NESTORIUS AND THE COUNCIL OF EPHESUS: CONSTANTINOPLE AND EPHESUS

Nestorius, Bishop of Constantinople

Twenty-four years separated the final exile of John Chrysostom from the elevation of his compatriot Nestorius to the see of Constantinople.¹ By then, Theodosius II had succeeded his father, although, like Arcadius, he seems frequently to have been under the influence of some stronger personality at court²—first the praetorian prefect, Anthemius, and later his sister, Pulcheria, under whose domination “la Cour de Constantinople prit une allure monastique.”³ This situation apparently changed after 421, when Theodosius married Eudocia, the former Athenais, daughter of a pagan Athenian philosopher.

During the reign of Theodosius, the Germanic threat to Constantinople diminished as the barbarians turned their attention increasingly to the West. But they were replaced by an even more formidable enemy, the Huns, who devastated areas of Thrace in 395-98, 408-13, and again sometime about 422. Their presence so near to Constantinople must have made the inhabitants nervous, and the heavy tribute they demanded placed a sizable drain on the treasury.⁴

Sisinnius, the third successor of John Chrysostom as bishop of Constantinople, died late in 427, and the historian, Philip of Side, and Proclus, the deposed bishop of Cyzicus, were the principal candidates. The monks, the clergy, and the laity each supported different persons, and there was disagreement even within these groups. The emperor at first wished to select a monk—probably the archimandrite Dalmatius—hoping that an ascetic would arouse the least opposition. But Dalmatius refused, and no one else in the monastic community would agree to accept the responsibility. Finally, Theodosius determined to appoint an outsider as bishop, someone who was not a part of the strong rivalries and who
could, hopefully, undertake the governance of the church without prejudiced opposition. Just as in the case of Chrysostom, a call went out to Antioch to bring a famous Syrian preacher to Constantinople.⁵ Nestorius was born, perhaps to Persian parents, in the military settlement of Germanikeia in Syria Euphratensis, about the year 381.⁶ He came to Antioch and studied in the famous theological “school” of that city, quite possibly under Theodore of Mopsuestia.⁷ He became a priest and entered the ascetic life in the monastery of Euprepios just outside the walls of the city. His speaking ability first gained for him the position of expounder of Scripture in his monastery; then, when a successor to Sisinius was being sought, it brought him to the attention of the court, since Theodosius hoped that Nestorius’ oratory would aid in the instruction of the inhabitants of Constantinople. The majority of the people of the capital (οἱ πλεῖστοι) we are told, applauded the choice of Nestorius because of his reputation for austerity and asceticism.⁸ Dionysius, probably the magister militum per Orientem, brought Nestorius to Constantinople, and he was consecrated bishop on the tenth of April, 428.⁹ Despite his favorable reception, Nestorius was faced with immediate problems. The election in which he had been chosen was hotly contested, and Proclus and Philip of Side were not the kind of men to take defeat lightly. Both had been similarly passed over two years earlier, when the supporters of Sisinius had prevailed, and Socrates wrote that Philip reacted to that setback by including some bitter remarks about Sisinius in his Christian History.¹⁰ We may also suspect that the followers of each of these men formed parties which remained strong throughout the reign of Nestorius, for after his deposition they once again competed for the vacant episcopal throne.¹¹ Besides these disappointed partisans, Nestorius may have found enemies among the clergy and laity of Constantinople simply because he was an outsider, a Syrian.¹²

More significantly, Nestorius appears immediately to have encountered the opposition of the monastic community of Constantinople. This is indicated by the actions of Hypatius, a Phrygian monk who had established himself in the old villa of Rufinus near Chalcedon. When Nestorius was on his way to Constantinople, Hypatius saw a vision in which Nestorius was enthroned by “laymen.” Immediately Hypatius prophesied that Nestorius would remain in office for only three and onehalf years before being removed as a heretic. The authenticity of this particular scene may properly be questioned, but not, I think, the general hostility of Hypatius and many other monks toward Nestorius from a very early time.¹³ The source of this opposition may have been the failure of the monastic party to control the election, but Nestorius’ early indication that he intended to exercise strict control over the ecclesiastical establishment must have contributed to it.¹⁴
Like Chrysostom, Nestorius succeeded episcopal administrations notable for their laxity and near-inertia in difficult matters. The episcopate of Arsacius (404-06), the immediate successor of Chrysostom, for example, was "singularly mild and peaceful."\textsuperscript{15} Atticus (406-25), probably the strongest of the intervening bishops, was praised by Socrates for his success in pacifying and governing the church; but it is clear that this achievement was based upon concession and compromise: according to Socrates "he was all things to all men."\textsuperscript{16} One need only remember that Atticus had responded to popular pressure in returning John to the episcopal diptychs, and his charity was extended even to heretics. Further, in an age in which rhetoric was highly praised and valued, "his sermons were not such that they received much applause from his audience, nor did they deserve to be written down."\textsuperscript{17} As for Nestorius' immediate predecessor, Sisinnius (425-27), Socrates wrote that he was personally pious and concerned for the poor, but added that his simple disposition "rendered him rather averse to practical affairs, so that by men of active habits he was thought indolent."\textsuperscript{18}

No one could possibly accuse Nestorius of disinterest, and the spectre of another reforming Syrian prelate may have been enough to cause the alienation of the monks from Nestorius' camp. In any case, it is noteworthy that the monastic attitude toward the new bishop was in marked contrast to the popular support which he apparently enjoyed at the beginning of his episcopate.

From these considerations, one would expect the general reaction to the episcopacy of Nestorius to be much the same as that accorded to Chrysostom: support from most of the inhabitants of the city and decided opposition from many powerful groups and individuals. Nevertheless, within a short time after his arrival in the city, Nestorius had alienated all but the most loyal of his supporters. To explain this, it is not enough simply to assert that his "personality" was less attractive than that of Chrysostom. It is true that the sources describe him as hotheaded, stubborn, impolitic, and bellicose, but these are some of the same qualities that in Chrysostom were virtues. Chrysostom's ferocity seems to have been tempered by a kindness and charity that was apparently missing in Nestorius' character, and this may have been an important distinction between the two men, but it is a difficult thing to measure or discuss in historical terms. The ecclesiastical tradition was as uniformly hostile to Nestorius as it was favorable to Chrysostom, and it is not surprising that all aspects of Nestorius' character have been universally blackened. In fact, the real distinction between the two men lay in the failure of Nestorius' policy against the heretics and his involvement in theological controversy, something which Chrysostom had generally escaped. It is true that in 397 Arianism was by no means dead in Constantinople, and
John was accused of Origenism by his enemies; but theological debate played a negligible role in the events which led to his deposition. Such was not to be the case with Nestorius.

Probably on the occasion of his consecration, Nestorius announced publicly his plan regarding heresy in the empire:

Speaking to the emperor before all the faithful, he said, “Give me, O emperor, the land free of heretics and I will give you heaven in return; help me destroy the heretics and I will help you destroy the Persians.”

As mentioned before, the immediate predecessors of Nestorius had been disinclined to persecute heretics, and even though the emperor had been the author of a number of laws against heretics before 428, none of them were particularly severe and their implementation was not prosecuted rigorously:

The laws against heretics had formidable penalties associated with them, but these were not always carried out; for the emperor had no wish to persecute his subjects.

Accordingly, it is not surprising that “some of the multitude” rejoiced at the statement of the new bishop, but others—including certainly the heretics themselves—realized that only trouble would come from this program. Nestorius had “revealed himself as an ardent persecutor.”

Only five days after his elevation, Nestorius began to put his plan against the heretics into action. Undoubtedly with the emperor’s knowledge and approval, he dispatched men to destroy a chapel of the Arians.

The sight of this drove the Arians into a frenzy, and they set fire to the building themselves. The church burned to the ground and the fire spread to adjoining buildings. After the fire died out,

a disturbance (thorybos) arose in the city and the Arians prepared themselves for revenge. But God, the guardian of the city, did not allow the evil to be actualized in deeds. Nestorius, however, was from that time regarded as an incendiary not only by the heretics, but also by those of his own faith.

But even this disaster did not dampen Nestorius’ ardor, and he continued to disturb the city. He wished to attack the Novatians of Constantinople, but either because the emperor considered them harmless or because they had influential friends at court, Theodosius refused to cooperate and they escaped the wrath of the bishop. Nestorius then extended his persecution to the Quartodecimans in Asia, Lydia, and Caria; in Sardis and Miletus many people died in a riot when they resisted the efforts of the bishop of Constantinople.

Nestorius secured a legal basis for his activities when, on May 30, 428, Theodosius issued an edict which renewed and strengthened the old penalties for heresy. Nevertheless, we must suppose that even some of those who had
originally supported Nestorius' attack on heresy developed reservations when they saw the violence and questionable results of his methods.

**The Christological Controversy**

This was only the beginning of Nestorius' difficulties, however, for he almost immediately became involved in the complexities of the christological controversy. At this point it might be well to examine briefly the history of this dispute before 428. This is a difficult undertaking and one which presents many opportunities for confusion and error. It must involve not only an examination of theology, but also a consideration of how this evolving theology appeared to those not trained to understand it fully.26

Questions concerning the relationship between the divine and the human elements in the person of Christ—and questions concerning relationships among the persons of the Trinity, for these are really parts of the same problem—were as old as Christianity itself.27 The New Testament, particularly the Gospel of John, provided a tension between the Logos, who dwelt with God from the “beginning” and who became man, and the concept of a single monarchic God. How could the Trinity and the divinity of Christ be reconciled with monotheism? To some, the apparent contradiction inherent in the idea of the Trinity was simply a mystery to be accepted as impossible to understand. Others, however, turned to the methods and systems of classical philosophy for an explanation and solution of the dilemma. The Greek philosophical schools added their vocabularies and means of approach to the controversy, but they did not provide a generally agreed upon answer.28

It is impossible to do justice to the complexity of views which arose, but one may simplify and identify two opposing tendencies, each of which emphasized one aspect of the problem at the expense of the rest. One of these stressed the unity of the Godhead and the all-pervasive quality of the divine element in the Trinity.29 This tendency, represented at its extreme by the theology of Origen, Docetism, and finally Gnosticism, could not fully deny the humanity of Christ, but it made this humanity at best a secondary attribute, something which was only incidental to the person of Christ. Generally speaking, this view was characteristic of the so-called Alexandrian “school” of theology. An opposing view was held by the theologians of the “school” of Antioch, who stressed the humanity of Christ at the expense of his divinity.30 They emphasized the monarchy of the Father and resisted any tendency toward pagan polytheism by insisting on the absolute monotheism of the Christian God. In its extreme form, these tendencies led ultimately to Monarchianism, Modalism, and Adoptionism, heresies which exalted the Father but decreased the importance of the Son.
Both of these tendencies had long traditions and many particular variations, and one should not expect them to be always mutually exclusive or easily identifiable. Nevertheless, a distinction between the tradition stressing the humanity of Christ (and the monarchy of the Father) and that emphasizing his divinity is a useful generalization in attempting to understand how complicated theological systems appeared to the largely uneducated inhabitants of the cities of the late Roman East.

In viewing the conflict between these two traditions, which is the very essence of the christological controversy, one should always remember that the question was one of more than theoretical interest. For the believer, eternity was at stake.

Behind the seemingly unending wrangle over whether Christ existed "in two natures" or "out of two natures" lay deep questions of human salvation, not least those embodied in the doctrines of the Eucharist and the Atonement.

To put the situation very simply, if Christ is God, how does Christianity differ from paganism, with its multiplicity of divinities? But if Christ is not God, then how can he have effected our salvation?

It has been common to write about "popular religion" in the later Roman empire and to suggest that the lower-class residents of the empire tended almost naturally toward one or the other of the theological positions of the time. Thus, some have claimed that the inhabitants of the East always had a taste for despotic rulers and monarchic deities. Their ancestors worshipped the gods with a singleness of purpose and an excess of devotion matched only by their political subservience in entrusting their fate to a succession of autocratic kings and emperors. Thus, Eastern popular Christianity is supposed to have smacked of pagan intrusions in following the traditions of the school of Alexandria. The people worshipped a thoroughly divine Christ and ultimately became the fanatical Monophysites who rent the empire in their refusal to compromise their age-old beliefs.

Others would see the "common people" of the empire in a different light. According to this view, they tended to accept Christianity in a simple form which stressed the humanity of Christ and the singularity of the divinity. They regarded the word of the Bible with special veneration and accepted literally its ethical teachings and its picture of Christ as a real man. They represented a simple—one might almost say Judaising—Christianity and regarded all who attempted allegorical or philosophical explanations of the mysteries of the faith as pagans. Such primitive Christians ultimately became the main force behind Arianism and Nestorianism.

Obviously, neither of these views alone can explain the popular support for the various christological positions, and the attribution of diametrically opposite sentiments to "popular Christianity" by different authorities
must cause some suspicion as to method. It may, however, be correct to point to the importance of pre-Christian traditions and the nature and extent of the conversion to Christianity in shaping popular response to the christological controversy. Nevertheless, in the complex urban environment of the East, this popular response is unlikely to have been simple, and we should not expect to find any easy answers. It is possible, of course, that popular opinion—in Constantinople and Alexandria, in Syria and throughout Egypt—was already formed before the beginnings of the controversy and that the history of Nestorianism and Monophysitism is merely the account of the separation of peoples already different by temperament and long tradition. But such a hypothesis must be demonstrated rather than assumed.

For example, it may be possible to find some of the antecedents of fifth-century christological thought in the Arian controversy. The issue is easily confused, however, for the christological position of Arius can be viewed in two ways. He and his followers taught that there is only one nature (perhaps semidivine) in the person of Christ. They accused their opponents of teaching two natures. In this sense, the Arians appear to have been proto-Monophysites. Yet, viewed from another perspective, Arius remained directly in the tradition of those who maintained a simpler form of Christianity and who rejected any compromise with paganism. In their strong antipagan sentiments and their desire to view Christ as somehow inferior to the Father, the Arians maintained principles which were to be very important to Nestorius.

