Working on the Minutes of Late Antique Church Councils
A Methodological Framework

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Abstract

The minutes of church councils from late antiquity provide us with an unparalleled amount of first-hand information about late antique history and language. However, they present issues of different kinds that need addressing. In this paper I wish to suggest a methodological framework to work with conciliar minutes. First of all, one has to consider the question of the reliability of the minutes, which in turn raises the questions of their thoroughness and genuineness. In order to assess these, one has to establish how and under what circumstances the minutes were produced and transmitted; this is not always easy, for details about minute-taking surface only occasionally. Comparison of different versions of the minutes can also help understand if editing took place and to what extent it has affected the reliability of the minutes as historical evidence. In the minutes we obviously find factual information of a kind that can also be found in the works of ancient historians. Conciliar minutes, however, go beyond that, for they provide us with evidence of dialogue and debate, thereby allowing us to look at dynamics of communication. In order to disentangle such dynamics, I suggest using techniques from the linguistic fields of discourse and conversation analysis that focus on contextual parameters and social interactions. In the second part of the paper, I apply the methodological framework proposed to analyse the minutes of the third session of the Council of Chalcedon.

1. Introduction

Numerous church councils were held in late antiquity to debate and decide on doctrine and ecclesiastical governance. Of some councils we possess minutes, which appear as verbatim transcripts of the proceedings; the statements of the attendees are recorded, and they are connected by a narrative framework, or protocol. Here follows a list of councils or other church gatherings from the fourth to the mid-sixth century of which we have minutes: the Council of Carthage in 345–348 (ed. Munier 1974: 2–10); Cologne in 346 (ed. Munier 1963: 27–29); Aquileia in 381 (ed. Banterle 1988); Carthage in 390 (ed. Munier 1974: 11–19); Hippo in 393 (ed. Munier 1974: 20–21); Constantinople in 394 (ed. Labbe 1728: 1375–1380); Carthage in 397 (ed. Munier 1974: 329–341); the so-called Conference of Carthage in 411 (latest ed. Weidmann 2018); the Council of Thelepte in 418 (ed. Munier 1974: 58–64); Carthage in 419 (ed. Munier 1974: 88–94); the council held in Carthage in 419 about the case of Apiarius of Sicca (ed. Munier 1974: 101–155); excerpts from the register of the church of Carthage containing parts of minutes of African councils from 393 to 419 (ed. Munier 1974: 182–247); the ecumenical First Council of Ephesus in 431 (ed. *ACO* I); the Councils of Antioch in 445 and 448 (preserved in the Acts of Chalcedon 451); the Resident Synod of Constantinople in 448 and 449 concerning the case of the monk Eutyches (preserved in Chalcedon 451); the Council of Berytus and Tyre in 448/449 (preserved in Chalcedon 451); the Second Council of Ephesus in 449

(preserved in Chalcedon 451); the ecumenical Council of Chalcedon in 451 (ed. *ACO* II); the Roman synods of 495 (ed. Guenther 1895: 474–487), 499 (ed. Mommsen 1894: 399–415), and 502 (ed. Mommsen 1894: 438–55); the Council of Carthage in 525 (ed. Munier 1974: 255–282); that of 536 (part. ed. Munier 1974: 283, complete ed. Mansi 1762: 841–842); the Resident Synod of Constantinople in 536 (ed. *ACO* III); the Council of Mopsuestia in 550 (preserved in Constantinople 553); the ecumenical Second Council of Constantinople in 553 (ed. *ACO* IV).

By providing us with the (allegedly) very words spoken by the council attendees along-side a narrative of their actions, the minutes allow us a privileged insight into late antique history; as a matter of fact, no other ancient sources provide us with so much detail about social interactions. However, the minutes pose a number of issues that we need to address in order to use them fruitfully. In this paper I wish to outline a methodological framework to work with minutes of church councils; this combines historiographical and philological methods with techniques belonging to the linguistic disciplines of discourse and conversation analysis; in conclusion, I shall provide an essay of what the application of such methods to actual minutes may look like.

2. Reliability of the Minutes

When reading conciliar minutes, the first question has to be that of their reliability, that is, how faithfully they report what actually happened during the councils; this in turn raises the question as to how the minutes were produced and transmitted. Unfortunately, as much as minuting is concerned, the only gathering we have copious information about is the so-called Conference of Carthage in 411. However, that was special in several respects, for it was not a council but an imperial adjudication between two parties (Catholics and Donatists); therefore, one cannot assume that minutes were produced in precisely the same way at other gatherings.[1] We also have some information about minuting at the Resident Synod of Constantinople in 448 and 449, at Second Ephesus in 449, and at Chalcedon in 451.[2] As a matter of fact, most of the times the details of minuting remained invisible; we learn about them when the process was especially important and delicate (as was the case at Carthage in 411) or when the veracity of the minutes was contested in the years to come and thus scrutinised (as for example in the case of the Resident Synod of 448 and of Second Ephesus in 449). It stands to reason that the basic procedure was common to different gatherings: secretaries (or notaries, Lat. *notarii*) working for the chairmanship would take notes during the sessions and later render them into formal minutes. The details might vary from one gathering to another depending on who organised it, where it took place, how large it was, and so on.

Conceptually, there are two main problems concerning the reliability of the minutes: whether they are thorough and whether they are genuine. While these problems are connected, the former chiefly concerns the skills and recording policies of the *notarii*; the latter, not only their skills but also their honesty as well as the honesty of those who directed the proceedings. As the production and publication of the minutes was normally organised by religious and/or political authorities, chances are that they might use the minutes to pursue their own propagandistic agenda; this will have to be borne in mind when considering these questions.

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[1] See especially Tengström (1962), Lancel (1972: 337–363), and Teitler (1985: 5–15).
[2] See Teitler (1985: 102–103) and Mari (forthcoming).

