

Article

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Greek, Latin, and more: Multilingualism at the ecumenical Council of Chalcedon

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Abstract: The Council of Chalcedon was a multilingual event, but its multilingual situation was unbalanced. Most attendees spoke Greek, which was *de facto* the official language of the council. The Roman delegates spoke in Latin, presumably for symbolic reasons, and their statements were translated simultaneously into Greek. The difference of language was no apparent obstacle to communication; this can be seen best in the third session, which was efficiently chaired by the chief of the Roman delegation. Although the translations recorded in the Acts are generally reliable, there are some differences between the Latin and Greek versions reflecting political differences between the Sees of Rome and Constantinople. Languages other than Greek and Latin were spoken, as for example Syriac, but their role was marginal. The original minutes of the Council of Chalcedon reflected the “unbalanced” multilingualism of the assembly; they were mostly in Greek but preserved some parts in Latin. With time, and with Latin fading in the East, they lost the parts in Latin and became unilingual; at the same time, the Greek Acts were translated into Latin for a Latin-speaking western audience.

Keywords: multilingualism, bilingualism, Latin in the East, translations, church councils

1 Introduction

Late Antiquity was a particularly rich time for doctrinal debate within the church. Questions on the nature of Christ divided believers and doctrinal disagreement was taken very seriously. Several church councils were summoned in the fourth and fifth century to establish orthodoxy and crush heresy. In a time when Christianity

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had spread to the whole of the Roman Empire and beyond, the doctrinal debate became a universal concern, although it was always livelier in some areas than others. Some of the councils of this time were called ecumenical, for they theoretically involved the whole christianised world. This means, from a linguistic perspective, that they were potentially multilingual events.¹

In this paper, I am going to focus on the very important Council of Chalcedon, which took place in 451. I shall investigate the multilingual context of this council, look at how the different languages interacted and at the way the linguistic differences reflected and/or influenced the power dynamics at the council and in its aftermath, especially as far as the relations between the western and eastern parts of the Roman Empire are concerned. Our main source consists of the Acts of the Council, which include the allegedly verbatim records of the proceedings – i.e. the actual words spoken by the attendees of the council accompanied by a sort of narrative framework, the protocol.² Although we must reckon that some degree of editing will have obscured features of spoken language, when it comes to examining multilingualism these records give us some kind of advantage compared to purely written texts, because they are transcripts of spoken language and because the “narrative” framework contains metalinguistic comments.³

Let us start by considering the historical circumstances under which the Council of Chalcedon took place. The Second Council of Ephesus in 449, chaired by bishop Dioscorus of Alexandria under the auspices of Theodosius II, made many people upset. Pope Leo was especially unsatisfied; he accused Dioscorus of misdemeanours and famously called the council a “robbery” (*latrocinium*).⁴ He discussed with Theodosius II the opportunity to summon a new ecumenical council; Leo asked for the council to take place in Italy, so that he would be able to attend and oversee the proceedings.⁵ All the previous ecumenical councils had taken place in the East (Nicaea in 325, Constantinople in 381, and Ephesus in 431), and no

1 A good introduction to the topic of multilingualism in the Greek and Roman world is Mullen (2012).

2 The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon are published in Schwartz (1933–1937). I cite the text of the Acts (*ACO*) according to the volume, page, and line number of Schwartz’s edition, followed by the session and paragraph number (e.g. *ACO* 2.1 p. 55.2, I.1); when the number of the session is different in the Greek and Latin version, I indicate them both (first Greek, then Latin: e.g. II/III). An English translation is in Price and Gaddis (2005). In this paper, all translations are my own.

3 The potential of the Acts as evidence for spoken language in Antiquity has been discussed by de Ste. Croix (1984) and Millar (2006: 249–250).

4 Letter 95 to Pulcheria, 20 July 451 (*ACO* 2.4 p. 51.4, *ep.* 51).

5 Letter 54 to Theodosius II, 24 December 449 (*ACO* 2.4 p. 11, *ep.* 9).

bishop of Rome had ever attended; moreover, the western delegations had always been very small, because the trip was long and expensive and western bishops were less involved in doctrinal issues than eastern bishops; the western delegation at Second Ephesus was also very small. This time Leo wanted everything to go according to his plans, and for this he needed many western bishops to attend. But after Theodosius' sudden death, Marcian came to the throne in the East. He agreed that a council should be held, but he insisted for it to take place in his jurisdiction; moreover, he wanted the council to produce a new definition of faith. Neither of those plans appealed to Leo: another council in the East would have been again unbalanced towards members of the eastern churches; furthermore, he did not want to stir doctrinal matters up. Leo concluded that, under those circumstances, it was best if the council did not take place altogether. He sent to Constantinople a delegation including bishop Lucentius of Asculum and the Roman presbyter Basil; these delegates should co-operate with bishop Anatolius of Constantinople to settle certain issues so that a council would not be necessary.⁶ On 23 May 451, however, Marcian sent letters to the bishops inviting them to a new council to take place in Nicaea, although he later opted for Chalcedon.⁷ Leo tried to persuade Marcian to put the council off on the ground that western bishops could not leave their provinces to attend because of the barbarian invasions.⁸ However, that did not produce the expected result. Pope Leo was disappointed but had to play along and wrote to Marcian giving him the names of his representatives at the council:⁹ the chief of the delegation would be bishop Paschasinus of Lilybaeum, in Sicily; the Roman presbyter Boniface would go with him; they would be joined by bishop Lucentius of Asculum and the presbyter Basil, who were already in Constantinople (Basil, however, is not recorded among the attendees); finally, all of these would be assisted by bishop Julian of Cos, Leo's trusted man in the East. In a letter to Anatolius of Constantinople, Leo complained that he would have preferred if more westerners could attend, so that the council would be really ecumenical, but there was not enough time for that.¹⁰

6 Letter 82 to Marcian, 23 April 451 (*ACO* 2.4 p. 41, *ep.* 39); in this letter Leo announces that he will send a delegation. The delegation was in Constantinople by 9 June, as shown by letters written on that day: letter 83 to Marcian (*ACO* 2.4 p. 42, *ep.* 41); letter 84 to Pulcheria (*ACO* 2.4 p. 43, *ep.* 42); letter 85 to Anatolius bishop of Constantinople (*ACO* 2.4 p. 44, *ep.* 43); letter 86 to Julian bishop of Cos (*ACO* 2.4 p. 42, *ep.* 40).

7 *ACO* 2.1 p. 27, *ep.* 13.

8 Letter 83 to Marcian, 9 June 451 (*ACO* 2.4 pp. 42–43, *ep.* 41).

9 Letters 89 of 24 June (*ACO* 2.4 p. 47, *ep.* 46) and 90 of 26 June (*ACO* 2.4 p. 48, *ep.* 47).

10 Letter 91 of 26 June (*ACO* 2.4 p. 49, *ep.* 48).

2 Who spoke what language at Chalcedon?

The council assembled for the first time on 8 October in the church of St Euphemia. The overwhelming majority of the attendees of the Council of Chalcedon came from the eastern part of the Roman Empire, as was the case with previous ecumenical councils. It is difficult to calculate with precision the number of attendees, for there are different attendance lists for different sessions and they do not seem to be very reliable; Price and Gaddis (2005: 3.193–3.196) estimate that around 370 between bishops and episcopal representatives may have actually attended.

Apart from the three papal delegates, the names of only four westerners made it into the attendance lists: the Africans Aurelius of Hadrumetum, Aurelius of Puppūt, and Restitianus (whose episcopal see is not stated), and Valerian of Bassianae (in Pannonia Secunda). It is believed that these were refugees from the barbarian invasions and were resident at Constantinople already before Chalcedon, for Valerian and Aurelius of Puppūt had attended the so-called Resident Synod of Constantinople in 448 and Aurelius of Hadrumetum had attended some hearings in Constantinople in 449 (but chances are that the two Aurelii were actually the same person, see Price and Gaddis 2005: 3.202 n. 24).

All of the other bishops came from the eastern provinces.¹¹ Moreover, the council was chaired by officials of the imperial administration of Constantinople (there were 19 of them at the first session, fewer at later sessions); exceptionally, the sixth session was presided over by the eastern imperial couple, Marcian and Pulcheria. It is important to point out that, although the Council was an ecclesiastical event, it was organised and chaired by the imperial administration. One also has to consider that the attendance lists do not mention all of those that did not act as delegates but certainly attended the council, as for example lower-ranking clergymen, including the bishops' secretaries.¹²

The first question that we have to ask ourselves with regard to multilingualism is who spoke what language at the council. The attendance alone should say a great deal about the linguistic situation: it is normally assumed that, in the fifth

11 These include the Arab bishops John and Eustathius, who did not represent cities but are styled as bishops “of the Saracens” or “of the nation of the Saracens”; on these two bishops at Chalcedon see Shahīd (1989: 217–222). Also, associated to the Egyptians there was one bishop whose episcopal see was outside the Empire, Sabinus of Adulis in Ethiopia (see Price and Gaddis 2005: 3.278).

