

THE ANTI-TRITHEIST FLORILEGIUM IN MSS BL ADD 14532 AND 14538 REVISITED*

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ABSTRACT

In 1924, Giuseppe Furlani published an Italian translation of an anti-Tritheist florilegium he found in MS BL Add 14532. His translation focused mainly on the chapter titles in the florilegium and the quotations from the works of John Philoponus. In 1980, Albert van Roey published the Syriac Trinitarian fragments of Philoponus, found in various manuscripts, together with their Latin translation. Van Roey's contribution also presented the same florilegium, as found in MS BL Add 14538 as well as 14532, and identified most of the patristic passages quoted by the compiler. Both scholars, besides some inaccurate readings and some errors in identifications, paid attention only to the quotations of Philoponus, while the Trinitarian position of the compiler and his identity

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remained unanalysed. In this study then, I aim to analyse the Trinitarian position of the compiler, which offers important evidence of a relationship between the doctrine of Damian of Alexandria against Tritheism and some West Syrian circles. In doing so I will first present the florilegium, illustrate the profile of the compiler, his sources, and a probable date and place of his compilation of the florilegium as well as the doctrinal context in which this text was composed.

INTRODUCTION

In 1924, Giuseppe Furlani published an Italian translation of an anti-Tritheist florilegium he found in MS BL Add 14532. His translation focused mainly on the chapter titles in the florilegium and the quotations from the works of John Philoponus.¹ In 1980, Albert van Roey published the Syriac Trinitarian fragments of Philoponus found in various manuscripts, together with their Latin translation. Van Roey's contribution presented the same florilegium, as found in two manuscripts, namely MSS BL Add 14532 and 14538, he also identified most of the patristic passages quoted by the compiler.² In this study, I aim to present the florilegium, to examine the profile of the compiler, his sources, and a probable date for its compilation. A comparative analysis of the Trinitarian position of the florilegium's compiler and that of Damian of Alexandria will also be productive in that it will further illustrate the second phase of the anti-Tritheistic controversy among Syrian Miaphysites and will call attention to probable contacts between the Syriac community where this

¹ G. Furlani, "Un florilegio antitriteistico in lingua siriaca" (Atti del Regio Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti IX: 8 [1924]), 661–677

² A. Van Roey, "Les fragments trithéites de Jean Philopon" (Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica, 11 [1980]), 137–145.

florilegium was composed and Damian of Alexandria, and will provide evidence that it was probably against this community that Peter of Callinicum wrote his *Contra Damianum*.

THE ANTI-TRITHEIST FLORILEGIUM

This anti-Tritheist florilegium is preserved, as far as I know, in two manuscripts of the British Library, namely MS BL Add. 14532 ff. 194r-207v and MS BL Add. 14538, 140r-145r.³ Recently I published a critical digital edition of this florilegium, including identifications of the patristic passages, the original Greek texts, where they exist, and other metadata.⁴

The structure of the florilegium is as follows: a general title, an introduction, five chapters and a conclusion. The chapters also have the same structure, each has a title that can be considered an introduction to the contents of the chapter, followed by quotations from the Trinitarian writings of John Philoponus, and then others from various Church Fathers, like Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nazianzus, Cyril of Alexandria, and Severus of Antioch.⁵ The general introduction mentions that on comparison of the respective doctrines it will be clear to the reader, even if an intellectually simple person, that the doctrine of John Philoponus disagrees with the teaching of the Church Fathers.⁶ Moreover, in the introduction to each chapter,

³ According to Wright MS BL Add. 15432 was copied during the 8th century while MS BL Add. 15438 can be dated to the 10th century, see respectively W. Wright, *Catalogue of Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum, Acquired since the Year 1838*, vol. II (London: British Library, 1871), 955–967, 1003–1008.

⁴ <https://www.florilegiasyriaca.eu/flos/ATR> (accessed 15/07/2024).

⁵ See the digital edition in the link of the previous footnote. See also the names of the quoted Fathers identified by Furlani, “Un florilegio”, 661–662; for the passages identified by van Roey and their original sources see van Roey, “Les fragments”, 137–145.

⁶ <https://www.florilegiasyriaca.eu/texts/ATR|000a> (accessed 15/07/2024).

the compiler presents the topics dealt with in the quotations, and expresses his own position with comments on them.

The tables that follow give the general title of the florilegium, the general introduction and conclusion. In addition I present: 1) the titles of the chapters; 2) the Fathers mentioned in each chapter, their quoted works, identification of these quotations; and 3) the main topics treated in the quotations.⁷ Footnotes, make reference to the editions of the original texts of the quotations in question and offer observations as well as some disagreements with the readings of both G. Furlani and A. van Roey.⁸

⁹ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ (C:194r; E:140r)
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Tomus that briefly demonstrates the opposition of John the Grammarian and his followers to the Divine Books and the Holy Fathers

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⁷ For the Syriac text note the following abbreviations: C = MS BL Add. 14532; E = MS BL Add. 14538.

⁸ It must be mentioned that Furlani translated all the passages by John Philoponus into Italian, while for the patristic quotations he gave Italian translations of the beginning and end of each passage without any precise identification of the Greek sources; for the Syriac sources, he gave details of the works of Severus of Antioch that had so far been edited. However, as mentioned in the introduction to this study, van Roey identified most of the patristic passages quoted in this florilegium.

⁹ E: ܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ

¹⁰ E: ܡܠܟܐ

<p>3) <i>On the Trinity</i>²²</p> <p>4) <i>Against Themistius</i>²³</p>	<p>Hypostases, that is, singular substances, or primary substances, are what really exist, since they are subsistent.</p> <p>The common substance, even if does not exist, is divisible, and therefore numerable through its hypostases, that is, the single existences that participate in it.</p> <p>God is neither one in number (as in the monotheism of the Jews) nor four hypostases (in the meaning, three hypostasis and one existing common substance).</p>
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Quotations from Church Fathers	Main topics
<p>5) Basil of Caesarea <i>On the Holy Spirit</i>²⁴</p>	<p>God cannot be a common quality existing only in thought.</p>

²² Van Roey, "Les fragments", 149, no. 3.

²³ Van Roey, "Les fragments", 54: nos 18a and 18b.

²⁴ B. Pruche, ed., *Basile de Césarée. Sur le Saint-Esprit*, Sources Chrétiennes 17 bis (Paris: Cerf, 1968), Chapter 17, section 41.17–21.

ደረጃቸው²⁹ ስላሉ (C:195v) ስለሚባል ምንም እንኳን
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Chapter two

About the [fact] that while the Holy Fathers say that the one substance and the [one] worshipped Divinity is neither divisible nor countable in the three Holy hypostases, that is, persons and properties, of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, these [the adversaries] contend oppositely and confess that the one substance and the [one] worshipped Divinity is divisible and countable, even in the same substance and Divinity, so that, of necessity, they are constrained not to unify the Holy and consubstantial Trinity through anything.

Quotations from John Philoponus	Main topics
1) <i>On the Trinity</i> ³¹	Divinity is divisible.
2) <i>Against Themistius</i> ³²	If it is said that the Godhead is three, it means that it is divided, according to number, into three realities.

Quotations from Church Fathers	Main topics
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²⁹ C: ስላሉ

³⁰ C: ስለ

³¹ Van Roey, "Les fragments", 149, no. 4.

³² Van Roey, "Les fragments", 154–155, no. 19.

<p>3) Gregory of Nazianzus <i>Oration on the Holy Spirit (Or. 31)</i>³³</p>	<p>Godhead is undivided, one substance in three separate hypostases.</p>
<p>4) Ps.-Basil of Caesarea <i>Against the Sabellians, Arius and the Anomoeans</i>³⁴</p>	<p>It is said, concerning God, one and one, but without meaning a division.</p> <p>God, being immaterial, is one and undivided.</p>
<p>5) Ps.-Basil of Caesarea <i>Against the Sabellians, Arius and the Anomoeans</i>³⁵</p>	<p>The Trinity is numerable in the hypostases but subsists outside number because it is one and the same substance.</p>
<p>6) Athanasius of Alexandria <i>Defence of the Nicene Definition</i>³⁶</p>	<p>The Holy Trinity is divided and distinct in hypostases, but not divided into one substance and one Godhead.</p>
<p>7) Severus of Antioch <i>Letter to John and John the priests and abbots</i>³⁷</p>	
<p>8) Severus of Antioch <i>Letter to the priests and abbots, Yonatan and</i></p>	<p>God is one substance. He exists and is known in three hypostases.</p>

³³ Barbel, *Gregor von Nazianz*, Section 14.2–8.