2.1 Thoroughness of the minutes

As for thoroughness, the minutes of some gatherings seem to be more thorough than others; even within the same gathering, the proceedings of some sessions have been recorded more thoroughly than those of others. It has been argued that judicial or quasi-judicial gatherings or sessions were recorded more fully, for controversies could later arise as to whether proper procedures had been followed and there was an interest for minutes to be as thorough as possible; on the other hand, discussions of faith tended to be recorded rather selectively, for much value was attached to the impression of ecclesiastical consensus and the recording of disagreement might have undermined it.[3] Sometimes it is stated quite explicitly in the protocol that some parts have not been recorded: that is the case, for example, at the important fifth session of the Council of Chalcedon, where it was decided not to include the draft definition of faith in the minutes (*ACO* II.1.2 p. 123.7-8: 'Asclepiades deacon of the great church of Constantinople read out the definition, which it was decided not to include in these minutes'). At other times it is stated that somebody spoke but his very words are not recorded: that is the case, for example, at the Roman Synod of 495 concerning the absolution of bishop Misenus, where his request is reported in the protocol in indirect speech (*Collectio Avellana* p. 476.18-20 Günther: 'After he had entered, having bowed to the floor, Misenus presented another petition and asked that it be received').

Working our way around omissions is obviously more complicated for us when we are not told that something has been omitted. At times we realise through close reading that some statements are missing, because other statements seem quite unjustified. That is the case, for example, of the first session of the Council of Chalcedon: as bishop Theodoret of Cyrrhus is granted participation in the council, many bishops explain why they have subscribed to his condemnation at Second Ephesus, although nothing seems to require it in what precedes it (*ACO* II.1.1 p. 69.16-23); Price and Gaddis (2005: I.134 n. 66) convincingly explain this oddity by arguing that an acclamation accusing them was not recorded before.

That omissions affected the reliability of synodal minutes was already clear to contemporaries. For example, at the hearings that took place in Constantinople in 449 and concerned the case of the monk Eutyches, who had been condemned at the Resident Synod of 448, the minutes of the Resident Synod were scrutinised and somebody noted that some statements were missing; to this remark the *notarius* Aetius responded that statements of an informal character were not normally recorded (*ACO* II.1.1 pp. 172.34–173.34). Surely, to tell whether one statement was formal or not was not always straightforward, and some attendees complained that the notaries had recorded some informal statements of theirs as if they were formal (*ACO* II.1.1 p. 171.25-27, 172.1-3).

In conclusion, when reading conciliar minutes we must always bear in mind that there might have been more to it than we can read today. To establish how much more is difficult; however, if a statement clearly lacks an antecedent, it is possible to reconstruct more or less what has been omitted in much the same way as critical editors postulate and fill in lacunae.

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[3] Chrysos (1990: 88); Price and Gaddis (2005: I.78).

2.2 Genuineness of the minutes

The question as to whether what has been recorded corresponds precisely to what has been said and done is obviously crucial for the use of the minutes as a historical source. We can look at this question from two different angles: one regards the form, the other regards the content of the minutes. By form I mean how faithfully the statements were recorded from a linguistic point of view. Here all sorts of factors come into play, such as: how practical the writing supports were; how quick and accurate the notaries were; what their attitude was towards formal and less formal language. It stands to reason that, on average, a number of less formal features of spontaneous spoken language did not make it into the records, because the goal of the notaries was readability rather than linguistic accuracy; phonological and morphological errors would have undermined the readability of the minutes and were certainly easy to standardise; interjections, pauses, repetitions, syntactic inconsistencies also undermine the readability of a text, but they occasionally made it into the minutes, perhaps because they are less automatically standardised. As far as the Council of Chalcedon is concerned, it has been observed that the language of spoken statements in the minutes is different from that of petitions and letters contained in the minutes in a way that matches the differences between spoken and written language as established by modern linguistic research (Mari forthcoming). This speaks against the hypothesis that the minutes of that council were heavily edited or even rewritten from a formal point of view; the syntax and lexicon as recorded in the minutes must reflect quite closely the syntax and lexicon as used by the attendees of the synods in their spoken statements. A linguistic analysis of the minutes, consisting of the linguistic comparison of spoken and written statements, can help us understand more or less how heavily the minutes have been edited: the closer the language of spoken statements is to that of written statements, the more likely it is that they have been heavily edited from a formal point of view.

The genuineness of the content is obviously a different, albeit related, question.[4] Already among contemporaries there were claims that not only omissions undermined the reliability of the minutes but also veritable falsifications, such as entire statements that were in the minutes but had never been actually pronounced according to those to whom they were ascribed (e.g. *ACO* II.1.1 p. 167.1-6, p. 172.11-12 at Constantinople 449). Admittedly, claims of falsification were much rarer than those of omission and they concerned very small textual sections (see e.g. Price 2009: 105 on Chalcedon). Not until modern times has the suspicion arisen that larger sections of minutes or even entire Acts were fabricated: that is the case of the Acts of the Lateran Council of 649 according to Riedinger (1982), who argued that they were composed prior to the council and read out by *notarii* during the council; this quite extreme position has been mitigated by Price (2014: 64–68), who has pinned down elements of spontaneity in the Acts. Leaving aside the cases in which contemporary testimonies point to falsifications, there is no safe way for us to tell whether specific parts of the minutes are original or have been falsified. One might think that linguistic criteria could help track down falsifications, as if a forger was likely to use a more standardised language than the original oral utterances. That might work in theory but in practice it is unlikely to be decisive: first of all, the language of the council attendees was hardly substandard and rarely even informal, for they all were educated men speaking at a formal occasion; secondly, as different attendees (and at times

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[4] On this question at several councils see Wessel (2001) and MacMullen (2006: 105–112).

even one and the same attendee) could use more or less formal registers when speaking, one cannot tell whether particularly formal statements were produced by forgers/editors or by the very speaker who chose to speak in a particularly formal way; as we have seen that most contemporary claims of falsification concerned small rather than large sections, falsification is more likely to have affected small sections, but linguistic comparison of small parts of text is hardly revealing because one cannot achieve statistical significance.