The christological controversy per se began only about the middle of the fourth century when Cappadocian theology proposed terms sufficiently exact to allow precise distinctions concerning the person of Christ. The teachings of Apollinarius of Laodicea (in Syria) provided the impetus for the new struggle. The father of Apollinarius—he had the same name—came from Alexandria to Laodicea, where he taught grammar. Although both father and son were Christians, together they attended the lectures of the pagan sophist, Epiphanius, and for this they were excommunicated by the Arian bishop of Laodicea. From this time at least the two Apollinarii espoused the Athanasian cause, and by about 362 they had formed around themselves an orthodox community. The younger Apollinarius became the bishop of this group, but he was soon exiled by the Arians, and he opened a theological school in Antioch.

The theology of Apollinarius was based upon two propositions: that perfect God and perfect man cannot be united in one being, and that the fathers of Nicaea had been correct in accepting the homoousios. It followed from these propositions that Christ could not be fully human and that the divine element should predominate in the second person of the Trinity. Apollinarius suggested that the person of Christ had a human body (sarx) but that the place of a human mind (nous) had been taken by
the divine Logos. In this way, Christ had a single divine nature, and his humanity was curtailed to preserve unity. As early as 377, Basil of Caesarea began to complain about the teachings of Apollinarius, and these were soon condemned, first by Pope Damasus in 379 and then by the Council of Constantinople in 381. After 383 the adherents of Apollinarius were included in the legal condemnations of heretics and various penalties were imposed upon them.\textsuperscript{38} Nevertheless, just as had the Arians, many Apollinarians survived their official condemnation.\textsuperscript{39} More importantly, the disciples of Apollinarius managed to conceal many of their ideas in spurious works attributed to orthodox Fathers, and these circulated throughout the East, gaining unsuspecting converts to the heresy.\textsuperscript{40} From this time, Apollinarius' slogan “one is the incarnate nature of God the Word” (μία φύσις τοῦ Θεοῦ λόγου σεσαρκωμένη) became the formula which divided the two sides of the christological controversy.\textsuperscript{41}

\textit{The Outbreak of the Quarrel}

Later in his life, when he was justifying his involvement in the christological dispute, Nestorius wrote that he discovered the controversy already fully developed in Constantinople when he arrived there in 428:

But in Constantinople, when I found that men were inquiring and in need of being taught, I yielded to their persuasions as the truth required. For factions of the people who were questioning this came together to the bishop's palace, having need of a solution of their questions and of arriving at unanimity. Those on the one hand who called the blessed Mary the mother of God they called Manichaeans, but those who named the blessed Mary the mother of a man Photinians. . . . But when they were questioned by me, the former denied not the humanity nor the latter the divinity, but they confessed them both alike, while they were distinct only in name: they of the party of Apollinaris accepted “Mother of God” and they of the party of Photinus “Mother of man.” But after I knew they disputed not in the spirit of heretics, I said that neither the latter nor the former were heretics, (the former) because they knew not Apollinaris and his dogma while similarly the latter (knew) the dogma neither of Photinus nor of Paul (of Samosata).\textsuperscript{42}

If we accept this statement, and there seems little reason to reject it totally, we must conclude that controversy over the nature of Christ had already become a subject of disagreement before 428. According to Nestorius, individuals without proper theological training were discussing complex issues which they could not quite understand.\textsuperscript{43} Factions had arisen, he claimed, not over any real theological disagreement, but because of allegiance to different theological “schools” and the use of different terminology. From the very beginning the word \textit{theotokos} (Godbearer or Mother of God) was seen as the basis for division, and both sides accused their opponents of espousing heresies which had been
condemned years before. The christological significance of the title of Mary should be obvious: if one were to stress the divine nature of Christ, his mother should be styled *theotokos*; but if an emphasis were placed on his humanity, Mary should be called *anthropotokos*, the Mother of Man (the man Jesus).

This was the first theological difficulty which Nestorius had to face as bishop of Constantinople, and it was settled quietly and privately. Nestorius suggested that the disputing factions would have no cause for disagreement if they made use only of the words found in the Scriptures and called Mary *Christotokos*, the Mother of Christ.

When they heard these things they said: "Before God has our inquiry been solved." And many praised and gave glory and went away from me and remained in agreement... 

But the christological dispute was far from over, and soon it again became a public issue. How and why this happened is unclear. Socrates and the enemies of Nestorius claimed that christological questions were raised by the bishop himself, or at least by members of his clerical staff. Friedrich Loofs, however, supported by evidence from Nestorius, argued that the matter was considered settled until Cyril of Alexandria and his associates revived the difficult theological question, much as Theophilus raised the issue of Origenism against Chrysostom. According to this view, Cyril's enemies had accused him of some irregularities in his administration of the see of Alexandria, and Nestorius either supported the accusers or at least did nothing to defend his episcopal colleague. Thus endangered, Cyril resorted to the old expedient of casting doubt on the orthodoxy of his enemies.

Whatever the ultimate origins of the conflict, the whole matter was brought to public attention by the Syrian presbyter Anastasius. This man, whom Nestorius particularly esteemed and to whom he entrusted matters of the greatest importance, gave a sermon in Constantinople, probably late in 428, in the course of which he said: "Let no one call Mary *theotokos*. For Mary was human and it is impossible for God to be born of a human." The reaction to this sermon—and in particular to the condemnation of the *theotokos*—was immediate and unfavorable: "He disturbed many of the clergy and all of the laity in this matter" (πολλούς κληρικούς τε και λαϊκούς ἐν αὐτῷ πάντας ἔταραξεν).

In the midst of this disturbance, Nestorius rose to defend Anastasius. The bishop preached a number of sermons in which he also condemned the use of the term *theotokos*. But, instead of clarifying the matter and settling the dispute, the sermons of Nestorius only increased the disagreement. The church of Constantinople was split into factions that "resembled combatants in a night battle, each side uttering confused and
contradictory statements."\textsuperscript{51} The dispute spread quickly outside the capital, and it finally reached Egypt, where difficulties arose even among the monks of the Nitrian desert.\textsuperscript{52}

Eusebius (later bishop of Dorylaeum), a \textit{scholasticus} in the service of the empress (either Pulcheria or Eudocia), was the first to speak publicly against the teachings of Nestorius and Anastasius. He posted a written document "in public and in the church [Hagia Sophia]" which began as follows:

\begin{quote}
I have sworn this statement by the Holy Trinity so that it may be made known to the bishops, priests, deacons, readers, and the faithful living in Constantinople. . . that the heresy of Nestorius is of the same kind as that of Paul of Samosata who was condemned 160 years ago by the orthodox fathers.\textsuperscript{53}
\end{quote}

The document continued with six sayings attributed to Paul, alongside of which Eusebius placed words of Nestorius which might be interpreted in a similar sense. The obvious purpose was to show that Nestorius was as much a heretic as Paul of Samosata:

\begin{quote}
Paul said, "Mary did not bear the Word." Agreeing with this, Nestorius said, "My good man, Mary did not bear the divinity."
\end{quote}

Eusebius then commented on the similarity of the views of the two "heretics" and concluded:

\begin{quote}
If someone, then, would dare to say that the Son was not the only-begotten of the Father, born before the ages and that he was not born of the Virgin Mary, and that he is not the one Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema.
\end{quote}

It is noteworthy that Eusebius did not merely prepare a learned theological attack on Nestorius. Instead, he drew up a document and had it posted where it might be read by all. This document was anything but subtle, and its reasoning, while ultimately questionable, was difficult to refute. The propaganda had its effect and, according to Theophanes, Eusebius stirred up many riots and disturbances (πολλούς θορύβους ἠγείρε καὶ ταραχὰς).\textsuperscript{54}

Possibly in the same year, Proclus, who, it will be remembered, had lost his bid to become bishop when the emperor chose Nestorius, preached a sermon in the great church of Constantinople.\textsuperscript{55} The occasion was a feast of the Virgin (παρθενικὴ πανήγυρις), an appropriate time for public support of the \textit{theotokos}. Although Nestorius was present in the church, Proclus took the opportunity to condemn his teaching soundly. The thrust of Proclus' argument was clear and simple: Christ was both God and man; if he were merely a man (ψιλὸς θρησκευών άνθρωπος) salvation would be impossible.\textsuperscript{56} He also took care to connect this unity of natures in Christ with the Virgin, so that to deny honor to Mary would be seen as questioning the divinity of Christ.\textsuperscript{57} If anyone was confused by the
controversy, this sermon must have done much to clarify the difficult theological issues involved, since it stated the theological objections to Nestorius' teaching in simple terms understandable to most of its audience.

Proclus also took care to defend the honor of the Virgin and perhaps to play on the sympathies of those who venerated Mary in a special way. Christological concerns may have been paramount in the mind of Proclus, but one has the impression that the ringing praises of the Virgin had considerable effect upon his audience:

Brethren, today a feast of the Virgin summons the tongue to praise. The present festival is an embassy of help to those gathered together; and it is especially fitting. For it is the demonstration of purity and the most perfect boast of the race of women, the glory of the female, because [Mary was] at the same time mother and virgin. The assembly is a beautiful one. . . . For, behold, the land and the sea have become spear-bearers for the Virgin. . . . Let nature leap for joy and women be honored; let mankind dance and virgins be glorified. . . . The holy Mary has called us here together, the stainless jewel of virginity, the rational paradise of the second Adam, the workshop of the unity of the natures, the festival of the saving covenant, the bridal chamber in which the Word espoused the flesh, the living bush which the fire of the divine birth did not burn. . . slave and mother, virgin and heaven, the only bridge between God and men.58

Proclus concluded his sermon by quoting a prophecy from Ezekiel concerning the closed gate through which only "the lord God Israel" should come in and go out. This prophecy was "an exact description of the holy and Godbearing (theotokos) Mary. Let all contrary teachings be dismissed, and let us all be enlightened by the instruction of the Scriptures, so that we may have a share in the kingdom of heaven in Christ Jesus. . . ."59 The implication is clear: anyone who denied this title to the Virgin would miss his share in the kingdom of heaven.

Unfortunately, the narrative historians tell us little about the state of affairs in Constantinople between the outbreak of the controversy in 428 and 431 when the council was called. Although it is possible that much of what Socrates and Theophanes said about 428 is appropriate to the whole period, it is clear that they were more interested in describing the outbreak of the quarrel than its subsequent development. For much of this period we must, therefore, rely on letters and other such sources, which are difficult to use because of their obvious bias and the problems they present for chronological reconstruction.

Cyril, in his first letter to Nestorius, written probably toward the middle of 429, observed that conditions were then very disturbed in Constantinople. He claimed that there were even some people in the capital who denied that Christ was God.60 Perhaps about this same time, Cyril wrote his first letter to Pope Celestine. In this letter the bishop of
Alexandria proposed his explanation of the origin of the controversy and added a description of the contemporary situation in Constantinople:

And there occurred a great outcry and a desire to flee among all the faithful; for they did not wish to remain in communion with those who believed thus. So now the faithful of Constantinople have seceded, except for a few rather stupid people and some flatterers of his [Nestorius], and almost all the monasteries and their archimandrites, and many members of the senate do not meet together, fearing lest they be harmed because of their faith.  

In this letter we have important evidence for the division of the inhabitants of Constantinople into groups supporting or opposing the use of the *theotokos* and the teaching of Nestorius. Cyril admitted that a few people continued to support their bishop, but he insisted that most of the faithful, including the monks and the senators, opposed the teachings of Nestorius and went about in fear of persecution for their beliefs.

Other evidence supports Cyril's contention that the monasteries of Constantinople continued to be centers of opposition to Nestorius. This is perhaps best illustrated by the petition submitted to the emperor by “Basil, deacon and archimandrite, Thalassius, reader and monk, and the rest of the Christian monks.” This document began with a partial list of all the fathers who believed that Christ “is true God.” It continued by mentioning the heresy of Paul of Samosata, through which occurred “schism among the people and revolts by the priests.” Now, the monks claimed, Nestorius was stirring up the same trouble again. As a result, a number of priests had been persecuted for preaching against the doctrines of Nestorius “in the church of Irene by the sea.” After this violence, committed, we must presume, by the soldiers of the emperor:

The faithful (λαός) cried out, seeking the familiar teaching of orthodoxy. And they said, “We have an emperor, a bishop we do not have” (βασιλέα ἔχομεν, ἐπίσκοπον οὐκ ἔχομεν). Meanwhile, the faithful who were arrested by the *apparitores* underwent terrible suffering. They were variously beaten in the *dekanikon* of the capital. Such things have not happened even among the barbarian nations.

Some persons, the monks claimed, supported the demands of the faithful, and they were made to suffer for this. A certain zealous monk denounced Nestorius in the midst of a church, and when he was arrested he had to be dragged away screaming. Also, some of the monks planned to assassinate their bishop should divine aid not be forthcoming. A party made up of monks, other members of the clergy, and laymen approached Nestorius, and he had them seized and treated badly. The monks concluded their petition and their tale of terror with a demand that Theodosius summon an ecumenical council to deal with the heresy and injustice of the bishop of Constantinople. By doing this, the monks argued, the emperor would unite the faithful under his rule.
Even Nestorius himself admitted that he had few supporters in the monasteries of Constantinople. Complaining to Cyril, he said, "You have filled all the churches and all the monasteries with disturbance against me so that even the unfeeling have been roused to feeling."  

Cyril took care to involve the church of Rome in the dispute, and in August of 430 a synod in Rome, on the advice of the bishop of Alexandria, condemned the teachings of Nestorius. Soon after this, Pope Celestine wrote a letter "to the priests, deacons and clergy . . . and to the catholic faithful (laos) who live in Constantinople." In this letter, Celestine warned against the errors of Nestorius, and he launched into a series of comparisons, measuring Nestorius against the standard of other well-known ecclesiastical figures. Obviously, Nestorius did not compare favorably with his predecessors Atticus and Sisinnius, for during their episcopates heresy was suppressed, and the Christian faithful were well governed. But even more damning was the comparison made between Nestorius and the condemned heretics Arius and Paul of Samosata.

Meanwhile, Cyril himself did not leave the job of propagandist entirely to others. Two letters he sent to Constantinople give us further information about this. One of them, directed to the clergy and laity of the capital, was similar to the letter of Celestine. In it Cyril warned the people about the teachings of Nestorius and reminded them that both the church of Rome and that of Alexandria had recently condemned the heresy of their bishop. He feared lest they suffer a "disturbance in their faith" and said that they must not act like "a great rioting herd" (θορυβουμένη ἀγέλη μεγάλη), but like good laymen and clergies (λαοί καὶ ἐκκλησίαι).

