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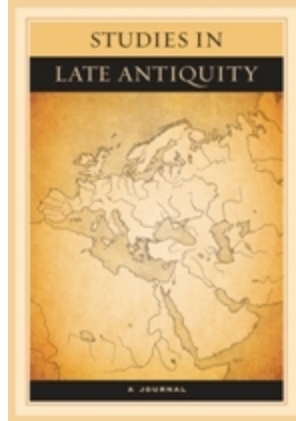
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Imperial Women and Clerical Exile in Late Antiquity

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Imperial Women and Clerical Exile

Imperial Women and Clerical Exile in Late Antiquity

Between the fourth and the sixth centuries, a large number of Christian clerics were exiled, often, but not exclusively, as a result of theological dispute. Nearly 500 of such cases are recorded, although the actual number was potentially much higher.¹ While the legal circumstances, experiences, and commemoration of male exiled clerics have attracted attention – not the least, by other contributors to this volume – it has gone so far largely unnoticed that, of these c. 500 cases, a statistically not insignificant 25 per cent involve the activities of women in some form.²

Some of these women were themselves exiled.³ More frequently than as exiles themselves, however, women appear as supporting characters within the drama of clerical exile. Their roles were varied, as Figure 1 shows.⁴ Without any further gloss, this graph appears to present a predominantly positive relationship between exiled clerics and women. They appear among exiled clerics' correspondents⁵, as tending to them during exile through the provision of food, books, hospitality or companionship⁶, or at the receiving end of exiled clerics' liturgical or charismatic pursuits, such as preaching or the performance of miracles. The types of women recorded as involved in clerical exile are equally varied. They range from deaconesses to pagans, from Christian virgins to prostitutes, and from slaves and peasants to family members of exiled clerics and aristocrats.

[Figure 1: Activities of women during clerical exile]

The largest group of women is, however, belonging to the imperial family: wives, sisters, sisters-in-law, mothers, daughters and nieces of emperors (see the Appendix).⁷ This is because much of our information about clerical exile derives from the fifth- and sixth century 'Church historians' (above all, Rufinus, Philostorgius, Socrates, Sozomen, Theodoret, the Anonymous

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of Cyzikus, Theodore lector, John of Ephesus). These authors had a deep interest in the relationship between Church and Empire.⁸ Therefore, the women about whom they wrote were, almost inevitably, often those of ruling families.

Attention to the role of imperial women in clerical exile has so far rested predominantly on just two, spectacular cases: the clash between John Chrysostom of Constantinople and the empress Eudoxia that allegedly led to the bishop's two banishments in 403 and 404; and the conflict between Pulcheria, Theodosius II's sister, and Nestorius of Constantinople, who was deposed in 431 and banished in 435.⁹ Yet, despite this relatively late date of many of our sources, the involvement of imperial women is recorded for as early as the aftermath of the council of Nicaea in 325, after which exile of deposed and condemned clerics became a standard, if often ineffective tool in imperial attempts to guarantee the peace of the Church.¹⁰ As Figure 2 shows, imperial female involvement then appears persistently throughout the period, emerging, in particular, around times of great doctrinal controversy, such as under the non-Nicene emperors Constantius II and Valens, at the time of the Christological councils of the fifth century (Ephesus, 431; Ephesus II, 449; Chalcedon, 451), and during the struggles between supporters and opponents of the council of Chalcedon under emperors Justin and Justinian in the sixth.¹¹

[Figure 2: Chronological distribution of the involvement of imperial women in clerical exile (ordered by start date of the exile in question)]

Of course, the data at our disposal are still rather limited. Nonetheless, they are more abundant than has hitherto been acknowledged, and have a long chronological spread. This provides an opportunity to attempt a reconstruction of the nature of the involvement of imperial women in clerical exile during late antiquity that is more comprehensive than the anecdotal approaches focused on single imperial women undertaken until now. More

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1
2
3 importantly, the data also provide an opportunity to understand how this involvement was
4
5 subsequently reported and to what purpose, for our authors almost exclusively write about
6
7 deceased imperial women. The article argues that while there were important continuities
8
9 (such as a predominantly negative reporting), the ways in which late antique authors describe
10
11 the complicity of imperial women in clerical exile changed twice between the fourth and the
12
13 sixth centuries. While there is relative restraint in the face of involvement of imperial women
14
15 in the exiling of clerics in sources dated to the fourth century, this changes to outspokenly
16
17 negative portrayals of their involvement in the fifth, and then changes to ambiguous
18
19 assessments (a mixture of negative and positive judgment) towards the end of the fifth and
20
21 into the early sixth. This means that a positive spin on imperial women's interference with
22
23 clerical exile appears relatively late. More important, I will show that such positive spin
24
25 almost exclusively appears in sources that were either produced by opponents of the council
26
27 of Chalcedon, which had taken place in 451 to define the nature of Christ, or in Chalcedonian
28
29 sources drawing on such resistance texts. These Christians, whom modern scholars call
30
31 Miaphysites as they rejected the Chalcedonian formula of Christ's 'two natures and one
32
33 person', were above all located in Syria, Egypt and Palestine.¹²
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40 The article will argue that these changes in representation needs to be seen in conjunction
41
42 with the now very well established real changes in female imperial roles between the fourth
43
44 and the sixth centuries, in particular the increasing incorporation of women into imperial
45
46 expressions of power from the late fourth century on.¹³ This means that it was not only gender
47
48 that affected the representation of these women, but also their social role. I will show that
49
50 Greek and Latin patristic literature was much slower to come to terms with changes in female
51
52 imperial roles than more marginalized Christian authors, such as Syriac exiles. As such, the
53
54 study of clerical exile provides a window into the multiplicity of early Christian
55
56 historiographical traditions regarding the representation of women, and imperial women
57
58 specifically. These conclusions will also help to set the well-known incidents of female
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3 imperial involvement with clerical exile, that of Eudoxia and Pulcheria, into a wider context.
4
5 The pronounced negative attitude towards Eudoxia and Pulcheria that previous scholars have
6
7 noted were by no means a freak occurrence. However, it may not be accidental that such
8
9 attitudes mostly appear in fifth-century texts, when the empress began to emerge as an
10
11 important court figure in her own right and, with this, shifted into the view of authors not only
12
13 as a contemporary character to comment on, but also as a literary device for how to explain
14
15 events in the past.
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17

18
19 In order to establish these conclusions, this article will, firstly, adopt a quantitative
20
21 approach to late antique reports of imperial women and exile. In addition to trying to
22
23 determine the authenticity of imperial women's activities in this area, this will seek to reveal,
24
25 on a numerical level, how late antique authors presented such behavior. The remainder of the
26
27 article will submit to further scrutiny the representation, over the course of late antiquity, of
28
29 one type of imperial female involvement in clerical exile: the imperial woman's patronage of
30
31 exiled clerics. While this scrutiny will be, for the major part, of a qualitative nature, to unpick
32
33 the broad trends identified in the first part of the article, it will also employ digital social
34
35 network analysis. However, rather than just identifying 'real' social networks between women
36
37 and exiled clerics, I will use this method and the underlying social theories to further uncover
38
39 narrative patterns in the representation of imperial women's roles in clerical exile in late
40
41 antique texts. This builds on observations made in the preface to this volume about the
42
43 usefulness of network analysis as a tool to reveal and visualise how late antique authors
44
45 constructed networks based on how they imagined social relationships to function. It is
46
47 similar to the approach adopted by Richard Flower in his contribution to this volume.¹⁴
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Late Antique Assessments of Imperial Women and Clerical Exile: The Numbers

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Looking at clerical exile cases quantitatively, across late antiquity as a whole, and focusing on the role of imperial women exclusively, Figure 3 reveals that the predominance of incidents of female support for exiled clerics suggested by Figure 1 is misleading. Stories about conflict, mostly, where an imperial woman brought about the exile of a cleric, far outweigh those of female support for exiled clerics.¹⁵ Against this background, the cases of Eudoxia and Pulcheria mentioned above appear relatively normal. Support – by which I mean acts of patronage such as provision of material sustenance or intercession for a cleric with the emperor either before or during exile – was mostly associated with types of women other than imperial, particularly aristocrats or ascetics.¹⁶

[Figure 3: Imperial women: enemies or patrons of exiled clerics?]

