Jnl of Ecclesiastical History, Vol. 55, No. 3, July 2004. © 2004 Cambridge University Press
DOI: 10.1017/S0022046904000740 Printed in the United Kingdom

John Chrysostom as Bishop: The View from Antioch

by WENDY MAYER

The basic details of the portrayal by the sources of the episcopate of John Chrysostom have long been accepted in the literature. So also the perspective from which his episcopate is viewed, which is both Constantinopolitan and partisan. By examining what happened from another angle, namely from Antioch, it can be seen that the standard portrayal needs to be treated with caution. At the same time, an Antiochene perspective offers new insight into the sequence of events as they unfolded.

When scholars reflect on the election to and rapid deposition from the episcopate of Constantinople of the Antiochene presbyter John, subsequently known as Chrysostom, we are very much at the mercy of the sources with their firm focus on the latter stages of events at Constantinople, relayed in each case through the filter of their own particular interests.[1] As a result there has been a tendency to accept the basic outline of events as it is conveyed: that John was kidnapped from Antioch (and therefore an innocent bystander in the political jockeying surrounding the election); that he fell out rapidly with the empress, the monks of Constantinople and other influential factions (largely because of their character and his political naivety); that he was ganged up against by a cabal led by Acacius of Beroea and the monk Isaac, later joined by Theophilus of Alexandria; and that, as a consequence, he was unable to resist the momentum which led to his second and final exile on 20 June 404. This basic structure is rarely questioned.[2] Debate concerning John's episcopate tends to focus instead on discussion of the precise relationship of the causal factors.

GCS = Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller; SC = Sources Chrétiennes

[1] I refer to the church histories of Socrates, Sozomen and Theodoret, the *Historia nova* of Zosimus, the *Dialogus de vita Iohanni Chrysostomi* of Palladius and the *Vita Iohanni Chrysostomi* of ps–Martyrius.

[2] So Chrysostomus Baur, *John Chrysostom and his time*, Westminster 1960, ii; Kenneth Holum, *Theodosian empresses: women and imperial dominion in late antiquity*, Berkeley 1982, 69–78; Wolfgang Liebeschuetz, *Barbarians and bishops: army, Church, and State in the age of Arcadius and Chrysostom*, Oxford 1990, chs xv–xxi; J. N. D. Kelly, *Golden mouth: the story of John*

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022046904000740 Published online by Cambridge University Press

What I wish to do in this article is to turn even this familiar picture on its head, and to examine the episcopate of John from the perspective of its roots in Antioch. By doing so, I want to test whether the picture that we have received is accurate or whether, in fact, we have succumbed to the portrayal that the partisans and anti-Johnites, but most particularly the partisans, have carefully constructed for us.[3]

The first question that I want to ask is: how honest is Palladius' portrayal of John's nomination and election? At the very least, how accurate is our reading of it? When we examine John's arrival on the throne of Constantinople from the point of view of Antioch, does the picture shift in a way that is significant? I would argue that it does. What is noticeable when one reviews all of the sources that mention the lobbying which took place following the death of Nectarius is the overwhelming silence regarding the interests in the matter of the see of Antioch. Attention focuses on the machinations of the Alexandrians *via* Theophilus and on the counter-machinations of the palace *via* the consul-eunuch Eutropius.[4] Nowhere is the see of Antioch mentioned; indeed the impression is given that not only is Antioch uninvolved in the promotion of John as a candidate, but that the election is a surprise and that John himself is expected to prove reluctant.[5] The overall picture, then, is that John's name has been put forward by Eutropius for his own reasons, without checking whether John himself had any interest in the nomination.

In order to understand the significance of this particular view of the situation we need to review the manoeuvrings of the major interests (Rome, Alexandria and Antioch) in relation to the see of Constantinople over the course of the elections of John's predecessors. When we examine the process involved in John's nomination and election in the context of the elections of his immediate predecessors, we cannot help but ask: is it likely that Antioch would really have been as detached from events as the silence of the sources

Chrysostom: ascetic, preacher, bishop, London 1995, chs viii–xviii; Rudolf Brändle, *Johannes Chrysostomus: Bischof–Reformer–Märtyrer*, Stuttgart 1999, 54–132.