12 At the first session, for example, the Egyptian bishops complained that the clerics were shouting and they should be driven out as “supernumeraries” (τοὺς περισσοῦς), for that was a council of bishops, not of clerics (ACO 2.1 p. 75.16–19, I.55; p. 78.5–7, I.74); Theodore of Claudiopolis complained that it was the secretaries of Dioscorus of Alexandria who were shouting, and Dioscorus replied that he had only two secretaries (ACO 2.1 p. 78.5–9, I.75–76). On the activity of lower clergymen at councils, see MacMullen (2006: 79–81).

century, the western part of the Roman Empire was by and large Latin-speaking and the eastern part was by and large Greek-speaking, meaning at the very least that most westerners had Latin as their first language and most easterners had Greek.¹³ Did that also determine the languages that were actually spoken at the council? The Acts contain some information about that.

3 Greek and Latin in the Acts of the Council of Chalcedon

The original Acts were written in Greek, at least for the most part. In a letter addressed in 453 to bishop Julian of Cos, Pope Leo candidly complained that he did not have a clear understanding of the content of the Acts “due to the difference of language”, and he asked Julian to provide him with a full Latin translation.¹⁴ This shows that in the version of the Acts that Leo received there were parts that were only in Greek. Now we know that Leo received some documents from his delegates upon their return to Rome and the rest from Anatolius of Constantinople by the end of 451.¹⁵ That was the first version of the Acts, but the version that has come down to us has gone through a few more stages. In 454/455 there was published in Constantinople the official version of the Acts, including letters about the Council written by Leo, the emperors and their associates, etc. A revision of the Acts probably took place in the seventh century. This has produced what we may call the Greek Acts (ACO 2.1), as distinguished from the sixth-century Latin translations (ACO 2.3).¹⁶

13 See for example the Map 1.2 in Clackson (2015).

14 Leo’s letter 103, ACO 2.4 pp. 66.35–67.6 (*ep.* 61): *Gestorum synodaliū quae omnibus diebus concilii in Chalcedonensi ciuitate confecta sunt, parum clara propter linguae diuersitatem apud nos habetur instructio et ideo fraternitati tuae specialiter iniungo ut in unum codicem uniuersa facias congregari, in Latinum scilicet sermonem absolutissima interpretatione translata, ut in nulla parte actionum dubitare possimus neque ullo modo esse possit ambiguum quod ad plenam intellegentiam te fuerit studente perductum.* ‘Due to the difference of language, we do not have sufficiently clear information about the synodal proceedings which were drawn up on each day of the council that was held in the city of Chalcedon; and therefore I especially urge you, brother, to have them all collected into one volume, translated most accurately into Latin of course, so that we may have no doubts in any part of the sessions, and that what will have been brought to my full understanding through your work may in no way be ambiguous.’

15 See Anatolius’ letter to Leo of December 451 (ACO 2.1 p. 248.24–28, *ep.* 15).

16 On the edition and revision of the Greek Acts, see Price and Gaddis (2005: 1.78–1.83). On the Latin translations, see Price and Gaddis (2005: 1.83–1.85) and, more extensively, Mari (2018).

The Greek Acts, in the form that we possess them, indicate when somebody spoke in Latin, not when somebody spoke in Greek. Some of the utterances of the Roman delegates are explicitly marked as having been expressed in Latin and translated into Greek by the imperial secretaries Veronicianus and Constantine, who acted as interpreters; on the contrary, no linguistic remark is made on the myriad statements of the bishops who came from the Greek-speaking world. As exceptions are more likely to be signalled than rules, one can reasonably conclude that Latin was the exception and Greek was the rule.

Let us have a look at the first statement of Paschasinus, the chief of the Roman delegation, as recorded in the Greek Acts:

(ACO 2.1 p. 65.15–19, I.4–5)

*** τούτων τοίνυν Ἑλληνιστὶ ἐρμηνευθέντων διὰ Βερονικιανοῦ τοῦ καθωσιωμένου σηκρεταρίου τοῦ θείου κοινοστορίου Πασκασίνος ὁ εὐλαβέστατος ἐπίσκοπος καὶ φύλαξ τοῦ ἀποστολικοῦ θρόνου, ὡς ἔσθη ἐν μέσῳ μετὰ καὶ τῶν συνελθόντων αὐτῷ, ἔφη· Τοῦ μακαριωτάτου καὶ ἀποστολικοῦ ἐπισκόπου τῆς Ῥωμαίων πόλεως [...].

*** These words having been translated into Greek by Veronicianus, the hallowed secretary of the divine consistory, Paschasinus, the most devout bishop and guardian of the apostolic see, took his stand in the centre together with his companions and said: “From the most blessed and apostolic bishop of the city of Rome [...].”

It is evident that τούτων “these words” lacks an antecedent, whose loss has been signaled with the asterisks in Schwartz’s edition. The antecedent consisted of the statement of bishop Paschasinus in a form that had to be translated into Greek. What does this tell us? First, that Paschasinus spoke in Latin and the secretary Veronicianus translated his statement into Greek on the spot; second, that in the official version of the Acts the statements in Latin were recorded before their translation into Greek, and that they were excised at a later stage (perhaps in the seventh-century revision).¹⁷

4 Metalinguistic comments on the statements of the Roman delegates

Not all of Paschasinus’ statements in the Greek Acts are accompanied by comments on his language choice; for example, the next two statements that he made at the

¹⁷ For bilingual materials in the Acts (not only those of Chalcedon), see Schwartz (1933). The sixth-century Latin translators of the Acts had access to some original Latin materials, see Mari (2018: 144–155).

first session are not.¹⁸ The same happens with the other Italian bishop who represented the Roman see, Lucentius of Asculum: only one out of 11 statements that he made is introduced as having been uttered in Latin and translated into Greek.¹⁹ Only four statements are ascribed to the presbyter Boniface alone, none of which are said to have been expressed in Latin. Of the statements that are presented as having been made by all three Roman delegates together, three are marked as having been expressed in Latin.²⁰ Table 1 lists all of the statements of the Roman delegates, indicating which ones are accompanied by metalinguistic comments on their language choice and which ones are not (references are to session and paragraph in the Acts; when the numbering of the session is different in the Greek and Latin Acts, I indicate both; the session on Domnus is preserved only in the Latin version).

Should we take this at face value and conclude that the Roman delegates spoke in Latin when this is indicated in the Greek Acts and in Greek when this is not indicated? If that was so, Paschasinus would have repeatedly switched from Latin to Greek and vice-versa: he would have spoken in Latin at I.5, then in Greek at I.7, I.10 and I.72, then in Latin again at I.273 and I.336; he would have spoken in Latin at II/III.4, then in Greek at II/III.8, then in Latin again at II/III.18, then in Greek again for the rest of the session, and so on. This seems unlikely, especially if it is fair to recognise a pattern whereby the first statement tends to be commented upon in the protocol (e.g. I.5) and the following ones do not (e.g. I.7, 10). In this perspective, one can rather think that the editors of the Acts simply took the information for granted and avoided repeating the same comment at every instance.

Table 1: Statements of the Roman delegates.

Delegate	Comments on language choice	No comments
Paschasinus	I.4–5, I.273, I.336, II/III.4, II/III.18, IV.6–7, IV.38	I.7, I.10, I.72, II/III.8, II/III.44, II/III.46, II/III.51a, II/III.67, II/III.79, II/III.82, II/III.85, II/III.87, II/III.92, IV.9.2–4, IV.28, IV.61, X/IX.144, X/IX.161, Domnus 21, XIII/XII.4, XIII/XII.10, XVII/XVI.4
Lucentius	I.275	I.9, I.12, I.338, II/III.42, II/III.52, IV.53, XIII/XII.5, XVII/XVI.10, XVII/XVI.12, XVII/XVI.14
Boniface	–	II/III.49, IX/VIII.9, XVI/XV.3, XVII/XVI.14
Together	V.9, VIII/VII.6–7, XIX.48–49	II/III.94.1–3, IX/VIII.16, X/IX.6, X/IX.12, XII/XI.49, XVII/XVI.2

¹⁸ ACO 2.1 p. 65.25 (I.7), 65.33 (I.10).

¹⁹ ACO 2.1 p. 114.30 (I.275).

²⁰ ACO 2.1 p. 319.24 (V.9); p. 364.26 (VIII/VII.6–7); p. 467.30 (XIX.48–49).