³⁴ PG 31, 605.

³⁵ PG 31, 608. Note that Furlani considers the two quotations as a single one, see quotation n. 13 in Furlani, “Un florilegio”, 666.

³⁶ H. G. Opitz, ed., *Athanasius. Werke*, Band 2, Teil: *Die Apologien (Lfg. 1-7)* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1940), Chapter 24, Section 1.5–8.

³⁷ E. W. Brooks, ed., *A Collection of Letters of Severus of Antioch from Numerous Syriac Manuscripts*, PO 12.2 (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1915), 215.

Quotations from John Philoponus	Main topics
<p>1) <i>On the Trinity</i>⁴¹</p> <p>2) <i>Against Themistius</i>⁴²</p> <p>3) <i>Against Themistius</i>⁴³</p> <p>4) <i>Against Themistius</i>⁴⁴</p> <p>5) <i>On the Trinity</i>⁴⁵</p> <p>6) <i>On the Trinity</i>⁴⁶</p> <p>7) <i>On the Trinity</i>⁴⁷</p> <p>8) <i>On the Trinity</i>⁴⁸</p>	<p>If the hypostases are not recognized as single substances it means that they are simply names and this leads to Sabellianism.</p> <p>The hypostases of the same substance are equal and similar in substance, that is, they are not different in substance, even if each has its own property which makes it different from the other, and therefore one might affirm that each hypostasis with its own property is different in species from the other hypostases that share the same common substance.</p> <p>The one common divine substance subsists in three</p>

⁴¹ Van Roey, "Les fragments", 149–150, nos 5a and 5b.

⁴² Van Roey, "Les fragments", 155, nos 20a and 20b.

⁴³ Van Roey, "Les fragments", 156, nos 21a and 21b.

⁴⁴ Van Roey, "Les fragments", 156, no. 22.

⁴⁵ Van Roey, "Les fragments", 150–151, nos 6a and 6b.

⁴⁶ Van Roey, "Les fragments", 153, no. 12.

⁴⁷ Van Roey, "Les fragments", 153, no. 13.

⁴⁸ Van Roey, "Les fragments", 153, no. 14.

	hypostases which are divided in number and in species.
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Quotations from Church Fathers	Main topics
9) Ps.-Athanasius of Alexandria <i>On faith</i> ⁴⁹	The hypostases of the Trinity are substantial.
10) Ps.-Julius of Rome (Timothy of Beirut, Apollinarist) <i>Letter to Prosdocius</i> ⁵⁰	The Trinity is one in thought and reality.
11) Ps.-Basil of Caesarea <i>Against the Sabellians, Arius and the Anomoeans</i> ⁵¹	The substance of the one Father and the one Son and the one Spirit is one and the same.
	Even if the Father is God, the Son is God and the Spirit is God, they are not three gods.

⁴⁹ This work has not survived in Greek. Van Roey noted that this passage was used by Damian of Alexandria in one of his synodical letters, as testified by Michael the Syrian, see footnote 15 in van Roey, "Les fragments", 139. It must be also mentioned that this same passage was used by Peter of Callinicum (see R. Y. Ebied, A. van Roey and L. Wickham, eds., *Peter of Callinicum. Anti-Tritheist Dossier*, Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 10 (Leuven: Departement Oriëntalistiek, 1981), 77.17–20) and in the Trinitarian florilegium based on Peter's work (See quotation 1 in <https://www.florilegiasyriaca.eu/texts/TRI|037> [accessed 14/07/2024]).

⁵⁰ H. Lietzmann, *Apollinaris von Laodicea und seine Schule. Texte und Untersuchungen* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1904), 283.17–21.

⁵¹ PG 31, 605.

12) Gregory of Nyssa <i>On the Holy Trinity, to Eustathius</i> ⁵²	Because the Godhead is one, the substance is one.
13) Gregory of Nyssa <i>On the Holy Trinity, to Eustathius</i> ⁵³	The Divine substance is unchangeable and undivided, therefore all the names that indicate this substance, like Godhead, God, Holy, Good, Saviour, Just and Judge, are employed in the singular.
14) Gregory of Nyssa <i>On 'Not three gods', to Ablabius</i> ⁵⁴	
15) Gregory of Nyssa <i>On 'Not three gods', to Ablabius</i> ⁵⁵	
16) Gregory of Nyssa <i>On the Holy Trinity, to Eustathius</i> ⁵⁶	
17) Gregory of Nyssa <i>On the Holy Trinity, to Eustathius</i> ⁵⁷	

⁵² F. Müller, ed., *Gregorii Nysseni. Opera dogmatica minora*, vol. 1, *Gregorii Nysseni Opera III.1* (Leiden: Brill, 1958), 5.3–14.

⁵³ Müller, *Gregorii Nysseni*, 6.18–7.8.

⁵⁴ Müller, *Gregorii Nysseni*, 55.3–20.

⁵⁵ Müller, *Gregorii Nysseni*, 57.8–13. Note that both quotations, the one here and the previous one, are considered by van Roey as one passage, see van Roey, “Les fragments”, 140, see also footnote 16 on the same page.

⁵⁶ Müller, *Gregorii Nysseni*, 6.6–11.

⁵⁷ Müller, *Gregorii Nysseni*, 6.15–17. Note that it was because of an error of the compiler, who, as we shall see below, considers this passage and the one before to derive from Gregory's letter to Ablabius, that van Roey was unable to identify them, see footnote 17 in van Roey, “Les fragments”, 140.

18) Gregory of Nyssa <i>Refutation of the Confession of Eunomius</i> ⁵⁸	
19) Ps.-Athanasius of Alexandria <i>On Epiphany</i> ⁵⁹	
20) Ps.-Athanasius of Alexandria <i>On Trinity</i> ⁶⁰	
21) Gregory of Nazianzus <i>Oration on Athanasius (Or. 21)</i> ⁶¹	
22) Gregory of Nazianzus <i>Oration on the Holy Spirit (Or. 31)</i> ⁶²	

⁵⁸ W. Jaeger, ed., *Contra Eunomium Libri. Liber III (vulgo III-XII). Refutatio confessionis Eunomii (Vulgo Lib. II)*, Gregorii Nysseni Opera II (Leiden: Brill, 1960), Section 144.1–4.

⁵⁹ This work is not preserved in Greek. Note that this passage, as van Roey correctly noticed (see footnote 18 in van Roey, “Les fragments”, 140), was quoted in another Syriac source deriving from the Trinitarian controversy among Miaphysites (see G. Furlani, ed., *Sei scritti antitrinitaristici in lingua siriana*, PO 14.4 (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1920), 691.12–14). See also below.

⁶⁰ This work no longer exists in Greek. Note that a small part of this passage, as van Roey noticed correctly (see footnote 19 in van Roey, “Les fragments”, 141), was quoted in another Syriac source deriving from the Trinitarian controversy among Miaphysites (Furlani, *Sei scritti*, 698.10–14). See also below.

⁶¹ PG 35, 1096.

⁶² Barbel, *Gregor von Nazianz*, Section 28.1–8.

consequence of this, they introduce gods and divinities to the con-divinity.

Quotations from John Philoponus	Main topics
1) <i>On Theology</i> ⁶⁴	Even if the divinity of the Son is like the divinity of the Father, the three divine hypostases are not equal in genre and species.
2) <i>On Theology</i> ⁶⁵	
3) <i>On Theology</i> ⁶⁶	
4) <i>On Theology</i> ⁶⁷	To assert consubstantiality, one must profess a multitude of substances.
5) Konon of Tarsus, Eugenius of Seleucia, Theonas <i>Letter to their followers</i> ⁶⁸	If it is stated that consubstantiality is between hypostases, it is because hypostases are substances.
6) Konon of Tarsus, Eugenius of Seleucia, Theonas <i>Letter to their followers</i> ⁶⁹	The one-in-number substance cannot be consubstantial.
7) Konon of Tarsus, Eugenius of Seleucia,	

⁶⁴ Van Roey, "Les fragments", 153, no. 15.

