

REVIEW

The Case against Diodore and Theodore: Texts and their Contexts. Edited by JOHN BEHR. Pp. xx + 526. (Oxford Early Christian Texts.) Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011. ISBN 978 0 19 956987 8. £140.

5 THIS work is not merely a well-researched collection of texts concerning the controversy which arose around the two famous teachers of the Antiochene tradition, but also a scholarly attempt to throw light upon the background and main motives of this centuries-long dispute. As it is known, both Diodore of Tarsus and Theodore of Mopsuestia died in peace with the universal Church (Diodore around 390, Theodore in 428). Moreover, the former had been mentioned among the pillars of orthodoxy in the decree of Theodosius I issued on 30 July 381 after the closure of the second ecumenical council held at Constantinople (15 *Codex Theodosianus* 16.1.3). Nonetheless, Cyril, the mighty patriarch of Alexandria, after having deposed Nestorius, the pupil of Theodore and patriarch of Constantinople between 428 and 431, and then having signed the *Formula of Reunion* with John of Antioch, the former ally of Nestorius, in 433, mounted a furious assault upon the two masters of his earlier opponent, thus triggering a long controversy which resulted in Theodore's condemnation a century later.

The timing of the publication of Cyril's tract *Against Diodore and Theodore* in 438 could not have been accidental. It is often overlooked that in the same year, on 27 January 438, Emperor Theodosius II and his older sister, Pulcheria Augusta, had ordered the remains of John Chrysostom to be brought to Constantinople and buried near the altar of the Church of the Apostles as an imperial act of penance for the maltreatment of the famous Antiochene preacher and exiled patriarch of Constantinople by their father, Emperor Arcadius (Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 7.45). This solemn event implicitly blemished Cyril's reputation, since he had taken a very active part in the infamous Synod of the Oak in 403, aiding his uncle and predecessor, Theophilus of Alexandria, in having John Chrysostom deposed. Furthermore, Cyril indignantly refused the request of his colleague, Atticus of Constantinople, to reintroduce the name of Chrysostom in the diptychs of Alexandria, although he had been urged also by Isidore of Pelusium not to continue his uncle's policy (Isidore, *Ep. 370 ad Cyr. Alex. de contentione*, 40

PG 78, col. 392). Cyril replied to Atticus that Judas Iscariot could not be mentioned among the apostles either, since his place had been taken by Matthias (Cyril, *Ep. 76 ad Atticum*, PG 77, col. 356). Thus, his newly published book in 438, which simultaneously targeted Chrysostom's beloved master (Diodore) as well as his best friend (Theodore), clearly represented an implicit attack against the famous Antiochene preacher and martyred patriarch. His clear aim was to condemn Diodore and Theodore as fathers of Nestorianism—an aim which was ultimately achieved, albeit not in his lifetime.

In the first part of this work John Behr offers a clearly argued presentation of the context of this debate, which began soon after Theodore's death. The discussion of the theological background, the origin of certain doctrinal terms and phrases reaching back to the controversies of the fourth century, includes assessments of these teachers in modern scholarship, as well as a presentation of their lives, works, and theological legacy. The campaign against Diodore and Theodore is presented in a chronological fashion, from initial reactions through the aftermath of Ephesus (431) and their apparent fading out of theological discussion around and after the Council of Chalcedon (451), including most of the second half of the fifth century until Emperor Justinian's famous *Three Chapters*, to the ensuing controversy as well as their condemnation by the fifth ecumenical council held in Constantinople in 553, aided by the coerced consent of Pope Vigilius, held in house arrest in the eastern capital by Justinian. Among the famous Antiochenes Theodore of Mop-suestia was condemned in person, which implicitly meant the condemnation of Diodore as well, whilst Theodoret of Cyrus and Ibas of Edessa—having been rehabilitated by Chalcedon—escaped the anathema pronounced upon their names, but did not escape the condemnation of their works considered as having been directed mainly against Cyril of Alexandria. One of the very few staunch defenders of these Antiochene teachers in the sixth century was Facundus, the bishop of Hermiane in Africa.

The second part of the volume offers the texts in connection with the controversy around Diodore and Theodore as well as their historical-theological background. Faithfully to the title of his work, the author chooses to present these bilingual texts (Syriac-English, Greek-English, Latin-English) in the chronological order of their appearance instead of trying to reconstruct tracts of Diodore and Theodore. The theological importance of these texts and florilegia, coming from Cyril, Eutharius of Tyana, Timothy Aelurus, Severus of Antioch, Leontius of

Byzantium, Emperor Justinian, Facundus, the fifth ecumenical council, and Pope Vigilius, cannot be overstated. The author makes a very important contribution not only towards our chronological and contextual understanding of a whole series of doctrinal and church-political reasons behind this controversy, but also makes some of these documents accessible for the first time to an English-speaking readership. The addition in the appendix of the Syriac–English text of the surviving excerpts of Theodore’s *On the Incarnation* preserved in British Library Add. MS 14669 represents an indispensable source for further discussion and assessment of one of the most controversial yet also highly influential figures of doctrinal history.

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