The comparison of different versions of the minutes, particularly versions in different languages, might on occasion yield more dependable results with regard to the genuineness of the minutes. Let us consider again the case of the Acts of the Council of Chalcedon. The original minutes were written mostly in Greek but they also contained the statements and the signatures of the Roman delegates in Latin (see Schwartz 1933). The Greek version that has come down to us does not preserve the Latin statements and signatures but their Greek translation. We also have three Latin translations of the Acts, which were produced in the sixth century (see Mari 2018: 130–133). The translators found some original Latin statements and signatures in their Greek manuscripts and used them in their translations. On occasion, the original Latin statements and the Greek translations present substantial differences that must have come about in the production of the Greek Acts and appear to be ideologically motivated: the Greek Acts, for example, tend to downplay the standing of Pope Leo within the universal church and the role of the Roman delegates at the council (see below an example from the third session). Furthermore, when the Roman delegates during the sixteenth session protest against some decisions of the council concerning the privileges of the see of Constantinople, the protests are milder in the Greek Acts in comparison with the Latin Acts; here scholars have argued that the Latin Acts preserve the original words (*ACO* II.3 p. 547.22–548.16), which are watered down in the Greek Acts (*ACO* II.1.1 p. 453.33–454.12). For more on this, see Price and Gaddis (2005: III.84 n. 30).

The translations can also help in case the original Acts have undergone editing after the translations have been produced. For example, the Acts of the Council of Chalcedon underwent editing around the seventh century and sections that were deemed redundant were excised; some such sections can still be read in the Latin translations, for they were produced before such changes were made in the originals (see Price and Gaddis 2005: I.82).

3. The Contribution of Discourse Analysis to the Work on Conciliar Minutes

It is bearing in mind the results of this reflection on the reliability of the minutes that one should embark on the investigation of the minutes as historical evidence. In the first place, the minutes provide us with information about historical facts of a kind we also find in other historical sources: for example, what was the bishop Dioscorus' punishment at Chalcedon, or what was contained in the definition of faith? Information of this kind will have to be handled in very much the same way as if it was found in the works of ancient historians or in ancient documents.[5]

What is peculiar about the minutes is that they can show us in detail, for example, quite how the decision to punish Dioscorus was taken or how the definition of faith was agreed upon, that is through dialogue and debate. The nature of the minutes makes it particularly fruitful for us to apply techniques from the linguistic discipline of discourse analysis to

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[5] As shown by Millar (2006), conciliar minutes are a rich source for information about administration, ecclesiastical law, politics etc.

them, as Amirav (2015) has shown; in fact, 'oral material, normally recorded or (less frequently) videotaped in natural contexts, mainly in conversational settings' is an obvious type of data for discourse analysis (Georgakopoulou and Goutsos 2004: 22). Discourse analysis is a complex of disciplines studying how 'sentences and utterances are put together to make texts and interactions and how those texts and interactions fit into our social world' (Jones 2012: 2); in other words, it can be defined as 'the study of language at use in the world, not just to say things, but to do things' (Paltridge 2011: ix). Some techniques developed in the realm of conversation analysis can also be applied, although one should bear in mind that, while the interactions recorded in the minutes are by and large formal, conversation analysis normally focuses on ordinary and informal conversation (see Paltridge 2012: 90–91).

Discourse analysis looks at speech events, that is social activities in which language plays an important role. The context of a speech event is a prime element of investigation, for it has an impact on the event itself. Among the many descriptions of contextual parameters that one can use to analyse a speech event, that of Hymes (1964) has enjoyed particular favour. He has identified eight parameters which are conveniently ordered so as to form the acrostic SPEAKING (here presented as in Georgakopolou and Goutsos 2004: 19–20): the setting or scene of the event; the participants and their roles; the ends or purposes of the participants; the act sequence, which includes the message form, medium and content; the key, that is the manner or mood of communication (which can be formal, informal, etc.); the instrumentalities, that is the channel of communication (verbal or non-verbal); the norms of interaction, that is the set of rules regulating appropriate behaviour during the speech event; the genre, that is the type of speech event.

One of the main issues of discourse and especially conversation analysis is how people manage their interactions in conversation. Hence scholars have focused on the mechanisms of turn-taking, that is how participants in a conversation alternate turns in speaking. Other objects of inquiry are: the openings and closings of conversations; adjacency pairs, that is 'utterances produced by two successive speakers in a way that the second utterance is identified as related to the first one as an expected follow-up' (Paltridge 2012: 97); feedback, that is 'the ways in which listeners show they are attending to what is being said' (Paltridge 2012: 101); repair, that is 'the way speakers correct things they or someone else has said, and check what they have understood in conversation' (Paltridge 2012: 101); discourse markers, that is 'items in spoken discourse which act as signposts of discourse coherence' (Paltridge 2012: 102). In investigating modern data, conversation analysis does rely on features of spoken language such as intonation, pitch, loudness, pauses etc., and it has developed sophisticated transcription conventions in order to account for these factors in writing (Paltridge 2012: 92–93). Ancient records are obviously much more limited in this respect, and many such details have been lost in the minutes; however, others have sometimes been preserved, as for example the loudness of one's statements: these too will be taken into account in our analysis.

4. A Sample Analysis: The Third Session of the Council of Chalcedon (451)

So let us see how this complex of techniques can be applied to minutes. Amirav (2015) has focused on the first, second, and sixth session of the Council of Chalcedon (451). I shall analyse the third session of this council, which was dedicated to a trial of bishop Dioscorus of Alexandria.

A few words on the historical background to the Council of Chalcedon are necessary. The emperor Theodosius II had put Dioscorus in charge of the Second Council of Ephesus in 449; at this council, Dioscorus promoted the 'miaphysite' doctrine of the monk Eutyches of Constantinople as opposed to the 'dyophysite' doctrine of Flavian of Constantinople, Eusebius of Dorylaeum, and other bishops who were deposed. After the death of Theodosius II, the emperor Marcian summoned the Council of Chalcedon as a reaction to the Second Council of Ephesus: the new council embraced 'dyophysitism' by approving the doctrinal writings of Leo of Rome, reinstating those who had been deposed at Second Ephesus, and deposing those who had condemned them, especially Dioscorus. The first session of the council took place on 8 October 451 and was chaired by officials of the imperial court; it examined the proceedings of the Second Council of Ephesus and in particular Dioscorus' actions. It was concluded with the chairman deposing Dioscorus and five bishops who had supported him; the council approved of this decision. By the time of the third session, it had become clear that the lay chairman's sentence needed ratification by a trial of bishops: that was the purpose of this session.