[3] In a similar way Susanna Elm has successfully challenged the traditional view of the conflict between Theophilus and John by examining events from the perspective of Alexandria. See her 'The dog that did not bark: doctrine and patriarchal authority in the conflict between Theophilus of Alexandria and John Chrysostom of Constantinople', in Lewis Ayres and Gareth Jones (eds), *Christian origins: theology, rhetoric and community*, London 1998, 66–93.

[4] See Socrates, *Historia ecclesiastica* vi.2, ed. G. C. Hansen, GCS n.f. i; Sozomen, *HE* viii.2, ed. J. Bidez and G. C. Hansen, GCS n.f. iv; Theodoret, *HE* v.27, ed. L. Parmentier, GCS n.f. v; Palladius, *Dialogus* 5, ed. A.-M. Malingrey and P. Leclercq, SC cccxxxxi.

[5] See the interpretation by Gilbert Dagron, *Naissance d'une capitale: Constantinople et ses institutions de 330 à 451*, Paris 1974, 464. Kelly, *Golden mouth*, ch. viii, uses the label 'Unexpected promotion'; cf. Brändle, *Chrysostomus*, i.12 ('Ein überraschender Befehl'). Ps–Martyrius, Paris gr. 159, fo. 464a, says that John went 'quietly and unwillingly'.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022046904000740 Published online by Cambridge University Press

suggests? For one thing, by the time the see became vacant on Nectarius' death in 397, Constantinople had become pivotal in eastern ecclesiastical politics. For another, as one point of a triangle which included Alexandria (in close association with Rome), Antioch had long been a major and very active player within eastern church-political circles.

If we turn first to the election of John's immediate predecessor, Nectarius, several significant factors come to light. First, he was nominated and elected as a surprise candidate while the Alexandrian-Roman party was busy ensuring that Gregory of Nazianzus was declared ineligible for the position and trying to insert its own candidate, the cynic Maximus, whom Peter of Alexandria had ordained stealthily at Constantinople.[6] Second, it should be noted that the person who nominated Nectarius was none other than Diodore of Tarsus,[7] a former leader of the Meletian Nicene faction at Antioch, now bishop of a see under the broad supervision of Antioch, who, given his long and intimate connection with that city, is likely to have been promoting Antiochene interests. Flavian, the new bishop of that same Nicene faction at Antioch, who had led the faction together with Diodore during the years of Meletius' exile,[8] is said to have supported Diodore in promoting Nectarius as a candidate.[9] Third, Nectarius himself had family connections in Tarsus, even though he had been an urban praetor at Constantinople for many years and a member of the Constantinopolitan senate. He was, it appears, on the point of retiring back to Tarsus at the time of his nomination.[10] The close ties between Nectarius' family and Diodore's see, and *via* that see, Antioch, suggest strongly that Nectarius was seen as a candidate who would support Antiochene interests in the imperial capital, in particular those of Flavian's (formerly Meletius') Nicene faction. This circumstance becomes particularly significant in light of the alliances formed in the course of the Antiochene schism. A careful study of the two factions involved shows that the Eustathian faction, led at that time by Paulinus, had strong links to Rome and the bishops of Italy in the west. By virtue of the joint interests of Rome and Alexandria, this saw the Paulinian faction allied with Alexandria as well. The Meletian faction, on the other hand, had sought its alliances among the bishops of the east and had the

[6] See Dagron, *Naissance*, 451–2.

[7] According to Sozomen, *HE* vii.8.2, who provides an independent account. Socr. *HE* v.8 simply says that he was elected by popular demand.

[8] Theodoret, *HE* iv.22, and *Historia religiosa* ii.16, ed. P. Canivet and A. Leroy-Molinghen, SC ccxxxiv. 230.

[9] See Sozomen, *HE* vii.8.3–4, who claims that Flavian was initially reluctant but added Nectarius' name to the list as a favour to Diodore.