These two letters, and others like them, make us wonder to what extent they reflect propaganda directed toward the people of the city. At first sight, they appear to be in a different category from the placards erected, for example, by Eusebius of Dorylaeum: letters do not normally have a very wide circulation. However, there is evidence that letters written "to the faithful" of a given city were actually read to the assembled people at public gatherings. If we may gauge from the few examples we have, these public recitations may have been quite elaborate and even theatrical. In any case, this procedure undoubtedly allowed letters to serve as a means toward the manipulation of popular opinion, particularly among those who could not read, and they should be carefully examined.

In a letter Cyril wrote to his clerical envoys in Constantinople, he discussed the origin of the controversy and accused Nestorius of dividing the person of Christ (the heresy of the two sons: one divine, one human). He then reproduced two statements which he attributed to Nestorius:

I do not judge goodwill toward me by applause, but by a desire for [correct] dogma and by the maintenance of both the divinity and the humanity of the Master.
And I take special care for our people (demoi), who have very much reverence and a warm piety, but who are imperfect because of their ignorance of divine teaching. But this is not a fault of the faithful (looi), but—how shall I say it appropriately?—it is because the teachers do not have time to present you with the really correct doctrines.71

Cyril continued by comparing Nestorius unfavorably with Atticus. He then provided some important information about the supporters of Nestorius in Constantinople:

Is it any wonder [that I have enemies there] if I am slandered by the dregs of the city, Chairemon, Victor, Sophronas, and that boy of the disturber-of-the-peace Flavian? For they are evil both in their own matters and in everything else. And let him who stirs them up know that I am not afraid of a long journey nor of making my defense against them.72

Cyril concluded by predicting that Nestorius would soon find himself judged by the bishop of Alexandria.

In a long article, Eduard Schwartz has shown that the Victor mentioned in this letter was an important Egyptian monk, perhaps from the Tabbenisian cloister near Alexandria.73 He was in Constantinople, not as a supporter of Cyril, but as one of those who had accused him of wrongdoing in the administration of his see. He later returned to Egypt, and by the time of the council in 431 he had forgotten his antagonism to the bishop of Alexandria. We know nothing about the other individuals mentioned in this letter, although it would be reasonable to assume that they were Egyptians. It is tempting to identify Flavian as the young priest who was later to become bishop of Constantinople and face the accusations of Cyril’s successor, but there is no evidence to support such a hypothesis. Finally, it is interesting to note that Cyril accused Nestorius of willfully stirring up opposition to him in Constantinople and warned him to desist or face the sudden appearance of the Egyptian bishop. This may be so much rhetoric, but it does suggest that Nestorius was active in attempting to build an ecclesiastical party favorable to himself and hostile to Cyril. Probably the actions of Chairemon, Victor, and Sophronas were directed toward the court and the various bishops assembled in the capital, and we have no indication that they attempted to sway popular favor in the direction of Nestorius.

Finally, we know of two other events which happened during the time before the assembly of the Council of Ephesus. How they might have influenced public opinion is difficult to say. First despite his violent persecution of heretics, and an earlier condemnation of their doctrines, Nestorius apparently became involved with some Pelagians who had sought asylum in Constantinople. He wrote a warm letter of support to Celestine, the leader of the Pelagians, and many in Constantinople regarded the bishop as the protector of these heretics.74 As a result, the
westerner Marius Mercator produced a tract against the Pelagians and sent it to the church of Constantinople, the monasteries, and the emperor. This document and the subsequent exile of the Pelagians from the Eastern capital can hardly have improved the bishop’s reputation there.

At about this same time, some barbarian servants of an important man of Constantinople fled to Hagia Sophia as suppliants after a disagreement with their master. They were armed and refused to leave the church. After killing one ecclesiastic and wounding another, however, they killed themselves. One source says that they had planned to burn the church and suggests that they killed themselves only by mistake. An observer of this event predicted that the desecration of the church was an evil omen for the future and quoted an ancient poet to support his prophecy:

For such signs are likely to happen
Whenever defilement breaks out in the temples.

Socrates noted that subsequent events confirmed this prediction, “for, as was appropriate, it indicated a dissension among the faithful and the deposition of the author of the dissension.” The connection of this event with the affair of Nestorius is most tenuous: the “prophecy” sounds very much like something thought up or remembered well after the event. If, however, the story is genuine, it may reflect a feeling of tension and uneasiness about the teachings of Nestorius. In such a case, unusual and particularly unfortunate occurrences might have been seen as indications of divine disapproval of the bishop of Constantinople.

The sources hostile to Nestorius, as would be expected, tried to create the impression that all of Constantinople rose in opposition against its bishop. Nestorius, for his part, failed to give any indication that he had any large popular support, and we may infer that the greater part of those actively involved in the controversy did indeed support the party of Cyril of Alexandria. Also, all the evidence indicates that the opposition to Nestorius was widespread among the clergy of Constantinople and that he had few, if any, supporters among the monks.

Yet, from the words of Cyril himself we know that some people supported Nestorius. In his letter to Pope Celestine, Cyril conceded that a few flatterers and lightheaded people still remained loyal to their bishop, and in his letter to his envoys in Constantinople, he identified four of his own bitter opponents. Further, Socrates stated that there was a division of opinion “resembling a night battle,” which suggests that at least a small number of people were on the side of Nestorius.

The most important ally of Nestorius was the emperor himself. Theodosius, once he finally selected a bishop for his capital, was determined to defend that choice so long as he was able. Thus, Nestorius had at his disposal all the coercive force of the government, and he did not hesitate to use this when he was attacked by various clerics and laymen.
We have evidence of this in the monks’ complaint of violence at the hands of his supporters. Likewise, friends of Hypatius were distressed and feared for his safety when the monk publicly removed the name of Nestorius from the diptychs, “for Nestorius was at the height of his power in the city.”

Cyril wrote separate letters to Theodosius, to Eudocia, and to Pulcheria, warning them against the teachings of Nestorius. The emperor replied, accusing Cyril of causing all the difficulties in the church and condemning him for his attempt to sow discord in the imperial family.

Nestorius claimed further that he had not only the support of the emperor, but also that of the “chief men . . . and the episcopate of Constantinople (presumably members of the synodos endemousa).”

Unfortunately, the sources do not allow us to say much about the composition of groups supporting or opposing Nestorius. While a variety of terms were used to describe the crowds involved in the affair of John Chrysostom, in the case of Nestorius the sources almost universally use laos rather than any of its possible synonyms. This use of laos may have been meant (by the sources hostile to Nestorius) to imply that the crowds who opposed Nestorius were made up of all classes of the population united in their dislike of the heresy of their bishop. Or, the sources might have used laos to indicate the orthodox population, in order to distinguish them from the heretics who supported their enemies.

The words of Cyril appear to give us some insight into the social composition of the partisans of Nestorius. However, we must expect some exaggeration when he described them as “lightheaded people and flatterers” and “the filth of the city.” On this evidence, it would surely be rash to maintain that Nestorius’ support was drawn from the lowest elements of society. Cyril’s terminology undoubtedly was designed to attack his enemies rather than to provide us with objective information about them.

On the other end of the social scale, both Cyril and Nestorius claimed that members of the aristocracy supported them. It might be suggested that important members of the imperial court supported Nestorius (because the emperor did), while rich and powerful men who were independent of imperial favor opposed him. As has been mentioned, most of the monks of the capital appear to have opposed Nestorius, and some of the secular clergy did so as well. But Nestorius certainly had some supporters among the clergy, as is indicated by the party which remained loyal to him in Ephesus. Certainly, the Syrian priests (for example, Anastasius), whom he brought with him from Antioch, did not abandon the bishop.

The sources agree that there was a “disturbance” (tarache) from the time of the first sermon of Anastasius until the assembly of the council itself. This tarache may refer to a series of riots, or the term may mean no more than an unsettled condition, or a disturbance of the mind. More rarely the sources speak of a thorybos—which seems more serious than a tarache, and may indicate a riot, although it, too, may reflect only general
agitation or peaceful protest. The sources never mention a *stasis*, which in other contexts often implies violence of some kind. In fact, there is no evidence whatsoever that the opponents of Nestorius (as opposed to his supporters) ever resorted to violence to give weight to their demands. We know of only one event in which the “faithful” gathered to demonstrate their opposition to Nestorius. One might suspect that this incident, which was reported only by the petition of the monks to the emperor, was arranged by the clerical opponents of Nestorius, although it may have developed spontaneously as the result of the arrest of some popular priests. In any case, the demonstrators (*laos*) were well enough organized to chant an appropriate protest: “We have an emperor, a bishop we don’t have.” Anyone who has witnessed a political demonstration in Greece or the Near East, or even in America, will realize the emotive power of such a rhythmical slogan.

The most difficult question concerns the motivation of those who supported or opposed Nestorius. Why did they choose one theological position rather than the other? In our discussion of the origins of the christological controversy, we have suggested that there were basically two ways of viewing the person of Christ. The view which stressed the unity and divinity of Christ at the expense of his humanity was a theological position which many have equated with paganism and “intellectual” or “philosophical” Christianity. The view which stressed the humanity of Christ, on the other hand, was a straightforward, seemingly more Biblical form of the faith which might be more easily understandable to the less educated elements in the Christian population. From this analysis one might expect that a large segment of the population of Constantinople would favor the theology of Nestorius, since he represented a simpler, antipagan tradition of christological thought. Yet just the opposite was the case. Why was there such a strong reaction against the teachings of Nestorius?

Much of the controversy turned around the use of *theotokos*. As we have seen, christological questions had been connected with the title of the Virgin from a very early date, and anyone trained in elementary theology would have understood the primary issue: to refuse to call Mary *theotokos* was to question the divinity of Christ. Nevertheless, in the theologically charged atmosphere of Constantinople, can we expect that “all the faithful” understood this point, especially since Nestorius and his followers made an attempt to present their side of the controversy?

Constantinople, of course, had no theological “school” of its own, but from the time of Gregory of Nazianzus at least the bishops of the capital seem generally to have accepted the *theotokos* without question. Moreover, the *theotokos* was much more than a term of theological dispute. Unlike the *homoousios*, which was an emotionally sterile word designed originally to distinguish the Arians from the orthodox, the
Theotokos was a powerfully evocative term which belonged to the "language of devotion." The one of the earliest attested uses of the theotokos is in a third or fourth-century papyrus, which contains a prayer to the Virgin, beseeching her as though she could herself free the suppliant from danger. The Fathers of the fourth and fifth centuries—with the notable exception of John Chrysostom—continued to pay increasing honor to Mary. More and more she was set as the ideal after which women, and more particularly, ascetics should strive. In this period, the monastic movement took the Virgin as its special patron, and it is not surprising to find the monks as the strongest defender of her honor. Artistic and liturgical studies unfortunately contribute relatively little to our understanding of growing Mariolatry; it is well known that the popular veneration of Mary increased greatly in the fifth century, but it is not at all certain to what extent this development preceded the Council of Ephesus. Yet, the institution of at least one feast of the Virgin at Constantinople and the dedication of the cathedral church at Ephesus in her honor are indications of considerable veneration. Further evidence of this development is obvious in the elaborate praise of Mary in the sermon of Proclus, discussed above.

The tendency to regard the Virgin as important in herself—as opposed to her role as subordinate to her son—may well have been the Christianization of the pagan Great Mother. There is some evidence that such was the case in the neighborhood of Constantinople. Epiphanius, already mentioned in connection with his role in the deposition of Chrysostom, provides information about a sect which he called the Collyridians. Most of the devotees of this heresy, which was most prevalent in Thrace and Scythia, were women. On certain festival days they decorated a throne for the Virgin and ceremonially offered bread to her. Epiphanius regarded these practices as pagan survivals.

Nestorius' vigorous attack on the theotokos was prompted, at least in part, by what he felt were current abuses of the term. Thus, while he did not object to the theotokos in principle, he feared that its public use would lead to the errors of both Apollinarianism and Arianism. In particular, it is clear that Nestorius thought that the theotokos would encourage an inappropriate elevation of the Virgin and a return to pagan polytheism. Some people, he said, not only failed to understand the person of Christ, but they also made a goddess of his mother:

Does God have a mother? Then we must excuse the pagans for giving mothers to the gods. But there are also some who treat the virgin mother of Christ, together with God, as in some way divine. I have already said many times that if any of you, or anyone else, be simple and
prefer to use the *theotokos* than I have no objection to the term—only do not make a goddess (*thea*) of the Virgin.\(^94\)

Most authorities have maintained that the controversy concerning the *theotokos* was carried out on purely christological grounds: that when people defended or rejected the term they were defending or rejecting the divinity of Christ. Nevertheless, it is clear that some people worshipped the Virgin as more than the instrument through which the Incarnation came about: they venerated her directly for herself and for the assistance she might give mankind. These individuals undoubtedly opposed Nestorius because he appeared to question the honor which was due to Mary.

Despite this evidence, we must admit that the narrative sources almost universally ascribe the opposition to Nestorius to christological considerations. This is as we would expect it to be, since those hostile to Nestorius would hardly maintain that their party contained idolators. Nevertheless, we cannot simply dismiss the notion that many people understood at least the basics of the christological debate. As Socrates claimed:

> Nestorius had the reputation among the many of saying that the Lord was a mere man (*ψιλὸς ἀνθρώπος*).\(^95\)

The monk Hypatius appears to reflect this same sentiment: Nestorius meddled in “forbidden things” and insulted God.\(^96\)

From this evidence, it would appear that many people understood the christological significance of the controversy. This may be explained, at least in part, by the statement of Socrates that the laity had been “taught” and “persuaded” to accept certain dogmatic principles concerning the divinity of Christ. Questions which had puzzled theologians for some time and which were still not firmly resolved were presented to the faithful of Constantinople as established propositions. Undoubtedly proponents of both sides of the controversy gave sermons in the capital, but it appears that the supporters of Alexandrian theology had gained the upper hand over their rivals from Antioch. Sermons in the churches of Constantinople prior to 428 probably tended to emphasize the divinity of Christ.\(^97\)

We are able to say something about the people who “taught” these things to the inhabitants of Constantinople. They were not all members of the local clergy, as Nestorius wrote:

> Now the clergy of Alexandria, who were in favor of his [Cyril’s] deeds, persuaded them [the inhabitants of Constantinople] as persons deceived that they should accept the word *theotokos* and they were stirring up and making trouble and going around in every place and making use of everything as a help therein.\(^98\)

These people were undoubtedly the envoys of the bishop of Alexandria, whom we have already met several times before. Nestorius further complained that Cyril had stirred up enmity against him by having his
agents carry through the city the letter which he had written to the Egyptian monks. This letter and others like it from Cyril and Pope Celestine, the sermon of Proclus, and the public notice of Eusebius set forth the objections to the theology of Nestorius clearly, if simply: he forbade a term which the Fathers had used, he denied the divinity of Christ, and he taught the same things as Paul of Samosata and other condemned heretics. Such a campaign, obviously designed to sway public opinion, apparently had its result.