As I have said above, one should also consider how the minutes were produced. We know only little about minuting at the third session. Exceptionally, this session was presided over by Paschasinus bishop of Lilybaeum, Pope Leo's representative, and not by imperial officials, who were not present. The imperial secretaries who in other sessions read out the documents also seem to have been absent. The notaries who are recorded as acting during the third session are those working for the patriarchate of Constantinople; it stands to reason that patriarchal notaries were also tasked with the production of the minutes. One can observe some differences in the protocol of the minutes as compared with the other sessions: for example, the name of Paschasinus' interpreter is not stated; the names of the bishops are not accompanied here by honorifics such as 'most devout' etc.; it is also interesting to note that bishop Anatolius is presented not simply as 'bishop of Constantinople' but as 'bishop of Constantinople New Rome'. As it was up to the notaries to write the protocol, it may be that different notaries took care of the third session and used slightly different conventions. Furthermore, it has been pointed out that the minutes of the third session are quite sloppy when it comes to indicating that a bishop did not himself attend but was represented by another (Price and Gaddis 2005: II.35 n. 15). The subsequent history of the minutes must be in common with the other sessions (see Price and Gaddis 2005: I.75–85). Right after the council, copies of the formal version of the minutes were made for the parties. In 454 or 455, the official Acts of the council were published in Constantinople on the initiative of imperial and patriarchal authorities; the Acts included not only the minutes but also letters and other documents and were intended as a means of propaganda. In the sixth century, three Latin translations were produced. Later, probably in the seventh century, a revision of the Greek Acts was made that excided material deemed superfluous. The manuscripts on which Schwartz based his critical edition date from the eleventh and twelfth/thirteenth century.

5. Contextual Parameters of the Speech Event

In order to produce a sample analysis of the third session, let us start by addressing the contextual parameters listed in the SPEAKING grid that I have introduced above.

5.1 Setting

The setting or scene is stated clearly at the opening of the minutes: the council met on 13 October in the church of St Euphemia at Chalcedon.[6] The minutes do not provide further information about the setting, but we do find a detailed description of this church in the second book of Evagrius Scholasticus' *Ecclesiastical History*, which is dedicated precisely to the Council of Chalcedon. Amirav (2015: 38–41) takes a closer look at Evagrius' description and stresses how the setting can influence people's actions at a speech event. We do not know precisely how participants occupied the area inside the church, but Amirav (2015: 39) argues that the rotunda described by Evagrius as a part of the building might have played an important role in the meeting. The minutes of the first session, which also considered the case of Dioscorus, are more specific as to where the participants were seated: the imperial officials and senators were seated in the centre, in front of the rails of the sanctuary; on their left were seated the representatives of Leo alongside other bishops opposing Dioscorus; on their right were seated Dioscorus and his associates (*ACO* II.1.1 p. 64.36–65.14). This alone says a great deal about the hierarchies and dynamics of power during the first session (an analysis of this can be found in MacMullen 2006: 84–85 and Amirav 2015: 107–108). The imperial officials were not present at the third session, which leads us to the second parameter, that of participants.

5.2 Participants

As with the other sessions, we have the list of the participants for the third session. As Price and Gaddis (2005: II.35) point out, though, this is not entirely reliable: it gives 204 names of bishops, but in the minutes the statements are recorded of seven more bishops who are not in the list of participants; there are also listed some names of bishops who did not attend themselves but were represented by others. Names of notaries appear in the minutes as they spoke or read out documents but not in the list of participants.

It would be too long to name all of the participants and specify their roles at this session, but it is necessary to mention the most important ones. The three representatives of Pope Leo are given the first three positions in the list: they are Paschasinus bishop of Lilybaeum, Lucentius bishop of Asculum, and the Roman presbyter Boniface. As I have said above, Paschasinus acted as chairman of this session; this was exceptional, for all the other sessions were chaired by imperial officials. Other important participants were the other two patriarchs who were not under accusation: Anatolius of Constantinople and Maximus of Antioch, who appear in fourth and fifth place in the attendance list; their place in the list reflects their activity during the session, for they spoke less often than Paschasinus but more often than any other participants. Eusebius bishop of Dorylaeum also played a major role at this session; he had been deposed by Dioscorus of Alexandria at Second Ephesus in 449 and now brought charges against him. Crucially, Dioscorus of Alexandria was not present, so this was a trial *in absentia*. Furthermore, many bishops who had taken part in the previous two sessions did not participate in this one, for some 370 bishops attended the first session and only about 200 attended the third; this indicates that many did not support Dioscorus' condemnation but it also entails that the discussion at this session was one-sided. As for the relation between participants and setting, MacMullen (2006: 85) argues that at the first session bishops from the same provinces

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[6] General considerations about the setting of church councils can be found in MacMullen (2006: 78–81).

must have been seated together and formed groups; that might have been the case at the third session, too.

The list of participants does not include clerics of a lower rank; it was customary that they would follow their bishops and many must have attended this council, too.[7] During the sessions, they may well have joined in collective statements and chants, but if they ever spoke individually, their statements were usually not recorded. There are exceptions during the third session, for witnesses came from Alexandria to testify against Dioscorus (Theodore, Ischyrion, Athanasius, and Sophronius); their statements were solicited and consequently recorded. It is interesting to note that bishops were seated and would stand up to deliver statements (the minutes specify that only occasionally, so perhaps that was not the rule); other participants were standing (cf. *ACO* II.1.2 p. 22.33 ἑστώς 'standing', said of the witness Sophronius). MacMullen (2006: 81) raises the question as to how the combination of setting and participants affected the dynamics of assemblies, 'for it is not possible to picture any intelligent participation of a thousand persons in a discussion, that is, being able to hear what was said clearly enough to follow it and then to react ... nor could so large a mass of humanity be anything but intimidating to someone who might want to stand up and say something'. The minutes of the third session do not tell us anything to this effect, nor do we read of complaints that communication was made difficult by poor acoustics or by participants shouting; uproars were frequent at councils and the minutes sometimes record protests that noise made it difficult to hear or transcribe statements (e.g. *ACO* II.1.1 p. 158.20-21, 174.23–175.26). The third session seems to have been conducted in a rather orderly way, yet MacMullen's considerations should be borne in mind.