[10] See A. H. M. Jones, J. R. Martindale and J. Morris, *The prosopography of the later Roman empire*, i, Cambridge 1971, *s.v.* Nectarius 2 (p. 621); Sozomen, *HE* vii.8.1.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022046904000740 Published online by Cambridge University Press

support of the emperor Theodosius.[11] The election of a candidate favoured by Diodore and Flavian, and indeed Theodosius, and therefore the Meletian Nicene faction at Antioch, was therefore likely to have caused considerable consternation in Rome and Alexandria. Indeed in 381 we see a council of western bishops at Aquileia, led by Ambrose of Milan, at which demands were made that a general council be convoked at Alexandria to rule in the case of Antioch in regard to the election of Flavian (in other words, to deny the legitimacy of his election in favour of Paulinus) and also to affirm Maximus, Alexandria's candidate, as the legitimate bishop of Constantinople.[12] It is perhaps significant in this respect that Ambrose, in writing to Theodosius in regard to these events, accuses Nectarius, whom he considers to have been elected illegally to the see of Constantinople, of actively supporting the ordination of Flavian at Antioch.[13] Brought together in this way, the strands are strong enough to suggest that the nomination and election of John's predecessor was no accident, but a matter of considerable political importance for the see of Antioch – in particular, the Meletian Nicene faction.

Antiochene interests had also come to the fore, albeit for different reasons, in 360 at the time of another critical vacancy in the Constantinopolitan see. At that point, Eudoxius, who had spent a substantial part of his life at Antioch, eventually succeeding Leontius as bishop of that city's Arian faction in 357, was manoeuvered by Arian interests onto the throne of Constantinople.[14] What is interesting in this case is that Eudoxius had shortly beforehand been deposed at a synod controlled by the allies of Macedonius, the then bishop of Constantinople,[15] the very person whom Eudoxius was to succeed not long after on Macedonius' own deposition. Dagron, in light of the geographic spread of those deposed along with Eudoxius versus those who were subsequently deposed along with Macedonius, views this turn of events as a takeover of the imperial capital by interests in the diocese of Oriens, most particularly its capital Antioch.[16] Thus in two instances at critical points in the episcopate we see Antiochene interests taking control of the dominant Christian community in Constantinople.

[11] See Ferdinand Cavallera, *L'Schisme d'Antioche* (*IVe–Ve siècle*), Paris 1905, esp. p. 262, and Wendy Mayer, 'Antioch and the west: assessing levels of contact in late antiquity', forthcoming.

[12] See Ambrose, *ep. extra coll.* vi [xii] and ix [xiii], ed. Michaela Zelzer, CSEL lxxxii/iii. 186–90, 201–4, and Neil McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan: Church and court in a Christian capital*, Berkeley 1994, 137–46.

[13] Ambrose, *ep. extra coll.* ix [xiii], CSEL lxxxii/iii. 201–2.

[14] See Dagron, *Naissance*, 443–4.

[15] Sozomen, *HE* iv.22; Socrates, *HE* ii.40.41–3; Dagron, *Naissance*, 443.

[16] 'Si bien que, quand on voit Eudoxe d'Antioche supplanter Makédonios à Constantinople, on a un peu l'impression que c'est l'Orient qui s'empare de la capitale à la faveur d'un schisme; l'Orient d'Antioche et non celui de Constantinople': Dagron, *Naissance*, 443–4.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022046904000740 Published online by Cambridge University Press