Noteworthy in this campaign was the use of the term “mere man”—ψιλός ἄνθρωπος, a phrase taken to deny the divinity of Christ—something which had been connected with the heresy of Paul of Samosata and now attributed to Nestorius. It is all but certain that this did not represent the teaching of Nestorius, but this was how his views were presented to the public. This clever piece of propaganda is a good example of the skill of Cyril and his associates in molding popular opinion. It may be added, also, that Cyril had an easier position to defend. He had merely to reiterate that to deny the theotokos was to deny the divinity of Christ, while Nestorius had to explain his objection to the public use of the term while maintaining his loyalty to the divinity and the humanity of Christ—a difficult task, indeed.

Many people probably joined the opposition to Nestorius for reasons that were not theological. Cyril lost no time in enlisting the support of those who favored Proclus and Philip of Side in the most recent episcopal elections; they were naturally jealous of the new bishop. We have already seen that Proclus was a leading spokesman in this opposition. Those who regarded their bishop as an arsonist and furious persecutor, a foreigner and unbending moralist, also may have joined the opposition. These probably included the greater part of the monastic community.

The reasons why some people remained loyal to Nestorius are not difficult to ascertain. Throughout this period the bishop received the support and assistance of the emperor, and an early observer of the controversy probably felt that Nestorius would defeat his Alexandrian rival. Also, it is certain that some people supported Nestorius because they agreed with his theology. Teachers from the “school” of Antioch had been active in Constantinople, and they may have won some adherents to their views. Some of Nestorius’ followers may also have been adherents of an older, more primitive form of Christianity which, generally speaking, Nestorians represented. Nevertheless, by persecuting potential allies, such as the Arians, Quartodecimans, and Novatians, Nestorius alienated much of his support and stood alone.

The Council of Ephesus—431

All parties to the controversy were willing to settle the dispute by
Nestorius and the Council of Ephesus

reference to general council. The monks, as we have seen, demanded that a council be convened to condemn Nestorius. Cyril, remembering the triumph of his uncle at the Council of the Oak and confident of his own theological ability and the support of Pope Celestine, was anxious to submit the matter to a council. Nestorius himself, perhaps trusting in his own innocence and the support of the emperor, may have been the first to press for a council. Theodosius, on the other hand, resisted the idea. He had selected Nestorius as bishop of Constantinople, and he wished to defend him rather than have him examined by a council. The chronicler Malalas indicated that the emperor yielded only after much pressure was put upon him:

When a disturbance occurred because of his [Nestorius'] sermons. Theodosius himself was forced to summon the council.¹⁰³

There can be little doubt that by tarache the chronicler meant the general unrest we have been describing above. Finally, on November 30, 430, Theodosius yielded. He issued a letter to all the metropolitans of the empire, requiring them to appear in Ephesus, along with a few of their subordinate bishops, at Pentecost of 431.¹⁰⁴

Nestorius arrived in Ephesus immediately after Easter and, although he was the first of the great metropolitans, he found many ordinary bishops already assembled in the city awaiting the opening of the council.¹⁰⁵ He was accompanied by what Socrates called "a powerful mob" (τελλη δύναμις διχλων).¹⁰⁶ This phrase probably refers to a group of ruffians Nestorius had recruited near the Baths of Zeuxippos before he left Constantinople.¹⁰⁷ The bishop thus came to Ephesus with a kind of popular bodyguard. Nestorius was also accompanied by his friends the comes Ireneus, and by Candidianus, the comes domesticorum. The emperor had commissioned Candidianus to preserve order in Ephesus so that the deliberations of the bishops might proceed in peace; he was to be especially concerned that outsiders not cause "riots" (thoryboi).¹⁰⁸ Ireneus had no official commission and went to Ephesus, apparently, out of friendship for the bishop. Each of these men undoubtedly brought a large contingent of soldiers with him. The party of Nestorius clearly expected some resistance in Ephesus, and they came prepared to meet it.

Not long after Nestorius had settled in the city, Cyril of Alexandria arrived, accompanied by about fifty-five bishops and a considerable number of monks and other hangers-on.¹⁰⁹ The two principals occupied their time before the beginning of the council by attacking each other verbally and making public appeals for support.¹¹⁰ Much of this propaganda was directed at the bishops, but there undoubtedly was an attempt on the part of both sides to influence the populace of Ephesus. It was probably at this time that Nestorius delivered his famous, but unfortunate sermons in which he said that he would never call an infant (that is, the
One can imagine that the supporters of Cyril quickly spread this statement throughout the city, making the appropriate comments on it and emphasizing the heresy of the bishop of Constantinople.

Control over the ecclesiastical situation in the city was exercised by Memnon, bishop of Ephesus, who was an avowed enemy of Nestorius. Ephesus had been an extremely important see and it had, along with Alexandria, suffered most from the growth in importance of Constantinople. In fact, Ephesus probably had more to fear from Constantinople than had Alexandria, as the bishops of the capital had real interests in Asia: John Chrysostom, it will be remembered, became involved in the selection of the bishop of Ephesus, and Nestorius himself had encroached on the prerogative of Memnon in his persecution of the Quartodecimans in Asia. Probably because of this enmity, Memnon closed all the churches of Ephesus to Nestorius and his followers, gathered large groups of violent people and stirred them into a fury against the bishop of Constantinople. Nestorius fled to the house which had been reserved for his use, and there he was protected by the soldiers:

Seditious persons filled the city with idle and turbulent men, who were assembled together by Memnon, the bishop of Ephesus; and he was at their head and was making them run about armed in the city, in such wise that every one of us fled and hid himself and had resort to caution and saved himself in great fear.

Although Nestorius came to Ephesus with his official and unofficial bodyguards, he was not safe against the violence controlled by Memnon and Cyril.

The story of the opening of the council is familiar enough. The day of Pentecost, June 7, which had been set for the opening ceremony, passed without the arrival of the Eastern bishops under the leadership of John of Antioch. The bishops already in Ephesus agreed to wait for some time, but on the twenty-first of June, Cyril proposed to open the council on the following day. In doing this, he relied on the commission given him by Pope Celestine (as "prosecutor" of Nestorius), and he claimed that further delay in the heat of the summer would cause more sickness and death among the bishops. The supporters of Nestorius realized that the exclusion of the oriental delegation would deprive them of their most influential support, and sixty-eight bishops signed a letter protesting the decision of Cyril and demanding that the council await the arrival of John of Antioch. The next day the delegation sent by these bishops was driven violently from the council, and Cyril paid no attention to the protests of Candidianus, who produced letters from the emperor requiring all metropolitans to be present before the beginning of the debate. Although Candidianus knew that Cyril's actions were in direct
violation of the wishes of the emperor, he did not attempt to delay the opening of the council by force. As Nestorius wrote some time later:

And, as I suppose, Candidianus knew them [the supporters of Cyril] and was frightened by them; and by words alone would he have hindered them; but he dared not proceed to deeds and to afflict those who did such things.\(^{117}\)

One must wonder at Candidianus' restraint. Perhaps he did not feel that his orders authorized him to use force against the bishop of Alexandria, but his troops later attacked other ecclesiastics. More likely, and despite the preparations made by the supporters of Nestorius, Candidianus felt that his forces were no match for the armed "idle and turbulent men ... assembled by Memnon."

Cyril opened the council on June 22 "in the church called Mary."\(^{118}\) The council then dispatched four bishops to summon Nestorius. When they returned, one of these, an Egyptian named Theopemptos, reported that they saw a number of soldiers with clubs in the house of Nestorius.\(^{119}\) These soldiers told the bishops that they had orders not to allow anyone to enter the house. But some of the clergy in Nestorius' party came outside and told the bishops to wait. The tribune Florentius, a subordinate of Candidianus, reported that Nestorius would soon appear. After some time, however, Florentius returned and told the bishops that no one could see Nestorius. Another attempt was made to invite Nestorius to the council, but when the envoys arrived at the gate of his house, they found soldiers armed with clubs again barring their entrance. The soldiers shoved the bishops out of the shade and into the heat of the sun and otherwise bullied them. Despite the protests of the bishops, the soldiers told them that they would not be admitted even if they stood in the sun all day. John of Hephaestos, who reported these events to the synod, supposed that the soldiers took their orders "from him"—that is, from Nestorius.\(^{120}\)

Nestorius did not deny that his dwelling was protected by soldiers or that the soldiers had mistreated the envoys of the council. Instead, he claimed that the messengers sent to his house had come not to convey him to the council, but to do away with him:

Seditious persons ... came under the pretense of summoning me to the council but in reality they came to carry me off by assault and by violence and to spread the rumor that "he has surely perished." From the fact that you [Cyril] reproach us with posting soldiers, it is clear that if they had not first been posted around me and been a wall for me, I should have been destroyed by violent men.\(^ {121}\)

Since Nestorius did not answer his summons to attend the council, the supporters of Cyril moved quickly to his deposition. Many of the bishops uttered short statements condemning Nestorius, and some of his "blasphemous" words were read. Then, the bishops shouted "These are the
opinions of all; we all say this; this is the universal prayer," and Nestorius was formally deposed.\textsuperscript{122}

Meanwhile, many of the inhabitants of Ephesus had assembled outside the church where they anxiously awaited the decision of the council. Triumphantly, Cyril wrote back to the church of Alexandria:

We bishops, more than two hundred of us, came out together. And all the faithful (laos) of the city remained from early morning to early evening awaiting the decision of the holy council. When they heard that the blasphemer had been deposed, all with one voice began to praise the holy synod and to glorify God, because the enemy of the faith has fallen. While we were coming out of the church, they went before us with lamps even unto our lodgings—for it was evening. And there arose much joy and illumination in the city, so that even the women went before us carrying censers. And the Savior revealed his glory to the blasphemers, since he can do anything.\textsuperscript{123}

The assembly of such a crowd outside the church may well have influenced the decision of the council. Cyril and his followers probably took care to mention the arrival of the people to those bishops who had not yet abandoned Nestorius, and they may have taken that into consideration in casting their vote for the deposition. It is interesting to speculate what might have been the reception of the bishops had Nestorius not been condemned. Also noteworthy was the participation of the women of Ephesus in this demonstration.\textsuperscript{124}

Some time after June 22, Cyril wrote another letter to the church of Alexandria. At that time, popular demonstrations were still continuing in Ephesus:

For [there was] happiness among the teachers and leaders of the faithful (laoi) . . . so that all agreed, saying with one mouth, "One Lord, one faith, one baptism."\textsuperscript{125}

The formulaic quality of this slogan and its recollection of the words of Scripture (see Ephesians 4.5, a particularly appropriate book of the New Testament!) are obvious. Such a slogan and such uniformity are unlikely to have occurred without considerable organization.

The situation had not calmed appreciably when the Easterners, under the leadership of John of Antioch, finally arrived in Ephesus on June 26. They wrote to the emperor:

Being commanded by your pious letters, we arrived in the metropolitan city of Ephesus. And we found the affairs of the church filled with civil war and all manner of confusion. Cyril of Alexandria and Memnon conspired together and assembled a crowd of country-folk ($\pi\lambda\theta\omicron\sigma\varsigma$ $\gamma\rho\rho\omicron\iota\kappa\iota\nu\omicron\nu$) .\textsuperscript{126}

He [Memnon] closed the holy churches, the holy martyria, and the church of St. John ($\tau\omicron$ $\gamma\rho\omicron\nu$ $\alpha\pi\omicron\sigma\tau\omicron\delta\omicron\iota\omicron\nu$), not allowing the feast of Pentecost to be celebrated . . . and gathering together a crowd of country-folk, he disturbed the city.\textsuperscript{127}
But it is Nestorius himself who gives us the fullest description of these disturbances:

And the followers of the Egyptian and those of Memnon, by whom they were aided, were going round the city, girded and armed with rods, stiff-necked men, who rushed upon them [the supporters of Nestorius] with the clamor of barbarians and . . . breathing anger without self-control, with all pride, against those whom they knew not to be in agreement with the things which were done by them. They were taking bells around the city and were kindling fire in many places and handing round documents of various kinds; and all those things which were taking place were matters of astonishment and fear, so that they blocked all the ways and made everyone flee and not be seen, and they were behaving arbitrarily, giving way to drunkenness and to intoxication and to a disgraceful outcry. And there was no one hindering, nor even bringing aid, and thus men were angered. But all of it was being done against us, and for this reason we made use of the aid of the emperors and of the authority of the strategoi, who were angered at the things which were done, though they let them be.128

Thus, the followers of Cyril, including peasants from the surrounding countryside, Egyptian sailors, and various ecclesiastics, went around the city like travelling showmen. They displayed diverse documents describing the heresy of Nestorius, and they summoned crowds by ringing bells and lighting fires (if, indeed, the fires were not set for more destructive purposes). Against this, the armed force of Candidianus and Ireneus continued to do nothing.

The opponents of Nestorius had no intention of allowing popular excitement to dwindle. Soon after the close of the first session of the council, several bishops delivered a series of sermons which strongly defended Alexandrian theology.129 Although these sermons were largely concerned with difficult questions of Christology, the presentation of these ideas was simple and easy to understand. Unlike most contemporary theological works, they made use of uncomplicated arguments and an almost commonsense appeal to scriptural authority. Of particular interest is the last sermon of Cyril, for it seems to advocate a veneration of the Virgin which considerably exceeds christological considerations: "Mary the theotokos, the holy ornament of all the universe, the unquenchable lamp, the crown of virginity, the sceptre, the container of the uncontainable, mother and virgin."130 The similarity to the sermon of Proclus in Constantinople is striking. In both cases, the Virgin was praised for her own virtues as well as for her connection with the birth of Christ.