5.3 End

The end or purpose of the speech event was by and large to have Dioscorus of Alexandria condemned for his crimes. The third session is not so much a trial as a show-trial, and it must have been very clear to the participants that there was only one possible outcome, especially after the chairman belonging to the imperial administration pronounced the deposition of Dioscorus at the end of the first session. That is also why most of Dioscorus' supporters did not attend the third session.

5.4 Key

Before discussing the act sequence, which is best done while examining the minutes in their entirety, I shall say something about the other parameters. The key of the speech event is a formal one, for an ecumenical council was a formal event. This is shown for example by the regular use of titles and standard honorific epithets when referring to bishops, even adversaries: Dioscorus, for example, is consistently referred to with the formal and polite honorifics θεοφιλέστατος 'most God-beloved', εὐλαβέστατος 'most devout', ἁγιώτατος 'most holy', and ὁσιώτατος 'most sacred'; his title of bishop of Alexandria is also normally specified. There are but a few exceptions in the first part of the session: Paschasinus uses simply 'Bishop Dioscorus' at *ACO* II.1.2 p. 10.40; his enemy Eusebius of Dorylaeum calls him simply Dioscorus on p. 14.32-33, although he has called him 'most God-beloved' just three lines above; Pergamius of Antioch calls him only 'Bishop Dioscorus' on p. 20.12-13. Things change quite dramatically from § 79,

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[7] See MacMullen (2006: 79–81) on the activity of lower clergy at councils.

when Paschasinus pronounces Dioscorus guilty and asks the council what punishment he deserves: from now on, no honorifics will be used for Dioscorus anymore (*ACO* II.1.2 p. 27.19, 28.6, 28.13, 28.24, 29.19, 29.23, *ACO* II.3.2 p. 47.3, 47.12, etc.). The stop to this politeness strategy does not indicate of course a change in the key or tone of the event as a whole but only the changed status of Dioscorus: after his deposition, he was not worthy of the same respect anymore and so no polite honorifics were to be used when talking about him.[8]

5.5 Instrumentalities

As for the instrumentalities, the medium is spoken language, and the language is mostly Greek, but bishop Paschasinus spoke in Latin with an interpreter translating his statements into Greek; it is not stated here what language the other Roman delegates spoke but that must have been Latin too. There is no clue in the minutes that misunderstandings arose from the variety of languages used. Some written texts were also read out by secretaries: that is the case of Eusebius' and other people's plaints accusing Dioscorus and of the records of the three delegations to summon Dioscorus.

5.6 Norms of interaction

As a rule, it seems that one participant could speak only when another one was finished speaking. It does not seem that anyone could speak at any given time over the course of the whole session, for there appear to be specific patterns in the order of speaking that are based on role and hierarchy. For example, at the beginning of the session there speaks the chief notary Aetius, who introduces the subject matter; next speaks the chairman Paschasinus, then Dioscorus' accuser Eusebius; the next bishops speaking are the patriarchs Anatolius of Constantinople and Maximus of Antioch, who follow Paschasinus (as representative of Leo of Rome) in the hierarchy. All of these appear to self-select themselves as speakers; so do the other bishops, under normal circumstances. The delegations sent for Dioscorus, on the other hand, are introduced by the chief notary and are asked and granted permission to speak by a high-ranking bishop; the witnesses from Alexandria too can only speak when asked to do so by the bishops.

5.7 Genre

The genre of the speech event is obviously a trial at a council of bishops; we shall see in what follows how this influenced the proceedings.

6. Analysis of the session[9]

As it would be too long to carry out a detailed analysis of the whole session in the way that is normally done in discourse analysis, I shall concentrate here on the structure of the session and on points of special importance. The third session is opened by Aetius, archdeacon of Constantinople and chief notary (πριμικήριος νοταρίων). This is a quite

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[8] See MacMullen (2006: 81–82) on the use of titles at councils.
[9] In brackets I indicate the paragraphs as appear in Schwartz's edition and Price's translation (e.g. § 3). A paragraph normally corresponds to an individual statement; when a document is read out, that normally corresponds to one paragraph, even if the document contains the statements of more than one person.

unique feat at the Council of Chalcedon, for the other sessions were opened by either imperial officials or bishops. As I have pointed out above, it is also unique that the notaries operating at this session were not those of the imperial court but those of the church of Constantinople; this reflects the fact that the imperial officials did not participate in this session and the chairmanship was left to the chief of the Roman delegation, Paschasinus bishop of Lilybaeum. Here Aetius addresses the council by briefly summing up the proceedings of the first session and introducing a new object of discussion, Eusebius' new plaint against Dioscorus (§ 3).

After Aetius stops talking, there speaks in Latin Paschasinus, with an unnamed interpreter translating his words into Greek (§ 4). The language choice is important: one might argue that Paschasinus spoke in Latin at a Greek-speaking council because he did not know Greek, but that cannot be proved; it seems likely that he spoke Latin because this was the language of the Roman see, which he was representing, and that he would have spoken Latin even if he had perfect command of Greek. In other words, the language choice might very well be symbolic. Another question is that of the turn-taking: nothing in the minutes tells us if Paschasinus was designated to speak by someone else; it seems that he self-selected himself to start talking in his capacity as chairman of the council. This must have felt obvious to all participants, for no objections were raised. In partial violation of adjacency pairs, Paschasinus does not immediately address Aetius' announcement but rather starts by telling how Pope Leo put him in charge of the council (unless ἡμετέραν 'our' actually refers to the whole Roman delegation and is not a *pluralis maiestatis*); it is in this capacity, says Paschasinus, that whatever is brought forward should be examined by him (or them), and so he commands that the chief notary Aetius receive and read out Eusebius' plaint. It was customary that the order for the secretary to read a document should be given by the chairman.