To return closer to the time of Chrysostom and the election of Nectarius, the status of the see of Constantinople at that point is an important element in the equation. As Dagron carefully documents, in the year and a half between Theodosius' initial declaration of orthodoxy and the close of the second ecumenical council in 381, the definition of orthodoxy had evolved through several stages from that of the Apostle Peter (i.e. a Roman-Alexandrian definition) to broad adherence to the Nicene faith, to specific communion with the bishop of Constantinople.[17] That is, within that short period in the east the Roman religion of Peter was replaced by the Constantinian faith of Nicea and, under imperial direction, Constantinople, the new Rome, was substituted for the doublet Rome–Alexandria as the axis of the unified Church. When this factor is taken into consideration, it becomes clear that not only would Alexandria have been smarting at the election of Nectarius and keen to secure control of the see when it next became vacant, but that it would also have been extremely unhappy at the election of a second Antiochene pro-Meletian-Nicene faction candidate. Moreover, when we take into consideration the fact that the successful candidate was not just from that party but in fact a close *protégé* of Flavian's, who, as now seems clear, had been groomed to succeed him at Antioch (and was therefore intimate with and presumably supportive of that faction's interests)[18] the offence it caused to Alexandria must have been considerable. When we view events in this light the likelihood of John's nomination and election being a coincidence and of the Antiochene see, particularly the Flavian-led Nicene faction there, being politically neutral, if not entirely removed from the matter, as the sources would like us to believe, appears slim. The fact that one of John's first acts is to use the status accorded by the see to approach Rome to secure approval of Flavian's election as bishop of Antioch and therefore approval of the claim by the faction to which John was loyal to be the legitimate orthodox Nicene church in that city,[19] confirms his partisan interest in the affairs of the Meletian-Nicene faction at Antioch and suggests that his election was indeed no accident.[20] This conclusion in turn leads to the suspicion that the picture supplied by the sources constitutes at the very least a modesty *topos* – if not, in fact, an example of what Philip Rousseau would term 'the politics of humility'[21] – as much as it can be attributed to a desire simply to gloss over facts which detract from the

[17] Ibid. 454–5.

[18] See n. 39 below.

[19] Sozomen, *HE* viii.3.3–4; ps–Martyrius, *Vita*, Paris gr. 159 fos 466b–7a. Note, however, that Theodoret, *HE* v.23, says that Flavian sent the embassy to Rome.

[20] Whether John sent the embassy or the initiative came from Flavian, the timing makes it clear that the succession of an Antiochene candidate from that faction to the throne of Constantinople was considered essential before any further overtures could be made.

[21] This term was coined by Rousseau for a paper delivered at the conference 'The power and the glory: the legacy of Constantine', University of Exeter, 7–10 August 2000, entitled 'Less power, more glory: reflections on the politics of humility in the late empire'.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022046904000740 Published online by Cambridge University Press

favourable view of John's episcopate that the authors, in particular Palladius and his fellow Johnite, ps-Martyrius, are intent on constructing.

Examining the events of John's episcopate from the perspective of Antioch can perhaps be of assistance in a second matter. In this case, too, the sources present one picture, while a careful study of the context challenges us to see another. The question that I want to ask in this second instance is this: what prompted Epiphanius of Salamis to ally himself so readily with John's enemies? In particular, what could have motivated the hostile behaviour that he exhibited immediately upon his arrival at Constantinople?[22] Epiphanius' actions are particularly puzzling when we consider that he had had no occasion to suspect John's orthodoxy prior to that encounter. Both Baur and Kelly attribute his behaviour to the malicious promptings of Theophilus, coupled with Epiphanius' zeal for rooting out heretics, and are at pains to cite precedent for his uncanonical actions in his encounter ten years earlier with John of Jerusalem.[23] None of these reasons, it seems to me, provides a satisfactory explanation. It is also curious that both Kelly and Brändle raise doubt about whether Theophilus could himself have believed that John's theology was in any way tainted with Origenism and yet see no difficulty with the sources' portrayal of events *vis-à-vis* Epiphanius – namely, that he on the contrary thought the allegation was reasonable and was moved to swift action.[24] Baur further points out that ten years earlier, in relation to Epiphanius' treatment of John of Jerusalem, Theophilus had not supported Epiphanius and had in fact condemned his behaviour.[25] Another question thus occurs: how could Theophilus have expected that Epiphanius would now support him?