⁶⁵ Van Roey, "Les fragments", 153, no. 15. It is worth noting that van Roey considered the first two quotations to be one, while Furlani treated them as two separate quotations.

⁶⁶ Van Roey, "Les fragments", 153–154, no. 16.

⁶⁷ Van Roey, "Les fragments", 154, no. 17.

⁶⁸ Van Roey, "Les fragments", 141.

⁶⁹ Van Roey, "Les fragments", 141–142. Note that van Roey considered this passage as two different quotations while Furlani treated it as one.

Theonas <i>Letter to their followers</i> ⁷⁰	
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Quotations from Church Fathers	Main topics
8) Epiphanius of Salamis <i>Anchoratus</i> ⁷¹	Even if the hypostases of the same common nature are distinguished, each through its own property(ies), this does not mean that they are different in species or nature.
9) Gregory of Nazianzus <i>First oration on the Son</i> (Or. 29) ⁷²	
10) Gregory of Nazianzus <i>Oration on the Holy Spirit</i> (Or. 31) ⁷³	The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are one in nature, and they are united in three hypostases.
11) Basil of Caesarea <i>On the Holy Spirit</i> ⁷⁴	Affirming three hypostases in the Godhead does not mean three origins, or that
12) Basil of Caesarea <i>On the Holy Spirit</i> ⁷⁵	

⁷⁰ Van Roey, “Les fragments”, 142.

⁷¹ K. Holl, ed., *Epiphanius. Ancoratus und Panarion*, vol. 1, Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller 25 (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1915), Chapter 6, Sections 4–8.

⁷² Barbel, *Gregor von Nazianz*, Section 10.6–18.

⁷³ Barbel, *Gregor von Nazianz*, Section 9.5–16.

⁷⁴ This quotation and the following four, as we shall see below, come from an elaborated and paraphrased Syriac translation of Basil’s work, see D. Taylor, ed., *The Syriac versions of the De Spiritu Sanctu by Basil of Caesarea*, CSCO 576, Syr. 228 (Louvain: Peeters, 1999), 15.6–13. Note that neither Furlani nor van Roey noticed this element, see Furlani, “Un florilegio”, 673; van Roey, “Les fragments”, 143.

⁷⁵ Taylor, *The Syriac*, 15.16–18.

2) <i>Against Themistius</i> ⁸²	<p>to be understood that they mean dissimilar or unsubstantial substances.</p> <p>It is contradictory to confirm that the three hypostases in the Godhead are three lives and three lights but not three substances.</p>
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Quotations from Church Fathers	Main topics
3) Gregory of Nazianzus <i>Oration on Athanasius</i> (Or. 21) ⁸³	The distinction between substance and hypostases (i.e. persons) is to avoid asserting three substances.
4) Gregory of Nazianzus <i>Oration on the Last Farewell in the Presence of the One Hundred and Fifty Bishops</i> (Or. 42) ⁸⁴	The unity of the Godhead is preserved by professing one substance, and the trinity of the hypostases is confessed by asserting to each one its own property.
5) Cyril of Alexandria <i>Against Julian</i> ⁸⁵	

⁸² Van Roey, "Les fragments", 156, no. 23.

⁸³ PG 35, 1124–1125.

⁸⁴ PG 36, 476–477.

⁸⁵ W. Kinzig, B. Wolfram, Ch. Thomas and H. Kaufhold, eds., *Kyrill von Alexandrien: Gegen Julian Buch 6-10 und Fragmente*, vol. 2, Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte Neue Folge 21, (Berlin-Boston: De Gruyter, 2017), Book 8, Section 18.8–14.

6) Cyril of Alexandria <i>Against Julian</i> ⁸⁶	Each hypostasis is considered one God, if contemplated separately; each is God because of consubstantiality. The three hypostases are considered one God, if contemplated collectively; they are one God because of the Monarchy.
7) Basil of Caesarea <i>Letter</i> 38 ⁸⁷	
8) Gregory of Nazianzus <i>Apologetic Oration</i> (Or. 2) ⁸⁸	
9) Gregory of Nazianzus <i>Third oration on Peace</i> (Or. 23) ⁸⁹	
10) Gregory of Nazianzus <i>Third oration on Peace</i> (Or. 23) ⁹⁰	
11) Gregory of Nazianzus <i>Second oration on Peace</i> (Or. 22) ⁹¹	
12) Gregory of Nazianzus <i>Oration on Baptism</i> (Or. 40) ⁹²	There is one nature, not in empty names, but in true beings.

⁸⁶ Kinzig, Wolfram, Thomas and Kaufholded, Hubert, *Kyrill von Alexandrien*, Book 8, Section 27.19–27.

⁸⁷ Y. Courtonne, ed., *Saint Basile. Lettres*, vol. 1 (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1957), Section 1.

⁸⁸ PG 35, 445.

⁸⁹ PG 35, 1161.

⁹⁰ PG 35, 1164.

⁹¹ PG 35, 1144.

⁹² PG 36, 417.

13) Gregory of Nazianzus <i>Oration on Baptism (Or. 40)</i> ⁹³	
14) Gregory of Nazianzus <i>Oration on New Sunday (Or. 44)</i> ⁹⁴	
15) Gregory of Nazianzus <i>Oration on the Lights (Or. 39)</i> ⁹⁵	
16) Gregory of Nazianzus <i>Oration to Hero the philosopher (Or. 25)</i> ⁹⁶	
17) Basil of Caesarea <i>On the Holy Spirit</i> ⁹⁷	
18) Basil of Caesarea <i>On the Holy Spirit</i> ⁹⁸	

⁹³ PG 36, 417.

⁹⁴ PG 36, 609.

⁹⁵ PG 36, 345.

⁹⁶ PG 35, 1224.

⁹⁷ This quotation and the one after, as we shall see below, come from an elaborated and paraphrased Syriac translation of Basil's work, see Taylor, *The Syriac*, 83.12–24. Note that this element was not noticed by Furlani nor by van Roey, see Furlani, "Un florilegio", 675; van Roey, "Les fragments", 144.

⁹⁸ Taylor, *The Syriac*, 85.21–86.26.

19) Basil of Caesarea <i>On Not Three Gods</i> ⁹⁹	
20) Basil of Caesarea <i>On Not Three Gods</i> ¹⁰⁰	
21) Severus of Antioch <i>Against the additions of Julian</i> ¹⁰¹	
22) Orthodox bishops in the East <i>Letter to the Orthodox bishops in Constantinople</i> ¹⁰²	
23) Athanasius of Alexandria <i>On the Opinion of Dionysius</i> ¹⁰³	

⁹⁹ This quotation and the one after, as we shall see below, come from an elaborated and paraphrased Syriac translation of Basil's work, as witnessed for example in MS BL Add 17143, f. 47v. This element too was not noticed by Furlani nor by van Roey, see Furlani, "Un florilegio", 675; van Roey, "Les fragments", 144.

¹⁰⁰ See MS BL Add 17143, f. 47v.

¹⁰¹ R. Hespel, ed., *Sévère d'Antioche. La Polémique Antijulianiste, II, A: Le Contra Additiones Juliani*, CSCO 295, Syr. 124 (Louvain: Secrétariat du CorpusSCO, 1968), 78.21–79.16.

¹⁰² J. B. Chabot, ed., *Documenta ad origines monophysitarum illustrandas*, CSCO Syr. II.37 (Paris: Typographie Reipublicae, 1907), 190.9–192.19. Note, as will be discussed later, that this passage was identified by neither Furlani nor van Roey. The former considered it a passage from Severus' previous work and the latter a passage from Theodosius of Alexandria, see Furlani, "Un florilegio", 676; van Roey, "Les fragments", 145.

¹⁰³ Opitz, *Athanasius. Werke*, Chapter 6, Section 3.