It is, of course, entirely possible that imperial women frequently clashed with prominent churchmen in this period. This was not because of their scheming female nature – even though, as we shall see, this would usually be the view of contemporaries – but may have been due to a combination of dynastic and structural changes particularly under the Theodosian dynasty (379-450). As Kenneth Holm and Anja Busch have shown, female members of the Theodosian dynasty were promoted to the population as pious and chaste representatives of what the Christian, Nicene empire stood for. This may well have come at the expense and to the annoyance of local bishops, especially in imperial residences where there was spatial proximity between the imperial and the ecclesiastical spheres.¹⁷ Nonetheless, it would be naïve to think that imperial women's endeavors, whether positive or negative, were not also recorded because they made a good story. As Averil Cameron observes, the tendency 'to put the responsibility for events good and bad onto a woman' was widespread among late antique authors.¹⁸ The persistent appearance of imperial women in conflict with

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1
2
3 exiled clerics in source from across and not just the Theodosian period already confirms this
4
5 point.
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7
8 There are two additional reasons why we should practice circumspection in the handling of
9
10 stories of imperial female involvement in clerical exile. First, as Figure 4 shows, imperial
11
12 women's actions relating to clerical exile were predominantly seen as having had unfortunate
13
14 or even impious consequences over the entire period under study. This widespread negative
15
16 reporting is remarkable, because there were occasions when imperial women apparently
17
18 brought about the removal of a cleric who was almost universally seen as troublesome, such
19
20 as Pulcheria seems to have done with Nestorius in the 430s. Yet, while we hear much
21
22 criticism of this state of affairs from marginalized Nestorian sources, Christian writers who
23
24 are hostile to Nestorius choose to be almost completely silent about her role.¹⁹ The only
25
26 source that openly celebrates Pulcheria's interference are the Coptic Acts of Ephesus.²⁰ In
27
28 sum, even when there were reasons to report an imperial woman's conflict with a cleric
29
30 positively, this was generally not done. As Figure 5 shows, the vast majority of reporting is
31
32 negative. The case of Eudoxia, famously portrayed as a latter-day Jezebel, the biblical
33
34 persecutor of the prophet Elisha (1 Kings 19), is only a particularly well documented example
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36 here.²¹
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[Figure 4: Late antique assessment of imperial women's interference with clerical exile overall]

[Figure 5: Late antique assessment of female behavior in 'conflict' stories]

Second, and more importantly, the negative reporting just described was, to a large extent, independent of whether a woman's actions amounted to conflict with an exiled cleric or his support. It should not surprise us that stories about imperial women's endeavors to have clerics banished were, on the whole, considered very critically, because these amounted to

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transgressions into administrative and legal, that is, male spheres. As Figure 6 shows, however, incidents of an imperial woman's patronage – something that we may consider as the 'female' realm and an empress' duty – could also be reported very negatively.²²

[**Figure 6:** Late antique assessment of imperial women as patrons of exiled clerics]

Figure 6, admittedly, presents an overall reasonably balanced assessment of imperial female patronage for exiled clerics. But Figure 6 and also Figure 5 already indicate an idiosyncrasy of the positive reporting on such behaviour: it appears mostly in Miaphysite sources (which includes John Rufus noted in Figure 5²³). In addition, this chart, and those presented by Figs. 3, 4 and 5, are, however, somewhat skewed by the fact that their underlying data are not related to change over time. In the following, I will trace this rhetorical development, beginning with a discussion of how interference of imperial women with clerical exile was reported in the fourth century, during the Nicene controversy, before moving on to the fifth and sixth centuries. In doing so, I will focus on stories of support, where imperial women are recorded as patrons of exiled clerics. This is not only for the sake of expediency or because, compared with stories of conflict, these have received much less attention by historians. Stories of female imperial patronage are also a useful case study, because they provide insight, on the one hand, into powerful traditions of negative gender stereotyping to explain complex political and theological processes in past and present. On the other hand, they also provide insight into moments in which these traditions were ignored or reassessed.

Athanasius and Constantinian Women in the Aftermath of Nicaea

Scattered across the works of Athanasius, Nicene bishop of Alexandria (328-373), are references that connect several female members of the Constantinian dynasty to the struggles

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1
2
3 that followed the council of Nicaea in 325, at which the views of the Alexandrian presbyter
4
5 Arius on the relationship between God the Father and Christ the Son had been condemned.
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7
8 Constantine had banished both Arius for refusing to accept the creed that the council ratified,
9
10 and a number of bishops, among them Eusebius of Nicomedia, for continuing to back Arius
11
12 after the council. However, within a few years the bishops who supported Arius regained
13
14 Constantine's favor, were recalled from banishment, and, at least as reported in the Nicene
15
16 literature, initiated a counter-offensive in favour of Arius and against Nicene bishops led by
17
18 Eusebius of Nicomedia. This was to last for decades, bolstered by the patronage they
19
20 subsequently received from Constantine's son, Constantius II. Athanasius himself now was
21
22 either banished or put to flight five times.²⁴
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25

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27 On the second of these occasions, after he had been deposed by a council in Antioch in
28
29 early 339, Athanasius fled to Rome, whose bishop Julius was a friend.²⁵ Here, as he himself
30
31 tells us in his *Defense before Constantius*, written between 353 and 357, he was received by
32
33 Eutropia, Constantine's half-sister and aunt of the then ruling emperors Constantius II and
34
35 Constans.²⁶ Contact with Eutropia may have been through her brother, Flavius Dalmatius,
36
37 who had given Athanasius military protection after his previous deposition at the council of
38
39 Tyre in 335.²⁷ Eutropia, in turn, seems to have given Athanasius access to the senatorial
40
41 aristocracy of Rome and to her nephew Constans, who eventually returned Athanasius to his
42
43 see. Her activities can, however, only be deduced from her social network, not from
44
45 Athanasius' description of their relationship.²⁸ Athanasius mentions only that she – who had
46
47 been his host in Rome – had been killed by the usurper Magnentius, probably in the summer
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49 of 350.²⁹
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55 Other women of the Constantinian dynasty appear in Athanasius' *History of the Arians*, a
56
57 polemical narrative text he wrote in late 357, for possibly Egyptian monks.³⁰ The relevant
58
59 passages can all be found in three subsequent chapters towards the beginning of the extant
60
text (chs. 4-5). Some of these women, Constantine's mother Helena and Basilina, wife of

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Constantine's half-brother Julius Constantius, bring about the banishment of bishops (on which see the Appendix). However, Athanasius also makes a brief mention of women lending patronage to his opponents. After giving a longish list of other bishops who were also banished by imperial letters, Athanasius turns to Marcellus of Ancyra, who had been deposed at a council of Constantinople in 336 and then banished on instigation of Eusebius of Nicomedia, who had access to the emperor through his 'women' (para tw=n gunaikw=n sustasi/n).

Athanasius' interest in these 'women' derived from his desire to show that Constantine's turning against Nicene bishops was because he had been tricked. While the architect of this deception was Eusebius of Nicomedia, he could succeed only because he had help from the laity, who should have stayed out of ecclesiastical affairs. The latter included imperial officials, to whom Athanasius turns immediately after his account of female complicity in the banishment of Nicene bishops.³¹ Yet, that Athanasius apparently chose to open his *History of the Arians*³² with this complicity demonstrates his belief in the narrative power of the topos of 'womanly influence', which was widespread in classical and biblical literature.³³ It set the scene for Constantine's change of mind about the 'Arian' heresy: While not entirely without guilt, he was a victim of female abuse of power, which was a constant throughout human history.

Nonetheless, it is remarkable how little Athanasius made of this story, when compared with later accounts of similar acts of female patronage for heretics discussed below. The motivations or exact involvement of Constantinian women to facilitate communication between the previously banished Eusebius and Constantine is barely reconstructable from Athanasius' account. Athanasius also remains vague on their identity. If we believe Athanasius that female intervention for Eusebius actually happened, it is possible that one of the women was Basilina, since we know from Ammianus Marcellinus that she may have been related to Eusebius of Nicomedia.³⁴ On the other hand, Basilina already died in 333, some

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1
2
3 time before Marcellus' deposition, and at a very young age. Perhaps Athanasius was trying to
4
5 imply that Constantinian 'women' had aided Eusebius in his own return from banishment and
6
7 into the emperor's favour. This is at least what later authors suspected.³⁵ In any case,
8
9 Athanasius does not provide us with further clues.

10
11
12 It is also remarkable, again in comparison with later accounts of exile, how little
13
14 Athanasius made of the support he himself had received from Eutropia. This may be due to
15
16 the purpose of the *Defense before Constantius*. The *Defense* was written to clear himself of
17
18 the charge that he had induced Constantius' brother, Constans, to invade his brother's
19
20 territory, and had then conspired with Magnentius, who had killed Constans in 350. It would
21
22 have been impolitic to draw attention to the details of his relationship with Eutropia, who, as
23
24 was mentioned above, may have given Athanasius access to Constans. In the *Defense*,
25
26 Athanasius suggests that he had never sought an audience with Constans.³⁶ His relationship
27
28 with Eutropia is mentioned only to prove Athanasius' innocence of conspiracy with
29
30 Magnentius. Here, Eutropia was useful to support Athanasius' point that he had never been in
31
32 contact with the usurper. For, as he says, how could he have conspired with the man who had
33
34 killed Eutropia, his host? Eutropia was Constantius' aunt – as highlighted by Athanasius
35
36 himself – and reference to her murder also points at the bond between Athanasius and the
37
38 emperor, his addressee, to evoke a shared sense of grief. Eutropia is mentioned nowhere else
39
40 in Athanasius' writings. More emphasis of his link to her would have made him awkwardly
41
42 comparable to the 'Arians' who, as he himself established in the *History of the Arians*,
43
44 succeeded only through the support of women.