The key to these events lies once again, I would argue, in the schism at Antioch and the alliances formed by the two factions. Kelly and Brändle both casually mention this as a motivating factor, but neither demonstrates just how strong the association was between Paulinus and Epiphanius.[26] The first point to be noted here is that Alexandria was not alone among the eastern sees in ranging with the west against accepting the legitimacy of Flavian's claim to the see of Antioch. Along with Alexandria and Rome Cyprus had also taken up the cause of Paulinus.[27] The second point is that, as Jerome recalls, both Epiphanius and Paulinus had on one occasion been in Rome at the same time for church-political reasons and, in the company of the wealthy Roman matron Paula, had travelled back to their respective sees by

[22] See Socrates, *HE* vi.12, 14; Sozomen, *HE* viii.14.

[23] Baur, *Chrysostom and his time*, ii, ch. xx; Kelly, *Golden mouth*, ch. xv; cf. Brändle, *Chrysostomus*, 111, who takes the same approach.

[24] Kelly, *Golden mouth*, 205; Brändle, *Chrysostomus*, 111.

[25] Baur, *Chrysostom and his time*, ii. 218.

[26] Kelly, *Golden mouth*, 206; Brändle, *Chrysostomus*, 111.

[27] Socrates, *HE* v.10.31–3; Sozomen, *HE* vii.11.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022046904000740 Published online by Cambridge University Press

ship together.[28] That the voyage was delayed on reaching Salamis so that Paula and Paulinus might enjoy Epiphanius' hospitality suggests a more than casual association. If we consider, then, that Epiphanius was an active supporter of Paulinus' claim, once again it must be supposed that the placing of John, a cleric from Flavian's faction, on the throne of Constantinople would have been a cause for disaffection. With both Alexandria and Cyprus at one in their support of the Paulinian side of the faction, it would further have been possible for Epiphanius to overlook any previous slight by Theophilus in pursuit of the common goal of discrediting John, particularly when it is considered that by this point John had obtained the support of the bishop of Rome, a crucial ally for Alexandria and Cyprus in the cause of Paulinus. Add in the fact that when visiting Constantinople in the past Epiphanius had been a beneficiary of Olympias's largesse, which John had also now redirected,[29] and the picture of the hot-headed hunter of heretics that the sources promote begins to take on quite another aspect. While it is still possible that Theophilus' skewed account of John's involvement with the Tall Brothers acted as a trigger, it can now be seen that the roots of Epiphanius' hostility lay much deeper and had had occcasion to develop over a much longer period.

The third and final question that I want to pose is this: why did John not get into trouble at Antioch? If, as the sources suggest, his personality, values, lifestyle and agenda were such that they quickly caused him to come into conflict with the clergy, women, monks and aristocracy of Constantinople,[30] why did these same characteristics not get him into trouble with the same groups at Antioch? Or is it again the case that the preoccupations of the sources have had an unwarranted influence on the way in which we have viewed his ministry in each of the two cities? The sources offer a relatively bland picture, indicating little other than harmony and good will between John and others during the twelve years of his presbyterate. Palladius lists a few of the positive effects of John's ministry and literally says that 'all was plain sailing';[31] ps-Martyrios gives an encomiastic account of John's aggressive ministry at Antioch;[32] Theodoret ignores the years prior to Constantinople;[33] while Socrates offers impartial comment on the less

[28] Jerome, *ep.* cviii.6–7, ed. Isidore Hilberg, CSEL lv. 310–13.

[29] Palladius, *Dialogus* 17, SC cccxxxxi. 348, lines 195–200; cf. *Dialogus* 16, SC cccxxxxi. 320–2, where Palladius claims that Theophilus had also tried to extract money from Olympias. In the same passage he refers to Theophilus' ambivalent attitude towards Epiphanius.

[30] For a detailed discussion of the sources in this respect see Wolfgang Liebeschuetz, 'Friends and enemies of John Chrysostom', in Ann Moffatt (ed.), *Maistor: Classical, Byzantine and Renaissance studies for Robert Browning*, Canberra 1984, 85–111, esp. pp. 88–96.

[31] *Dialogus* 5, SC cccxxxxi. 112, lines 39–45.

[32] *Vita*, Paris gr. 159, fos 460–1.