[illegible]¹⁰⁵ E: **كثرة**

words, do not confess two Sons and two Christs, but one, in reality, however, they are reproached for teaching two Sons and two Christs; then the Julianists, who in words confess that Christ suffered, but in reality demonstrate that they [follow] the opposite [doctrine]; so also those who dare to utter substances and natures concerning the Holy and consubstantial Trinity, in order to deceive those who listen [to them] and to escape from an evident confutation, they say just in words one God and one Divinity and one substance that is, nature, which they prove to confess to be nothing but a mere word in mere thought. [And] while they are blotting out to confess principally one God and one Divinity, one substance, that is, nature in three Holy hypostases of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, as the Divine Scriptures and the Holy Fathers teach, they are evidently caught boldly confessing gods, divinities, substances and natures concerning the Holy and consubstantial Trinity, as was shown through the blasphemies set down [above]. No one should believe them, because in the Scripture[s] those who confess substances, natures, gods and divinities concerning the Holy and consubstantial Trinity are anathematized, although they say [that] these [gods] are consubstantial, as also the Holy Theodosius refused, who [now] is among the saints. No one must believe heretics, because, as with lambskin, they cover and conceal their wickedness through beautiful words [taken] from the Holy Scriptures, and they do not think what they [really] say and do not say what they [really] think, so that no one gets bored by them, they, in fact had learned this from the Evil, their father.

To prove, then, that this is so, we will cite, in order to conclude in a good way, the word of the Apostle

Athanasius from the first discourse against the Arians,¹⁰⁷ when warning [the reader] from their wickedness, he says the following:

And however they may write phrases out of the Scripture, endure not their writings; however they may speak the language of the orthodox, yet attend not to what they say; for they speak not with an upright mind, but putting on such language like sheeps' clothing, in their hearts they think with Arius, after the manner of the devil, who is the author of all heresies. For he too made use of the words of Scripture, but was put to silence by our Saviour. For if he had indeed meant them as he used them, he would not have fallen from heaven; but now, having fallen, he acts evilness, in his mind.¹⁰⁸

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE FLORILEGIUM'S STRUCTURE AND CONTENT

The structure of florilegium, as is evident from the above presentation, is very clear. However, one must make some observations in this regard. First, taking into consideration what is mentioned in the introduction to the fifth chapter, namely the compiler's reference to what he has mentioned in the third chapter: "as was clearly seen in the third chapter put down above" (ܐܠܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܒܐ ܕܬܠܬܐ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܒܐ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܒܐ), it becomes evident that the compiler of the florilegium is one person, and that the structure and division we

¹⁰⁷ As we shall see below, the quoted passage derives in fact from Athanasius of Alexandria's *Letter to the bishops* and not as the text maintains from his *First discourse against the Arians*.

¹⁰⁸ D. U. Hansen, K. Metzler and K. Savvidis, eds., *Athanasius. Werke*, Band I, Teil 1; *Die dogmatischen Schriften*, Lieferung 1: *Epistula ad episcopos Aegypti et Libyae* (Berlin-New York: De Gruyter, 1996), Sections 2.1–3.3. The English translation of the passage by Athanasius, made from Greek, is taken from <https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/2812.htm> (accessed 14/07/2024), slightly modified according to the Syriac.

have is indeed by him. Nevertheless, this does not mean that errors or anomalies cannot be found in this structure. In fact, after the florilegium's title, coloured in vermillion in both manuscripts, we have an introduction and then the quotations from John Philoponus' Trinitarian works followed by those of the Church Fathers. There is no mention, as happens in the other chapters, of any subtitle to indicate the first chapter. This, indeed, caused G. Furlani to consider the whole introduction as a preamble to the first chapter.¹⁰⁹ A. van Roey, on the contrary, separated the introduction into two parts, considering the first part a general introduction to the whole florilegium and the second an introduction to the first chapter; he also adds the bracketed subtitle 'Chapitre premier' before this second part of the introduction.¹¹⁰ Examination of the contents of the whole passage enabled me to agree with A. van Roey's conclusion. I have therefore indicated the first part of the passage as the florilegium's general introduction and the second as an introduction to the first chapter, and like van Roey, I have added the subtitle 'Chapter one'.

Having an introduction to the florilegium one might also expect a conclusion. In fact, the passage I consider to be the florilegium's conclusion was also, to some extent, considered as such by G. Furlani, who translated it into Italian,¹¹¹ as he did for all the chapter introductions and for the passages by John Philoponus. A. van Roey, however, probably missed this passage and his analysis makes no mention of it.¹¹² Returning to the manuscripts we note that both consider this passage to derive from Severus of Antioch: a note in the margin of Ms C states 'Of Severus' (ⲉⲥⲉⲩⲱⲥ);¹¹³ while Ms E has 'Of Saint Severus' (ⲉⲥⲉⲩⲱⲥ ⲉⲥⲉⲩⲱⲥ).

¹⁰⁹ Furlani, "Un florilegio", 662–663.

¹¹⁰ Van Roey, "Les fragments", 137–138.

¹¹¹ Furlani, "Un florilegio", 676–677.

¹¹² Van Roey, "Les fragments", 145.

¹¹³ MS BL Add. 14532, f. 207r.

ⲛⲓⲁⲣⲓⲛⲟ) in vermillion, without any information concerning the work from which this text was supposed to derive.¹¹⁴ However, on reading the contents of this passage, and considering that it was impossible to identify it or a part of it in the writings of Severus of Antioch that are known to us, it is clear that it contains some elements that cannot have been written by Severus, including the reference to the Tritheites and the mention of Theodosius of Alexandria as already deceased:

No one should believe them [i.e. Tritheites's blasphemies], because in the Scripture[s] those who confess substances, natures, gods and divinities concerning the Holy and consubstantial Trinity are anathematized, although they say [that] these [gods] are consubstantial, as also the Holy Theodosius refused, who [now] is among the saints.

We know in fact that Theodosius died in 567, thirty years after the death of Severus of Antioch, so to consider this passage as written by Severus is indeed out of the question. Consequently, it is more than probable that the source of both manuscripts had wrongly attributed this passage to Severus. Examination of its content leads, in fact, to conclude that it is, without doubt, the conclusion of the florilegium. What confirms this hypothesis is the way the compiler ends this passage, giving a quotation from Athanasius of Alexandria's *Letter to the Bishops* (wrongly considered by the compiler as the *First discourse against the Arians*) as support for his position. The compiler, in fact, introduces Athanasius' passage with the following way: "to prove, then, that this is so, we will mention, in order to conclude in a good way (ⲛⲓⲁⲣⲓⲛⲟ ⲛⲓⲁⲣⲓⲛⲟ) ...", which means that this whole passage is indeed to be considered the florilegium's conclusion.

¹¹⁴ MS BL Add. 14538, f. 144v.

The aforementioned passage by Athanasius is not the only patristic quotation for which the compiler, or his source, gives wrong title of the work from which it derives. Quotation 18 of the third chapter is stated as deriving from Gregory of Nyssa's *Against Eunomius*, instead of the same author's *Refutation of the Confession of Eunomius*. In the same chapter, quotation 23 is also wrongly attributed to Damasus of Rome's *Synodical letter to Paulinus, Bishop of Thessaloniki*, whereas it actually derives from Damasus' *Profession of Faith to Paulinus*, known also as his *Tomus*; moreover, it is evident that the compiler, or his source, wrongly considers Paulinus to be the Bishop of Thessaloniki instead of Antioch. Although they occur frequently in the florilegia and in their sources, none of these errors were noted by G. Furlani¹¹⁵ or by A. van Roey.¹¹⁶ Neither did they note one another anomaly in the same chapter. The anomaly is found in quotations 12 to 17, which all derive from Gregory of Nyssa. The florilegium correctly attributes quotations 12 and 13 to Gregory of Nyssa's *On the Holy Trinity*, i.e. his *Letter to Eustathius*, and quotations 14 and 15 to Gregory's *On 'Not three gods'*, namely his *Letter to Ablabius*, but quotations 16 and 17, which derive from Gregory's *Letter to Eustathius*, are ascribed to the same author's *Letter to Ablabius*. This error was noted by neither G. Furlani¹¹⁷ nor A. van Roey whose analysis admits explicitly that he could not identify these quotations (16 and 17) in the Greek version of the *Letter to Ablabius*.¹¹⁸ Going back to the florilegium, one might maintain that the original order of the quotations was different, first those from the *Letter to Eustathius*, i.e. quotations 12, 13, 16 and 17, and then those from the *Letter to Ablabius*, namely quotations 14 and 15. However, taking all these elements together and the fact that all these errors are found in the same

¹¹⁵ Furlani, "Un florilegio", 670.