At § 5, Aetius reads out Eusebius' plaint, which contains a long list of accusations against Dioscorus and begs the council to make him pay for his crimes. After the reading, it is Eusebius himself who takes the floor as if to follow up on his own plaint and requests that his adversary Dioscorus be summoned (§ 6). Aetius replies that already before the session two deacons had been sent for Dioscorus to summon him to the council; however, he refused to attend on the ground that his guards would not let him (§ 7). This was quite clearly an absurd excuse and one might expect that somebody would follow up and comment on it, but that did not happen. Paschasinus simply observed that Dioscorus was nowhere to be seen and asked some clerics to go and look for him just outside the assembly (§ 8). That was wishful thinking or rather a formality. It is not stated how long the search took; the next statement is by Aetius who announces that two presbyters have gone round the sanctuary to look for Dioscorus (§ 9); as is customary, he politely asks for the council's approval to admit the presbyters to testify.

This time it is Anatolius of Constantinople, the highest bishop in the ranking after the Roman delegates, to grant the request (§ 10). After the two presbyters obviously answer that they did not find Dioscorus (§ 11), Anatolius suggests sending another delegation to Dioscorus to summon him to the council (§ 12); one can observe once again how politeness is key in this context, for even the powerful Anatolius decides to accompany his suggestion with the formula 'if it please your holiness' (εἰ παρίσταται τῆι ὑμετέραι ἁγιωσύνηι). The next bishop in the ranking, Maximus of Antioch, takes the floor to back Anatolius' suggestion (§ 13: καλῶς ἔδοξε τῶι ... Ἀνατολίωι).

It is up to the council to decide whether to send another delegation and precisely who should be sent. The minutes present the whole council as speaking unanimously, but it

seems unlikely that this was actually the case, or at least that the council's response was immediate (§ 14). If the council really spoke unanimously, it must have taken them a while to prepare a common statement; if that happened, there is no trace of such process in the minutes. But it is not to be excluded that somebody spoke and the notaries ascribed his/their statement to the whole council (see MacMullen 2006: 86–87); after all, the notary Aetius himself revealed in 449 that often what was said by one bishop would be written down as if the whole council had said that (*ACO* II.1.1 p. 170.34-37).

Three bishops set off to Dioscorus' lodgings; they were accompanied by the notary Himerius so he could take notes of the meeting. It is not stated how long it took them, but the procedure as they returned was the same as before: Aetius announces that they are back (§ 15) and Anatolius asks them to report about Dioscorus' response (§ 16); one of the envoys, Constantine of Bostra, asks the notary to read out the notes that he took (§ 17); this is approved of by Paschasinus, who speaks again through an interpreter (§ 18).

Himerius' notes also qualify as minutes and follow the conventions of the minutes of the third session, not including honorifics in the protocol (§ 19); yet the protocol is not so basic as to omit, for example, that Constantine's opening statement was directed specifically at Dioscorus (e.g. *ACO* II.1.2 p. 11.1 'Constantine bishop of the metropolis of Bostra said to bishop Dioscorus'). The exchange appears to have been quite vivid, much more so than was the case at the council. The protocol does not specify what tone was used but one gets the impression that it was not a relaxed one. Both the delegates and Dioscorus repeatedly make their point without making any progress, whereby one can observe a clear pattern: each of the three bishops says his line to the effect that the council bids Dioscorus to present himself before it and Dioscorus dryly replies that he is prevented by the guards from going. One can notice Dioscorus' impatience as he replies for the third time (*ACO* II.1.2 p. 11.13-14): 'I said once that I too intend to go to the holy and ecumenical synod' etc.

Having taken note of Dioscorus' pretext to not go to the council, the delegates leave and meet an imperial official who is able to assure that Dioscorus is free to present himself (§ 20). When they go to Dioscorus again, he has a different pretext: he requests that the imperial officials and the senate be present at the council as was the case during the first session. As the bishops repeat their point, Dioscorus gets aggressive and even interrupts bishop Atticus (*ACO* II.1.2 p. 11.35-37): 'Atticus bishop of Zela said: "We have been sent to your holiness to urge" and Dioscorus the bishop interrupted him saying: "I answered already that..."'. This is a patent violation of turn-taking rules, which in this context require that somebody takes the floor after the other has finished speaking; at any rate, Atticus did not protest or raise objections because of this interruption (§ 22).

After the reading of the notes of the meeting with Dioscorus, the council discussed whether it would be appropriate to send a second summons to Dioscorus, as required by the canons (§§ 23–30). As was the case at § 14, it is recorded that the council spoke as a whole expressing approval of the decision to send another delegation. Interestingly, someone objected: Amphilochius of Side suggested that the matter be postponed for one or two days (§ 29); as Price and Gaddis (2005: II.47 n. 55) note, he was a miaphysite and would not have wanted to see Dioscorus condemned. A strong reply came from Menecrates of Ceraseis, and it was a rare moment of sarcasm at this session: he said hyperbolically that one man had devastated the whole world and rhetorically asked if they were going to devote three months to him (§ 30). The question went unanswered, or at least so say the minutes, for they just record the second summons which was prepared in writing for Dioscorus (§ 31). After the delegates returned, they were asked again to report

on the meeting (§§ 32–35). As appears from the notary's notes (§ 36), the script was the same as before: Dioscorus piled up pretexts, saying he was ill, and after the delegates observed that that was not his reason the previous time, he changed topic and requested again that the officials attend the council. The tone of the communication was still inquisitive on the part of the delegates and aggressively defensive on the part of Dioscorus; Dioscorus was especially abrupt as he concluded that he did not wish to discuss any further (*ACO* II.1.2 p. 14.25-26): ἅπαξ εἶπον ἃ εἶπον, καὶ περαιτέρω τούτων εἰπεῖν οὐκ ἔχω συντόμως 'I said once what I said and, in brief, I have nothing more to say'.