45
46
47 Athanasius gives us some information about imperial women's involvement in clerical
48
49 exile, but what he has to say is only noteworthy in comparison to other fourth-century authors
50
51 commenting on the exile of Nicene bishops. These completely ignored the role of imperial
52
53 women, even though some of them had much to say about the dismal behavior of emperors.³⁷
54
55 Taken on its own merits, however, Athanasius' account of imperial women's actions is rather
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subdued. This changed towards the end of the fourth century, along with the whole manner of the reporting of imperial women's intervention in clerical exile.

The Sister of the Emperor: Constantia and the 'Arian' presbyter

From the late fourth century on, Christian authors became much more explicit about imperial women's actions with regard to the exile of clerics. This is not only the case for imperial women who allegedly brought about the banishment of famous bishops, such as Eudoxia, her daughter Pulcheria and others (see Appendix), but also for those women supporting exiled bishops. A series of authors from across the fifth century record the story of Constantia, wife of Licinius and Constantine's half-sister, who allegedly aided in the return of Arius from exile (and, in one version, of Eusebius of Nicomedia too). The story strongly reminds us of what Eutropia – interestingly, Constantia's sister – had done for Athanasius, which may well have been known in the circles in which Constantia's story developed. In this respect it is significant that the *Defense before Constantius* and the *History of the Arians* were both part of the famous *Apologienkorpus*, a collection of Athanasius' apologetic and polemical writings assembled in Constantinople in the early fifth century.³⁸ Many fifth-century authors took a similar perspective as the *History of the Arians* and vilified a Constantinian women who supported exiled clerics – albeit a different one than those Athanasius had mentioned – rather than taking up the more restrained view of the *Defense before Constantius* which they also may have known. Whatever the influence on these authors was, it was considerably amplified.

The following will first compare the different accounts of the Constantia story, as told between the late fourth and the mid-fifth century, by the church historians Rufinus, Socrates, Sozomen and Theodoret. This detailed comparison will show that the story was almost certainly fabricated. I will then submit the story to a re-reading in light of modern network theories. This will show that fifth-century church historians had a similar perception on how

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1
2
3 information (in this case, ‘heretical’ information) disseminates as some modern sociologists.
4
5 However, given that such sociological models can be criticized as reductive, this similarity
6
7 adds to the impression that Constantia’s network and her role within it presented by the
8
9 church historians was, in fact, a narrative creation to aid these authors’ literary aims. Finally, I
10
11 will consider the retelling of the story in two further texts written in the second half of the
12
13 fifth century, the *Dialogue against the Arians, Sabellians and Photinians* by Vigilius of
14
15 Thapsa and the Church history of the so-called Anonymous of Cyzikus. Unlike the earlier
16
17 church historians, who were mostly concerned with presenting the spread of ‘Arianism’ in the
18
19 fourth century, Vigilius and the Anonymous of Cyzikus may have retold the story in a more
20
21 direct response to current affairs: in Vigilius’ case, the persecution of Nicene Christians in
22
23 Vandal Africa; in that of the Anonymous of Cyzikus, the emergence of Miaphysite resistance
24
25 to the council of Chalcedon, and female imperial support of it.
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30 The story of Constantia and Arius appears first in Rufinus’ Latin *Church History*,
31
32 published c. 403/4, though given that this text may be a translation of the earlier lost *Church*
33
34 *History* by Gelasius, it could already have been current towards the end of the fourth
35
36 century.³⁹ It tells how, after the banishment of Arius in 325, a presbyter who was one of his
37
38 followers persuaded Constantia, Constantine’s sister and widow of Licinius, with whom he
39
40 had become familiar, that Arius had been unjustly condemned. This happened shortly after the
41
42 death of Helena, Constantine’s mother. Before Constantia died, she commended the presbyter
43
44 to her brother Constantine, urging him to listen to the man so as not to taint his empire with
45
46 the punishment of the innocent. Constantine accordingly recalled Arius and sent him for
47
48 judgment to a synod in Jerusalem which, as it was controlled by ‘Arian’ bishops, rehabilitated
49
50 him. However, when Arius tried to return to Alexandria, the city’s bishop, Alexander, and
51
52 Athanasius, Alexander’s deacon and successor, refused to receive him. Constantine also
53
54 entrusted his will to Constantia’s presbyter on his deathbed. The presbyter then passed the
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1
2
3 will and his influence on to Constantius II. As a consequence, Constantius enforced the
4
5 reinstatement of Arius in Alexandria.⁴⁰
6

7
8 No extant text of Athanasius, our contemporary witness to the events after Nicaea,
9
10 mentions Constantia. This is not to say that Gelasius or Rufinus did not draw on other
11
12 accounts about the women close to Eusebius of Nicomedia, and, inspired by these, read
13
14 between the lines of Athanasius' polemics, in particular with regard to Athanasius'
15
16 unspecified 'women' around Eusebius of Nicomedia. The fifth-century heterodox church
17
18 historian Philostorgius reports that Constantia was acquainted with Eusebius of Nicomedia
19
20 and advised him to sign the creed of Nicaea.⁴¹ That Constantia knew Eusebius is not
21
22 surprising, given that she and Licinius had resided in Nicomedia at the same time as Eusebius
23
24 became bishop there.⁴² Philostorgius may have also deployed the standard ecclesiastical
25
26 misogynistic invective of other church historians: Eusebius of Nicomedia (who he
27
28 sympathized with) was tricked by a woman into signing a devious creed. Nonetheless, his
29
30 story shows that Constantia's acquaintance with Eusebius may have been common knowledge
31
32 throughout the fourth and into the early fifth century. From this it would have been easily
33
34 deduced that she must have been aware of Arius' predicament as well.
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40 Still, Rufinus' story about Constantia and the presbyter is clearly a fabrication. This can be
41
42 concluded from the fact that the presbyter is left anonymous and, more importantly, from
43
44 mistakes in Rufinus' chronology. To begin with, Rufinus lets Constantia die after Helena and
45
46 before Arius was recalled. However, Helena probably died after 329, while the recall of Arius
47
48 should be dated to 327/8 already.⁴³ Even more importantly, Rufinus also lets Arius live on
49
50 into the reign of Constantius, while we know he died in 336, a year before Constantine.⁴⁴
51
52 Rufinus' dates shift the events described into the 330s, suggesting that he (or even Gelasius)
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54 were interested in deflecting the blame of Arius' reinstatement from Constantine onto
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56 Constantius II.
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The ‘synoptic’ church historians, writing a little later in the mid-fifth century – Socrates, Sozomen and Theodoret of Cyrillus – rectify this chronology. Socrates, on whose text the other two, especially Sozomen, depend, notes that his discovery of Athanasius’ writings led him to recognize the unreliability of Rufinus, whom he had previously used as a source for the events of Nicaea.⁴⁵ As a result, Socrates, and the other two, correctly report, following Athanasius, that Arius died before Constantine. Nevertheless, none of the three give up on the story of Constantia and the presbyter altogether. On the contrary, they relate it enthusiastically, with revealing modifications.⁴⁶ First and probably under Athanasius’ influence, they increase Eusebius of Nicomedia’s and his friends’ role in the story, making them responsible for the presbyter’s machinations. Arius also got a companion, the deacon Euzoïus. Second, they suppress the presence of Helena. This was important to keep the right chronology of events, but censorship of her connection with an ‘Arian’ empress may also have derived from Helena’s status as the model for the pious empress that Helena had by this time received.⁴⁷ Instead, another, more suitably evil empress appeared. Immediately after pouring scorn over Rufinus’ chronology, Socrates spins his story on. He reports that as soon as the presbyter had entered Constantius’ household, he, instigated by Eusebius of Nicomedia and his cronies, struck up a friendship with the ‘empress’ (this must be Eusebia, Constantius II’s second wife⁴⁸) and her eunuchs, above all, the chief-eunuch Eusebius. As a result, the entire palace, including eventually the emperor, began to follow ‘Arian’ teaching. Through the imperial officials who worked in the palace the ‘Arian’ doctrine was also disseminated beyond, and soon all households in the city (Constantinople?), and eventually the whole empire, began to quarrel about it (εὐνοίας ἀπολείπειν τὴν πόλιν καὶ ἐκαστὸν οἰκίαν διαλεκτικῶς πόλεμον).⁴⁹ This version is repeated by Sozomen, but not by Theodoret, who concludes his story with Constantius receiving the presbyter and, on his and Eusebius of Nicomedia’s advice, expelling Athanasius from Alexandria (which refers to the events in 339).⁵⁰

Imperial Women and Clerical Exile

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3 It is clear that the synoptic church historians, while having their doubts, considered the
4 story too good to lose. It would, however, be rash to assume that this was an entirely cynical
5 move. Fifth-century authors interested in the formulation, acceptance of and opposition to the
6 Nicene creed were faced with the challenge of recording complex processes that had taken
7 place a century earlier and that, due to a lack of documentation, or at least unbiased
8 documentation, could be only dimly understood. They therefore clung to a plausible
9 explanation of the dissemination of the 'Arian' heresy. Whatever its veracity, its plausibility
10 to them should not surprise if we consider the story in the light of modern network theory.