¹¹⁶ Van Roey, "Les fragments", 141.

¹¹⁷ Furlani, "Un florilegio", 669.

¹¹⁸ See footnote 17 in van Roey, "Les fragments", 140.

chapter three, one might hypothesize that the source of the florilegium's compiler had already made these errors and imprecisions, which would mean that they were not made by the compiler himself. In my opinion, this hypothesis is more plausible than asserting that the copyist of the archetype of both manuscripts made these errors and created such anomalies.

THE PROFILE OF THE COMPILER

David Taylor notes that this florilegium quotes seven passages from the first Syriac translation of Basil of Caesarea's *On the Holy Spirit*,¹¹⁹ namely quotations 11-15 in the fourth chapter and quotations 17-18 in the fifth chapter. This was a paraphrased translation, where the translator was more interested in interpreting the Greek text than translating it.¹²⁰ This element was not noted by A. van Roey who comments that he could identify just a few phrases in the Greek text.¹²¹ David Taylor also noted that one quotation from *On the Holy Spirit* in this florilegium, namely quotation 5 in the first chapter, comes neither from the first nor the second Syriac translation of the work,¹²² which means that the compiler used more than one source for his florilegium.¹²³ In fact, the compiler refers to Basil's work in different ways, 'Of Saint Basil from the discourse to Amphilochius' (ܐܠܝܐ ܕܩܝܨܐ ܕܐܡܦܝܠܘܚܝܘܨ ܕܩܝܨܐ ܕܐܡܦܝܠܘܚܝܘܨ)¹²⁴ for quotation 5 in the first chapter, and 'Of Saint Basil from the letter to Amphilochius concerning the Holy

¹¹⁹ Taylor, *The Syriac*, xx.

¹²⁰ In this regards see Taylor, *The Syriac*, ix-xxxv.

¹²¹ Van Roey, "Les fragments", 143-144.

¹²² Taylor, *The Syriac*, xxxvi.

¹²³ See also the opinion of Furlani in this regard, Furlani, "Un florilegio", 661.

¹²⁴ <https://www.florilegiasyriaca.eu/texts/ATR|001> (accessed 14/07/2024).

Moreover, I have noticed that quotations 19-20 in the fifth chapter, which derive from Basil of Caesarea's *On 'Not Three Gods'* are not faithful to the Greek text. Comparing them with a Syriac translation of this work – found in three manuscripts in the British Library, namely MS BL Add 17143, ff. 46v-48v (5th century); BL Add 14543, ff.134r-140v (6th century), and BL Add 14612, ff. 100r-105r (6th/7th century),¹²⁶ which is also a paraphrased translation of Basil's work – shows that they were based on a similar paraphrased translation and not necessarily the version testified in these manuscripts. The point is demonstrated in the following table, where I present Basil's paraphrased translation according to MS BL Add 14543:¹²⁷

[illegible]

¹²⁶ On these manuscripts see respectively Wright, *Catalogue*, 416, 419–420: 696–701. See also S. Brock, “Basil’s Homily on Deut. xv 9: Some Remarks on the Syriac Manuscript Tradition”, in *Texte und Textkritik: Eine Aufsatzsammlung*, Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der Altchristlichen Literatur 133, ed. J. Dummer (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1987), 57–66.

¹²⁸ See the previous footnote.

[illegible]

compiler was a Syriac-speaking Miaphysite. This is not the only factor that can support such a hypothesis. In fact, a considerable number of patristic quotations in this florilegium are also quoted in other texts written during the Tritheist controversy, namely (1) Theodosius of Alexandria's *On Trinity*;¹³³ (2) Various texts published by G. Furlani;¹³⁴ (3) Peter of Callinicum's Trinitarian Corpus;¹³⁵ (4) a Trinitarian florilegium based mainly on Peter of Callinicum's Trinitarian Corpus.¹³⁶

Theodosius of Alexandria's *On Trinity* was originally composed in Greek but it exists in various Syriac translations of which the oldest, used for comparison in this study, is copied in MS British Library Add. 14602, which dates, according to Wright,¹³⁷ from the sixth or seventh century.¹³⁸ G. Furlani demonstrated that the texts he published were originally composed in Syriac;¹³⁹ I have demonstrated that the Trinitarian florilegium is based on the Syriac version of Peter of Callinicum's Trinitarian Corpus¹⁴⁰ on which L. van Rompay recently expressed his doubts as to whether it was originally composed in Greek. In his opinion, it is more plausible that Peter wrote his work against Damian of Alexandria directly in

¹³³ Chabot, *Documenta*, 40–79; A. van Roey and P. Allen, eds., *Monophysite Texts of the Sixth Century*, Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 56 (Leuven: Peeters, 1994), 144–221.

¹³⁴ Furlani, *Sei scritti*.

¹³⁵ R. Y. Ebied, A. van Roey and L. Wickham, eds., *Petri Callinicensis Patriarchae Antiocheni. Tractatus contra Damianum*, 4 vols, Corpus Christianorum, Series Graeca 29, 32, 35, 54 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1994, 1996, 1998, 2003); Ebied, van Roey and Wickham, *Peter of Callinicum*.

¹³⁶ <https://www.florilegiasyriaca.eu/flos/TRI> (accessed 14/07/2024).

¹³⁷ Wright, *Catalogue*, 952–953.

¹³⁸ For more details on this work, its contents, Syriac translations etc. see van Roey and Allen, *Monophysite Texts*, 105–143

¹³⁹ Furlani, *Sei scritti*, 675–678.

¹⁴⁰ B. Ebeid, “Metaphysics of Trinity in Graeco-Syriac Miaphysitism: A Study and Analysis of the Trinitarian Florilegium in Ms BL Add. 14532” (*Studia graeco-arabica* 11 [2021]), 83–128.

Syriac.¹⁴¹ In support of this position one might also add the fact that in *Contra Damianum*¹⁴² we find a quotation from a pseudo-Basil of Caesarea’s *Against the Anomoeans* (CPG 2988),¹⁴³ a work that was originally composed in Syriac.¹⁴⁴ In addition, and as we shall see below, it seems that Peter of Callinicum wrote his work against the Syrian Miaphysite followers of Damian of Alexandria and his Trinitarian doctrine.

To return to our florilegium, the table below presents the quotations found both in our florilegium and in one or more of the Miaphysite texts relating to the Tritheist controversy, using Roman numerals to indicate the chapter in our florilegium, Arabic numerals for the number of the quotation in the chapter, and adding ‘p’ when the passage is quoted in partial form in one of these sources.¹⁴⁵

Theodosius of Alexandria	Furlani’s Texts	Peter of Callinicum	Trinitarian florilegium
		I:8 (p)	
		II:3 (p)	
		II:4 (P) x2	II:4 (P)
II:7		II:7 (p)	II:7
		III:9 (p)	III:9 (p)
			III:11 (p)
			III:15

¹⁴¹ See L. van Rompay, “Pierre de Callinique et les versions syriaques des Homélies de Grégoire de Nazianze. Un premier sondage” (Babelao 10-11 [2022]), 481–495.

¹⁴² Ebied, van Roey and Wickham, *Petri Callinicensis*, vol. 4, XXXIX.152–165.

¹⁴³ A. van Roey, “Une Homélie inédite contre les Anoméens attribuée à saint Basile de Césarée” (Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica 28 [1997]), 179–192.

¹⁴⁴ See J. Noret and M. Geerard, *Clavis Patrum Graecorum. Supplementum*, Corpus Christianorum, (Brepols: Turnhout, 1998), 130, no. 2988 (14).

¹⁴⁵ For exact references, consult the online digital critical edition, <https://www.florilegiasyriaca.eu/flos/ATR> (accessed 14/07/2024).