[33] See Theodoretus, *HE* v.27, where he begins his account with John's ordination to the episcopate.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022046904000740 Published online by Cambridge University Press

comfortable aspects of John's character, but draws the line at analysing their effect on his ministry prior to Constantinople.[34] Only Sozomen introduces a negative note, when he says that at Antioch John's boldness pleased the people (from the context, Sozomen is referring here to John's preaching), but grieved the wealthy and the powerful at whom it was targeted.[35]

The first point to be made here is that, when the content and style of John's preaching are carefully analysed, there is no noticeable difference in tone or content between those homilies preached during his presbyterate, whether early or late, and those which belong to his episcopate.[36] John's view of ordained ministry and the duties attached to it was such that he saw no real difference between the role of presbyter and bishop. Indeed what in the past has been referred to as 'episcopal tone' – that is, a strong condemnation of certain failings among his parishioners, often accompanied by a threat to ban the offenders from church – is found equally in homilies from Antioch and Constantinople.[37] Thus, if we accept the common argument that at Constantinople the content of such homilies offended their target audience,[38] then we must also accept the veracity of Sozomen's comment – that the same style of preaching proved offensive to its target audience, the wealthy and the powerful at Antioch.

The second point to be made is that, as I have argued elsewhere, John, it seems, was being groomed by Flavian to be his successor at Antioch.[39] Just when this grooming process started we do not know, but it seems reasonable to assume that John was occupied with *de facto* episcopal activities for several years at least prior to his election to the see of Constantinople. If we accept this reading of events, three consequences follow. The first is that John already had a clearly developed idea of what the role of bishop entailed prior to his arrival in the imperial capital – a model of the episcopate that had been shaped by years of service within the Meletian-Nicene faction at Antioch first under Meletius, and then Flavian.[40] It is thus likely that careful examination of the actions of these two bishops will shed light on John's own understanding of the role. The second consequence is that John must have been aware of the ecclesiastical and political tensions associated with the position, whether exercised at Antioch or at Constantinople. After all, his

[34] Socrates, *HE* vi.3.12–14.

[35] Sozomen, *HE* viii.2.11.

[36] See Wendy Mayer, *The homilies of St John Chrysostom: provenance: reshaping the foundations*, Rome forthoming, ch. iii.

[37] See Pauline Allen and Wendy Mayer, 'Chrysostom and the preaching of homilies in series: a new approach to the twelve homilies *In epistulam ad Colossenses* (CPG 4433)', *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* lx (1994), 24–7, and Mayer, *Homilies* iii.2.c.

[38] See, for example, Kelly, *Golden mouth*, 134–6, and Liebeschuetz, *Barbarians*, 176–7.

[39] Wendy Mayer, 'Patronage, pastoral care and the role of the bishop at Antioch', *Vigiliae Christianae* lv (2001), 58–70.

[40] Kelly, *Golden mouth*, 16–18, 38–9, supposes that under Meletius John worked closely with him as an aide.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022046904000740 Published online by Cambridge University Press

view of the episcopate was moulded during a period when complex and ever shifting political alliances (most recently stretching through Syria, Palestine and Asia Minor on the one hand, and to Alexandria and Rome, on the other) were extremely important to the three or four different Christian factions prominent in Antioch.[41] The third consequence is that by becoming involved in the performance of tasks at the episcopal level,[42] a naturally zealous and somewhat authoritarian character would have been provided with additional opportunities to manifest itself, such that it is likely that in these latter years at Antioch John's interactions with people on an individual level came under the same strains that we observe at Constantinople. Of particular significance in this respect is the not unreasonable assumption that such interactions at Antioch would have occurred at the upper rather than lower levels of society. If so, then we have some of the same ingredients for conflict – sermons that antagonise rich men and women of influence, reinforced by less than diplomatic private interaction with persons in the same category – that we subsequently find at Constantinople.