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22 The story's perspective on how information spreads is in fact not dissimilar to what
23 modern sociologists have postulated. In his famous study 'The Strength of Weak Ties', Mark
24 Granovetter argues that flow of information is facilitated through so-called 'brokers' of social
25 networks. 'Brokers' are not part of densely connected social clusters themselves, but connect
26 such clusters and also potential 'outliers' (individuals connected to a larger social network
27 through one other individual) with each other. 'Brokers' therefore bridge 'structural holes'
28 within a larger social network, which arise through contacts of reciprocal need. Without them,
29 social networks would essentially trade the same knowledge.⁵¹ Other network analysts point
30 at the power of informal or horizontal social relationships, created, for example, by kinship,
31 friendship or even just spatial proximity, that cut across vertical or hierarchical relationships
32 created by formal institutions.⁵² Taken together, these models suggest that the most successful
33 social 'brokers' are those who have informal relationships with a number of tightly knit, but
34 isolated social clusters. Network scientists have developed algorithms to reveal such
35 dynamics, in particular the 'betweenness-centrality measure', which calculates the shortest
36 connection between all actors in a network.

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Figure 7 shows a diagram of the social relationships described by the synoptic church historians, which have been calculated by this measure (size of the nodes reflects who has the shortest connections across the network, that is, functions as 'broker').⁵³ The diagram shows

Imperial Women and Clerical Exile

clearly that these authors, just like modern social network analysts, suspected that information, in this case, heretical teaching, passed through ‘structural holes’ between otherwise unconnected, but tightly knit sub-groups, in this case between the ecclesiastical, institutional groups of heretics on the right (dark blue nodes) and the Constantinian kinship group on the left (light blue nodes). The bridge over this ‘structural hole’ was, in turn, created through the informal, domestic relationship between the presbyter, the ‘broker’, and Constantia, who acted as a gatekeeper to her male relatives, but was also interested in new information to save her brother from perdition. What the graph cannot show fully is that it was not just teaching that passed through the ‘structural hole’, but, in accordance with ancient patronage habit, also the presbyter, that is, the ‘broker’ himself, who eventually ended up in Constantius’ household. The upper half of the diagram shows the network created through this process, as described by Socrates and Sozomen. As we can see, this subsequent scenario imagined by these two church historians mirrors what had happened earlier with Constantia: the presbyter is the ‘broker’ who connects the group around Eusebius of Nicomedia with the empress and her eunuchs, who act as gatekeepers to the emperor and his imperial officials (this group of ‘court members’ appears as dark green nodes). It is then implied the imperial officials again speak to their wives, so it continues to be the informal, domestic relationships connected to the $\text{o} \text{iki/a}$ (light green nodes) that explains the spread of heresy and the quarrels around the form of the right Christian faith. What is remarkable about the algorithm underlying the diagram in Figure 7 is that those it has calculated as ‘brokers’ purely on the number and distribution of their social connections, and not by some other attributes, are indeed those who the Nicene church historians identify as chiefly responsible for this spread (Arius, the ‘Arian’ presbyter, Constantia, Eusebia, Constantius II, the imperial officials).

[Figure 7: Social network that led to the recall of Arius; based on Rufinus, *Historia ecclesiastica* 10.12; Socrates, *Historia ecclesiastica* 1.25; Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica*

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3 2.27; Theodoret, *Historia ecclesiastica* 2.3; Anonymous of Cyzikus, *Historia ecclesiastica*
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5 3.12; Vigilius of Thapsa, *Contra Arianos, Sabellianos, Photinianos dialogus* 1.1-3.]
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10 Given that modern sociologists come to the same conclusions, the church historians' ideas on
11 how information circulated may well have been true on a general level. However, engagement
12 with further social network theories reveals that these ideas are just that: a model of what may
13 have happened. They help us to identify the story not as a repository of facts, but as a
14 rhetorical construct. It should, in fact, be noted that Granovetter's model of strong and weak
15 ties has also been criticized. Above all, it does not account for the strong tendency of
16 individuals to strike connections with other individuals of the same social background, status
17 and mentality ('homophily').⁵⁴ Social networks may therefore, usually, be of a much more
18 homogeneous nature than presented by the church historians (and Granovetter), and provide
19 less opportunity for an 'outsider' to act as broker of information. Historians have indeed
20 argued that the events in the aftermath of Nicaea were far less binary than our sources
21 suggest. For example, we may remember that Eusebius of Nicomedia was, most likely, a
22 kinsman of Constantine and Constantius. There must, therefore, have been reasonable overlap
23 between his and the emperor's networks, as there was, probably also between those of Nicene
24 and ante-Nicene bishops, whose allegiances shifted over time anyway.⁵⁵ In fact, the heterodox
25 church historian Philostorgius reports that it was Eusebius of Nicomedia who the dying
26 Constantine entrusted with his will to give to Constantius.⁵⁶ Eusebius of Nicomedia therefore
27 may not have needed the help of an anonymous presbyter to gain access to either emperor,
28 which, again, confirms that the presbyter was probably an invention. The Nicene church
29 historians, just like Granovetter, hence had a reductive view on the spread of what they
30 thought of as 'heresy', blaming a woman and her anonymous and lowly household dependent.
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58 This reductive view was probably also because, looking to explain the puzzling
59 inconsistency of the first Christian emperor's dealings with the 'Arian' faction and his son
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Imperial Women and Clerical Exile

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3 Constantius' 'semi-Arian' sympathies, the story not only provided the most plausible, but also
4
5 the most convenient explanation. Emphasizing the deception of a woman by an unnamed
6
7 lowly man relieved fifth-century authors from scrutinizing the potentially embarrassing
8
9 behavior of the named imperial men involved more closely. Constantia was less important,
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11 not only because she was a woman, but because she was the widow of the pagan persecutor
12
13 Licinius. The story also allowed Constantine to be exonerated from any willing or conscious
14
15 complicity. Here, Socrates is the most cautious, as he leaves it largely to his readers to draw
16
17 their conclusions about the emperor's true faith. Sozomen instead doubts that Constantine
18
19 could have believed the presbyter, wondering whether he did not rather want to indulge his
20
21 sister. Elsewhere Sozomen, alone among the church historians, adds that Constantia was also
22
23 behind recalling Eusebius of Nicomedia himself from the exile Constantine had imposed on
24
25 him after he had refused to give up contact with Arius.⁵⁷ In Theodoret's version, Constantine
26
27 remains oblivious about the presbyter's real nature altogether, and it is only revealed when the
28
29 presbyter hooks up with Constantius, who, everyone could agree, was a villain.⁵⁸
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36 Importantly, for all of the authors who reported the Constantia and Arius story, it also
37
38 allowed to ground Constantine's behaviour in Scripture, which provided it with greater truth.
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40 A slightly later text than the synoptic church histories, Vigilius of Thapsa's *Dialogue against*
41
42 *the Arians, Sabellians and Photinians*, written in Vandal North Africa, also recounted the
43
44 return of Arius from exile with reference to the story of the presbyter.⁵⁹ The text, composed in
45
46 or after 484, records an imaginary debate between Athanasius and the leaders of well-known
47
48 heresies in front of a judge named Probus, whose victor was, of course, the bishop of
49
50 Alexandria. The Constantia story, which appears in the preface, served Vigilius to situate this
51
52 debate historically, but also within a divine plan. Without beating around the bush, Vigilius
53
54 presents the presbyter as the devil, who similarly as he had done in snake-form with Eve,
55
56 induced Constantia to pass on the 'fruit of the poisonous word' (*pomum uenenati uerbi*) to her
57
58 brother. Constantine, in turn, like the first man, unknowingly deviated from the right path
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Imperial Women and Clerical Exile

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3 (*exemplo primi hominis, nescius per transgressionis uiam dilabitur*). None of the other
4
5 authors spelled this line of thought out quite as crudely as Vigilius. Yet, it is clear that this
6
7 biblical dimension is present also in the Church histories, aligning what had happened after
8
9 Nicaea with the trajectory of human history, signposted by the deception of a woman and
10
11 marked by the fallibility of a man.
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15 The fifth-century authors who seized on the story of Constantia and the presbyter were
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17 hence determined by the limits of historical research of the time, as well as led by their will to
18
19 exonerate Constantine and to position the events in a greater divine scheme. Yet, the synoptic
20
21 church historians perhaps also found the domestic politics presented by the Constantia story
22
23 convincing, because it reflected imperial customs of their own time. It seems to have been
24
25 institutionalized and generally accepted practice at the Theodosian court to approach women
26
27 and eunuchs to gain access to the emperor, as petition habits show.⁶⁰ Our authors
28
29 retrospectively applied this situation to the time of Constantine also, perhaps because they
30
31 understood from Athanasius' mentioning of 'women' as gatekeepers to Constantine that the
32
33 situation then would have been similar. In this they were probably misled by Athanasius'
34
35 polemics, because the kind of power Theodosian imperial women wielded is unlikely for the
36
37 Constantinian dynasty.⁶¹ We can perhaps note in the synoptic church historians a general
38
39 uneasiness about this power and the resulting overlap between secular and ecclesiastical
40
41 business.
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47 A direct response to concrete events – a *Sitz im Leben* – of the synoptic church historians'
48
49 retelling of the Constantia story is, however, difficult to establish. Yet, such a direct response
50
51 may be detected in later texts that include the story, the already mentioned *Dialogue* by
52
53 Vigilius of Thapsa and the Church history of the so-called Anonymous of Cyzikus, written c.
54
55 475. Both Vigilius of Thapsa's and the Anonymous of Cyzikus's version of the Constantia
56
57 story were far shriller than the synoptic church historians', perhaps because they wrote in
58
59 more uncertain times. Vigilius, the bishop of Thapsa in Byzacena from at least 484, clearly
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Imperial Women and Clerical Exile