The fact that this quotation was not identified in the incomplete version of Peter of Callinicum's Trinitarian corpus known to us today suggests that both florilegia were based either on the same source, which contains this fragment, or on the same integral Syriac translation of Gregory's *Letter to Ablabius*. The next example offers further support to my hypothesis. Quotation 7 in the fifth chapter, which derives from Basil of Caesarea's *Letter 38, concerning the difference between substance and hypostasis*, is found in one of Furlani's texts as well as in Peter of Callinicum's *Against Damian*. The text in all these sources is similar to that of an integral early Syriac translation:

¹⁵⁰ <https://www.florilegiasyriaca.eu/texts/ATR/003> (accessed 14/07/2024).

¹⁵¹ See quotation 1 in <https://www.florilegiasyriaca.eu/texts/TRI|038> (accessed 14/07/2024).

[illegible]

¹⁵² <https://www.florilegiasyriaca.eu/texts/ATR|005> (accessed 14/07/2024).

<p> 162 ♣ 163 ♣ 164 ♣ 165 ♣ 166 ♣ 167 ♣ 168 ♣ 169 ♣ 170 ♣ 171 ♣ 172 ♣ 173 ♣ 174 ♣ 175 ♣ 176 ♣ 177 ♣ 178 ♣ 179 ♣ 180 ♣ 181 ♣ 182 ♣ 183 ♣ 184 ♣ 185 ♣ 186 ♣ 187 ♣ 188 ♣ 189 ♣ 190 ♣ 191 ♣ 192 ♣ 193 ♣ 194 ♣ 195 ♣ 196 ♣ 197 ♣ 198 ♣ 199 ♣ 200 ♣ 201 ♣ 202 ♣ 203 ♣ 204 ♣ 205 ♣ 206 ♣ 207 ♣ 208 ♣ 209 ♣ 210 ♣ 211 ♣ 212 ♣ 213 ♣ 214 ♣ 215 ♣ 216 ♣ 217 ♣ 218 ♣ 219 ♣ 220 ♣ 221 ♣ 222 ♣ 223 ♣ 224 ♣ 225 ♣ 226 ♣ 227 ♣ 228 ♣ 229 ♣ 230 ♣ 231 ♣ 232 ♣ 233 ♣ 234 ♣ 235 ♣ 236 ♣ 237 ♣ 238 ♣ 239 ♣ 240 ♣ 241 ♣ 242 ♣ 243 ♣ 244 ♣ 245 ♣ 246 ♣ 247 ♣ 248 ♣ 249 ♣ 250 ♣ 251 ♣ 252 ♣ 253 ♣ 254 ♣ 255 ♣ 256 ♣ 257 ♣ 258 ♣ 259 ♣ 260 ♣ 261 ♣ 262 ♣ 263 ♣ 264 ♣ 265 ♣ 266 ♣ 267 ♣ 268 ♣ 269 ♣ 270 ♣ 271 ♣ 272 ♣ 273 ♣ 274 ♣ 275 ♣ 276 ♣ 277 ♣ 278 ♣ 279 ♣ 280 ♣ 281 ♣ 282 ♣ 283 ♣ 284 ♣ 285 ♣ 286 ♣ 287 ♣ 288 ♣ 289 ♣ 290 ♣ 291 ♣ 292 ♣ 293 ♣ 294 ♣ 295 ♣ 296 ♣ 297 ♣ 298 ♣ 299 ♣ 300 ♣ 301 ♣ 302 ♣ 303 ♣ 304 ♣ 305 ♣ 306 ♣ 307 ♣ 308 ♣ 309 ♣ 310 ♣ 311 ♣ 312 ♣ 313 ♣ 314 ♣ 315 ♣ 316 ♣ 317 ♣ 318 ♣ 319 ♣ 320 ♣ 321 ♣ 322 ♣ 323 ♣ 324 ♣ 325 ♣ 326 ♣ 327 ♣ 328 ♣ 329 ♣ 330 ♣ 331 ♣ 332 ♣ 333 ♣ 334 ♣ 335 ♣ 336 ♣ 337 ♣ 338 ♣ 339 ♣ 340 ♣ 341 ♣ 342 ♣ 343 ♣ 344 ♣ 345 ♣ 346 ♣ 347 ♣ 348 ♣ 349 ♣ 350 ♣ 351 ♣ 352 ♣ 353 ♣ 354 ♣ 355 ♣ 356 ♣ 357 ♣ 358 ♣ 359 ♣ 360 ♣ 361 ♣ 362 ♣ 363 ♣ 364 ♣ 365 ♣ 366 ♣ 367 ♣ 368 ♣ 369 ♣ 370 ♣ 371 ♣ 372 ♣ 373 ♣ 374 ♣ 375 ♣ 376 ♣ 377 ♣ 378 ♣ 379 ♣ 380 ♣ 381 ♣ 382 ♣ 383 ♣ 384 ♣ 385 ♣ 386 ♣ 387 ♣ 388 ♣ 389 ♣ 390 ♣ 391 ♣ 392 ♣ 393 ♣ 394 ♣ 395 ♣ 396 ♣ 397 ♣ 398 ♣ 399 ♣ 400 ♣ 401 ♣ 402 ♣ 403 ♣ 404 ♣ 405 ♣ 406 ♣ 407 ♣ 408 ♣ 409 ♣ 410 ♣ 411 ♣ 412 ♣ 413 ♣ 414 ♣ 415 ♣ 416 ♣ 417 ♣ 418 ♣ 419 ♣ 420 ♣ 421 ♣ 422 ♣ 423 ♣ 424 ♣ 425 ♣ 426 ♣ 427 ♣ 428 ♣ 429 ♣ 430 ♣ 431 ♣ 432 ♣ 433 ♣ 434 ♣ 435 ♣ 436 ♣ 437 ♣ 438 ♣ 439 ♣ 440 ♣ 441 ♣ 442 ♣ 443 ♣ 444 ♣ 445 ♣ 446 ♣ 447 ♣ 448 ♣ 449 ♣ 450 ♣ 451 ♣ 452 ♣ 453 ♣ 454 ♣ 455 ♣ 456 ♣ 457 ♣ 458 ♣ 459 ♣ 460 ♣ 461 ♣ 462 ♣ 463 ♣ 464 ♣ 465 ♣ 466 ♣ 467 ♣ 468 ♣ 469 ♣ 470 ♣ 471 ♣ 472 ♣ 473 ♣ 474 ♣ 475 ♣ 476 ♣ 477 ♣ 478 ♣ 479 ♣ 480 ♣ 481 ♣ 482 ♣ 483 ♣ 484 ♣ 485 ♣ 486 ♣ 487 ♣ 488 ♣ 489 ♣ 490 ♣ 491 ♣ 492 ♣ 493 ♣ 494 ♣ 495 ♣ 496 ♣ 497 ♣ 498 ♣ 499 ♣ 500 ♣ 501 ♣ 502 ♣ 503 ♣ 504 ♣ 505 ♣ 506 ♣ 507 ♣ 508 ♣ 509 ♣ 510 ♣ 511 ♣ 512 ♣ 513 ♣ 514 ♣ 515 ♣ 516 ♣ 517 ♣ 518 ♣ 519 ♣ 520 ♣ 521 ♣ 522 ♣ 523 ♣ 524 ♣ 525 ♣ 526 ♣ 527 ♣ 528 ♣ 529 ♣ 530 ♣ 531 ♣ 532 ♣ </p>

¹⁵⁸ Ebied, van Roey and Wickham, *Petri Callinicensis*, vol. 3, XXIII.80–85.

¹⁵⁹ Ebied, van Roey and Wickham, *Petri Callinicensis*, vol. 2, I.76–81.

¹⁶² See quotation 2 in <https://www.florilegiasyriaca.eu/texts/TRI|023> (accessed 14/07/2024).

[illegible]

All this clearly leads to the conclusion that the compiler of the anti-Tritheist florilegium was a Syrian Miaphysite who was directly involved in the Tritheistic controversy and who had access to various patristic texts, mainly those which already existed in an integral or partial Syriac translation, and that were in use among the different parties involved in the controversy.

¹⁵⁶ <https://www.florilegiasyriaca.eu/texts/ATR|005> (accessed 14/07/2024).

¹⁵⁷ Chabot, *Documenta*, 72.24–73.2.

¹⁶⁰ Ebied, van Roey and Wickham, *Petri Callinicensis*, vol. 4, XLVII.372–380.

¹⁶¹ See quotation 8 in <https://www.florilegiasyriaca.eu/texts/TRI|001> (accessed 14/07/2024).