There is also evidence that the extant Greek Acts do not record all cases of statements made in Latin: the sixth-century Latin translators of the Greek Acts found some of the original Latin statements in their Greek manuscripts and sometimes reported them in their translation (see Mari 2018: 144–155). A couple of these do not coincide with those cases in which the extant Greek Acts tell us that the statements were made in Latin (Paschasinus at IV.28, Lucentius at I.9); moreover, the original Latin statement of all three Roman delegates at II/III.94 is preserved in Leo's letter 103 (see Section 8).²¹ The Roman delegates could also sign in Latin; it is again the sixth-century translators that give us this information and preserve some of the Latin *subscriptions* (Paschasinus at ACO 2.3 p. 331.1–3, II/III.97.1; all three at ACO 2.3 pp. 415.28–416.6, VI.9.1–3).²²

In Section 1, I mentioned that Pope Leo asked Julian of Cos, his trusted man in the East, to act as his representative at Chalcedon in association with the Italian delegates. As a matter of fact, Julian of Cos did not enjoy quite the same status as the Italian delegates; in the lists of attendees and signatories, he is never associated with them, who are consistently listed in the first three places; yet he had a prestigious position, as his name was placed among those of the metropolitans, well above where he would have been if he had attended only as bishop of Cos. In the case of Julian, there are no comments revealing that his individual statements and signatures were in a language other than Greek. A couple of times, however, the records state that he spoke together with his Roman colleagues, so he might have spoken in Latin then.²³

As for the other westerners who took part in the council, their role was marginal and they never seem to have made public statements at Chalcedon. If one looks at previous gatherings, Valerian of Bassianae spoke in Latin at the Resident Synod of Constantinople in 448 (ACO 2.1 pp. 119.33–120.4, I.330); the language in which one Aurelius spoke at Constantinople in 449 is not specified in the records, so he might have spoken in Greek then (ACO 2.1 p. 170.3–4, I.753).

5 The Latin and Greek speeches of the emperor Marcian

There is evidence that also the emperor Marcian spoke in Latin on one occasion. As he presided over the sixth session, he addressed the council with a speech in Latin

²¹ ACO 2.4 pp. 155–156, *ep.* 112. On this text, its Greek translation and Latin retroversion, see Mari (2018: 140–144).

²² Latin signatures are also preserved in the Acts of the First Council of Ephesus in 431, see Millar (2006: 18).

²³ ACO 2.1 p. 369.6–17 (IX/VIII.16); 373.3–7 (X/IX.6).

followed by one in Greek (ACO 2.1 p. 335.19–21, VI.2): προσεφώνησεν τὰ ὑποτεταγμένα πρότερον Ῥωμαιστὶ καὶ μετὰ τὴν Ῥωμαικὴν προσφώνησιν Ἑλληνιστί, ‘(Marcian) delivered the following address in Latin first, and after the Latin one in Greek’. Here follow Marcian’s original Latin speech as found and transcribed by the sixth-century Latin translator Rusticus and the original Greek speech.²⁴ I present them side by side in columnar form so as to better allow comparison between “translation units”; dashes indicate that the corresponding unit in the other version is missing or is placed elsewhere.

(ACO 2.3 pp. 409.12–410.10, VI.3)

Vbi primum

*diuino iudicio ad imperium sumus electi,
inter tantas*

necessitates rei publicae

nulla nos magis causa

constrinxit

quam ut orthodoxa et uera fides Christiana,

quae sancta atque pura est,

–

–

indubitata omnium animis insideret.

constat enim

–

auaritia

uel studiis quorundam

per media tempora

nonnullis diuersa sentientibus

et pro uoluntate sua,

non prout ueritas atque doctrina patrum

postulat,

populos edocentibus

in errorem quam plurimos esse deductos.

qua de re sanctam synodum

hoc uidelicet proposito fieri studuimus

et uobis laborem indixisse uidemur,

–

–

quatenus omni errore atque caligine detersa,

(ACO 2.1 pp. 335.27–336.26, VI.4)

Ἐν προοιμίῳ τῆς ἡμετέρας βασιλείας,

θεῖαι ψήφῳ ἐπ’ αὐτὴν αἰρεθέντες,

πρὸ τῶν ἄλλων ἀπασῶν

καὶ ἀναγκαιοτάτων φροντίδων

οὐδὲν οὕτω καὶ βουλῆς καὶ σπουδῆς ἄξ

ἐνομίσαμεν

ὡς τὸ περὶ τὴν ὀρθόδοξον πίστιν

ἀγίαν καὶ ἀληθῆ τυγχάνουσαν

ὁμογνώμονας ἅπαντας εἶναι

καὶ μηδὲν περὶ αὐτὴν

ἀμφίβολον ταῖς τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐγκαθεσθῆναι
ψυχαῖς.

εὕρηται γὰρ

ὁ μέσος χρόνος τινῶν

τοῦτο μὲν χρημάτων ἐπιθυμίαις,

τοῦτο δὲ φαύλαις σπουδαῖς

–

φρονούντων διάφορα

–

καὶ παρὰ τὴν τῶν ἁγίων πατέρων πίστιν

τὰς διδασκαλίας τοῖς πλήθεσιν

ἐκτιθεμένων πλάνης γέμων ἐπιβλαβοῦς.

ταύτην ἰσάσασθαι βουλόμενοι

τὴν ἀγίαν ὑμῶν ἠθροίσασμεν σύνοδον,

τῶν τῆς ὁδοπορίας μόχθων

ἀποτέλεσμα μέγιστον ἔσσεσθαι πιστεύσαντες

τὴν τῆς ἀληθοῦς θρησκείας βεβαίωσιν,

ὥστε τὴν ἐπικειμένην ἀχλὺν ταῖς τῶν [ἀνθρώπων

24 On Rusticus’ work and on the other translations of the speech, see Mari (2018: 152–154).

(continued)

—
*prout se diuinitas hominibus
manifestare uoluit
et doctrina patrum ostendit, religio nostra,
quae pura atque sancta est, uniuersorum
mentibus
insinuata suae ueritatis luce fulgescat*
—
*nec in posterum
quisquam audeat
de natiuitate domini
et saluatoris nostri Iesu Christi
aliter disputare
quam apostolica praedicatio*

*et instituta trecentorum decem et octo
sanctorum
patrum eidem conuenientia
posteritati tradidisse noscuntur,
sicut etiam sancti Leonis
papae urbis Romae,
qui sedem apostolicam gubernat,
missa ad sanctae memoriae Flauianum*

Constantinopolitanae urbis episcopum

*scripta testantur.
remotis itaque studiis,
ablatis patrociniis,
cessante auaritia,
cunctis ueritas innotescat.
nos enim
ad fidem corroborandam,
non ad potentiam aliquam exercendam
exemplo religiosi principis Constantini
synodo interesse uoluimus
neque ut ulterius
populi prauis persuasionibus*

*separentur.
facile enim simplicitas quorundam hactenus
nonnullorum ingeniis atque superflua*

τῶν] πεπλανημένων ἐννοίαις ἀναιρεθῆναι
καὶ καθὼς αὐτὸ τὸ θεῖον τοῖς ἀνθρώποις οἰκείαι
βουλήσει ἑαυτὸ κατέστησε φανερόν
καὶ ὡς ἡ τῶν ἁγίων πατέρων διδασκαλία
τὴν καθαρωτάτην καὶ ἀληθινήν ταῖς ἀπάντων
ψυχαῖς
ἐκλάμπουσαν πίστιν ἐξέθετο,
οὕτως τὸ ἀνθρώπινον θρησκευεῖν γένος
καὶ τοῦ λοιποῦ πᾶσαν περαιοθῆναι
τοῖς τολμῶσιν αὐθάδεια
περὶ τῆς γεννήσεως τοῦ δεσπότου
καὶ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ
ἕτερόν τι φρονεῖν ἢ διαλογίζεσθαι
παρὰ τὰ κηρυχθέντα μὲν παρὰ τῶν ἁγίων
ἀποστόλων,
παραδοθέντα δὲ νῦν συμφώνως παρὰ τῶν τῆ
ἁγίων
πατέρων ἡμῶν τῶν ἐν Νικαίαι,
—
ὄν τρόπον καὶ ἡ τοῦ θεοφιλεστάτου Λέοντος
τοῦ τῆς βασιλίδος Ῥώμης ἀρχιεπισκόπου
τοῦ τὸν ἀποστολικὸν θρόνον κυβερνῶντος
ἐπιστολῇ διαπεμφθεῖσα πρὸς τὸν τῆς εὐλαβοῦς
μνήμης
Φλαβιανὸν ἐπίσκοπον τῆς νέας βασιλίδος
Ῥώμης
γεγονότα σημαίνει.
ἀναιρουμένης τοίνυν πάσης ἀτόπου σπουδῆς
ἐκβαλλομένης τε ἀπάσης προστασίας
καὶ τῆς ἀπληστίας χώραν ἔχουσης οὐδεμίαν,
ἡ ἀλήθεια ταῖς ὑμῶν ἐκθέσει φανερούσθω.
ἡμεῖς γὰρ
βεβαιότητα τοῖς πραττομένοις προσθήσοντες,
οὐ δυνάμεως ἐπίδειξιν ποιησόμενοι
παρεῖναι τῇ συνόδῳ ἐδοκιμάσαμεν ὑπόδειγμα
ποιησόμενοι τὸν τῆς θείας λήξεως Κωνσταντίνου
ὥστε τῆς ἀληθείας εὐρεθείσης μὴ περαιτέρω
τὰ πλήθη ὑποσυρόμενα φαύλαις τινῶν
διδασκαλίαις
διχονοεῖν.
πολλοὶ γὰρ ἀπλότητι διανοίας πτοηθέντες ὑπὸ
τινῶν