1
2
3 composed his *Dialogue* as a comment on present-day religious conflict between Nicene and
4
5 Homoian Christians in Vandal North Africa. Vigilius may have been banished to or at least
6
7 had resided in Constantinople some time before, where he could have picked up the
8
9 Constantia story, but this is uncertain. He repeats the chronological mistakes made by
10
11 Rufinus, so could also have followed a Latin tradition of the story.⁶² It is unlikely that he was
12
13 interested in Constantia or imperial women beyond their convenient ability to gender his text
14
15 and, through this, denigrate his opponents.
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19 For the Anonymous of Cyzikus, interest in contemporary imperial women may have been
20
21 even more acute. Of all the church historians, the Anonymous' account of the Constantia
22
23 story is the longest and most elaborate. It is over long stretches held in dialogue format
24
25 between Constantia and her brother. They are represented as united in grief over the death of
26
27 Helena – here erroneously described as the mother of Constantia also – which served to
28
29 partly also exonerate Constantia, tricked by a 'top-rate flatterer' (qw=pa a) kroqi/nion)
30
31 during a dark hour of her life.⁶³ The Anonymous also, as the first among the authors who
32
33 mention the story, gives the presbyter a name, Eutokios ('he who aids in childbirth'). This
34
35 may be to underline his hybrid nature as an interloper, not only between heretics and the
36
37 imperial household, but also between the sexes. Yet, it also may be a metaphor for the benefit
38
39 of a contemporary audience much used to debate around the birth and human nature of Christ.
40
41 By his own admission, the Anonymous' Church history aimed to make a contribution to these
42
43 very debates.
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49 As detailed at the beginning of his church history, the Anonymous was the son of a
50
51 presbyter from Cyzikus who lived in Bithynia. From here, he witnessed the usurpation of
52
53 Basiliscus against emperor Zeno in 475, which triggered fierce theological debates. A sect of
54
55 heretics who the Anonymous calls 'Eutychians' – followers of the archimandrite Eutyches
56
57 whose teaching can be understood as denying Christ's complete (and hence imperfect)
58
59 humanity – had gained influence on the palace (ta\ basi/leia) and turned Basiliscus
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3 against the right faith. Outrageously, they, or rather their followers in Bithynia with whom the
4
5 Anonymous debated, claimed continuity from the council of Nicaea. The Anonymous
6
7 therefore set out to write the history of that council, to demonstrate that, if anything, his
8
9 opponents were in continuity with heretics, namely ‘Arians’.⁶⁴

10
11
12 It is unlikely that those who took theological influence on Basiliscus’ ‘palace’ were
13
14 followers of Eutyches (even though he had also been condemned at the council of Chalcedon
15
16 in 451). Rather, for the Anonymous this was short-hand for Miaphysite Christians. Basiliscus
17
18 had recalled some Miaphysite bishops who had been banished previously, Timothy Aelurus of
19
20 Alexandria and Peter of Antioch (the Fuller), and circulated an imperial statement of faith that
21
22 referenced all ecumenical councils, bar that of Chalcedon. Basiliscus’ motives are obscure,
23
24 but what is important in this context is that rumors circulated that his wife, Aelia Zenonis, and
25
26 monks from Alexandria were behind the emperor’s actions. In addition, it may have been
27
28 Basiliscus’ sister Verina, widow of the previous emperor Leo, who had instigated his
29
30 usurpation.⁶⁵ Whether all of this was true or not, it may explain the Anonymous’ interest in
31
32 female influence to end the exile of heretics, for which the story of Constantia provided him
33
34 with a powerful moral tale.
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40 Yet there may be another contemporary context for the Anonymous’ fascination with
41
42 Constantia, which brings us back to the theme of how assessment of imperial women’s
43
44 support for the exiled changed over the course of late antiquity. Imperial women had indeed
45
46 begun to support Miaphysite Christians only a short while before the Anonymous of Cyzikus
47
48 wrote. It is to Miaphysite accounts of such support that we now turn.
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The ‘Believing Queens’:⁶⁶ Theodora and Eudocia

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58 The story of Constantia should not lead us to assume that imperial women supporting exiled
59
60 clerics were always a rhetorical construct. As detailed above, Athanasius was certainly

Imperial Women and Clerical Exile

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3 assisted by Eutropia and several other cases listed in the Appendix, some of which will be
4
5 discussed below, have a historical foundation. Nonetheless, such cases documenting social
6
7 realities could still be reported about quite differently. In the following, it will be argued that
8
9 from the end of the fifth century, and in Miaphysite sources, we see the emergence of a
10
11 positive portrayal of the empress as a patron of the exiled, in a startling departure from both
12
13 Athanasius' embarrassed restraint and the vilification by fifth-century authors described
14
15 above.
16
17

18
19 Among empresses who supported exiled clerics, the most famous is, undoubtedly,
20
21 Theodora, wife of Justinian (d. 548). It is well-documented that she assisted and provided for
22
23 a large number of exiled Miaphysite ascetics and clerics, even though her husband was a
24
25 fierce defender of the council of Chalcedon. For example, according to John of Ephesus'
26
27 *Lives of the Eastern Saints*, a hagiography of Miaphysite holy people written in the 560s, she
28
29 hid the bishop of Constantinople, Anthimus from the emperor's anger in the imperial palace,
30
31 after he had been deposed and banished as a Miaphysite sympathizer in 536. This allowed the
32
33 holy man to live a life of ascetic virtue. He was only discovered after the empress' death.⁶⁷ In
34
35 the same year of 536, Theodosius, the Miaphysite bishop of Alexandria, who, according to
36
37 Chalcedonian sources had been Theodora's choice for the see,⁶⁸ was also deposed and
38
39 banished. He was sent with three-hundred of his clerics, the Syriac holy man Z'ura and bishop
40
41 John of Hephastopolis, to a fortress near Constantinople, where Theodora 'who was perhaps
42
43 appointed queen by God to be a support for the persecuted' provided them with food and
44
45 money.⁶⁹ John of Hephastopolis later feigned illness, was transferred by the empress first to
46
47 the palace and then to an imperial villa outside Constantinople and from there managed, albeit
48
49 without Theodora's knowledge, to go on trips across Asia minor to ordain priests.⁷⁰ Already
50
51 earlier, towards the beginning of Justinian's reign,⁷¹ Theodora had, again according to John
52
53 Ephesus, asked the emperor to transfer Mare of Amida, banished to Petra in Arabia, to the
54
55 more pleasant surroundings of Alexandria, and, when Mare had died, she took care that his
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1
2
3 relics were returned to Amida. The sixth-century hagiographer of Severus, the famous bishop
4 of Antioch who had lived in hiding in Egypt, but had come to Constantinople in 536 for cross-
5 confessional conversations, reports how the empress helped Severus escape after the talks
6 broke down.⁷²

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11
12 Figure 8 shows a network diagram that visualizes Theodora's intervention in clerical exile,
13 drawn from the Migration of Faith database. It demonstrates that she was involved, or
14 reported to have been involved, in banishing clerics, but to a far greater extent she extended
15 patronage on the exiled. The contrast with her husband Justinian's behavior is striking.⁷³ The
16 contrast was perhaps not unintended. Under Justinian's predecessor Justin (d. 527), his uncle,
17 many Miaphysite leaders and their followers had been banished or escaped arrest, including
18 Mare of Amida and Severus of Antioch just mentioned. In the 530s, Justinian attempted
19 compromise on various occasions, and it is probably in this context that we have to locate
20 Theodora's activities. It is difficult to ascertain her independent agency amidst the polemics
21 from both Miaphysite and Chalcedonian quarters. Many historians believe she was a firm
22 Miaphysite herself since her youth and strategically intervened for her fellow believers with
23 the emperor.⁷⁴ This may well be, but it has been shown recently that the majority of her
24 interventions for Miaphysites in exile, and her ostentatious demonstration of her faith
25 generally, came late (around 536), with the agreement of the emperor, and may have been
26 meant to create a climate of benevolence which left open the possibility for reconciliation. In
27 this light, Theodora's patronage of the exiled appears as part of female imperial
28 *philanthropia*, which, increasingly, came to encompass care for strangers and the oppressed.⁷⁵
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60 Furthermore, while her actions provided relief and perhaps facilitated dialogue, they also
contributed to a higher surveillance of exiled clerics, which may well have been in the
emperor's interest.⁷⁶

[Figure 8: Exile Network under Justinian 518-565]