WHERE AND WHEN THE FLORILEGIUM WAS COMPILED

One another extremely important detail, noted by neither A. van Roey nor G. Furlani, remains to be highlighted. As seen above, the compiler of our florilegium mentions Theodosius of Alexandria as already dead but does not make any direct quotation from his *On Trinity*, even though he considers his own position to be in agreement with that of Theodosius, and that the Tritheites wrongly consider themselves followers of Theodosius. The texts published by G. Furlani also share the same characteristics as our florilegium: they place Theodosius among the saints, regard his doctrine as orthodox, without making any quotation from it, and they claim that the Tritheites, although they claim to follow Theodosius' teaching, in truth they do not do so.¹⁶³ On the contrary, the work of Peter of Callinicum, and consequently the Trinitarian florilegium based on it, quotes numerous passages from Theodosius' *On Trinity*. These various factors lead me to maintain that our florilegium was composed in the same period and place as the texts published by G. Furlani. What strengthens this hypothesis is that both our florilegium and the texts published by G. Furlani are silent concerning the controversy between Damian of Alexandria and Peter of Callinicum, so these texts must date from before the controversy.

To add detail to this hypothesis, another element must be taken into consideration: our florilegium quotes an extract from the letter sent by the 'Orthodox [i.e. Miaphysite] bishops in the East [i.e. Mesopotamia] to the Orthodox [i.e. Miaphysite] bishops in Constantinople', that is, quotation 22 in the fifth chapter. In both manuscripts this extract appears to be a continuation of the previous passages (quotation 21) from

¹⁶³ See, for example, Furlani, *Sei scritti*, 737–738, 759.

Severus' work *Against the additions of Julian of Halicarnassus*,¹⁶⁴ an element that led G. Furlani to consider it as such.¹⁶⁵ A. van Roey, however, noted that it is a new passage, correctly understanding that it is related to Theodosius of Alexandria and identifying the direct quotations from Theodosius' *On Trinity* mentioned in it. What he did not notice, however, is that the whole extract belongs to another text and is not by Theodosius himself.¹⁶⁶

The aforementioned letter, from which this extract derives, was composed to defend the writings of Theodosius from misinterpretations by the Tritheites,¹⁶⁷ a characteristic shared by our ant-Tritheistic florilegium, and the aforementioned texts published by G. Furlani. What distinguishes this letter is that it quotes some passages from Theodosius' *On Trinity*. These passages differ, to some extent, from the Syriac translations of Theodosius' work that are known to us. This is demonstrated in the following table, which compares the first and second quotations from Theodosius' work in the extract of our florilegium, with three different Syriac translations of Theodosius' *On Trinity*:

Theodosius in the florilegium	The earliest known Syriac translation of Theodosius	The second earliest known Syriac translation of Theodosius	The third earliest known Syriac translation of Theodosius

¹⁶⁴ In MS BL Add. 15432, this extract begins in folio 206r; while the folio where it is copied in MS BL Add. 15438, namely folio 144v, is damaged, even though it is clear that it was indeed considered a continuation of Severus' quotation.

¹⁶⁵ Furlani, "Un florilegio", 676.

¹⁶⁶ Van Roey, "Les fragments", 144–145.

¹⁶⁷ Chabot, *Documenta*, 189–195.

[illegible]

¹⁶⁸ Chabot, *Documenta*, 40.13–16.

¹⁶⁹ van Roey and Allen, *Monophysite Texts*, 148.2–5.

¹⁷⁰ van Roey and Allen, *Monophysite Texts*, 184.3–6

doctrine of this florilegium, reading it in the general context of the Tritheist controversy and examining its probable relationship to the Trinitarian teaching of Damian of Alexandria.

THE FLORILEGIUM AND DAMIAN OF ALEXANDRIA

Scholars today distinguish more than one phase in the Tritheist controversy;¹⁷⁵ Theodosius of Alexandria's reaction and his composition of *On Trinity* belong to the first phase; here he disagreed with the doctrine of the first Tritheites but did not regard it as heresy. The position of Theodosius did not resolve the problem but divided Miaphysites into two groups, those who agreed with him and those who disagreed. It is worth noting that during the second phase, some Tritheites used the work of Theodosius as proof of the correctness of their doctrine. The above argumentation on the use of Theodosius is indeed evidence supporting this element.

The aim of our florilegium, to return to our text, is explicit in its title, namely, to demonstrate that the doctrine of John

¹⁷⁵ In regards see, among others, A. Grillmeier, "The Tritheist Controversy in the Sixth Century and its Importance in Syriac Christology", in *Christ in Christian Tradition*, vol. II/III: *From the Council of Chalcedon (451) to Gregory the Great (590-604). The Churches of Jerusalem and Antioch from 451 to 600*, eds. A. Grillmeier and Th. Hainthaler (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 268–280; H. Martin, *La controverse trithéite dans l'Empire byzantin au VI^e siècle*, PhD Dissertation (Leuven: Catholic University of Leuven, 1960); A. van Roey, "La controverse trithéite depuis la condamnation de Conon et Eugène jusqu'à la conversion de l'évêque Elie", in *Von Kanaan bis Kerala: Festschrift für Prof. Mag. Dr. J.P.M. van der Ploeg O.P. zur Vollendung des siebenzigsten Lebensjahres am 4. Juli 1979 überreicht von Kollegen, Freunden und Schülern*, Alter Orient und Altes Testament 211, eds., W. C. Delsman, J. T. Nelis, J. R. T. M. Peters, W. H. Ph. Römer and S. A. S. van der Woude, (Kevelaar: Neukirchener Verlag, 1982), 487–497; A. van Roey, "La controverse trithéite jusqu'à l'excommunication de Conon et d'Eugène (557-569)", (*Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica* 16 [1985]), 141–165.

Philoponus and his followers contradicts the Scriptures and the patristic tradition. We are informed by the florilegium's introduction and conclusion, moreover, that the compiler aims to demonstrate that the claim of his adversaries, i.e. the Tritheites, that they follow Theodosius' teaching, is merely verbal; in truth their doctrine is in contradiction with that of Theodosius.

According to the passages quoted from John Philoponus and his followers one can assert that their doctrine consists of the following points: (1) since the hypostasis is an individual concrete substance, and since Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three hypostases, they are consequently three concrete individual substances; (2) the general substance is an abstract reality, it has no real existence and exists only in the mind; (3) the unity in the Godhead is seen only in mental abstraction, i.e. at the level of the general substance; (4) the three divine hypostases are three consubstantial divinities; (5) consubstantiality occurs between individual substances belonging to the same general substance; (6) each concrete substance differs from the other concrete substances of the same general substance on account of its own characteristics, and therefore (7) each concrete substance, with its property, is considered a different species.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁶ For more details on John Philoponus' doctrine and that of the Tritheites see Ebeid, "Metaphysics", 92–93. See also J. Zachhuber, *The Rise of Christian Theology and the End of Ancient Metaphysics: Patristic Philosophy from the Cappadocian Fathers to John of Damascus* (Oxford-New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 145–169; T. Hainthaler, "John Philoponus, Philosopher and Theologian in Alexandria", in *Christ in Christian Tradition*, Vol. II/IV: *From the Council of Chalcedon (451) to Gregory the Great (590-604). The Churches of Alexandria with Nubia and Ethiopia after 451*, eds., A. Grillmeier and Th. Hainthaler (London: A. R. Mowbray, 1996), 131–138; C. Erismann, "The Trinity, Universals, and Particular Substances: Philoponus and Roscelin" (*Traditio* 53 [2008]), 277–305; J. Zachhuber, "Personhood in

To confute this doctrine, the compiler, through the introductions he gives to the five chapters, affirms that (1) the divine substance is one; (2) it exists really and not in mere thought; (3) it should be considered according to what Aristotle defines as *substantia prima*; (4) it is subsistent, that is, one concrete and single substance; (5) it is neither divisible nor countable in the three hypostases; (6) consubstantiality indicates hypostases and not single and concrete substances; and (7) substance is distinct metaphysically from hypostases, which are identified with persons and properties; (8) consubstantiality in the Godhead indicates the unity of the hypostases, that is, the one and truly existing substance, (9) which is one and the same in the three hypostases, and therefore (10) they are consubstantial. However, and (11) although the hypostases are identified metaphysically with the properties, Sabellianism is rejected; thus, one might conclude that (12) persons-hypostases-properties are not understood as masks, but as substantial, i.e. not-abstract realities.