After the reading of the report there was a *coup de théâtre* at the session: Aetius announced that clerics and laymen from Alexandria arrived to present plaints against Dioscorus (§ 38). Quite obviously, this was a carefully planned move on the part of the organisers: according to Price and Gaddis (2005: II.31), 'the purpose of this evidence was manifestly to discredit Dioscorus in the eyes of the pro-Cyrillian majority at the council'. Following the same procedure as that seen at § 5 for Eusebius' plaint, the plaints of Theodore, Ischyrion, Athanasius, and Sophronius of Alexandria are read out and commented upon (§§ 40–64). This section presents some structural oddities. For example, at § 43 the protocol says that Aetius read out Theodore's plaint; § 44 starts by saying 'after the reading', but it is only at § 47 that the plaint is transcribed, and after the transcription we find Theodore's statement introduced with 'after the plaint had been read' (§ 48). The same happens with Athanasius' plaint: the minutes say it was read out at § 51a but it is not until § 57 that it is transcribed. All four plaints are carefully prepared, highly rhetorical texts; as Price (2009: 77) points out, these are so similar that they must have been drafted by the same government secretary, 'who, it is clear, thoroughly enjoyed his work'. With a certain dose of exaggeration, they accuse Dioscorus of serious crimes against the petitioners themselves and the people of Alexandria at large. In so doing, they present Dioscorus in the worst possible light before the council of bishops who are supposed to judge his case.

Having taken note of the charges contained in the plaints, the bishops decide that a third summons is in order, as required by ecclesiastical discipline (§§ 65–69); failure to appear before the trial after the third summons would amount to condemnation. Florentius of Sardis puts it in vague terms when he says that 'if even after this he should refuse (to appear), the canon may take its course' (*ACO* II.1.2 p. 24.33-34, § 66); however, this must have been very clear to the bishops. The decision of the whole council to send another delegation to Dioscorus is expressed in quite diplomatic, even patronising, terms: the delegates should 'brotherly advise' Dioscorus (ἀδελφικῶς παραινοῦντες at *ACO* II.1.2 p. 25.5, § 69). The written summons is quite straightforward: Dioscorus' reasons for not presenting himself before the council are discarded as untruthful and he is told that failure to go to the council after the third summons will cost him the penalty laid down by the canons (§ 70).

As recorded in the previous two cases, the delegates go to Dioscorus and return without him, asking for permission to read the report of their mission (§§ 71–77). Dioscorus' response to the third summons was even less diplomatic and more stubborn than before (§ 78). To each of the bishops' quite formal requests to present himself before the council he answered very briefly reiterating that he had nothing to add to his previous statements: e.g. 'I answered your religiousness sufficiently, to which I cannot add anything; for I am satisfied with that' (*ACO* II.1.2 p. 26.24-25); 'what I said, I said, to which I cannot add anything' (p. 26.30), etc.; the meeting is closed by Dioscorus' repeating 'what I said, I said, and I am satisfied with it' (p. 27.16).

At this point, the mask is off. The chairman Paschasinus takes the floor again. There follows a dense and collaborative exchange between him and the council, which is presented again as speaking unanimously; as observed above, chances are that individual statements were attributed to the whole council, yet here the council's utterances are so short and predictable that they were probably manageable as collective statements. At first, Paschasinus wraps up the state of the issue and asks the council a question that already has an answer: 'what does one deserve who has so contemned (a threefold summons)? Let your holiness make it clear by your own mouth' (p. 27.21-22, § 79). The verdict is the expected one: 'the censure prescribed by the canons against the non-compliant' (p. 27.23, § 80); then Stephen of Ephesus speaks up to elaborate on that (§ 81). Paschasinus asks the same question again in very similar terms and gets the same answer from the council (§§ 82–83). It must have been part of the procedure that an important question should be asked twice so as to avoid misunderstandings, for that is also the case at §§ 85–89: Paschasinus first asks the council 'Does your religiousness command us to impose the ecclesiastical penalties against him? Do you agree?' (§ 85) and the council replies 'we all agree to the decision' (§ 86); immediately Paschasinus asks the same question again, replacing 'do you agree?' with 'as I said?' (§ 87), and the council replies 'Yes, we agree' (§ 88).

There follow three longer statements by bishops Quintus of Phocaea, Proterius of Myrina, and Julian of Hypaepa commenting on how strictly the canonical procedure was followed in this case as opposed to what Dioscorus did at Second Ephesus in 449 when he had Flavian of Constantinople deposed (§§ 89–91). This series of statements are meant to validate the operations of the synod and to pave the way for the final verdicts, for Julian concludes his statement by asking Paschasinus and the other Roman delegates to deliver their sentence against Dioscorus (*ACO* II.1.2 p. 28.13-17): 'we therefore ask your holiness who acts, or rather those who act in place of the most holy archbishop Leo to deliver sentence against him (Dioscorus) and decide against him the penalties that are contained in the canons. For we all and the whole ecumenical council agree with your holiness' (here one can observe an instance of what in discourse analysis is called 'self-repair', as Julian corrects his reference to Leo's representatives in real time). In an exception to adjacency pairs, Paschasinus does not immediately deliver a sentence but prefers to double-check with the council first: 'I say again: what is the opinion of your beatitude?' (§ 92). This time it is Maximus of Antioch who takes the floor to speak in the name of the whole council and confirm that Paschasinus has the greatest authority: 'What seems fit to your holiness we also agree upon' (§ 93).

Now there comes the time for verdicts. As anticipated by Maximus of Antioch, first comes that of the Roman delegates, who speak together. This is the most powerful 'speech act' of this session: by pronouncing their verdict, the delegates carry out Dioscorus' deposition, the act for which the whole session took place. Of their fairly long and elaborate speech, which was certainly prepared beforehand, we have the original Latin text, which is preserved in Pope Leo's letter 103 (*ACO* II.4 pp. 155–156, *ep.* 112), the Greek translation (*ACO* II.1.2 pp. 28–29), and the sixth-century Latin retroversions (*ACO* II.3.2 pp. 45–46); the Greek translation is faithful but not slavish, and it includes substantial differences regarding the primacy of the Roman see within the universal church: Leo is presented as 'the head of the universal church' in the Latin original but is downgraded to 'archbishop of great and senior Rome' in the Greek version (see Mari 2018: 141–144). However, the section concerning Dioscorus' condemnation does not present differences other than formal. In one case one has to resort to the Greek text to