We must consider further evidence before we describe the party of Nestorius as the innocent victims of malicious violence, for the followers of Cyril accused Nestorius and his party of initiating much of the disturbance which followed the first session of the council. In a letter addressed to the emperor, the bishops of Cyril's council claimed that Nestorius had been in no danger in Ephesus, but that he had made the
soldiers attack the bishops only to avoid having to make his defense before the council. In their synodal letter to Pope Celestine, the bishops complained about “violence against the holy synod,” and Cyril accused the soldiers of mistreating the envoys sent to John of Antioch.

But it was Memnon who raised the most interesting charges against Nestorius and his supporters. Shortly after they reached Ephesus and learned of the condemnation of Nestorius, the oriental bishops assembled in council and promptly deposed Memnon and Cyril. Memnon reacted by sending a letter to the clergy of Constantinople, listing the abuses he and his party had suffered during and after the council. Candidianus and Ireneus, he complained, had ordered their soldiers to attack the bishops of the council, and they inflicted many wounds upon them. More specifically, Candidianus prevented supplies from reaching the council, organized “a great mob of country-folk from the ecclesiastical properties” and “filled the city with disturbance.” Ireneus, for his part, attempted to have someone else consecrated bishop of Ephesus. “All the orthodox of the city,” however, resisted this, and by seizing the churches they prevented the replacement of their bishop. Violence was apparently carried out by the partisans of both sides. Cyril and Nestorius had come to Ephesus prepared for violence, and each party attempted to use the force at its disposal to best advantage. Cyril controlled the monks and sailors he had brought from Egypt and the local mobs assembled by Memnon; Nestorius was supported by imperial troops and bands of ruffians brought from Constantinople. An interesting element in these disturbances was the country population, members of which were brought into the city by both sides. Possibly these peasants did not have any strong ideological ties to either of the parties so that they could be easily manipulated.

Nevertheless, the people and clergy of Ephesus appear strongly to have supported the party of Cyril. This was in part occasioned by the propaganda of the Cyrillians (encouraged by Memnon, who closed the churches to the Nestorians), but simple loyalty to their bishop may also have played a part. That is, as in the cases we have examined already, nontechnical, almost simplistic presentation of complex theological issues and loyalty to a popular bishop counted for much in the determination of popular opinion.

Nevertheless, it can be argued that the faithful of Ephesus felt a particular veneration for the Virgin Mary and that they opposed Nestorius and his teachings for this reason. Ephesus, it will be remembered, was in antiquity the site of the worship of Artemis of the Ephesians, who was herself also a virgin and mother, and St. Paul, in the first century, had
occasion to experience the devotion of the Ephesians to their patron deity. Very early the tradition had become established that the apostle John had come to Ephesus late in his life and had died there. Since the New Testament indicates that the mother of Christ had been placed under the care of John after the Crucifixion, it is not surprising that a tradition developed which linked the Virgin with Ephesus. The earliest evidence of this tradition is Epiphanius' (late fourth century) denial that the Scriptures said anything about the death of the Virgin or her journey to Asia with John. However, by the early fifth century the story of the death of the Virgin in Ephesus had become established, at least in that city, and Mary had become the patronness of the inhabitants. Thus, the church in which the council was held was “called Mary” (καλουμένη Μαρία), a designation which may indicate a popular appellation which had not yet received official sanction. Further evidence of the close connection between Mary and Ephesus is found in a letter written by Cyril's council to “the clergy and the faithful”:

Wherefore the impious Nestorius, the renewer of heresy, came first into the [city] of the Ephesians, that place where [are] John the Theologian and the holy Mary, the theotokos parthenos.

The sermon of Cyril, in which he praised the Virgin in terms of strong veneration, may very well have been intended to maintain the support of the people of Ephesus, for whom the honor of Mary was the primary concern of the controversy. Also, it is interesting to note that some of the women of Ephesus played an important part in the joyful procession after the deposition of Nestorius. It may be suggesting too much, but it should be remembered that women had characteristically been among the most ardent worshippers of the Asian Great Mother and of the Christian Mother of God (for example, the Collyridians mentioned above).

Memnon probably opposed Nestorius for reasons of ecclesiastical politics; Nestorius was bishop of Constantinople and he had already shown himself ready to meddle in the affairs of the bishop of Ephesus. One would like to know whether such a feeling of local patriotism, perhaps a survival of the local jealousies common in the classical period, was felt by the inhabitants of Ephesus. Did they regard Nestorius as an enemy simply because he was bishop of Constantinople? It would be reasonable to assume that they did, but there is no certain evidence to confirm or deny this hypothesis.

Their uniformity of opinion allowed the people of Ephesus to play an important role at the Council of 431. As we have already mentioned, the presence of a large, probably vocal crowd outside the conciliar church may have influenced the votes of a few of the bishops. More importantly, the people of Ephesus posed a counterforce to the troops of Candidianus and Ireneus. As we have seen, the supporters of Nestorius planned to use
violence to force the acquittal of the bishop of Constantinople, or at least to nullify the machinations of Cyril. They were able to do neither. The soldiers of Candidianus terrorized some of the bishops, but they stood by helplessly while the Cyrilians openly disregarded the wishes of the emperor and condemned his bishop. The forces brought to Ephesus by Nestorius may have been adequate to deal with Cyril’s Egyptian troublemakers, but they could do nothing in the face of organized, unified popular opposition. Most of the violence mentioned by the sources was carried out by “outsiders,” but in the background loomed the threat of massive popular rebellion. Candidianus might neutralize a few rebellious bishops or discontented monks, but he could not subdue the whole population of the metropolitan city of Asia.

*Constantinople after the Council*

While this was going on in Ephesus, the situation was not much calmer in Constantinople. Immediately after his deposition, Nestorius wrote to the emperor describing the violence and illegality committed by the followers of Cyril and Memnon. Candidianus complained to Theodosius as well and, although his letter has not survived, we can be sure that it was bitterly hostile to the party of Cyril. The council also addressed a letter to the emperor defending its actions, but either Theodosius never received this communication or he paid no attention to it, as he was still determined to support Nestorius. On June 29, he dispatched the *agens in rebus* Palladius to Ephesus with a letter which specifically condemned everything that had been done there. He reproved the bishops for acting before the arrival of the oriental contingent, forbade any of the participants from leaving the city, and promised that he would send another imperial official to investigate the situation fully.

Meanwhile, the agents of Cyril had been active in Constantinople during the absence of Nestorius. And the bishop of Alexandria, undoubtedly aware of the adverse reaction which the deposition of Nestorius would have on the emperor, was not slow to take advantage of the tense situation in the capital. Immediately after the condemnation of Nestorius, Cyril dispatched a letter to the clergy and *oikonomoi* of the church of Constantinople. This short letter announced the deposition of the bishop and concluded with a warning for them to watch over the property of the church in the city. The news of the action of the council spread rapidly throughout Constantinople, and the agents of Cyril were quick to point out that the emperor’s support of Nestorius was contrary to the decision of an ecumenical council. The result was predictable. In the words of Nestorius:

> When the followers of Cyril saw the vehemence of the emperor . . . they roused up a disturbance and discord among the people with an outcry, as though the
emperor were opposed to God; they rose up against the nobles and the chiefs who acquiesced not in what had been done by them and they were running hither and thither. And . . . they took with them those who had been separated and removed from the monasteries by reason of their lives and their strange manners and had for this reason been expelled, and all who were of heretical sects and were possessed with fanaticism and with hatred against me. And one passion was in them all, Jews and pagans and all the sects, and they were busying themselves that they should accept without examination the things which were done without examination against me; and at the same time all of them, even those who had participated with me at table and in prayer and in thought, were agreed . . . against me and were vowing vows one with another against me. . . . In nothing were they divided.

There is much to say on the subject of the dreams which they recounted, which they say that they saw concerning me, while others [saw] other things. And they amazed the hearers by the saints ... whom they saw and by the revelations which were recounted by them and by a prophecy which was fabricated. For there was none of them who was unaffected nor [any] that was distinct from their communion; I speak not only of Christians but also [of] pagans. For they were persuading all men of the things which they were seeing, likening themselves to angels of light. . . . The emperor allowed everything to take place . . . for they were not frightened by him nor [feared] to cause sedition and to run about to all men.147

This testimony of Nestorius, written some years after the event, is most interesting, for it tells us not only something about the composition of the groups opposing him, but also gives us considerable information about the means they used to influence popular opinion. The original support of Nestorius seems to have disappeared. The emperor and the "nobles and chiefs," who were probably members of the imperial court, still remained loyal to Nestorius, but the bishop admitted that even those who had previously been closest to him had now abandoned him—perhaps because of the decision of the council, perhaps because of the threats of the Cyrillians. More importantly, the opponents of Nestorius were united in everything. We may be suspicious of Nestorius’ statement that among his enemies were Jews, pagans, and heretics, but it is not impossible that these disgruntled groups all found unity in opposition to the bishop of Constantinople.149

At the forefront of the opposition was the monastic community of Constantinople. It is interesting that Nestorius describes some of these monks as those who “had been separated and removed from the monasteries by reason of their lives and their strange manners.” This would seem to support Dagron’s hypothesis about the unique nature of urban monasticism in Constantinople and its antagonism toward the bishop of the city. Nestorius clearly represented a threat to the monastic movement, including those who had been removed for their unusual practices, and its leaders were outspoken in their opposition to the bishop.150
The actions of the Cyrillians are reminiscent of the carnival-like atmosphere which prevailed in Ephesus somewhat earlier. They ran about the city, attracting adherents from all quarters and attacking their enemies openly. On this occasion, the Cyrillians added visions and prophecies as proof of their orthodoxy. Unfortunately, we cannot identify any of these supernatural occurrences specifically, except perhaps the earlier vision of Hypatius and the prophecy that Nestorius would be deposed after three and one-half years. We can imagine, however, that they took the form of the “appearance” of various saints warning against the heretical teachings of Nestorius. Particularly interesting is Nestorius’ assertion that his enemies likened “themselves to angels of light.”

Theodosius, as would be expected, feared revolution in Constantinople, and he determined to prevent further communication between the council and the city. Guards were set over the principal routes of access, and the leaders of the clergy watched the sea and the roads in vain. Sometime in early July a letter arrived at the gates of Constantinople, addressed by the council to the bishops Komarios and Potamon, and the archimandrites Dalmatius, Timotheos, and Eulogios. After some delay caused by the blockade, a beggar brought the letter into the city concealed in his cane.

The anti-Nestorian bishops in Constantinople then drew up a statement, which they presumably sent to the fathers of the council, describing events in the capital:

All the monasteries arose, together with their archimandrites, and they went out toward the palace singing antiphons. There was a certain holy Dalmatius, one of the archimandrites; for forty-eight years he had not left his monastery, but had remained inside and the pious emperor had come to see him... While he was praying concerning this [the deposition of Nestorius], a voice came down from heaven and [ordered him] to go out. For God did not wish his flock to perish. There was with them a large number of the orthodox faithful (laos). When they went into the palace, the archimandrites were ordered by the emperor to go inside and the greater part of the monks and the faithful remained outside singing psalms.

Nestorius also furnished a report of this scene:

They held assemblies of priests and troops of monks and they took counsel against me... And they had as helpers in these things all the ministers of the emperor... As indeed the schema of the monks was very dear to him, so all of them were unanimous in the one purpose of persuading him... And all of the monks participated... even those who in other things were without love among themselves, [some] being enemies and [others] envied, especially for the sake of the praise of them. And they took for themselves as organizer and chief, in order to overwhelm the emperor with amazement, Dalmatius the archimandrite, who for many years had not gone forth from his monastery; and a multitude of monks surrounded him in the midst of the city, chanting the office, in order that all the city might be assembled with them and proceed before the emperor and be able to hinder his purpose. For they had prepared
all these things in advance in order that there might not be any hindrance and they went in with [the chanting] of the office even to the emperor.\textsuperscript{155}

After this elaborate procession reached the palace, Dalmatius was granted an audience with the emperor. Theodosius was astonished to see the retiring monk and asked him why he had left his monastery, since not even sickness in the imperial family or tumults in the city had moved him before. Dalmatius replied that God had commanded him to reprove the emperor for his defense of Nestorius. Theodosius answered that he found no fault in his bishop, and he reminded Dalmatius that he and all the other monks had refused the episcopal chair when it had been offered to them.

"Neither do I find any cause of blame in this man; I and my empire and my race are guiltless of this impiety" [the deposition of Nestorius] . . . And Dalmatius and those with him cried out: "On me let this impiety be, O emperor; I rebuke thee and thine on account of these things; I will make my defense for these things before the tribunal of Christ, as having done this very deed." And after he [had] received this promise [that the archimandrites would take the responsibility for the deposition of Nestorius] . . . he decreed and confirmed the things which had been done against me.\textsuperscript{157}

The letter which the clergy of Constantinople sent to the council in Ephesus described the scene after the confrontation between Dalmatius and the emperor:

Then they came out, having received a just answer. And all cried out, "The orders of the emperor!" (τὰ μανδάτα τοῦ βασιλέως) . Then they said, "Let us go off to the martyrion of the holy Mokios\textsuperscript{158} to read the letter and learn of the order of the emperor!" Then everyone went away, both the monks and the laymen; for the road was an important one. Carrying candles and singing the last psalm in the last region of the city, the monks were joined by the faithful. When they saw the large number of people,\textsuperscript{159} they cried out against the enemy. Then they came to the martyrion of the holy Mokios and the letter was read to them.\textsuperscript{160}

After listening to the letter from the council, the faithful of Constantinople cried out with one voice: "anathema to Nestorius." Dalmatius then quieted the crowd and told them of his interview with the emperor. According to this account, the primary concern of Dalmatius was to secure Theodosius' assurance that messages from the council could reach the clergy of Constantinople without interference. And, as in the account of Nestorius, the emperor agreed.\textsuperscript{161}

Nestorius presented another version of this scene:

The impious band went forth from [his] majesty and some spread abroad [some things] and others other things against me; and they carried Dalmatius around, reclining on a couch which was spread with coverlets, and mules bore him in the midst of the streets of the city, in such wise that it was made known
to all men that a victory had been gained over the purpose of the emperor, amidst great assemblies of the people and the monks, who were dancing and clapping hands and crying out the things which can be said against one who has been deprived for inequity. But after it was known that the intention of the emperor had been overcome by them, all the heretics, who had formerly been deprived by me, took part with them, and all with one mouth were alike proclaiming my anathema, taking courage from anything that had taken place, in every part of the city, but especially in the parts by the sanctuary, in such wise that they added crowds of the people to themselves and committed inequity without reverence. Thus they took courage, clapping their hands and saying nothing except "God the Word died!" And there was not any distinction between heretics and orthodox . . . and they were fighting without mercy against those who were not persuaded to predicate the suffering of the nature of God the Word. . . . The services in the churches and in the monasteries were forgotten and they were busied with sedition and persecution and affairs such as these. As for those who were furnishing them with money and supplies and provisions, by all these things which they were giving they were both preparing them and demanding of them to be ceaselessly engaged in these things.\textsuperscript{162}

In this passage, Nestorius claimed that the monks and the people involved in the demonstrations against him were being paid for their actions and that whoever was supplying them with money and provisions required them to continue their demonstration. Although Nestorius did not make the accusation directly, he undoubtedly meant to imply that Cyril and Alexandrian cash were behind this apparently spontaneous outpouring of popular sentiment.