(continued)

<i>uerbositate</i>	περιττὰ καὶ σεσοφισμένα εἰσάγειν ἐπιχειρούντων
<i>decepta est et constat diuersorum prauis insinuationibus</i>	εἰκότως ἠπάτηνται. οὐκ ἔστι μὲν γὰρ ἀμφίβολον ὡς ἀτελέσι καὶ μοχθηρῶν διαφόρων ἐξηγήσεις
<i>dissensiones et haereses natas, studium autem nostrum est ut omnis populus per ueram et sanctam doctrinam unum sentiens in eandem religionem redeat et ueram fidem catholicam</i>	αἱ τε διχόνοια καὶ πολλὰ ἀνεφύησαν αἵρέσεις τῆι δὲ ἡμετέροι γαληνότητι σπουδαῖόν ἔστι τοὺς δῆμους ἅπαντας μίαν καὶ τὴν αὐτὴν περὶ τὸ θεῖον ἔχοντας γνώμην – τὴν ἀληθῆ καὶ καθολικὴν θρησκείαν τε καὶ πίστιν
<i>colat, quam secundum institutiones patrum exposueritis. concordantibus itaque animis religio uestra festinet quatenus sicut a Nicaena synodo usque ad proximum tempus erroribus amputatis uera fides</i>	σέβειν, ἦν αὐτοῖς κατὰ τὰ παραδοθέντα παρὰ τῶν ἁγίων πατέρων δόγματα ἐξηγήσεσθε. ἔργον τοίνυν γενέσθω τῆς ὑμετέρας εὐλαβείας ἵνα ὁμογνώμονι ψυχῆι καθάπερ ἐν τῆι Νικαέων ὀσιωτάτηι τῶν πατέρων συνόδοι φανερωθεῖσα ἡ πίστις πλάνης μὲν ἠλευθέρωσεν τοὺς ἀνθρώπους, εἰς φῶς δὲ προαχθεῖσα πᾶσιν ἐγνώσθη, παραπλησίως καὶ νῦν διὰ τῆς ὑμετέρας συνόδου πᾶν μὲν ἀμφίβολον ἐν τῶι ὀλίγωι τούτωι χρόνωι τεχθέν, καθὼς ἔφημεν, φαιλότητι τινῶν καὶ ἀπληστίαι περικοπῆι, εἰς αἰεὶ δὲ τὰ παρ' ὑμῶν δικαιούμενα φυλαχθεῖη.
<i>cunctis innotuit, ita et nunc per hanc sanctam synodum remotis caliginibus quae in his paucis annis, sicut superius dictum est, prauitate atque auaritia quorundam emersisse uidentur, perpetuo quae statuta fuerint, conseruentur erit autem diuinae maiestatis, id quod sancto animo fieri desideramus,</i>	εἰς φῶς δὲ προαχθεῖσα πᾶσιν ἐγνώσθη, παραπλησίως καὶ νῦν διὰ τῆς ὑμετέρας συνόδου πᾶν μὲν ἀμφίβολον ἐν τῶι ὀλίγωι τούτωι χρόνωι τεχθέν, καθὼς ἔφημεν, φαιλότητι τινῶν καὶ ἀπληστίαι περικοπῆι, εἰς αἰεὶ δὲ τὰ παρ' ὑμῶν δικαιούμενα φυλαχθεῖη.
<i>in aeternum – firmiter custodiri.</i>	ἔσται δὲ τῆς θείας προνοίας τοῦθ' ὅπερ εὐσεβεῖ γενέσθαι προθέσει σπουδάζομεν, εἰς τὸ διηκεκῆς ἐπὶ τῆι παρ' ὑμῶν ὠφελείαι φυλαχθῆναι βέβαιοι.
'When at first we were chosen by the divine judgement to reign, no matter kept us busier, among so great needs of the state, than that the orthodox and true Christian faith, which is holy and pure, should sink in without doubt	'At the beginning of our reign, having been chosen for it by divine judgement, before all other pressing matters, we thought nothing so worthy of deliberation and effort as that everyone should be of a common mind

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into everybody's soul. For it is well known that a very great number of people were led into error through the avarice or partisanship of certain persons – while in the meantime some had different views and taught the peoples according to their own will and not as the truth and the teaching of the fathers requires. Therefore, we have been eager for the holy council to take place, and we seem to have imposed a burden on you, surely with the intention that, once every error and obscurity has been dispelled, in accordance with the will of the Godhead to reveal itself to mankind and with the teaching of the fathers, our religion, which is pure and holy, should find room in the minds of all and shine forth with the light of its truth, and that in future no one should dare to argue on the subject of the birth of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in a way different to what the apostolic preaching and the concordant instructions of the 318 holy fathers are known to have transmitted to posterity, and also as witnessed by the letter sent to Flavian of holy memory, bishop of the city of Constantinople, by holy Leo pope of the city of Rome, who governs the apostolic see. Therefore, once the partisanship has been removed, the patronage has been suppressed, and the avarice has ceased, may the truth become known to all. For it is to confirm the faith and not to exercise some power, based on the example of the religious prince Constantine, that we have wanted to take part in the council, and so that the peoples should not be divided any further by perverse teaching. For up till now the simple-mindedness of some people has easily been deceived by the trickery and superfluous verbosity of some others, and it is well known that through the perverse insinuations of various people disagreements and heresies have arisen; but it is our concern that every people, being in agreement through true and holy teaching,

concerning the orthodox faith, which is holy and true, and that nothing ambiguous about it should find a place in the souls of men. For some people, on the one hand because of love of money and on the other because of evil partisanship, held divergent views and expounded to the masses teaching contrary to the faith of the holy fathers, the time in between has been found full of harmful error. Wishing to cure this, we have convoked your holy council, being confident that the greatest achievement of the labours of the journey will be the confirmation of true religion, so that the darkness which weighs on the minds of those in error will be dispersed, and in accordance with the Godhead's revelation of itself to mankind by its own will and with the exposition in the teaching of the holy fathers of the most pure and the authentic faith which illuminates the souls, so the human race may worship; and so that in future every stubbornness will be suppressed in those who dare to believe or argue on the subject of the generation of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in a way different to what was proclaimed by the holy apostles and has now been harmoniously transmitted by our 318 holy fathers at Nicaea, in the way indicated also by the letter sent to Flavian of devout memory, bishop of imperial New Rome, by the most God-beloved Leo archbishop of imperial Rome, who governs the apostolic see. Therefore, all vicious partisanship being removed, all patronage being suppressed, and greediness not finding a place, may the truth become manifest in your teaching. For it is to add stability to what is being transacted and not to make a display of power that we decided to take part in the council, making Constantine of divine condition our example, in order that, once the truth is discovered, the masses will not be seduced by the evil teaching of some and will not be divided any longer. For many, excited in their

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should return to the same religion and practise the true catholic faith which you have expounded according to the teaching of the fathers. Therefore with concordant minds may your piety speedily apply itself so that, just as until recently the true faith was known to all after errors had been excised by the Nicene council, so now too, once this holy council has dispelled the darkness that seems to have arisen through the perversity and avarice of certain persons in these few years, as we said above, what is decreed may be observed for all time. And it will be for the Divine Majesty to preserve firmly in perpetuity that which, with a holy mind, we desire to happen.’

simple-mindedness by some people who try to introduce superfluous and sophistical things, have obviously been deceived, for there is no doubt that disagreements and many heresies were produced by the purposeless and wicked teaching of various people; but it is the concern of our serenity that all the communities, having one and the same opinion about the divine, should observe the true and catholic religion and faith which you expounded to them according to the doctrines transmitted by the holy fathers. Therefore may the work of your devotedness be that with unanimous soul, just as at the most holy council of the fathers at Nicaea the faith, once manifested, freed men from error and, once brought to light, was recognized by all, so now equally through your council every ambiguity that has been generated in this short time, as we have said, by the wickedness and greediness of some be eradicated and your judgements be observed for ever. It will be for the divine providence to preserve firmly in perpetuity, for the sake of the benefit that comes from you, that which with pious intention we endeavour to produce.’

Neither speech is a literal or even close translation of the other (cf. the opening *Vbi primum diuino iudicio ad imperium sumus electi* as opposed to Ἐν προοιμίῳ τῆς ἡμετέρας βασιλείας, θείαι ψήφωι ἐπ’ αὐτὴν αἰρεθέντες).²⁵ Both speeches express the same ideas in the same order and in a different phrasing. The Latin is more synthetic than the Greek (309 vs. 429 words): several expressions in the Greek speech do not have a match in the Latin one, as for example ὁμογνώμονας ἅπαντας εἶναι (ACO 2.1 p. 335.30–31), ἀποτέλεσμα μέγιστον ἔσσεσθαι πιστεύσαντες τὴν τῆς ἀληθοῦς θρησκείας βεβαίωσιν (p. 335.35–36), οὕτως τὸ ἀνθρώπινον θρησκευεῖν

²⁵ Price and Gaddis (2005: 2.215 n. 17) refer to the Greek speech as “Greek translation” and describe it as “free and stylish.”