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1
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4
5 Chalcedonian sources have very little to say about Theodora's support for exiled Miaphysites.
6
7 To be sure, they, and in particular Liberatus, whose *Breviarium* was written before 568, do
8
9 not refrain from chronicling her (irrational) Miaphysite sympathies, but limit these to her
10
11 alleged role in the removal and banishment of bishops: Gaianus of Alexandria in 536, and
12
13 Silverius of Rome in 537.⁷⁷ The silence about Theodora's patronage activities in
14
15 Chalcedonian sources is perhaps surprising, particularly given negative attitudes to imperial
16
17 women supporting exiled clerics in Church Histories described above. It could mean that
18
19 these were far less extensive than made out in Miaphysite sources, or they were simply not
20
21 that well known. There may, hence, have been practical reasons for these sources omitting or
22
23 highlighting information about Theodora's actions.
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27

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29 Nonetheless, I would suggest that silence about Theodora's patronage activities in
30
31 Chalcedonian sources and insistence on them in Miaphysite also had to do with different
32
33 rhetorical traditions. In the case of Chalcedonian writers, it is very clear that they followed a
34
35 well-established tradition of styling the empress as the quintessential persecuting woman. As
36
37 the cases of Eudoxia and Pulcheria and others listed in the Appendix show, this was a more
38
39 established tradition than vilifying an empress for supporting heretics during exile, of which
40
41 the Constantia story is a rare, if often retold example. In addition, Theodora's patronage,
42
43 unlike Constantia's, did not venture into the male sphere, as it limited itself to providing
44
45 material support during exile and to relics translation, and never questioned the legality of an
46
47 emperor's or a council's decisions through pleading for the return of an exiled cleric. All of
48
49 this may explain why Chalcedonian sources focused on Theodora bringing about the
50
51 banishment of bishops, rather than her lending support to heretics. As for Miaphysite authors,
52
53 it may have been useful to show that an empress chose to undermine the emperor's authority
54
55 in persecuted clerics' favor. This was a rhetorical trick widespread across patristic literature,
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not just with reference to emperors and empresses, that at once questioned a secular male hierarchy and reconfirmed it in a different, clerical form.⁷⁸

Yet in the case of John of Ephesus such a reading overlooks the generally positive image he depicts of Justinian too.⁷⁹ It also overlooks that when it comes to positive reporting of Theodora's support of exiled clerics, Syriac Miaphysite sources were far more outspoken not only than Greek and Latin writers, but than (generally much later) Coptic sources, too.⁸⁰ Insisting on Theodora's support for exiled clerics, therefore, could also have to do with the unique roles afforded to women in Syriac Christianity generally, and in Syriac Miaphysite writing specifically.

As Susan Ashbrook Harvey and others have shown, women and the feminine are granted prominence and positive agency in Syriac Christian texts not often seen in other early Christian contexts, and certainly not in the Greek and Latin patristic literature, which would even consider some of these texts with suspicion. On a general level, this could be due to a 'stronger receptivity towards feminine aspects of the divine' deriving from pre-Christian religious traditions and deeper engagement in this region with old-testamentarian salvation history, which often featured women.⁸¹ In this instance, it should be noted that there are several positive royal characters within this salvation history that provided lessons on female strength in times of male distress (for example, Esther who saved her exiled people, Jehosheb who hid her nephew from massacre, or the Pharaoh's daughter, who saved the infant Moses).⁸² Earlier Nicene and Chalcedonian writers ignored these, at least when writing about exile. While Miaphysite Syriac authors did also not directly locate Theodora's action within a biblical dimension, the association can at least not be excluded (in particular, with respect to the motif of 'royal women hiding holy men').⁸³

On a more specific level, we should remember that, unlike most other authors writing about clerical exile – Nicene, Chalcedonian or Coptic – Miaphysite Syriac authors like John of Ephesus or the sixth-century biographer of Severus of Antioch did so from a direct

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1
2
3 experience of a persecuted community. This may have fostered a more pragmatic and less
4
5 prejudiced assessment of the contributions women made which were desperately needed in
6
7 times of crisis. As a consequence, women were judged more on the basis of their commitment
8
9 to the right faith than on their gender. Theodora is, in fact, not the only woman appearing in
10
11 the work of John of Ephesus. He dedicates much space to Syriac holy women aiding
12
13 Miaphysite refugees or being banished themselves, the latter a rare occurrence in late antique
14
15 accounts of clerical exile, which is additionally remarkable for its forgoing of overt gender
16
17 stereotypes or insistence on standard societal roles.⁸⁴

21 Further evidence that positive portrayal of an empress supporting the exiled may be an
22
23 approach specific to Miaphysite Syriac writers derives from the fact that the earliest recording
24
25 of such an portrayal, even predating John of Ephesus', can also be found in a Miaphysite
26
27 source, John Rufus' *De obitu Theodosii*. This text, written probably around 500, possibly
28
29 under Syriac influence but certainly transmitted in Syriac, is a hagiographical account of the
30
31 death of Theodosius, bishop of Jerusalem 451-3, and the life of a monastic leader in Palestine,
32
33 Abba Romanus.⁸⁵ John Rufus was a former priest at Antioch, who, upon banishment of
34
35 Antioch's Miaphysite bishop Peter the Fuller in 476, had resettled in Palestine.⁸⁶ His *sujet*, the
36
37 monk Theodosius, had become bishop of Jerusalem in the aftermath of the council of
38
39 Chalcedon when Palestinian monks riotously objected against their bishop Juvenal's
40
41 subscription to the council, in the process electing one of their own to the see of Jerusalem.
42
43 After the riot was suppressed, Theodosius and several other monks were banished
44
45 (Theodosius later escaped, was re-arrested and died in Constantinople). Among them was
46
47 Abba Romanus who was sent to Antioch. As John Rufus recounts, five years into his
48
49 banishment a famine struck Palestine, which was interpreted as divine wrath for the treatment
50
51 of Romanus. Juvenal, who in the meantime had retaken his see, asked the empress Eudocia to
52
53 petition emperor Marcian for Romanus' return. As a result of Eudocia's intervention, not only
54
55 Romanus, but all other banished monks were recalled. Romanus himself settled in
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1
2
3 Eleutheropolis where he built a monastery with funds provided by Eudocia.⁸⁷ According to
4
5 the Church History of Zachariah of Mytilene of c. 490, another Miaphysite writer from
6
7 Palestine, but close to leading Syriac Miaphysites, an empress had also asked Marcian to
8
9 spare the bishop of Maiuma Peter the Iberian from banishment, another of the riotous monks-
10
11 turned-bishops. This was most likely also Eudocia.⁸⁸
12
13

14 Eudocia was a special empress. Wife of Theodosius II, she had to leave the imperial court
15
16 at Constantinople in disgrace – but with her status and wealth – in c. 444, for reasons that
17
18 cannot be discussed here and were also mysterious to her contemporaries, and settled in
19
20 Palestine.⁸⁹ Her Miaphysite sympathies and contacts, picked up, perhaps, already during an
21
22 earlier visit to Palestine in 438,⁹⁰ are reasonably well attested also by contemporary
23
24 Chalcedonian sources. Leo, bishop of Rome, wrote her a letter in June 453 trying to convince
25
26 her of the Chalcedonian formula and asking her to use her influence on persuading the
27
28 rebellious monks.⁹¹ Whether she used her resources to actively support the riot as is claimed
29
30 in much later Chalcedonian sources is, however, unclear.⁹² It is remarkable that Marcian
31
32 apparently did very little about Eudocia's subversive activities. In fact, he may have hoped,
33
34 like Justinian did less than a century later, that the authority Eudocia enjoyed with
35
36 ecclesiastical opponents would help to de-escalate the situation. It is perhaps in this context
37
38 that we also have to reinterpret his willingness to give into her demands to have banished
39
40 monks recalled.⁹³ In any case, here was an imperial woman in unusual circumstances, an ex-
41
42 empress, without official power, but with proximity to the ear of the reigning emperor and
43
44 sympathies for who Chalcedonians considered 'heretics'. For the Anonymous of Cyzikus
45
46 discussed above, she may have appeared as a striking parallel to Constantia, an ex-empress
47
48 with continued proximity to the current emperor, her brother Constantine.
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55 According to a Chalcedonian source, Cyril of Scythopolis, writing in the mid-sixth
56
57 century, Eudocia eventually accepted the decisions of the council (rather dramatically, after
58
59 her daughter and granddaughter had been kidnapped by the Vandals). This version of events
60

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1
2
3 may well have been meant as a warning for non-conforming empresses in Cyril's own time,
4
5 like Theodora. Cyril is also the only Chalcedonian source that alludes to Theodora's help for
6
7 Miaphysite exiles.⁹⁴ If Eudocia's Chalcedonian conversion was true, it did not leave a trace in
8
9 Miaphysite writing. For John Rufus and Zacharias of Mytilene, who both wrote after
10
11 Eudocia's death in 460, she remained a patron to be celebrated. This suggests, again, that we
12
13 find ourselves in front of a unique rhetorical tradition of viewing female contribution to the
14
15 struggle for the right faith.
16
17