Socrates summed up his impression of events in Constantinople in these words:

After the deposition of Nestorius there arose a terrible disturbance (\textit{tarache}) in the church of Constantinople. For, as I have already said, the faithful (\textit{laos}) were disturbed by his exaggerated speech. By common agreement, however, all the clergy anathematized him.\textsuperscript{163}

The dispute was not, of course, ended by the decision of the emperor to abandon his support of Nestorius.\textsuperscript{164} Cyril and Memnon, as well as the bishop of Constantinople, had been deposed, and they were under arrest in Ephesus. The oriental delegation was still adamant, and a full imperial investigation had been promised. This latter, indeed, never came about, but both "councils" (that of Cyril and that of the Easterners) were invited to send delegations to present their cases to the emperor in Chalcedon. The dispute dragged on, and a full reconciliation was not achieved until 435.\textsuperscript{165} But after the meeting of Theodosius and Dalmatius, all support for Nestorius effectively collapsed. Nestorius returned to his monastery in Syria, and a short time later Maximianus was elected his successor as bishop of Constantinople.\textsuperscript{166}

Some time after the close of the council, Theodoret came to Chalcedon, representing views not far removed from those of Nestorius, and he was pleased to find considerable popular support for Antiochene theology.
According to his account, a veritable stream of people came to him, presumably from Constantinople.\footnote{167} He celebrated the liturgy among them, and they were so pleased by his preaching that they remained there, through the heat of the sun, until the seventh hour. In a similar fashion, Theodoret received “the whole of the clergy and the good monks,” who assisted him in his struggle with the Cyrillians. The result was that many of “our people” (οἱ μὲν ἡμῶν λαϊκοί) were wounded, along with many of the false monks. The emperor, as might be expected, wondered that Theodoret was able to gather such popular support.

These people who flocked to Chalcedon to hear the preaching of Theodoret were undoubtedly supporters of Nestorius. Yet, so far as we can tell, they had made no effort in his behalf at the time of his deposition. Probably they were smaller in number than Theodoret would have us believe, and they were obviously without leadership until he arrived. This, plus the awesome organization prepared by the Cyrillians and the monks of Dalmatius, undoubtedly cowed the Nestorians and prevented them from aiding their bishop in his time of need.

The disturbances in Constantinople which followed the deposition of Nestorius were of a familiar kind. The alignment of forces on either side was the same as before the council, except that now the agents of Cyril had done their job effectively, and they could also point to the decision of a council to justify their action. We can identify no supporters of Nestorius outside those in the service of the emperor, and even some of these had now allied with Cyril.

The wealth of the bishop of Alexandria was proverbial, and Cyril did not hesitate to use the resources of his church in defense of the faith. He distributed 1,400 pounds of gold to various members of the imperial court shortly after the Council of Ephesus, and this large-scale bribery must have had some effect upon the outcome of the affair of Nestorius, especially since Cyril sought the support of the empress Pulcheria by this means.\footnote{168} The sources further stress the importance of the personal intervention of Dalmatius in changing the emperor’s mind. These were probably the crucial factors involved, but we know that Theodosius altered his position during a massive popular demonstration designed explicitly to convince him that all the inhabitants of the city were united in their dislike of Nestorius. The sources tell us that the goal of that assembly of monks and laymen was to “hinder the purpose” of the emperor and to force him to change his mind. Before the council, the emperor knew that Nestorius was unpopular in Constantinople, but at least a few people supported him, and it could be hoped that popular antagonism might be overcome. The demonstrations which followed his condemnation must have convinced Theodosius that Nestorius could remain as bishop only at the cost of overwhelming public opposition. This is not to discount the role played by the personality of Dalmatius and the
intrigue of Cyril; it is only to suggest that when Theodosius made his
decision to abandon Nestorius, he probably considered the large, well-
organized crowd just outside the walls of the palace.\textsuperscript{169}

Also, we should note that, just as in earlier demonstrations in
Constantinople and Ephesus, the emperor did not interfere with the
expression of popular opinion, even though it ran exactly counter to his
well-known wishes. Perhaps the emperor wanted to have a definitive
statement of the popular will before he made a final decision on the fate of
Nestorius.

As a last point, we should ask once again whether the disturbances
which occurred during the episcopate of Nestorius can be explained in
terms other than religious. That is, is it possible that some people opposed
Nestorius for social, political, or economic reasons? In this connection, it
is well to remember that Nestorius must have been regarded, in Con­
stantinople at least, as the “emperor’s man”: Theodosius had selected him
and supported him against the wishes of most of the clergy of the capital.
It could be suggested, then, that some people saw in their opposition to
Nestorius a way to indicate their disapproval of imperial policy in general.

This is an extremely difficult question, and the evidence for it is less
than satisfactory. As we would expect, the sources give no indication that
there were any social or political considerations involved, and they
explain the affair exclusively in religious terms. There may, however, have
been nonreligious factors which our sources (most of which are concerned
with religious questions) simply did not report. The increased need for
gold occasioned by the large payments made to the Huns in these years
may well have created unrest among certain segments of the population,
particularly the merchants, who had to pay the \textit{chrysargyron}, and the
senators, who were liable for the \textit{collatio glebalis} and the \textit{aurum
oblaticum}.\textsuperscript{170} But there is no certain evidence of such unrest at just this
time. Much less do we have evidence that these people translated their
dissatisfaction into a protest against the religious policy of the emperor.

One approach to this problem is to see whether any social or economic
groups consistently supported one side in the controversy. In the case of
Nestorius, we have seen that such divisions in the populations of
Constantinople and Ephesus do not emerge clearly. The inhabitants of
Ephesus unanimously supported their bishop, Memnon, and after the
council the inhabitants of Constantinople almost unanimously called for
the condemnation of Nestorius.

During his tenure as praetorian prefect and regent for the young
Theodosius, Anthemius reorganized the administration of the food supply
of Constantinople.\textsuperscript{171} It has been generally assumed that this resulted in
years of plenty for the inhabitants of the capital. Nevertheless, there was
again a shortage of grain in Constantinople in 431, and the people
apparently blamed the emperor:
At this time, when Theodosius was holding a procession to the public granaries, a shortage of wheat fell upon the plebs and the emperor was assailed by stones from the starving people.\textsuperscript{172}

The sources do not tell us when during the year this event took place or whether it was before or after the disturbances described above. But it may be more than coincidence that the great demonstrations supporting the deposition of Nestorius and the dramatic change in the religious policy of the emperor occurred at about the same time as this severe administrative crisis in the city. Moreover, if we accept the testimony of Nestorius, the Cyrillians bribed the demonstrators with money and supplies. Such a policy would be particularly effective in a year of famine, and this may have contributed further to the willingness of the emperor to listen to the disaffected populace.

Many modern historians and theologians have denied that Nestorius was really a “Nestorian”: the teachings of Nestorius were nothing more than “a presentation of the Antiochene Christology which is clearest, simplest, and nearest to the Church that we possess.”\textsuperscript{173} Even Socrates, who was a contemporary of Nestorius, assured his readers that Nestorius was not a heretic, but a simple Christian who spoke about things he did not understand.\textsuperscript{174} Specifically, Socrates absolved him of the charge that he denied the divinity of Christ or that he taught the same things as Paul of Samosata. All this only increases our interest in contemporary popular opinion, which almost universally condemned the bishop as a heretic. If modern authorities generally agree that Nestorius—as opposed to some of his followers—was orthodox, how could the uneducated inhabitants of Constantinople and Ephesus be so certain of his heresy?

We can conclude that the disturbances which took place during the episcopate of Nestorius were basically religious in origin, but that the motivation of popular opinion was probably much more complicated than a casual reading of the sources would suggest. Although some persons (for example, the partisans of Proclus) undoubtedly had political reasons for opposing Nestorius, most people probably did so because they disliked his religious teachings. This opposition, however, was not entirely spontaneous; it was in part at least the product of the elaborate campaign directed by the supporters of Cyril of Alexandria.

Long before the controversy began, proponents of the Alexandrian school of theology had prepared the ground in Constantinople by teaching questionable doctrines as accepted points of faith. After the emergence of Nestorius, his enemies were quick to point out the bishop's errors to those who might not immediately recognize them: Nestorius, they said, taught that Christ was an ordinary man (ψιλός ἀνθρώπος); this teaching, they also pointed out, derived ultimately from Paul of Samosata, who had been condemned years before. The clerical envoys of Cyril, Egyptian monks and sailors, and discontented Constantinopolitans
kept things in constant ferment and resorted to agitation or claims of
divine assistance when ordinary persuasion failed. Thus, many of the
demonstrations against Nestorius were clearly organized and directed by
capable leaders. Important among these were the monks of Constanti-
nople, who were from the beginning outspoken in their opposition to the
bishop and who used their position of authority among the people to
shape and direct popular sentiment against Nestorius. In this connection,
it is important to note the increasing importance of the monastic
community in Constantinople in the first half of the fifth century. The
monks obviously had a more powerful position in 428 than they had held
in 404, and this helps to explain their greater significance in the affair of
Nestorius.175

Furthermore, Nestorius had attacked the term theotokos and had
forbidden its use. The Cyrillians pointed out the christological signifi-
cance of this word, but some people probably opposed Nestorius simply
because he seemed to question the honor which was due to the Virgin.

In the end, the sources do not allow us to say much about the possible
secular motivations of the inhabitants of Constantinople and Ephesus (as
distinct from their leaders). It is reasonable to assume that disturbed
conditions in Constantinople in 431 contributed to the tensions of that
year, but it is impossible to say more than that. About the significance of
popular opinion we may be more certain. Leaders of both sides took care
to secure the support of the urban crowd. In both Constantinople and
Ephesus the Cyrillians were more successful, and this popular support
helped to secure the deposition of Nestorius by the council and the
acceptance of that decision by the emperor.

1. The most important primary sources for the affair of Nestorius include the bishop's
own apology, which has survived only in a Syriac translation: The Bazaar of Heracleides,
Livre d'Héraclide de Damas, ed. and trans. F. Nau (Paris, 1910; rpt. 1969); the massive
collection of conciliar records and associated documents compiled by Eduard Schwartz,
Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum [ACO], vol. 1 (Berlin, 1927-32); and the Ecclesiastical
History of Socrates (PG 67). Among the most important secondary sources are Karl Joseph
von Hefele and Henri Leclercq, Histoire des conciles (hereafter cited as Hefele-Leclercq, vol. 2
(Paris, 1910), pp. 219–443; G. Baudry, P. de Labriolle et al., Histoire de l'Eglise de la mort de
Théodose à l'élection de Grégoire le Grand, vol. 4 of Histoire de l'Eglise depuis les origines
jusqu'à nos jours, ed. A. Fliche and V. Martin (Paris, 1948), pp. 163–203; and Duchesne,
Early History of the Christian Chuch, vol. 3, p. 219–70. On the secular history of the period,
see Bury, Later Roman Empire, vol. 2, pp. 212–35; Stein, Histoire, vol. 1, pp. 255–309; and
Jones, Later Roman Empire, pp. 170–216. See also the important dissertation of Kenneth
G. Holm, "Aelia Pulcheria and the Eastern Roman Empire" (University of Chicago, 1973).

2. This, at least, is the view of most of the ancient sources, which modern scholarship has
generally followed in evaluating Theodosius II. Caution should be used, however, in
accepting such a verdict on his reign. Church historians, writing after his death, remembered
Theodosius as one who had allowed the Latrocinium and encouraged the growth of
Monophysitism, the bane of orthodoxy in the later fifth and sixth centuries. It was easy to
blacken the emperor's reputation by asserting his weakness. There can be no doubt that intrigue flourished at the court and that others, particularly at the beginning of the reign, frequently determined policy. But the view of Theodosius as an emperor without a policy and without a will must be seriously questioned. See the opinion of Sozomen (Hist. Eccl. Prologue 9) and W. H. C. Frend, The Rise of the Monophysite Movement (Cambridge, 1972), pp. 94-95.


5. Socrates Hist. Eccl. 7.29; Nestorius Bazaar (ed. G. R. Driver and L. Hodgson), pp. 274-76. Unfortunately, the sources do not tell us who was the candidate of the "people," who of the clergy and so on. Such information would be most valuable here, but it may be significant that the clergy and the monks were apparently divided in their interests and that the laity supported a third candidate. Socrates called Nestorius ἐπηλυς, "a newcomer, stranger, foreigner," which I have translated "outsider." Socrates' term may have come from contemporary reference to the new bishop as an interloper or newcomer.


7. ACO, I, i, 6, pp. 152-53; Evagrius Historia Ecclesiastica 1, 2; Brière, "La légende syriaque," pp. 17-18.

8. Socrates Hist. Eccl. 7.29. "He was proclaimed by the people (πλείστοι) because of his sobriety (σωφροσύνη) ."

9. Socrates Hist. Eccl. 7.29; Callinicus Vita Hypatii 32. 1. p. 208 (ed. Bartelink), Dionysius was strategetes of the East (see chap. 2, n. 2).


11. Socrates Hist. Eccl. 7.35, 40. The party of Proclus appears to have been the more influential or greater in number (perhaps because of Proclus's oratorical ability?), and, although the ascetic Maximus was chosen to succeed Nestorius, Proclus finally became bishop of Constantinople in 434.