γένος (p. 336.1), ἐπὶ τῇ παρ' ὑμῶν ὠφελείᾳ (p. 336.26); conversely, some expressions in the Latin speech do not have a match in the Greek one, as for example *et pro uoluntate sua* (ACO 2.3 p. 409.16), *posteritati tradidisse noscuntur* (p. 409.24), *in eandem religionem redeat* (p. 410.3). One gets the impression of two texts that were developed in parallel from a common nucleus.

Marcian's bilingual choice must reflect the fact that, in the eastern part of the Roman Empire, Latin was the internal language of the imperial administration and Greek was the language of communication with the subjects (Millar 2006: 13); one can also imagine that the Latin address, and especially the fact that it was given before the Greek address, might have been “a token of politeness” towards the Roman delegates (Amirav 2015: 182). It may be out of homage to them that Leo is referred to with the honorific title *papa* ‘Pope’ in the Latin speech; in the Greek speech he is ἀρχιεπίσκοπος ‘archbishop’ (see Section 8 for a similar case with more profound implications). Other than this, it is difficult to tell if there were particular communicative strategies behind the different linguistic choices made in the two texts; one might argue that the greater length and elaboration of the Greek speech indicates Marcian's special attention to the expectations of the majority of bishops who were also his subjects, but that would be mere speculation.²⁶

5.1 Did the emperor Marcian and the imperial officials speak in Latin?

The Acts record six more statements of Marcian's addressing the assembly in real-time communication. The protocol does not provide information about the language in which they were uttered: if what I have said in Section 3 makes sense, this should mean that Marcian spoke in Greek in these cases; the same should also apply to all of the statements of the Constantinopolitan officials who chaired the council, because the Acts never state explicitly in which language they were uttered. However, there is one element that might possibly clash with this reconstruction. In the Greek Acts, some of the statements of the imperial officials and of the emperor are followed by the siglum 'P^ω, which must stand for Ῥωμαστί ‘in Latin’ (e.g. ACO 2.1 p. 337.7, VI.7): Ὁ θειότατος καὶ εὐσεβέστατος ἡμῶν βασιλεὺς εἶπεν· Ἀνάγνωθι. 'P^ω, ‘Our most divine and pious emperor said: “Read it.” Latin’.

Does this mean that they spoke in Latin when we find this mark? That would make sense, because Latin was still the official language of the imperial administration. Yet that does not seem to be the case. First of all, 'P^ω is also found at the

²⁶ A discourse analysis of Marcian's speeches is in Amirav (2015: 181–204).

end of Marcian's Greek speech (ACO 2.1 p. 336.26, VI.4) – it is certain that this speech was in Greek because it is so introduced in the protocol (ACO 2.1 p. 335.26–27, VI.4): Μαρκιανὸς [...] καὶ Ἑλληνιστὶ προσεφώνησεν οὕτως, 'Marcian [...] said also in Greek as follows'.

Also, most of the times the siglum Ῥω is associated with the formula ἀνέγνω ἀνέγνωμεν ἀνέγνω, 'I have read, we have read, he has read';²⁷ this must be "a formula of verification used by the scribes who edited the text, or even by the chairman himself [...], certifying that his instructions and decisions have been faithfully recorded" (Price and Gaddis 2005: 2.10 n. 16).²⁸ The siglum Ῥω is associated to ἀνέγνω ἀνέγνωμεν ἀνέγνω in 37 cases;²⁹ in one of these cases, the Latin version has the corresponding formula *legi legimus legit*.³⁰ On the other hand, Ῥω appears alone in 21 cases;³¹ quite interestingly, in three of these cases the Latin version has *legi legimus* or similar formulas:³² this indicates that the Greek version originally had ἀνέγνω ἀνέγνωμεν ἀνέγνω but that went lost at some point. In two cases the formula is only in the Latin version;³³ finally, ἀνέγνω ἀνέγνωμεν ἀνέγνω appears without Ῥω in four cases only.³⁴

Having considered the evidence, and especially the cases in which Ῥω in the Greek version corresponds to *legi legimus* or the like in the Latin version, the siglum

27 E.g. ACO 2.1 p. 275.33–35, III/II.13: Οἱ ἐνδοξότατοι ἄρχοντες καὶ ἡ ὑπερφυῆς σύγκλητος εἶπον· Ἀναγινωσκέσθωσαν καὶ τὰ ἐκτεθέντα παρὰ τῶν ἁγίων πατέρων. Ῥω ἀνέγνω ἀνέγνωμεν ἀνέγνω. "The most glorious officials and the exalted senate said: "Read out the exposition of the 150 holy fathers as well". Latin I have read, we have read, he has read."

28 For the formula ἀνέγνω in papyri, see Coles (1966: 52–53 n. 4).

29 ACO 2.1 p. 274.30 (III/II.6), 275.34 (III/II.13), 288.11 (IV.2), 289.19 (IV.5), 290.2 (IV.8), 305.24 (IV.12), 305.40 (IV.17), 306.25 (IV.24), 310.18 (IV.62), 310.29 (IV.63), 311.37 (IV.75), 312.35 (IV.79), 316.32 (IV.111), 317.5 (IV.116), 319.6 (V.2), 320.21 (V.15), 322.5 (V.29), 326.17–18 (V.36), 351.8 (VI.10), 375.28–29 (X/IX.13), 378.4 (XI/X.26), 391.7 (XI/X.137), 397.5 (XI/X.143), 398.22 (XI/X.160), 401.17 (XI/X.181), 407.8 (XII/XI.20), 408.29 (XII/XI.33), 410.19 (XII/XI.45), 412.10 (XII/XI.62), 413.8 (XIII/XII.8), 415.2 (XIII/XII.29), 421.37–38 (XIV/XIII.41), 440.27 (XV/XIV.148), 442.26–27 (XV/XIV.163), 454.14 (XVII/XVI.15), 458.23 (XVII/XVI.46), 469.9 (XIX.64).

30 ACO 2.3 p. 491.15 (XI/X.181) ~ ACO 2.1 p. 401.17 (XI/X.181).

31 ACO 2.1 p. 306.12 (IV.19), 306.17 (IV.20), 306.20 (IV.22), 310.9 (IV.60), 313.22 (IV.87), 314.21 (IV.92), 315.24 (IV.104), 316.15 (IV.107), 321.20 (V.26), 321.25 (V.28), 336.26 (VI.4), 337.7 (VI.7), 353.38 (VI.21), 354.5 (VI.23), 364.15 (VIII/VII.3), 366.6 (VIII/VII.7), 370.7 (IX/VIII.25), 373.2 (X/IX.5), 377.20 (XI/X.21), 463.7 (XIX.6), 467.29 (XIX.48).

32 ACO 2.3 p. 448.2 *Versio Antiqua* (VIII/VII): *legimus* ~ ACO 2.1 p. 364.15 (VIII/VII.3): Ῥω; ACO 2.3 p. 444.16 manuscript V: *legi legimus* = p. 449.26 *Versio Antiqua*: *legi legimus* ~ ACO 2.1 p. 366.6 (VIII/VII.17): Ῥω; ACO 2.3 p. 454.12 (IX/VIII.24): *relegi relegimus* ~ ACO 2.1 p. 370.7 (IX/VIII.25): Ῥω.

33 ACO 2.3 p. 259.17 (I.1075): *legi legimus*; 454.23 (VIII/VII.31): *legi legimus legit*.

34 ACO 2.1 p. 274.15 (III/II.2), 275.9 (III/II.10), 276.27 (III/II.17), 277.16 (III/II.21).

᾿Ρ^ω appears to indicate that the formula ἀνέγνω ἀνέγνωμεν ἀνέγνω was written in Latin in the original Acts and not that the statements marked with ᾿Ρ^ω were uttered in Latin at the council.³⁵ So I think it is fair to say that the officials of Constantinople and Marcian spoke in Greek during the debate; while Latin was the official language of the internal communication within the imperial administration, they would use Greek for communication with the Greek-speaking subjects, in this case the bishops. This reminds of the emperor Constantine’s language choice at Nicaea in 325: he delivered the opening oration in Latin, with an interpreter translating it into Greek for the audience, but he followed the subsequent debate in Greek (see Jones 1964: 3.331 n. 9; Rochette 1997: 151 n. 382).