So, why, then, did John not get into serious trouble at Antioch? What were the mitigating factors in that environment, and what can they tell us about why he ended up in exile at Constantinople? In the first instance it must be acknowledged that whatever 'episcopal' duties he performed at Antioch for whatever number of years, he was none the less not the bishop of that city and could not act on his own authority. His role can only have been that of a close assistant to Flavian in episcopal matters. In consequence, it was only at Constantinople that John had the opportunity to live out and exercise to the full a role that he had already conceived of at Antioch. Indeed Palladius suggests that at the very least at Constantinople John saw himself as modelling for his peers the ideal lifestyle of a bishop.[43] Similarly, John's wide-ranging reforms on taking over the episcopate suggest that he already held a clearly defined view of how an episcopal see, its clergy and constituents should function, an ideal to which the reality failed substantially to conform.[44] Further, as Justin Stephens's research on the political thought of John Chrysostom shows, it now seems likely that in fact he saw not just his way of life, but the definition of his sphere of activity and his every action as a bishop as an example and role model for others.[45] If the content as well as the imposition of these agenda are likely to have been important contributing

[41] See n. 11 above.

[42] For the range of tasks likely to have been encountered see Mayer, 'Patronage', 61–7, and Pauline Allen and Wendy Mayer, 'Through a bishop's eyes: towards a definition of pastoral care in late antiquity', *Augustinianum* xl (2000), 361–78.

[43] Palladius, *Dialogus* 17. [44] The reform measures are detailed ibid. 5.

[45] Justin Stephens, 'Ecclesiastical and imperial authority in the writings of John Chrysostom: a reinterpretation of his political thought', unpubl. PhD diss. Santa Barbara 2002.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022046904000740 Published online by Cambridge University Press

factors to the difficulties he experienced at Constantinople, it should not, however, automatically be assumed that the earlier development of the agenda did not cause him any problems at Antioch. If we consider that, in reality, John had been preparing to demonstrate his philosophy of the episcopate not at Constantinople, as in fact occurred, but at Antioch, then we must also consider the possibility that in preparing himself to take over from Flavian he both strove to live the kind of rigorous life that he would later demand of himself and others at Constantinople and performed his *de facto* episcopal duties there in a manner consistent with an already developed philosophy. As at Constantinople, both are quite likely to have irritated some of the faction's aristocratic patrons, along with fellow priests and deacons who did not subscribe to the same ideal. That it is the case that the Antiochene clergy did not all subscribe to the same ideal and that some in fact pursued a lifestyle similar to that which he encountered amongst his clergy at Constantinople is suggested by hints contained in the Antiochene sermons of accusations by laity against the overly fashionable dress and questionable financial dealings of certain priests.[46]

A second mitigating factor is the absence from Antioch, at least during the course of John's presbyterate, of the eastern imperial court. The implications of this in regard to his ministry at Antioch in contrast to that at Constantinople are extensive, but it is at least clear that his long-held belief in the pre-eminence of ecclesiastical over imperial authority was less likely to cause him problems when he himself was not the actual bishop and the emperor and his immediate representatives were not close at hand. Other difficulties which John experienced as a consequence of the imperial presence, such as conflict arising from competition for the patronage of wealthy and influential members of the senatorial class at Constantinople and, *via* them, the emperor,[47] were also less likely at Antioch, where in the context of that society his friendships with wealthy women from influential families, such as Carteria and Bassiana, would appear to have been less threatening.[48] On the other hand, such a view may well be an artefact of the

[46] See, for example, Chrysostom, *In I Corinth … homiliae* xxi, *PG* lxi. 179, lines 22–35; *In Phil … homiliae* ix, *PG* lxii. 251, lines 15–20.

[47] See Daniel Caner, *Wandering, begging monks: spiritual authority and the promotion of monasticism in late antiquity*, Berkeley 2002, ch. v, who points out that one of the causes for conflict between John and Isaac at Constantinople was the separate patronage networks established by Isaac and his monks, and their independent care for the poor. John's own attempts to direct Olympias's largesse compromised the interests of other episcopal clients, several of whom subsequently show up as John's enemies. For a list see Palladius, *Dialogus* 17, SC cccxxxxi. 348, lines 195–205.