12. See note 5 above. Such a feeling of antagonism toward the outsider is more likely among the clergy than the laity of Constantinople. The clergy, of course, had hoped for promotion from among their ranks and they must have disliked the "importation" of a bishop, especially when he brought along his own staff of priests and other servants. As for the laity of the city, we must remember that Constantinople was a new city and many of its inhabitants had themselves arrived relatively recently. On the other hand, they may have distinguished themselves from Syrians, who were traditionally considered culturally inferior.

13. Callinicus Vita Hypatii 32. 2. p. 210 (ed. Bartelink). The Council of Ephesus also congratulated Dalmatius for his early condemnation of Nestorius. Cf. Dagron, "Les Moines et la ville," p. 266, n. 173. We may doubt the veracity of these accounts because of Nestorius' later condemnation: it was obviously in the interest of the monastic community to claim that their enmity toward the heretical bishop dated from the earliest time. Also, three and one-half years is a standard time span in biblical and apocalyptic literature; often it is the rule of Antichrist on earth. See Paul J. Alexander, The Oracle of Baalbek (Washington, D. C., 1967), p. 115, n. 61. Nevertheless, I am inclined to accept the general truth behind these stories, for example, Hypatius' dream in which he saw Nestorius being enthroned by "laymen" (presumably the emperor and his court). In view of the later charges against Nestorius, this is an insignificant matter, but it might have been an important point in 428 when members of the monastic community had hoped for control of the church. The Vita
Hypatius adds that Nestorius was concerned enough about Hypatius' prediction to send an emissary to him about it: this might suggest that the monk's prophecy was rather widely known.

14. If one accepts Dagron's identification of the monastic community in Constantinople as Macedonian in sentiment, it is significant that Nestorius was especially harsh toward the Arians (Dagron, "Les moines et la ville," p. 266, n. 172).


20. Socrates Hist. Eccl. 7.21; C. Th. 16.5, 48; 5, 57; 6, 6; 5, 25; 5, 24; 5, 36; 5, 49; 5, 58–59; 6, 7. Colm Luibheid, "Theodosius II and Heresy," Journal of Ecclesiastical History 16 (1965), 36–37, and most other authorities seem to have overlooked the statement of Sozomen, which is strongly supported by the evidence of the other sources. Heretics were all but tolerated during the early years of the reign of Theodosius II.


22. Socrates Hist. Eccl. 7.29. The fact that the Arians still had a church in Constantinople further demonstrates the relative toleration of heretics. The location of the church is unknown.

23. Socrates Hist. Eccl. 7.29. It is possible of course that the Arians did not intend to burn their church but that they set fires in some nearby buildings in revenge or as a diversion and that the wind carried the flames to their place of worship.

24. Socrates Hist. Eccl. 7.29. At 7.31, he says that Antony of Germa (on the Hellespont) was induced by Nestorius’ example to persecute the Macedonians.

25. C. Th. 16.5, 65 (428). Heretical sects were divided into four groups according to the degree of evil associated with each. First came the Arians, Macedonians, and Apollinarians; they were least harmful because they were only deceived (cf. the wording of Nestorius in the Bazaar, ed. Driver and Hodgson, p. 99). They might not have churches within any municipalities. Second came the Novatians and Sabbatians, who could not construct new churches; and third were a long list of heresies, the members of which were not to assemble anywhere within the empire and who could not make wills. Finally came the Manicheans, the worst of all heretics; they were effectively deprived of all civic rights.


32. See, for example, the recent statement of Frend, *The Rise of the Monophysite Movement*, p. 119: “The ideas of Apollinarius coincided with those of a large proportion of the eastern episcopate and the people at large.”


35. As an example of the complexity of this problem, Athanasius, who from such an analysis was a forerunner of Nestorius, was the primary source of much of the theology of Cyril, the foremost enemy of Nestorius. Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, pp. 329–33.

36. Eusebius said specifically that to the Arians Christ was a “second God.” See also the letter of Alexander of Alexandria to Alexander of Constantinople in Theodoret *Hist. Eccl.* 1.3, and Athanasius *Oratio Contra Arianos* (PG 26, 3530), 2. 16.


39. See, for example, Gregory of Nazianzus’ complaint to Nectarius about them in Constantinople (Ep. 202).


43. The people who approached Nestorius on this question may have been clerics or even theologians, but it is clear (if the account of Nestorius is reliable) they did not understand the theological issues at stake. Nestorius, whose own “theological means . . . were not adequate” (Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, pp. 373–74), managed to illuminate the problem for them. It is likely that these people differed only in that they were the products of theological “schools” established in Constantinople by students of earlier heretics. Lacking any firm understanding of the issues, they were reduced to the hurling of epithets and anathemas.

44. J. F. Bethune-Baker, *Nestorius and his Teaching* (Cambridge, 1908), pp. 13–14; 56–59, briefly discusses the use of the term; cf. G. Bardy, *Histoire*, p. 170. Much of the polemic of the Trinitarian controversy had concerned itself with the birth, generation, or creation of Christ, and the language used (e.g., *egeneto* [“begotten”], references to Mary) was a perfect preparation for the dispute over the *theotokos*: “even as early as the first half of the fourth century Christology and Mariology went together” (Hilda Graef, *Mary, a History of*


48. Socrates Hist. Eccl. 7. 32: “Let no one call Mary theotokos for Mary was human and it is impossible for a human to give birth to God.” Cyril, however, claimed that Dorotheus, possibly bishop of Marcianopolis, gave the sermon, saying: “if someone says that Mary is theotokos, he is anathema” (Letter to Pope Celestine, ACO I, i, 5, p. 11). It is, of course, possible that these references described different events. See Hefele–Leclercq, Histoire des Conciles, vol. 2, pp. 237 ff.

49. Socrates Hist. Eccl. 7. 32: “Everywhere he forbade the word theotokos.” The sermons are preserved in the contemporary, but probably inaccurate, Latin translations of Marius Mercator (ACO I, i, 5, pp. 26–46).

50. Socrates Hist. Eccl. 7. 32: “Just as in a night battle, people said contradictory things.”

51. Cyril’s letter to the Egyptian monks, ACO, I, i, 1, p. 11: He complained that some people had come and disturbed the faith by saying that the Virgin should not be called theotokos. Who were these people who caused such a disturbance in the desert of Egypt? Were they agents of Nestorius? It seems unlikely. Perhaps they were Egyptians who agreed with Nestorius, or those who had returned from Constantinople and reported the controversy factually. In any case, the teachings of Nestorius seem to have met with some success in the very heart of Cyril’s domain.

52. Theophanes Chronographia (ed. de Boor), p. 88; ACO, I, i, 1, pp. 101–2. Note that de Boor’s text says that Eusebius was “a lawyer of the Basilica of Constantinople.” For the Basilica, see Janin, Constantinople byzantine, 2nd ed., pp. 157–60.


54. Proclus had been consecrated bishop of Cyzicus by Sisinnius, but the inhabitants of that city refused to allow him to take possession of his see. An imperial law had required the election of the bishop of Cyzicus to be conducted under the supervision of the bishop of Constantinople, but the people of Cyzicus felt that this law was to apply only to the episcopate of Atticus (Socrates Hist. Eccl. 7. 28). Whether this was the case or not, Proclus felt that it would be wiser to return to Constantinople rather than face the candidate who had already been elected in his stead. On the date of the sermon, and for all other dates, see the convenient table by Adolf Achommeitser, “Zeittafel zur Geschichte der Konzil von Chalkedon,” in Das Konzil von Chalkedon, ed. A. Grillmeier and H. Bacht, vol. 2 (Würzburg, 1953), pp. 942–67. There is no evidence to date this sermon securely, but the emphasis placed by Proclus on the conception and birth of Christ seems to indicate the Annunciation or, more probably, the Nativity (thus December of 428).

55. ACO, I, i, 1, pp. 103–7. The term ψιλός άνθρωπος was used no less than six times in this sermon. We should remember that this term was from a very early date associated (rightly or wrongly) with the heresy of Paul of Samosata. Representative of the sentiment of Proclus are the following statements:

“Salvation was not from a mere man” (p. 105, 25).

“The nature came together and the union remained unmixed . . . a mere man could not bring about salvation” (p. 107, 3–5).

“If Christ is one and God the Word is another, there is not a Trinity, but a Tetarty. Do not divide the heavenly garment of the economy [of salvation]. Do not learn from Arius” (p. 108, 23–24).

Note the alleged connection with Arianism.
57. Proclus did not say directly that the acceptance of the *theotokos* was a prerequisite for the acceptance of the divinity of Christ, but this was the implied point of the whole sermon: e.g., Mary was "the workshop of the unity of the natures."

58. *ACO*, I, 1, p. 103. It is interesting that Proclus brings up the point of the virginity of Mary and seems to make this a condition of the divinity of Christ: "If the mother was not a virgin the child was a mere man and the birth was not miraculous." At two points in the sermon he insists on the conception of Christ through the ear of the Virgin! See my comments in "The Remarkable Christmas Homily of Kyros Panopolites," *GRBS*, 16, (1975), 317–24.

59. *ACO*, I, i, 1, p. 107


61. *ACO*, I, 1, 5, p. 11.

62. *ACO*, I, i, 5, pp. 7–10. Nestorius probably had this document in mind when he said: "And you [Cyril] called up the hands of monks and bishops and sent [them] against me to the emperor and they accused me" (*Bazaar*, p. 102).


64. *ACO*, I, i, 5, p. 8. It is not certain exactly what the *dekanikon* was. Sophocles, *Greek Lexicon*, s.v., translates this as "ecclesiastical prison," but the *decanus* could be either a secular or an ecclesiastical figure. See G. J. M. Bartelink, *Vita Hypatii*, pp. 244–45, nn. 3 and 6.


68. This comparison appears to be a deliberate falsification since, as mentioned above, neither Atticus nor Sisinnius had been effective in dealing with heresy. This may be indicative of the respect many ecclesiastics had for the memories and intelligence of the faithful.


71. Both of these statements imply that Nestorius realized his failure to win popular support for his teachings.

72. *ACO*, I, i, 1, p. 11: I have translated (κοπρίαι) as "dregs," although the meaning is a bit more precise.


76. Marcellinus Comes *Chronicon*, p. 78: "ignem in ecclesian ad comburendum altare dum infesti inaciunt, invicem sese resistente deo trucidant." See also Socrates *Hist. Eccl.* 7.33.

77. Socrates *Hist. Eccl.* 7.33 The identity of the poet is unknown.


79. Of course, we do not know how many people, if any, simply sat at home wishing Nestorius well but taking no active part in his defense. Also, we cannot say anything about the numbers of those supporting either side, except to observe that the supporters of Cyril were apparently more numerous.

80. *ACO*, I, 1, 1, pp. 73–74. Nestorius claimed (*Bazaar*, pp. 96–97) that Pulcheria was exceedingly hostile to him throughout. She may have been won over to Cyril's side at this time—before the bribes.

82. Nestorius *Bazaar*, p. 96.
83. Socrates twice used of πολλοί in a way which seems to indicate the lower classes rather than the Christian laity in general. One of these occasions (7.29) concerned the reaction of the first sermon of Nestorius; τινες τῶν πολλῶν thought that Nestorius’ approach to the heretics was just right. On the second occasion (7.32), however, Nestorius was thought heretical παρά τοῖς πολλοῖς. If Socrates was precise in his terminology, this might indicate that between the arrival of Nestorius in Constantinople and his sermons against the theotokos the opinion of “the many” changed from approval to disapproval. In the first case, however, we should note that Socrates referred only to “some” of the many. Nestorius is also said to have referred to his concern for ημέτεροι δήμοι (ACO, I, i, 1, p. 111). I am not certain of the significance of this statement, particularly since Nestorius said that the failure of the people to attain correct teachings was not ἐγκλημα τῶν λαῶν. It would be tempting, of course, especially since the term is in the plural, to connect the δημοί with the circus factions, but there is no reason to do so here. Cf. Alan Cameron, “Demes and Factions,” p. 80.

84. For aristocratic support of Nestorius, see Bazaar, p. 96; for aristocratic opposition to Nestorius, see ACO, 1, i, 5, p. 11.


86. C. H. Roberts, Catalogue of Greek and Latin Papyri in the John Rylands Library vol. 3 (Manchester, 1938), pp. 46 ff; O. Stegmüller, “Sub tecum Praesidium. Bemerkungen zur ältesten Überlieferung,” Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie 74 (1957), 76–82. The term was probably accepted by the council of Antioch in 325 (Grillmeier, Christ in Christian Tradition, pp. 188n; 244).

87. Chrysostom, of course, was raised in the tradition of Antiochene Christianity. It is interesting that his sermons which do little to increase the honor paid to the Virgin appear not to have diminished his popularity in Constantinople (assuming that those sermons were presented there, which is open to some doubt). See H. Graef, Mary, pp. 74–76.


89. G. A. Wellen, Theotokos (Utrecht, 1961), pp. 14–29; 139. The feasts of the Nativity and the Epiphany probably originated during the fourth century; see B. Botte, Les origines de la Noel et de l’Epiphanie: Etude historique. Textes et études liturgiques, vol. 1 (Louvain, 1932); L. Fendt, “Der heutige Stand der Forschung über das Geburtsfest Jesu am 25 XII und über Epiphanias,” Theologische Literaturzeitung 78 (1953), 1–10; and Massey H. Shepard, Jr., “Liturgical Expressions of the Constantinian Triumph,” DOP 21 (1967), 59–78. This might be taken as evidence of a growth of the importance of Mary, since she is generally assigned an important place in later celebrations of these feasts.

90. Epiphanius Panarion 79. 1.

91. It is interesting to note that Nestorius had earlier admitted the orthodoxy of the term: “If indistinguishably and without extension or denial of the divinity and the humanity, we accept what is said by them (theotokos, anthropotokos), we sin not” (Bazaar, p. 99). But this was said in private and even some of Nestorius’ enemies hesitated to use the term in public or in the liturgy. In his first letter to Celestine Nestorius said the same thing: “Ferri tamen potest hoc vocabulum,” if it is understood correctly. (ACO, 1, 2, p. 13, 30–31). See also his first sermon against the theotokos (ACO, 1, 5, pp. 12–14; 132). After his deposition in Ephesus, Nestorius saw the conflict he had caused and said: “Let Mary be called theotokos and let the difficulties cease,” but no one paid any attention to him (Socrates Hist. Eccl. 7,34). On this matter see Wolfson, Philosophy of the Church Fathers, vol. 1 pp. 451–63; and Grillmeier, Christ in Christian Tradition, pp. 369–99.