6 Other languages spoken at the Council of Chalcedon: Syriac, Persian (?)

Not only Greek and Latin were used at the council. We have evidence that one controversial monk from Syria, Barsaumas, spoke in Syriac and his statement was translated, surely into Greek, by his own interpreter (*ACO* 2.1 p. 314.30–31, IV.95):³⁶ Βαρσουμᾶς ὁ εὐλαβέστατος μοναχὸς διὰ ἰδίου ἀνθρώπου ἑρμηνεύοντος αὐτὸν Συριστὶ λαλοῦντα εἶπεν Οὕτως πιστεύω [...]. ‘Barsaumas the most devout monk, speaking in Syriac, said through his own interpreter: “I believe so [...].”’ However, that is the only known instance of Barsaumas speaking at Chalcedon, so Syriac played only a marginal role at this council.³⁷

³⁵ Adams (2003: 565–566) cites a petition on papyrus (*P. Oxy.* IX.1201) in a mixture of Latin and Greek where the prefect grants the petition by writing *ex edicto: legi*. According to Adams, “It was standard practice for the Roman official to put his notation in Latin rather than in Greek or in both languages, even though the milieu was Greek and the participants Greek-speaking” (Adams 2003: 565). The same can be observed in *ChLA* 3.201. Even more to the point, *P. Oxy.* IX.1201 has a final section where the part in Latin is translated, including the endorsement of the prefect: *ex edicto: legi* becomes ἐκ τοῦ διάγματος ἀνέγνω; see Haensch (2009: 466 s.v. Latein als Sprache eines Dokuments/bestimmter Teile, and Haensch 2010: 179).

³⁶ There is evidence also from Second Ephesus in 449 that Barsaumas spoke through his own interpreter, then the monk Eusebius: *ACO* 2.1 p. 186.4 (I.884.112), 194.37 (I.1066).

³⁷ Syriac was spoken at Second Ephesus also by Uranius of Hemeria in Osrhoene, with the presbyter Eulogius of Edessa acting as his interpreter (*ACO* 2.1 p. 190.20, I.950; p. 193.21, I.1009); Uranius needed an interpreter into and from Syriac also at Berytus in 449 and the presbyter Maras acted as one (*ACO* 2.1 p. 379.24–29 + 2.3 p. 464.7–8, XI/X.33–35; 2.1 p. 382.13–28, XI/X.57–60); at Berytus, several attendees wrote their signatures in Syriac (*ACO* 2.1 p. 394.23–396.37, XI/X.141.1–65). Another one who spoke through an interpreter at Second Ephesus was bishop Colosirius of Arsinoites; his deacon Julius translated for him as he presumably spoke Coptic (*ACO* 2.1 p. 185.21, I. 884.90).

Secondly, the list of signatories of the third session (second in the Greek version) has one odd entry of a certain “Perses” who signed in Persian (*ACO* 2.1 p. 237.32, II/III.98.252): Πέρσης ὑπέγραψα Περσιστί. ‘I, Perses, signed in Persian.’ However, there does not seem to have been Persian representation at the council, and this signature is thought to be fake (Price and Gaddis 2005: 2.99 n. 147).

As for other people who might be expected to have spoken languages other than Greek and Latin, in Section 2 I have mentioned bishop Sabinus of Adulis in Ethiopia: the language spoken at that time in Adulis must have been Ge’ez, but Greek was also known; it is difficult to imagine that Sabinus did not speak Greek at Chalcedon, as he was associated to the Egyptians and signed a petition with them (*ACO* 2.1 p. 306.13–15, IV.20; p. 307.1, IV.25). As for the Arab bishops also mentioned in Section 2, the only statement attributed to one of them, Eustathius, is not characterised as having been made in a language other than Greek (*ACO* 2.1 p. 229.4, II/III.96.144 ~ *ACO* 2.3 p. 434.17–18, II/III.94.144).

7 Who knew what language(s) at the Council of Chalcedon?

So far, I have discussed which languages were used for official statements at the council and recorded in its proceedings. To sum up, the Roman delegates spoke in Latin and some imperial secretaries translated their statements into Greek; all the eastern bishops spoke in Greek; the imperial officials spoke in Greek; the emperor Marcian gave a speech in both Latin and Greek but used Greek to engage in real-time communication; a Syriac monk spoke in Syriac and his personal interpreter translated his statement into Greek. This portrays a multilingual context in which everybody, apart from the emperor, used only one language. But were individuals mostly unilingual or can we make a case for individual bilingualism? As for the members of the imperial administration, although they spoke in Greek, they must have been functionally bilingual, because at this time Latin was still the official language of the imperial administration of Constantinople.

7.1 Did the Roman delegates know Greek?

It would be significant for us to have an idea as to why Pope Leo chose precisely Paschasinus, Lucentius, and Boniface to represent him at a council in the East. It is well known that knowledge of Greek in the western part of the Roman Empire was

not common in the fifth century³⁸; as we have seen in Section 3, Leo did not know Greek well enough (if he knew it at all) to have an adequate understanding of the original Acts. As much as we would like to read that Leo's choice was connected to their knowledge of Greek, however, he does not mention the language as a reason for choosing them.

As for Paschasinus, the chief of the delegation, Leo says that he is a man worthy of his approval and that he comes from the safer province, probably implying that his episcopal see would be safe even in his absence.³⁹ We know little about Paschasinus.⁴⁰ He was bishop of Lilybaeum (present-day Marsala) in western Sicily. We possess a letter that he sent to Leo probably in 443 as a response to Leo's request of help in establishing the date of Easter for the year 444.⁴¹ In this letter, Paschasinus displays confidence with calendar issues and familiarity with the Alexandrine calculation; whether this means that he could handle Greek texts, however, is hard to say. Surely his Sicilian origin makes it likely that he was at least exposed to Greek: for still in the fifth century Sicily was vastly bilingual, although Latin was more common in the western part if inscriptions are anything to go by (see Korhonen 2012). All in all, there is no way to tell with certainty if Paschasinus knew Greek and, if so, how proficient he was.

As for the other Italian delegates, Lucentius of Asculum and the Roman presbyter Boniface, we know even less about them than about Paschasinus. As seen in Section 3, in 453 Pope Leo asked his representative in Constantinople, Julian of Cos, and not one of his Italian delegates, to translate the Acts into Latin for him: this shows that he trusted him more than them to that effect. Julian's being in Constantinople and having easier access to the sources may well have played a role in Leo's choice; however, Julian would always be Leo's first choice when it came to translations, as is shown by Leo's request for Julian to translate his letter to Flavian of Constantinople (the "Tome") into Greek for the benefit of the Alexandrians.⁴²

Upon first consideration, the fact that the Roman delegates spoke in Latin at a council where practically everybody else spoke in Greek might suggest that they

38 On the scarce knowledge of Greek among western clerics already in the fourth century, see Bardy (1948: 223–229).

39 Letter 91 to Anatolius, *ACO* 2.4 p. 49.9–10 (*ep.* 48); Letter 89 to Marcian, *ACO* 2.4 p. 47.21–23 (*ep.* 46).

40 See Pietri and Pietri (2000: 2.1591–2.1599); see also Cracco Ruggini (2002) and Rizzo (2002).

41 Leo's letter 3 (*PL* 54.606–54.610).

42 Leo's letter 131 of March 454 (*ACO* 2.4 p. 87, *ep.* 77).

did not know Greek altogether.⁴³ Surely that is not necessarily the case, though, for one can think of other reasons why they chose Latin. The first and most obvious is a symbolic one: Latin was the language of the Roman see, which they were representing. After all, that appears to have been the case with the papal delegates at the previous two councils of which we have the Acts, Ephesus 431 and 449: the protocol of First Ephesus introduces the statements of Arcadius, Projectus and Philip with Ἑρμηνεία τῆς καταθέσεως ‘translation of the statement’⁴⁴; at Second Ephesus the bishop Florentius of Sardi would translate the statements of the Roman delegates, Julius and Hilary.⁴⁵ The bishop of Rome for one would write in Latin to Greek-speaking bishops. Going back to Republican Rome, Roman magistrates would speak in Latin to Greek ambassadors even though they knew Greek.⁴⁶ So, the symbolic status of Latin was certainly decisive in the language choice of the Roman delegates, whether they were able to express themselves in Greek or not.

But were they able to follow the debate in Greek? The Acts do not make it clear whether the Greek statements, which are the vast majority, were translated into Latin for the Roman delegates. Upon reading the Acts one gets the impression that the Roman delegates were able to follow and keep up with the debate (see Section 9). In other words, the language barrier does not seem to have been much of a hindrance for their active participation in the council: either they understood Greek sufficiently well, or somebody translated Greek for them in real time. One might think that their eastern colleague Julian of Cos, who was functionally bilingual, could have served as a translator for them in case they needed one.⁴⁷

7.2 Did the eastern bishops know Latin?

The other question is whether the hundreds of eastern bishops who attended the council had active or even just passive knowledge of Latin. We do not have much

⁴³ That has often been thought about Paschasinus: see Pace (1949: 255, 281 n. 5), Cracco Ruggini (1980: 488), Varvaro (1981: 54), Wilson (1990: 317).