It is evident that the compiler's metaphysical system is not the one established by the Cappadocians, which is based on the distinction between Aristotle's second substance, for the common and shared, and the first substance, for the single and concrete realities, i.e. the hypostasis.¹⁷⁷ It is clear, then, that even

Miaphysitism. Severus of Antioch and John Philoponus", in *Personhood in the Byzantine Christian Tradition: Early, Medieval, and Modern Perspectives*, eds., A. Torrance and S. Paschalides (New York: Routledge, 2018), 29–43; H. Martin, "Jean Philopon et la controverse trithéite du Vie siècle" (*Studia Patristica* 5 [1962]), 519–525.

¹⁷⁷ On the Trinitarian doctrine of the Cappadocians, see among others, Ph. Kariatlis, "St Basil's Contribution to the Trinitarian Doctrine. A Synthesis of Greek Paideia and the Scriptural Worldview" (*Phronema* 25 [2010]), 57–83; A. Radde-Gallwitz, *Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nyssa, and the Transformation of Divine Simplicity*, Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford-New York: Oxford University Press, 2009); Ch. A. Beeley, *Gregory of*

if the compiler quotes the Cappadocians and other important Church Fathers, in order to support his own doctrine as expressed in the chapter introductions of the florilegium, he differs from these patristic doctrines. Comparing his doctrine with that of Damian of Alexandria, one might maintain that the florilegium is to be regarded as the first steps of the Trinitarian teaching of a Miaphysite current with which Damian probably had some direct or indirect relationships. The better to understand this hypothesis, one must take into consideration the main metaphysical principles of Damian's doctrine. These principles may be summarised as follows:

(1) There is a clear distinction between substance and hypostasis; (2) substance is the common and constituent element of being and (3) it exists concretely and not only in the mind; (4) hypostases are identified with the characteristic, also called hypostatic properties; as a consequence, (5) there is no distinction between 'name' and 'things'; (6) hypostases are distinct and incommunicable, but (7) each becomes substantial through participation in the substance, i.e. the common and constituent element of being, and (8) it consequently gains a substantial component; therefore, (9) it is not an abstract reality.¹⁷⁸

Nazianzus on the Trinity and the Knowledge of God. In Your Light We Shall See Light, Oxford Studies in Historical Theology (Oxford-New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); S. Hildebrand, *The Trinitarian Theology of Basil of Caesarea. A Synthesis of Greek Thought and Biblical Truth* (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2007); L. Turcescu, *Gregory of Nyssa and the Concept of Divine Persons*, American Academy of Religion, Academy Series (Oxford-New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

¹⁷⁸ This summary is based on Ebeid, "Metaphysics", 95; for more details on Damian's doctrine see A. van Roey, "Le traité contre les Trithéites (CPG 7245) de Damien d'Alexandrie", in *Philohistôr: Miscellanea in Honorem Caroli Laga Septuagenarii*, Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 60, eds. A. Schoors and P. van Deun (Leuven: Peeters, 1994), 229–250; D. Krausmüller, "Properties

Comparing the doctrine of Damian and that of the florilegium, it is clear that the former is a development of the latter. Moreover, considering that we are sure that at least one of the quotations in the florilegium, namely quotation 9 in the third chapter, was used in one of Damian's synodical letters,¹⁷⁹ this strengthens the hypothesis concerning the relationship between Damian and the milieu where the florilegium was composed. As for Damian, we also know that he was a Syrian Miaphysite from the region of Edessa. In fact, his brother was the prefect of the city.¹⁸⁰ Although he moved to Egypt at an early age, became a monk there, then a bishop and finally a patriarch, he continued to have contacts with the Syriac Miaphysite communities in his native area,¹⁸¹ and therefore it is very plausible that he belonged to, or at least had contacts with, the community of the florilegium. This is another element that supports what I have maintained above concerning the place where the florilegium was composed.

CONCLUSION

Revisiting the anti-Tritheist florilegium in MSS BL Add 14532 and 14538 and reading it in its doctrinal context has helped us, not just to date it and locate the place where it was composed, that is, during the second half of the sixth century among the Miaphysite community in Mesopotamia, probably in the region of Edessa, but also to add clarity to the profile of the compiler

Participating in Substance: The Trinitarian Theology of Severus of Antioch and Damian of Alexandria" (*Journal for Late Antique Religion and Culture* 12 [2018]), 15–29; Zachhuber, *The Rise*, 171–179.

¹⁷⁹ See footnote 15 in van Roey, "Les fragments", 139.

¹⁸⁰ See Th. Hainthaler, "Damian, head of the 'Monophysite' world", in *Christ in Christian Tradition*, vol. II/IV: *From the Council of Chalcedon (451) to Gregory the Great (590-604). The Churches of Alexandria with Nubia and Ethiopia after 451*, eds., A. Grillmeier and Th. Hainthaler (London: A. R. Mowbray, 1996), 75.

¹⁸¹ See Hainthaler, "Damian", 76–77.

and his community: an anti-Tritheistic Syrian group claiming to be followers of Theodosius of Alexandria, who regarded the divine substance as one concrete and singular substance, i.e. according to what Aristotle defines as *substantia prima*, and considering the hypostases as properties and persons. These details shed more light on the Tritheistic controversy among Syrian Miaphysites in its second phase, that is, after the death of Theodosius of Alexandria and before the controversy between Peter of Callinicum and Damian of Alexandria.

In fact, considering that the texts published by G. Furlani, which were probably composed in the same period and place as our florilegium, do not share the doctrine our florilegium professes, but one that can be seen the first steps in the teaching developed by Peter of Callinicum, the adversary of Damian, one might conclude that the controversy between these two Miaphysite theologians, which caused a schism between the two sees of the Miaphysite Church, Alexandria and Antioch, started as two different Syriac Miaphysite reactions against Tritheism, originating in Mesopotamia. Eventually the different approaches became two different currents, so some modern scholars are not totally wrong to maintain that Peter of Callinicum's *Against Damian* was written directly in Syriac, since, in my opinion, it was composed to oppose the Syriac-speaking Miaphysites, followers of Damian, that is, those of the milieu where our anti-Tritheistic florilegium was composed and transmitted. The fact, finally, that our florilegium is contained in two manuscripts that also copy the Trinitarian florilegium based on Peter of Callinicum's Trinitarian doctrine¹⁸² reflects the coexistence of these two reactions/currents against Tritheism among Miaphysites, which started before the controversy between Peter and Damian, and continued even after it ended

¹⁸² In MS BL Add. 14532, f. 94v–133v and in MS BL Add. 14538, f. 119v–133v. See also Ebeid, “Metaphysics”, see also <https://www.florilegiasyriaca.eu/flos/TRI> (accessed 14/07/2024).

with the victory of Peter's position in a synod that took place in 615 after the death of both patriarchs.¹⁸³

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¹⁸³ It can be maintained that these two approaches to Trinitarian doctrine continued to coexist among Miaphysites for centuries, since we find the west-Syrian Abū Rā'īṭah al-Takrītī (d. 835) sharing the doctrine of Peter of Callinicum (see B. Ebeid, "Patristic Tradition, Trinitarian Doctrine, and Metaphysics in Abū Rā'īṭah al-Takrītī's Polemics against the Melkites", in *Florilegia Syriaca. Mapping a Knowledge – Organizing Practice in the Syriac World*, *Vigiliae Christianae Supplements* 179, eds., E. Fiori and B. Ebeid (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2023), 228–306; B. Ebeid, "Abū Rā'īṭah al-Takrītī's Trinitarian Doctrine: Between Miaphysite Tradition and Islamic Challenge" (Adamantius 27 [2021]), 6–28) and the west-Syrian Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī (d. 974) sharing the doctrine of Damian of Alexandria (see B. Ebeid, "The Divine Substance as Aristotle's Substantia Prima: Yaḥyā b. 'Adī and his Trinitarian Doctrine", (Le Museon 136 [2023]), 509–548).

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