Nestorius and the Council of Ephesus

95. Socrates Hist. Eccl. 7.32.
96. Callinicus Vita Hypatii 32. 10, p. 212 (ed. Bartelink). Cf. Theophanes, Chronographia, A.M. 5923 (ed de Boor), p. 88: “he said that the Lord was a mere man.” It might be possible to discount this evidence, since Hypatius and Theophanes reported what they thought Nestorius’ theology was, not how it appeared to ordinary Christians. Socrates, however, said clearly that people regarded the bishop as a heretic.
97. Socrates Hist. Eccl. 7.32.
98. Nestorius Bazaar, p. 100.
99. ACO, I, i, 1, p. 24.
100. Nestorius Bazaar, pp. 100–101: “And many praised and gave glory and went away from me and remained in agreement until they fell into the snare of those who were seeking for the episcopate.”
104. ACO, I, i, 1, pp. 114–16; cf. his more harshly worded sacra sent to Cyril, ibid., pp. 73–74. Ephesus was chosen because, as the emperor said, it was easy of access to all of the bishops and it could provide all material necessities for the participants in the council.
105. Socrates Hist. Eccl. 7.34. These were probably the bishops from the diocese of Asia—perhaps the synodos endemousa of Ephesus—whom Memnon had assembled in great numbers. At least a hundred of these bishops eventually supported Cyril.
106. Socrates Hist. Eccl. 7.34.
107. ACO, I, i, 3, p. 46: οί τού Ζευξίππου παραμένοντες.
108. ACO, I, i, 1, pp. 120–21. Candidianus was to take no part in the deliberations of the council, but was to deal with “the laymen and monks who have already assembled and to remove those who are now arriving from the city by any means.” Appeal to any secular court except that of Constantinople was expressly forbidden. We know nothing about Candidianus except what we are told here. See O. Seeck, “Candidianus (no. 4),” RE (1899). The duties of the comes domesticorum are not fully known; he was, however, a military officer of high standing, a member of the comitatus, and he certainly had soldiers under his command (see Jones, Later Roman Empire, p. 372). We know something more about Irenaeus. See A. Jülicher, “Eirenaios (no. 9),” RE (1905). He later became bishop of Tyre and died about 450. Theodoret’s letters 3. 12 and 14 were probably addressed to him. In one of these he was stationed near the Euphrates and in another he was consoled for the death of his gambros (brother-in-law or other relative by marriage) who was from Antioch. There appears to be much to connect him with Antioch and possibly Antiochene theology. He was obviously a military officer and may have held the position of comes rei militaris or even comes Orientis. Thus, both Candidianus and Irenaeus were very important individuals.
109. The list of the Egyptian bishops is given in ACO, I, i, 3, pp. 6–7. See also Bardy, Histoire, pp. 177–78; J. Leipoldt, Schenute, pp. 42 and 90. Juvenal of Jerusalem arrived some time later; see Ernest Honigmann, “Juvenal of Jerusalem,” DOP 5 (1950), 290–79. An invitation had been sent to St. Augustine, but it arrived just after his death. Pope Celestine sent his legates.
110. This was standard procedure before the opening of a council and its purpose was clearly to enlist popular support as well as to secure votes among the bishops. See Socrates, Hist. Eccl. 1.8, for similar events before the council of Nicaea.
111. In the council, Theodotus of Ankara reported that “he said that one should not speak of the suckling nor the birth of God from a virgin, and many times he said that one should not speak of God as a two-month-old or a three-month-old,” and many persons heard him say these things at Ephesus; cf. Theophanes, A. M. 5925 (ed. de Boor), p. 90.
113. Nestorius *Bazaar*, p. 134. All these charges came from the pen of Nestorius, who obviously wished to have himself pictured as the innocent victim of Cyril of Alexandria and his friends. Nevertheless, the evidence of Nestorius is in keeping with that given by Cyril himself and Candidianus.


116. Nestorius *Bazaar*, pp. 108-16; *ACO*, I, i, 1, pp. 120-21; I, i, 5, pp. 119-24. These protests were not mentioned in the official *acta* of the council, drawn up by the notaries of Cyril and sent off to the emperor immediately after the close of the first session. We know of them only through the *Bazaar* and the testimony of Candidianus at the council of the easterners.


118. *ACO*, I, i, 2, p. 9: εν τη αγία έκκλησι τη καλουμένη Μαρία. Some have questioned this name for the church, as it is unusual that the church should be called Mary, yet it seems undeniable that it was dedicated to the Virgin. See Duchesne, *Early History of the Christian Church*, vol. 3, p. 244n; *Forschungen in Ephesos*, vol. 4, part I (Vienna, 1932), pp. 51 ff; Herman Vettres, “Zum byzantinischen Ephesos,” pp. 373-87; and Wilhelm Altzinger, “Ephesos, B.” *RE* supplemental vol. 12 (1970). The church “called Mary” was the famous “double church” of Ephesus, located in the city of Lysymachus at the head of the old harbor, and built (probably in the middle of the fourth century) on the foundation of an older building (probably the museum, perhaps destroyed in the Gothic invasion of the third century). This first church was damaged, probably by an earthquake and rebuilt (“doubled”) at the time of Justinian. An inscription of the sixth century confirms the dedication to the Virgin.


120. *ACO*, I, i, 2, pp. 11-12.


122. *ACO*, I, i, 2, p. 54. The letter of deposition sent to Nestorius is found at the same place.

123. *ACO*, I, i, 1, p. 118, 3-10.

124. Some of the inhabitants of Ephesus awaited the decision of the council in the agora of the city, just a short distance from the church of Mary. When the news of the deposition was brought to them, they formed a procession to show their support of the action of the council (*ACO*, I, i, 5, p. 120: the report of Candidianus given before the council of the easterners). The council met near the far western extremity of the ancient city; had the bishops wished to risk popular displeasure by exonerating Nestorius, they would not have been able to slip away unseen to their lodgings, which were probably to the east of the church.


127. *ACO*, I, i, 5, p. 121. This is from the *acta* of the council of the orientals. The purpose of this violence, according to the easterners, was to terrorize the supporters of Nestorius so that they would join Cyril’s council. Later they said that they found “the holy synod full of Egyptian sailors and Asian peasants” (*ACO*, I, i, 5, p. 128: letter to the senate of Constantinople; cf. *ACO*, I, i, 5, p. 129, 11-24: letter to the faithful of the capital).


129. *ACO*, I, i, 2, pp. 70-104.

130. *ACO*, I, i, 2, p. 102.

131. *ACO*, I, i, 3, p. 4.


134. *ACO*, I, i, 5, pp. 119–20. They posted the notice of deposition on the wall of the theatre, something which suggests that they hoped for some popular support.

135. *ACO*, I, i, 3, pp. 46–47.

136. These countryfolk seem to have lived on the land owned by the church of Ephesus. If so, it is surprising that they opposed their bishop unless, as a landowner, he was less than popular with the rural population. It is possible that they were from the ecclesiastical property of the church of Constantinople, rather than Ephesus, and that they had been brought from the neighborhood of the capital, or wherever they lived (in Asia, perhaps?), by Nestorius. Remember, however, that the easterners claimed that “Asian farmers” and Egyptian sailors supported Cyril and Memnon (note 127 above).

137. Memnon says that the “orthodox” supported him. Perhaps the “heretics,” if there were any, aided Irenaeus. An attempt to dethrone the bishop of Ephesus was hardly a novelty, as other bishops were not as popular as Memnon appears to have been. We will meet another attempt of this kind in chapter 6. If there was any local opposition to Memnon, we are unaware of it.


140. *ACO*, I, i, 2, p. 70, 7–9: ἐν θεολόγοις Ἰωάννης καὶ η θεοτόκος παρθένος ἤ ἡγία Μαρία. “John” and “Mary” may refer to the two churches of the city, although the addition of *theotokos parthenos* makes this seem unlikely.

141. One could argue that the veneration of Mary (and John?) as the special protectress of the city and support for her against her detractors were really manifestations of local loyalty. See Jones, *The Greek City*, pp. 144–46: 182; 248–49; 251–52; 299–304. It is unfortunate that we do not hear anything specific about the sailors, longshoremen, and traders of Ephesus, who must have constituted an important element in the city. One would guess that their interest in trade might make them hesitant to encourage schism.


143. The existence of this letter is known from the reply of the emperor, *ACO*, I, i, 3, p. 9.

144. *ACO*, I, i, 3, pp. 3–5. It is possible that Theodosius never received this letter, but this was probably not because of the “blockade” imposed by the emperor.

145. *ACO*, I, i, 3, pp. 9–10. Eventually Theodosius dispatched John, the *comes sacrarium largitionum*, to Ephesus to attempt to bring about a reconciliation. This ultimately resulted in the union of 433, in which the emperor agreed to the deposition of Nestorius.

146. *ACO*, I, i, 2, pp. 64–65. An *oikonomos* was an ecclesiastical official in charge of the financial administration of a church (Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, p. 902, cf. *ACO*, I, i, p. 359). Why the council warned the *oikonomoi* to watch over the ecclesiastical properties is not clear. Perhaps they feared that since Nestorius had been deposed, someone might appropriate ecclesiastical revenues on the grounds that there was no bishop.


148. In his French translation of the *Bazaar*, Nau calls them *les grands et les chefs* (p. 239); one would like to know what the original Greek was. These would presumably include some who had supported Nestorius earlier.
149. It will be remembered that Nestorius was an ardent persecutor of the heretics, but it is common to call one's enemies the "scum of the earth." Cf. Cyril's "dregs of the city" and the comments of Yavetz, *Plebs and Princes*, pp. 146-49.


151. On these visions, see F. Nau, "Jean Rufus, Évêque de Maoïuma, Plérophories," *Patrologia Orientalis* 8, 1 (Paris, 1912).

152. *ACO*, I, i, 2, pp. 66-68. The date of this letter is uncertain; it was probably written shortly after the other letter to the clergy of Constantinople (*ACO*, I, i, 2, pp. 64-65). A letter to the "fathers of the monks" (*ACO*, I, i, 2, pp. 69-70) and one addressed simply to "the reverend clergy and faithful" (*ACO*, I, i, 2, p. 70) may have been sent to Constantinople as well, although their content makes this uncertain. We know nothing about Komarios and Potamon; presumably their sees were near Constantinople. In any case, from the *com­monitorium* of the "bishops found in Constantinople" (*ACO*, I, i, 2, p. 65) we can tell that there was a large number of anti-Nestorian bishops in Constantinople immediately after the end of the first session of the council.

153. *ACO*, I, i, 2, p. 65. The clergy of Constantinople complained that before this they had received messages only from Nestorius.

154. Dalmatius had been a military officer when he was persuaded by St. Isaac to enter the monastic life. He had been married and had at least one son. He probably succeeded Isaac as abbot of the monastery which then bore his name—†α Dalmatou, but see Janin *Constantinople byzantine*, 2nd ed., pp. 333-34. Interestingly, this monastery was located near the martyrion of St. Mokios, the site of the celebration over the emperor's capitulation. See Callinicus *Vita Hypatii* 1. 6, p. 74 (ed. Bartelink); A. Julicher, "Delmatius" (no. 4), *RE* 4 (1901); and Dagron, "Les moines et la ville," pp. 266-70.


156. *ACO*, I, i, 2; Nestorius *Bazaar*, pp. 272-73.


159. Μονάζοντες μετὰ κηρίολων ψάλλοντες καὶ ως εἶδον τὰ πλήθη . . . The subject of the second clause may be πλήθη, which would change the sense of the passage.


163. Socrates *Hist. Eccl.* 7. 34.

164. It is not certain that Theodosius gave up all hope that Nestorius might be saved since as late as August of 431 Cyril felt the need to bribe the imperial court (*ACO*, I, i, 5, pp. 135-36). The emperor was also obviously upset by the following Theodoret gained in Chalcedon a short time later.


166. Socrates *Hist. Eccl.* 7. 35. At the time of this election Proclus was the popular candidate, but he was judged ineligible since he was nominally the bishop of Cyzicus. His support of the Cyrillians must have counted for much.

167. Theodoret's letter to Alexander of Hieropolis, *ACO*, I, i, 7, p. 80. Perhaps connected with this is the information that "long after the deposition of Nestorius, officers, clerics, and pious ascetics came frequently" to Hypatius and asked whether he would return to Constantinople. Hypatius answered that this would happen only if it was the "time of Antichrist." It is not certain whether these persons were Nestorians or (more likely) individuals who feared a return of the bishop. In any case it is interesting that this was still an issue. *Vita Hypatii* 39. 1-4, p. 232 (ed. Bartelink).

169. Nestorius noted that the monks “were very dear” to Theodosius and the Cyrillians undoubtedly wished to show the emperor that all the monks of the city were united in their opposition to Nestorius. Nevertheless, the support of a large number of laymen must have given weight to their demands.

170. See Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, pp. 430-32. The *collatio laustralis* was originally levied every five years, but “by the fifth century it was apparently demanded every four years,” computed from the accession of the reigning emperor. It we use 408 as the beginning of the reign of Theodosius, the tax would have been due in 428, the year in which the controversy broke out. The *collatio glebalis* (abolished by Marcian, the successor of Theodosius) was collected annually, while the *aurum obilaticum* was probably payable in 428 as well (C Th. 6.2, 25).

171. C. Th. 13.5, 32; 14.16, 1 (cf. 12.1, 177). This reorganization had been carried out under some necessity, as the house of the praefectus urbi had just been burned at the time of a food shortage. (Marcellinus comes, s.a. 409; Chron. Pasch., 407; cf. G.-I. Bratianu “La question de l’approvisionnement de Constantinople à l’époque byzantine et ottomane,” Byzantion 5 (1929), 83-107; and J. L. Teall, “The Grain Supply of the Byzantine Empire, 330-1025,” DOP 13 (1959), 87-139.

172. Marcellinus Comes, p. 78: “Hoc tempore dum ad horrea publica Theodosius processum celebrat, tritici in plebem ingruente imperator ab esuriente populo lapidibus inpetitur.”


174. Socrates Hist. Eccl. 7.32. Socrates based his evaluation on a personal reading of the works of Nestorius and conversations with his supporters.