⁴⁴ E.g. *ACO* 1.1.3 p. 53.24 (§ 106.2), 54.1 (§ 106.3), 54.25 (§ 106.8), 55.1 (§ 106.9), 57.28 (§ 106.20), 58.12 (§ 106.22), 58.21 (§ 106.23), etc.

⁴⁵ *ACO* 2.1 p. 82.27–28 (I.82), 83.1 (I.83), 86.24–25 (I.117), 99.10–11 (I.218), 99.14–15 (I.219), 101.11–12 (I.227), 190.23–24 (I.952), 190.34–35 (I.958).

⁴⁶ Cf. Rochette (2010: 283). If it makes sense to draw a parallel from contemporary international politics, we can look at the meetings between the German Chancellor Merkel and the Russian President Putin. Although both Merkel and Putin master the other’s language, they nevertheless speak their native language and use simultaneous translation headsets. On language choice and identity, see also Clackson (2015: 65).

⁴⁷ On interpreters in Antiquity, see most recently McElduff (2013: 24–30).

evidence from the Acts of Chalcedon to answer this. At the First Council of Ephesus in 431, 20 years earlier, the Roman delegates Arcadius and Projectus said that there were many of their fellow bishops who ignored Latin:

(ACO 1.1.3 p. 55.2–6, § 106.9)

Ἄρκάδιος καὶ Προϊέκτος οἱ εὐλαβέστατοι ἐπίσκοποι καὶ πρεσβευταὶ εἶπον Καθὼς ἐκέλευσεν ἡ ὑμετέρα μακαριότης, ἵνα εἰς τὴν πάντων γνώσιν ἔλθῃ τὰ γράμματα τὰ προσενηχθέντα, ἐπειδὴ πολλοὶ εἰσι τῶν ἁγίων ἀδελφῶν καὶ ἐπισκόπων ἡμῶν, οἵτινες Ῥωμαιστὶ ἀγνοοῦσι, διὰ τοῦτο καὶ Ἑλληνιστὶ ἢ προκομισθεῖσα ἐπιστολὴ μεταβέβηται καὶ εἰ κελεύοιτε, ἀναγνωσθήσεται.

‘Arcadius and Projectus, the most venerable bishops and delegates, said: “As your beatitude has ordered, so that the letter which has been brought may come to the knowledge of all, since there are many of our holy brothers and fellow-bishops who do not know Latin, for this reason the letter that has been brought has been translated into Greek; and if you so bid, it will be read out.”’

There is little reason to assume that 20 years later more Greek bishops knew Latin. It seems that clerics in the East never really felt an urge to learn Latin (Rochette 1997: 153–154): first of all, they did not read many religious texts produced in the Latin West⁴⁸; furthermore, their dealings with the imperial administration were routinely conducted in Greek. Of course there were some who knew Latin – after all, Arcadius and Projectus said that “many”, not all Greek bishops, ignored Latin. Florentius of Sardi, for one, was certainly bilingual, for he had served as an interpreter at Second Ephesus while also being active in the debate (see Section 7.1).⁴⁹ The case of Julian of Cos, the bilingual papal representative, may be special: from some allusions in Leo’s letters it has been argued that Julian was originally from the West.⁵⁰

As for all the others, there simply is no evidence. Several of them used Latin loanwords, but these were well acclimatised in Greek, so that does not attest to their knowledge of Latin.⁵¹ Anyway, there were official interpreters they could rely

48 Bardy (1948: 149–154). On the exchange between eastern and western churches, especially concerning monastic and hagiographic literature, see Rapp (2004).

49 On Florentius of Sardi, see Destephen (2008: 408–412).

50 Leo’s letter 81 to Julian, ACO 2.4 p. 40.30 (*ep.* 28): *nobis te et patriae praesentares* ‘that you presented yourself to us and to your motherland’; Leo’s letter 113 to Julian, ACO 2.4 p. 65.28–30 (*ep.* 60): *curam sollicitudini apostolicae sedis impendere, quae tibi apud se nutrito* [...] *actionem materno iure commendat* ‘that you take care of the problems of the apostolic see, which requires with maternal right that you act [...], for you have been nourished at hers’. On Julian of Cos, see Destephen (2008: 528–541).

51 See the Index of Latin words in Greek in ACO 2.1.3 p. 148.

upon to understand what the Romans said; the ability of the translators was therefore crucial.

8 Differences between the Latin original and the Greek translation: the standing of the pope within the church

As we happen to have samples of original Latin statements (see Section 3), we can appreciate some features of the translations from Latin into Greek; of course, however, we cannot be sure that the Greek translations that we find in the Greek Acts correspond exactly to those that were produced on the spot by the interpreters and were not reworked at a subsequent stage. At any rate, the Greek translations are normally reliable and differ from the Latin originals only in small formal matters (see Mari 2018: 142). In one case, however, the differences between the Latin and the Greek version seem to involve also the substance, not only the form.

Here follows part of the original Latin statement of the Roman delegates concerning the condemnation of Dioscorus of Alexandria as preserved in Leo's letter 103⁵²:

(ACO 2.4 p. 156.21–24, ep. 112)

unde sanctus ac beatissimus papa caput uniuersalis ecclesiae Leo per nos uicarios suos sancta synodo consentiente Petri apostoli praeditus dignitate, qui ecclesiae fundamentum et petra fidei et caelestis regni ianitor nuncupatur

'Therefore the holy and most blessed Pope Leo, the head of the universal church, through us his vicars with the agreement of the holy council, endowed as he is with the dignity of Peter the Apostle, who is called the foundation of the church and the rock of faith and the door-keeper of the heavenly kingdom'

This is the Greek version:

(ACO 2.1 p. 225.14–17, II/III.94)

ὄθεν ὁ ἀγιώτατος καὶ μακαριώτατος ἀρχιεπίσκοπος τῆς μεγάλης καὶ πρεσβυτέρας Ῥώμης Λέων δι' ἡμῶν καὶ τῆς παρούσης ἀγιωτάτης συνόδου μετὰ τοῦ τρισμακαριωτάτου καὶ πανευφήμου Πέτρου τοῦ ἀποστόλου, ὃς ἐστὶ πέτρα καὶ κρηπὶς τῆς καθολικῆς ἐκκλησίας καὶ τῆς ὀρθοδόξου πίστεως ὁ θεμέλιος [...]

52 This is treated more extensively in Mari (2018: 140–144).

‘Therefore the most holy and blessed Leo, archbishop of great and senior Rome, through us and the present most holy council, together with the thrice-blessed and wholly renowned Peter the Apostle, who is the rock and stay of the catholic church and the foundation of the orthodox faith [...]’

In the Latin original, Leo is called with the honorific title *papa* and is identified as “the head of the universal church” (*caput uniuersalis ecclesiae*); in the Greek translation, on the other hand, he is referred to as “archbishop of great and senior Rome” (ἀρχιεπίσκοπος τῆς μεγάλης καὶ πρεσβυτέρας Ῥώμης), the mention of his primacy within the universal church having disappeared. One has to bear in mind that there was a controversy after the Council of Chalcedon on the primacy of Rome and the role of the see of Constantinople (see Wessel 2008: 285–321). There is a tendency in the Greek Acts to downplay the role of Rome (see Price and Gaddis 2005: 1.80–1.82). One might wonder whether this difference came about already at the stage of the real-time translation: if that had been so, this would have conveyed a slightly distorted message to all the Greek-speaking bishops who did not understand Latin and relied on the official interpreter. However, it stands to reason that the alteration took place at a later stage, probably at the time of the official edition of the Acts (454/455); for if the interpreter had mistranslated the statements of the Roman delegates, it is likely that somebody would have protested (for example Julian of Cos, who was bilingual and represented the interests of Rome).⁵³

9 Presiding over a Greek trial speaking Latin: Dioscorus’ trial at the third session

An interesting case study of bilingualism at the Council of Chalcedon is the third session, at which the chairmanship of this Greek-speaking council fell upon the Latin-speaking Paschasinus.⁵⁴ As a matter of fact, in Pope Leo’s intentions, Paschasinus was supposed to preside over the whole council, but the imperial authorities did that instead. Yet the imperial officials did not attend the third session, which was meant to be a bishops’ trial (or rather show trial) of Dioscorus of

⁵³ Another conspicuous case is that of the sixteenth session on the privileges of the see of Constantinople. Here the Greek and Latin versions diverge substantially in that the complaints voiced by the Roman delegates are much weaker in the Greek version; Schwartz (1930: 622–623) has it that the Latin version is the original one and the Greek version has been altered at a later stage (see also *ACO* 2.1.3 p. XXIV and Price and Gaddis 2005: 3.84 n. 30).

⁵⁴ The third session, which took place on 13 October, is numbered as second in the Greek Acts and in the first Latin translation (see Price and Gaddis 2005: 2.1–2.2); hence I write II/III in the references.

Alexandria; for the imperial officials had already deposed Dioscorus at the first session and the council had approved of this decision, but apparently ratification by a trial of only bishops was needed.