18
19 This is not to say that Syriac Miaphysite sources were always fully positive about these
20
21 contributions. John of Ephesus, in his *Life of John of Hephaistopolis*, almost makes fun of
22
23 Theodora. She is completely oblivious of what her protégée John gets up to while she believes
24
25 him ill at her villa. As a result he is able to make ordination trips as far as Cyprus.⁹⁵ John of
26
27 Ephesus may have wanted to prevent the empress from taking center stage in John of
28
29 Hephaistopolis' story and reduced her to being a naïve tool in his hero's hands. Furthermore,
30
31 those who were in exile themselves, like Severus of Antioch, did not mention female imperial
32
33 support in their writing. Severus, in fact, in a letter to the deacon, and previous eunuch,
34
35 Misael, written in late 536 after he had left Constantinople, even had harsh words to say about
36
37 the Theodora's theological integrity.⁹⁶ There are no letters preserved from Severus to
38
39 Theodora directly. This may of course be the consequence of the transmission history of
40
41 Severus' letters.⁹⁷ Yet, his reluctance to draw attention to, let alone to celebrate, an empress'
42
43 patronage reminds of how Athanasius rhetorically handled the aid he had received from
44
45 Eutropia. It shows that Nicene, Chalcedonian and Miaphysite exiles (but not their Miaphysite
46
47 hagiographers) agreed that it was probably best to distance oneself from female influence, in
48
49 order not to jeopardize authority and the purity of one's doctrinal position. This reminds us
50
51 that Syriac clerics were still men of their time, and that, when the Syriac Miaphysite church
52
53 moved towards institutionalization this also came at the expense of excluding women.⁹⁸
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3 Still, Miaphysite sources' generally positive attitude to empresses contrasts with what we
4 find in Chalcedonian and earlier Nicene Latin and Greek sources. But even in this realm,
5 something began to change in the early sixth century. The church history of Theodore lector, a
6 reader at the Hagia Sophia, who may have accompanied his Chalcedonian bishop Macedonius
7 into exile in 511, is a case in point. Theodore reported of the banishment of Nestorius that the
8 empress Pulcheria hated Nestorius, because he had falsely accused her of incest with her
9 brother in front of the *magister officiorum* Paulinus.⁹⁹ This makes Theodore the first
10 Chalcedonian author to register Pulcheria's role in Nestorius' banishment, if with a somewhat
11 ambiguous assessment.¹⁰⁰ If this was already a radical departure from the usual distance
12 authors kept between 'heretics' and 'orthodox' empresses in order not to stir up any more
13 rumor or to muddy theological debate, a little later in his church history Theodore even more
14 directly alluded to female imperial defense of the right faith. He reports how, in c. 508,
15 Magna, the sister-in-law of emperor Anastasius, a Miaphysite sympathizer, handed him a
16 book written by the Alexandrian Chalcedonian monk Dorotheus about the council of
17 Chalcedon in the hope it would bring the emperor back to the right faith. Her hopes were
18 quickly squashed, because Anastasius banished Dorotheus to Oasis magna in southern Egypt
19 and condemned the book.¹⁰¹ Anastasius' household was famously divided over matters of
20 faith, which again, may have suited the emperor in order to keep up at least a pretense of
21 dialogue.¹⁰² Of course, Theodore may have reported the incident to pass criticism on the
22 foolish Magna, who was, after all, the cause of Dorotheus' banishment. Even so, he took the
23 for a Chalcedonian writer unusual step of recording that their cause had been taken up by a
24 female member of the imperial household (which also allowed Dorotheus this test of faith). It
25 was a risk because, since it involved a woman, the story was open to different interpretations.
26 Significantly, Severus of Antioch, the Miaphysite leader, mentioned in his *Apologia*
27 *Philaletes*, written during his exile after 518, that Dorotheus' book had been handed to
28 Anastasius in a deceitful way (which incidentally also confirms again that also Miaphysites

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were not shy of using stereotypes of female behaviour to smear the memory of events).¹⁰³

Theodore's choice of including Magna into his account of events is, therefore, curious, but it may be explained by his dependence on Miaphysite sources. Among his materials was the now lost church history of the Miaphysite author John Diacrinomenus, which covered the years from 431 (the council of Ephesus) to 512 (the election of Severus to the bishop's see of Antioch).¹⁰⁴ Theodore's use of this work was probably born out of necessity, for there were no Chalcedonian histories of this period. Still, it seems that, in addition to information, Theodore also absorbed Miaphysite ways of treating female characters. It is perhaps a sign that literary traditions were converging in this period.

Conclusions

This article has demonstrated that a quantitative approach to late antique assessments of imperial women's roles in clerical exile yields important insights, in particular with regard to narrative patterns in our sources reporting on this phenomenon. On a basic level, we can note a constant negative attitude towards involvement of imperial women in this area or perhaps more aptly, a constant tendency to trade on gendered stereotypes of female imperial behavior. It did not matter whether such involvement amounted to persecution or patronage. What mattered was whether the author in question was seeking to exalt or to denigrate the exiled cleric in question. Biblical female characters provided ready rhetorical models for such strategies. As previous scholarship has shown, for the persecuting empress these were figures like Jezebel. For the supporting empress – or better, the imperial woman taking influence on the emperor on behalf of an exiled heretic – it was Eve. All of this makes for unsurprising, but nonetheless depressing reading. Perhaps due to this, it has attracted the most scholarly attention, albeit concentrated on the persecuting, not the supporting imperial woman.

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3 A more significant and entirely new result concerns the chronological development of
4 narrative patterns. Here we can note that negative portrayals of imperial women engaged in
5 cases of clerical exile peaked in the fifth century. With regard to fourth-century women, we
6 learn about their relationships with exiled clerics mostly through such fifth-century sources.
7
8 This also means that the nature of these relationships was usually a consequence of
9
10 anachronistic representation, if it was not downright fabricated. Finally, with regard to the
11
12 positive portrayal of such relationships, we can see a reverse pattern at play. Positive portrayal
13
14 appears, at least in our extant sources, only towards the end of the period, and is largely
15
16 restricted to a particular genre of Christian writing, Miaphysite hagiography, which seems to
17
18 emerge from a different cultural tradition than Greco-Roman patristic literature. Even then,
19
20 however, no author praised an imperial woman for bringing about the banishment of a cleric.
21
22 Praise was limited to empresses' support for clerics during their exile, or for helping an exiled
23
24 cleric or ascetic to return.
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33 Kate Cooper has argued with reference to John Chrysostom that what all parties involved
34
35 with the bishop's banishment 'sensed', friends or enemies, was the 'narrative power' of the
36
37 story of his tumultuous relationship with the empress Eudoxia. It helped his enemies to
38
39 slander John and accuse him of treason, and his friends to explain his banishment with
40
41 recourse to the irrational behavior of a woman.¹⁰⁵ This 'narrative power' was certainly also
42
43 what sometimes drew fifth-century Nicene and Chalcedonian authors to stories of female
44
45 patronage, rather than persecution. Looking after the Christian needy after the model of
46
47 Helena, mother of Constantine (who was, significantly, cited in Rufinus' Constantia story as
48
49 the most honored woman of the empire), was a major expectation of imperial women since at
50
51 least the late fourth century, when Gregory of Nyssa had exalted such acts of female
52
53 *philanthopia* in his funeral speech on Aelia Flaccilla, wife of Theodosius I.¹⁰⁶ Presenting an
54
55 empress as instead looking after a heretic would therefore highlight the perversity of the
56
57 situation. Such stories, then, served similar purposes to that of persecuting empresses of
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1
2
3 providing a simple explanation, the caprices of a woman, for the outcomes of, in reality,
4
5 complex processes of theological debates and legal decision makings. The misguided support
6
7 by a woman discredited the decisions taken by men, without, importantly, reopening the case
8
9 about their legality. Given that the imperial women fifth-century church historians wrote
10
11 about were generally securely dead, they also provided a safe opportunity for some to
12
13 comment on the contemporary roles of imperial women at court.
14
15

16
17 It is interesting, however, that in the fourth century the ‘narrative power’ of such episodes
18
19 was, apparently, not yet sensed beyond Athanasius. While we may find the nucleus of
20
21 subsequent ways to tell the stories of women and exiled clerics already in the writings of
22
23 Athanasius, even he, compared with later authors, did not fully exploit their potential. This
24
25 may have been due to the fact that he was a contemporary to the male relatives of the women
26
27 so disparaged. Even if this was so, similar caution did not hold him or other exiled Nicene
28
29 bishops back from openly maligning Constantius II. Constantius’ wife, Eusebia, however, had
30
31 to wait decades before, in the fifth century, her (potentially also unhistorical) involvement in
32
33 cases of clerical exile was commented on.¹⁰⁷ It is equally remarkable that, at least for imperial
34
35 women, their positive portrayal as campaigner for exiled clerics also came relatively late. This
36
37 was not the case for other types of women. For example, Palladius, the bishop of Helenopolis,
38
39 friend of John Chrysostom and author of the *Lausiatic History* written in 419-20, reported how,
40
41 around 373, the Roman aristocrat Melania the Elder followed exiled Egyptian bishops and
42
43 ascetics around, offering them her assistance from her own funds, and even risking her
44
45 reputation by dressing up as a slave to minister to them in secret. In another chapter of the
46
47 *Lausiatic History*, Palladius told of a Christian virgin in Alexandria who hid Athanasius in her
48
49 house, after he had escaped from arrest in 357, serving on him and providing him with
50
51 books.¹⁰⁸ Of course, stories like these also served a wider rhetorical purpose, which deserves
52
53 further attention. What is important to remember here is that it took another hundred years for
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1
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3 imperial women to be treated as sympathetically as these non-imperial women in connection
4
5 with clerical exile.
6