[48] For a list of the women with whom he corresponded at Antioch see Wendy Mayer, 'Constantinopolitan women in Chrysostom's circle', *Vigiliae Christianae* liii (1999), 282, and Roland Delmaire, 'Jean Chrysostome et ses "amis" d'après le nouveau classement de sa correspondance', *Studia Patristica* xxxiii (1997), 308–9, 313.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022046904000740 Published online by Cambridge University Press

overwhelming lack of detail concerning John's activities in that city and, as in the case of the now doubtful assumptions regarding the discrete behaviour and character of the monks at each of the two locations,[49] should be treated with considerable caution, pending further investigation.

A third mitigating factor may well have been the schism at Antioch. Since the sphere in which John operated at Antioch was always only one part, if by far the larger part, of the Nicene community in that city, it is important to remember that the patrons and their networks upon whom his faction relied were necessarily more limited in number than they might have been otherwise. The implications of this are seen most clearly when studying the potentially powerful connections denied the Meletian-Nicene faction at Antioch since they were at the disposal of the smaller faction led by Paulinus. One of that group's more significant and wealthy patrons, Evagrius, came from a curial family at Antioch, had a brother who was a member of the Constantinopolitan senate, and himself spent some ten years in Italy where he developed influential western ecclesiastical connections. Back at Antioch he played host to numerous visitors from the west, all of whom supported the Paulinian side of the schism. After long taking an active interest in its affairs, Evagrius himself eventually became the bishop of that faction.[50] Evagrius' case is the best known but almost certainly not the only one. Thus we must consider that, important as the city of Antioch was in ecclesiastical and political affairs, even without the imperial court the sphere within which John performed his quasi-episcopal duties was to some degree restricted. As a counter-balance, however, one must also remember that at Constantinople the Nicene community which he inherited was still somewhat small and competed within the city walls with a Novatian community that was of equal status, that was led by a respected and charismatic bishop and that was of long standing.[51] In many ways the situation he inherited at Constantinople was not unfamiliar.

Brief as this study has been, the three questions posed have turned out to be significant for our understanding of the circumstances surrounding John's episcopate. The results challenge the received view and ask us to give serious thought to the following points. The first is that examining John's episcopate from the perspective of Antioch does indeed have the potential to provide new insights in an area that many have thought well-picked over. It is in the time he spent in that city, I would argue, that we find the roots and therefore the explanation for much of what happened later at Constantinople. The

[49] See Wendy Mayer, 'Monasticism at Antioch and Constantinople in the late fourth century: a case of exclusivity or diversity?', in Pauline Allen and others (eds), *Prayer and spirituality in the early Church*, i, Brisbane 1998, 275–88.

[50] See Mayer, 'Antioch and the west', and Stefan Rebenich, *Hieronymus und sein Kreis: prosopographische und sozialgeschichtliche Untersuchungen*, Stuttgart 1992, 52–75.

[51] See Kelly, *Golden mouth*, 125–7.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022046904000740 Published online by Cambridge University Press

second is that if we peer behind the picture that is presented in the sources, there are definite hints that for John the situation at Antioch was not all 'plain sailing'. This leads us to conclude that in general the sources need to be read with a greater degree of scepticism, that the neat division between his life at Antioch and at Constantinople, prevalent in the current literature, owes more to an uncritical reading of the sources than reality, and that even the basic outline of John's episcopate needs careful re-examination. Thirdly, these tantalising hints of trouble during John's presbyterate lead us back to the original consideration – John's nomination and election to the episcopate. Could it be that, in addition to John's election being a strategic move on the part of Meletian-Nicene ecclesiastical interests at Antioch, his nomination was promoted at Constantinople by certain wealthy and powerful lay members of Antiochene society from within that faction, who, irritated by his character, behaviour and preaching, used their influence to ensure both that their faction's interests were promoted and that at the same time this thorn was removed permanently from their side? At the very least, was he saved from getting into serious trouble at Antioch simply by the timing of his removal? This leads us to another avenue for speculation: had John succeeded Flavian as bishop of Antioch, as seems originally to have been the intention, what would have been the outcome? If we could answer these questions, we might find ourselves with an even clearer understanding of what did happen when he became instead bishop of Constantinople.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022046904000740 Published online by Cambridge University Press