The main questions concerning the bilingual functioning of the third session are quite obvious: as the chairman spoke a language that most attendees did not understand, could he convey information in an effective manner, and if so, how? And in case the chairman himself did not perfectly understand the language that the attendees spoke, could he chair the meeting effectively?⁵⁵

The first question is relatively easy to answer: the protocol makes it clear a couple of times that Paschasinus spoke in Latin and his words were translated into Greek, although it does not say who translated them.⁵⁶ As in the rest of the Acts, the protocol does not specify that the other statements were translated. What do we make of these cases? According to de Ste. Croix (2006), it is possible that “translations were not always provided: sometimes the involvement of an interpreter is noted [...], but the legates may have expected other Latin pronouncements to be understood or have relied on Aetius, the archdeacon and chief notary, to enact their instructions or provide sufficient paraphrase of their words to permit proceedings to continue” (de Ste. Croix 2006: 300). As I have said in Section 4, I think it more likely that translations were regularly provided but the editors of the Acts simply did not repeat the information at every instance.

How about Paschasinus’ understanding of what was said in Greek at the meeting? As observed in Section 7.1, we cannot tell whether Paschasinus understood spoken Greek well, or even at all. What we can do is look at his activity during the session and try to understand if he was able to keep up with the debate.

There does not appear to be any single instance in which Paschasinus makes a statement that does not fit in with what has just been said, nor does he ever ask for clarification; whether Paschasinus was able to understand Greek or relied upon an interpreter, the language difference does not seem to have impeded his understanding of the dealings. Surely, there are three cases in which Paschasinus asks the council to repeat their decision about the penalty that should be imposed upon Dioscorus; yet the repetition seems due to Paschasinus’ ritual concern for absolute certainty rather than to his failure to understand the council’s statements. In what

⁵⁵ On bilingual transcripts of hearings in Antiquity, see Adams (2003: 383–390).

⁵⁶ ACO 2.1 p. 204.22–25 (II/III.4): Πασκασίνος [...] εἶπεν Ῥωμαιστί καὶ ἡρμηνευθῆσαν εἰς Ἑλληνικὸν οὕτως ‘Paschasinus [...] said in Latin And these words were translated into Greek as follows’; 206.38 (II/III.18): Πασκασίνος ἐπίσκοπος δι’ ἑρμηνέως εἶπεν ‘bishop Paschasinus said through an interpreter’.

follows, I provide the passage in translation underlining Paschasinus' repeated questions.

79. And after the reading bishop Paschasinus said: "The most God-beloved and blessed holy council has learnt that bishop Dioscorus, having been called for the third time through the most God-beloved bishops Francion, Lucian and John to answer his accusers, knowing that he is liable to penalty, has disdainfully refused to come. What then does one who has been so disdainful deserve? Let your holiness make it clear by your own mouth."

80. The holy council said: "The censure imposed by the canons on those who disobey."

81. Stephen bishop of Ephesus said: "The consequence for the one who was summoned according to the holy canons and disdained it is to be subjected to the penalty of the canons."

82. Bishop Paschasinus said: "We again ask your beatitude: he who has already for the third time been summoned by our brothers and fellow bishops and who despised it and did not come, what does he deserve? We want to know what your holiness decides."

83. The holy council said: "What the canons decide."

84. Bishop Lucian said: "Our most blessed father and archbishop Cyril did some things against Nestorius at the holy council of Ephesus. By examining them, give the appropriate verdict."

85. Bishop Paschasinus said: "Does your religiousness bid us impose the ecclesiastical penalties on him? Do you agree?"

86. The holy council said: "We all agree with the decision."

87. Bishop Paschasinus said: "Does your religiousness bid us impose the ecclesiastical penalties on him, as I have said?"

88. The holy council said: "Yes, we agree."

[...]

92. Bishop Paschasinus said: "I say again: what does your beatitude decide?"

93. Maximus bishop of the great city of Antioch said: "What seems right to your holiness, for that we also vote."

(ACO 2.1 pp. 27.17–28.20, II/III.79–93)

Table 2: Statements of some attendees at Sessions III, IV, and XIX.

Attendees	Session III (96 statements)	Session IV (116 statements)	Session XIX in ACO 2.1 on Photius and Eustathius (64 statements)
Chair	Paschasinus: 13x (1x with the other Romans)	Imperial official(s): 26x	Imperial official(s): 21x
Others	Council: 10x Chief notary: 10x Anatolius of Cpl.: 6x Maximus of Antioch: 5x Eusebius of Dorylaeum: 4x (+ complaint) Lucentius: 3x (1x with the other Romans) Boniface: 2x (1x with the other Romans)	Council: 20x Chief notary: 6x Paschasinus: 5x Anatolius of Cpl.: 3x Diogenes of Cyzicus: 3x Lucentius: 1x	Council: 9x Photius of Tyre: 6x Eustathius of Berytus: 6x Anatolius of Cpl.: 3x Maximus of Antioch: 3x Paschasinus + Lucentius: 1x

One can notice another thing: Paschasinus spoke more often than anybody else at the third session but less often than the imperial officials did in their capacity as chairmen at other sessions, as shown in Table 2.

Here I have compared three sessions of similar length with respect to the number of statements that the more important participants make in each of them. At the third session, Paschasinus makes 13 out of 96 total statements (13.5 %); that is significantly less than the share of statements made by the imperial officials at sessions IV and XIX: 26 out of 116 (22.4 %) and 21 out of 64 (32.8 %), respectively.

One might argue that Paschasinus spoke comparatively less because his status as non-native speaker did not make him as authoritative or confident as the imperial officials. It would be impossible to demonstrate or reject this hypothesis. Yet it seems more likely that Paschasinus spoke less than the imperial officials because his status at the third session was different from theirs: as one bishop among other bishops, Paschasinus was more of a *primus inter pares*, and so he was not supposed to dominate the session. In fact, one can appreciate that the third session unfolded as a collaborative effort among the bishops to reach a common goal, the condemnation of Dioscorus. In this perspective, the activity of the bishops attending depended on the importance of their episcopal see: thus the first bishop in the attendance list after the Roman delegates, Anatolius of Constantinople, spoke the most after Paschasinus (six statements); the first bishop after Anatolius, Maximus of Antioch, spoke the most after Anatolius (five statements); the main accuser of Dioscorus, Eusebius of Dorylaeum, spoke four times, and so on. Not only that, but their statements are spread out quite evenly, and the order in which

they speak follows the order in which they appear in the attendance list: for example, Paschasinus speaks for the first time in II/III.3, Anatolius in II/III.10, and Maximus in II/III.13. This is all the more the case when it comes to delivering the statements condemning Dioscorus: the Roman delegates speak first (II/III.94.1–3), Anatolius second (II/III.95), and Maximus third (II/III.96).

10 Conclusions

The Council of Chalcedon was a multilingual event, where each attendee could speak in a language of their own choice. Such multilingual situation, however, was “unbalanced”: the council sounded mostly Greek, as Greek was spoken by the imperial officials who chaired the council and by all of the eastern bishops, who were the overwhelming majority; Greek was *de facto* the official language of the council. The three Roman delegates, who had a position of prestige at the council, spoke in Latin presumably for symbolic reasons (because Latin was the language of the Roman see) and not necessarily because they ignored Greek (which we have no evidence to establish). As a rule, their statements were simultaneously translated into Greek by an official translator, a secretary of the imperial court. The few times we possess both the original statements in Latin and the Greek translations, the Greek translations seem reliable; the Greek-speaking bishops, who were for the most part ignorant of Latin, must have been able to understand fairly well what their western colleagues said. On one occasion, the Greek and Latin versions have differences concerning the primacy of the Roman bishop within the church, for the Greek version undermines it: such differences are more likely to have come about at the time of the production of the official Acts in Constantinople than during the simultaneous translation. On the other hand, it is not clear whether somebody translated the Greek statements for the Roman delegates, but the difference of language was not a hindrance to their active and pertinent participation in the debate; this can be seen best in the third session, which was efficiently chaired by the chief of the Roman delegation in a spirit of collaboration with his eastern colleagues.

The only individual who is clearly recorded as having spoken in both Latin and Greek is the emperor of the eastern part of the Roman Empire, Marcian: during the sixth session, which he chaired, he gave the same speech in Latin as the official language of the imperial court and in Greek as the *de facto* language of the council as well as the language of communication with eastern subjects; in real-time communication with the bishops, he turned to Greek.

The role of languages other than Greek and Latin was marginal: Syriac was spoken by one attendee, who had his own interpreter; the Acts also refer to Persian, but that is hardly genuine.

The first minutes of the Council of Chalcedon must have reflected the “unbalanced” multilingualism of the assembly; they were written mostly in Greek but they preserved the Latin statements and signatures of the Roman delegates. With time, and with Latin fading in the East, they lost the parts in Latin and became unilingual; at the same time, the Greek Acts were translated into Latin for a Latin-speaking western audience.

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