fill a lacuna in the manuscript tradition of the Latin original (*ACO* II.4 p. 156.16). The verdict focuses on Dioscorus' crimes that have been mentioned during the debate; a new charge is also introduced, which was possibly unusual at this point in the proceedings (see Price and Gaddis 2005: II.70 n. 99). The delegates also stress the difference between the situation of Dioscorus and that of other bishops who had associated themselves to him but later repented, while he did not even present himself before the council after the formal three summonses. It is important to note that the decision is presented as if Leo himself took it: 'the holy and most blessed pope Leo, head of the universal church, through us his representatives ... has stripped him of the episcopal dignity and deprived him of all priestly functions' (*ACO* II.4 p. 156.21-25). Once the condemnation has been pronounced by the Roman delegates, the rest of the council can only follow in their wake: therefore, the delegates leave the floor to the bishops with the precise instruction to pronounce a verdict against Dioscorus (*ACO* II.4 p. 156.25-26: 'it remains for the venerable council here congregated to pronounce a canonical verdict against the aforementioned Dioscorus, as justice bids').

It is not stated whether the delegates' speech was translated into Greek in real time, but that must have been the case because there does not seem to have occurred any misunderstanding in what follows. The minutes record 189 statements of bishops condemning Dioscorus as requested by the Roman delegates: to ratify such an important decision it was not sufficient for the council to express itself as a whole, but every single bishop should speak up. The order in which the bishops gave their sentences is very much the same as that of the list of attendees at the beginning of the minutes: the patriarchs Anatolius of Constantinople and Maximus of Antioch spoke first and the others followed. The Greek Acts omit the verdicts of all bishops after Anatolius but only preserve their names and provenance; the Latin sixth-century translations preserve the verdicts, which reveals that in the Greek Acts the verdicts were excised later. In the Latin text we observe that each bishop pronounced a different and personal verdict; all of them made it clear that they consented with either the verdict of the Roman delegates or the decision of the council as a whole, so as to show unanimous agreement. As Price and Gaddis (2005: II.35) put, 'the bishops had no option but to follow the lead of their chairman. Those who were unwilling to condemn Dioscorus simply absented themselves from the session'. Almost all bishops mentioned Dioscorus in their verdicts;[10] at this point, however, they omitted his title and honorific, referring to him either as 'formerly bishop' or simply as Dioscorus, for he was to be considered deposed right after the condemnation pronounced by the Roman delegates (see Price and Gaddis 2005: II.34).

The minutes tell us that after passing judgement, the bishops signed the condemnation of Dioscorus. According to Price and Gaddis (2005: II.36), the signatures were gathered after the session, for more bishops signed than were present at the session itself. The list of signatories in the Greek and in the Latin Acts differ and the Latin list appears to be more reliable. All considered, some 265 bishops subscribed to the condemnation, which is significantly less than the number of around 370 bishops who took part in the council: surely there was a significant degree of resistance against it, despite the efforts of the authorities.

It is not stated precisely how the session ended. Attached to the minutes the Acts preserve some documents concerning the session (a letter to Marcian, a notification of

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[10] The only exceptions are the presbyter Eulogius, representing Genethlius of Creteia (§ 119) and Eustathius bishop of the Saracens (§ 144), who simply agree with the decision of the others. The verdict of Caiumas of Marcopolis (§ 182) is missing.

deposition for Dioscorus, a letter to the clergy of Alexandria, etc.); these must have been redacted at some point after the session but we do not know the details.

7. Conclusions

Applying the methodology that I have outlined in the first part of this paper, I have first tackled the question of the thoroughness and genuineness of the minutes that were taken at the third session of the Council of Chalcedon. In order to do that, I have looked at the historical background of this session and tried to reconstruct how the minutes were produced and transmitted. Whenever different versions of the minutes are available, I have compared them and tried to establish which of them are closer to the original. I have then applied to the minutes some techniques taken from discourse and conversation analysis. First of all, I have identified some contextual parameters of the event: the setting; the participants; their purposes; the form, medium and content of the message; the manner and channel of communication; the norms of interaction; the type of speech event. This has paved the way for a more fine-grained analysis of the session, which has aimed at reconstructing not simply what happened, but also how that happened; discourse analysis provides an advantage in that it throws light upon the dynamics of communication at the session.

The minutes of the third session of the Council of Chalcedon seem to be quite thorough, as is often the case with judicial sessions; although not everything was recorded (for example, we do not know exactly how the session was closed after the verdicts), we do not have evidence that much of substance was omitted. For lack of external evidence, it is difficult to assess the genuineness of the minutes; however, as we have observed that falsification did not normally affect larger sections of the minutes, it seems unlikely that much of what we read never happened or happened in a very different way. However, by observing the original Latin of the Roman delegates' verdict as opposed to the Greek version, we have noticed that the editors of the Greek Acts did intervene on the text to downplay the role of Pope Leo within the universal church; that was done as a result of the friction between Rome and Constantinople over the privileges of the see of Constantinople.[11]

If the minutes are reliable, as it seems, the session was conducted in an orderly manner, especially if one is reminded of the unruly behaviour of bishops at other sessions such as the first (see Whitby 2009). There is no evidence that anyone ever shouted. Turn-taking rules besides a generic observance of hierarchy are not entirely clear, but nobody seems to have disrupted turn-taking nor spoken before another attendee was finished speaking; the only interruption recorded happened at the meeting between the bishops' delegation and Dioscorus of Alexandria, where the tone of the confrontation was rather tense. The 'flow' of the debate is smooth and coherent. That is also due to the fact that Dioscorus' supporters mostly absented themselves from the session: only Amphilochius dared speak up in partial defence of Dioscorus as he timidly asked for a postponement of the matter, but he was silenced right away. With that exception only, the third session unfolded as a collaborative effort to reach a result that was practically already agreed upon: after Dioscorus' deposition at the end of the first session, it was clear to all that he was to be condemned.

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[11] See Wessel (2008: 285–321).

Acknowledgements

Abbreviations

ACO = *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum*, 4 volumes in 27 parts: *ACO* I–III edited by Eduard Schwartz. 1914–1940. Berlin and Leipzig: de Gruyer; *ACO* IV edited by Johannes Straub. 1971. Berlin: de Gruyter.

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