7
8 This observation suggests that the narrative pattern identified in this article had as much to
9
10 do with the type of woman the stories involved as with authorial agendas or genre; in short,
11
12 changes in narrative patterns may have also responded to changes in the status of imperial
13
14 women. Women of the Constantinian dynasty, while more visible than their tetrarchic
15
16 forebears, still mostly appear as pawns in imperial men's games in our contemporary sources.
17
18 They were valued for their dynastic potential, but, at least not until very late in the
19
20 Constantinian period, rarely appear as independent agents.¹⁰⁹ It is therefore little wonder that
21
22 they did not register as much on fourth-century Christian authors' horizons as the more
23
24 proactive and even more visible Theodosian empresses did on that of their fifth-century
25
26 successors. With the establishment of more stationary imperial courts and the emergence of
27
28 Christian piety as a source of authority, the circle of women with direct access to the emperor
29
30 seems to have increased too in this period. It is, therefore, also no coincidence that sisters or
31
32 even sisters-in-law appear prominently in exile stories from the fifth century on. This
33
34 visibility of Theodosian women was something new, so may have triggered a suspicious or
35
36 even hostile response from observers of the imperial court.
37
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41

42
43 Yet, by the sixth century, the image of imperial women had changed again. From the time
44
45 of Marcian, the wife of the emperor in particular was increasingly presented as a partner in
46
47 reign and, culminating under Justinian, as a patron of the marginalized.¹¹⁰ The wide-spread
48
49 representation of Theodora as a champion of the exiled may owe much to Syriac traditions of
50
51 writing about women and actual Miaphysite experiences of persecution. However, the fact
52
53 that such positive reports also occasionally appear in Chalcedonian writing, like that of
54
55 Theodore lector, suggests that, on the whole, at the end of antiquity the role of the Roman
56
57 empress was in revolution. By the sixth century, observers of clerical exile seem to have
58
59 become more relaxed about her visibility and role, as long as it extended to female activities
60

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such as providing exiled clerics with food. However, as soon as the empress ventured into male and legal territory, such as contributing to the deposition and banishment of a cleric, she became victim of the customary vitriol that had already fueled criticism of female imperial behavior in the fourth century and earlier.

Appendix: List of imperial women involved in cases of clerical exile

Figures

Figure 1: Activities of women during clerical exile (chart)

Figure 2: Chronological distribution of the involvement of imperial women in clerical exile (ordered by start date of the exile in question) (chart)

Figure 3: Imperial women: enemies or patrons of exiled clerics? (chart)

Figure 4: Late antique assessment of imperial women's interference with clerical exile overall (chart)

Figure 5: Late antique assessment of female behavior in 'conflict' stories (chart)

Figure 6: Late antique assessment of imperial women as patrons of exiled clerics (chart)

Figure 7: Social network that led to the recall of Arius; based on Rufinus, *Historia ecclesiastica* 10.12; Socrates, *Historia ecclesiastica* 1.25; Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica* 2.27; Theodoret, *Historia ecclesiastica* 2.3; Anonymous of Cyzikus, *Historia ecclesiastica* 3.12; Vigilius of Thapsa, *Contra Arianos, Sabellianos, Photinianos dialogus* 1.1-3. (graph)

Figure 8: Exile Network under Justinian 518-565 (graph)

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¹ In this article and the underlying *Clerical Exile* database (Julia Hillner, Dirk Rohmann et al. *Clerical Exile in Late Antiquity*; <https://www.clericalexile.org/>), ‘exile’ refers to the outcome of a legal process: that is, either because a cleric was sentenced to exile by a legal authority, such as emperor or synod, or withdrew into exile to escape arrest. A synonym for the former is ‘banishment’ which I also use, mainly for stylistic reasons. I exclude voluntary exile, e.g. as an ascetic activity by choice, from the discussion (but see O’Connell’s contribution to this volume for examples, and the overlap between exile ‘by choice’ and the commemoration of banished clerics). On the recorded numbers of clerical exile as just a tip of the iceberg see Ramsay MacMullan, “Cultural and Political Changes in the 4th and 5th Centuries,” *Historia* 52 (2003), 482

² These numbers are based on 485 cases of clerical exile collected in the *Clerical Exile* database by 5 October 2017. Of these cases, c. 130 feature activities of women.

³ See e.g. on women in Alexandria following the condemnation of Athanasius of Alexandria in 355: Athanasius, *historia Arianorum* 72 (ed. H. G. Opitz, *Athanasius Werke*, vol. 2.1, Berlin: De Gruyter, 1941, 222-223); Theodoret, Theodoret, *Historia ecclesiastica* 2.13, ed. Léon Parmentier, Günther Hansen (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1998; GCS n.F. 5), 125-128.

⁴ The data underlying the statistical discussions in this introduction derive from the *Clerical Exile* database, as in n. 1; see also the Appendix. A list of women who appear in the database can be accessed here: Hillner, Rohmann, *Clerical Exile* https://www.clericalexile.org/browse/person?person_gender_untouched_facet=female&page=1 (accessed 18 June 2018).

⁵ Prominent clerics who extensively corresponded with women from exile are John Chrysostom, Fulgentius of Ruspe or Severus of Antioch; on John see Wendy Mayer, “John

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Chrysostom and Women Revisited,” in *Men and Women in the Early Christian Centuries*, ed. W. Mayer, I. J. Elmer (Strathfield, NSW: St Pauls Publications, 2014), 211-225; on Fulgentius Uta Heil, “From Hippolytus to Fulgentius: Sardinia as a Place of Exile in the First Six Centuries,” in *Clerical Exile in Late Antiquity*, ed. J. Hillner, J. Ulrich, J. Engberg (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2016), 165-192. On Severus see the Appendix.

⁶ For examples of such cases see also Margarita Vallejo Girvés, “Banished Bishops Were Not Alone: The Two Cases of Theodoros Anagnostes, Guardian and Assistant,” in *Clerical Exile*, ed. Hillner, Ulrich, Engberg, 193-211.

⁷ 90 of the c. 130 cases mentioned in n. 2 involved an imperial woman, 17 altogether (see Appendix).

⁸ On the church historians’ attitudes to empire see Hartmut Leppin, *Von Constantin dem Großen zu Theodosius II. Das christliche Kaisertum bei den Kirchenhistorikern Socrates, Sozomenus und Theodoret* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996).

⁹ On Eudoxia and John Chrysostom see Florent van Ommeslaeghe, “Jean Chrysostome en conflit avec l’impératrice Eudoxie: le dossier et les origines d’une légende,” *Analecta Bollandiana* 97 (1979): 389-414; Kenneth G. Holum, *Theodosian Empresses. Women and Imperial Dominion in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 69-78; J. W. G. H. Liebeschuetz, “The Fall of John Chrysostom,” *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 29 (1985): 1-31; K. Cooper, *The Virgin and the Bride. Idealized Womanhood in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1995), 17-19; W. Mayer, “Doing Violence to the Image of an Empress: The Destruction of Eudoxia’s Reputation,” in *Violence in Late Antiquity*, ed. Drake, 205-214; Krystyna Stebnicka, “Jezebel and Eudoxia: Reflections of the History of the First Conflict Between John Chrysostom and Empress Eudoxia,” *Palamedes: A Journal of Ancient History* 7 (2012): 143-154; Timothy Barnes, George Bevan, *The Funerary Speech for John Chrysostom* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013), 24-32; Anja

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Busch, *Die Frauen der Theodosianischen Dynastie. Macht und Repräsentation kaiserlicher Frauen im 5. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2015), 71-85; Belinda Washington, *The Roles of Imperial Women in the Later Roman Empire (AD 306-455)* (Diss. Edinburgh 2016), 189-206; Jennifer Barry, "Diagnosing Heresy: Ps.-Martyrius's *Funerary Speech for John Chrysostom*", *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 24 (2016), 395-418. On Pulcheria and Nestorius: Holum, *Theodosian Empresses*, 147-174; Vasiliki Limberis, *Divine Heiress. The Virgin Mary and the Creation of Christian Constantinople* (New York: Routledge, 1994); Nicholas Constatas, "Weaving the Body of God: Proclus of Constantinople, the Theotokos and the Loom of the Flesh", *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 3 (1995), 169-194; Christine Angelidi, *Pulcheria. La castità al potere* (Milan: Jaca, 1996); Kate Cooper, "Contesting the Nativity: Wives, Virgins and Pulcheria's 'Imitatio Mariae'," *Scottish Journal of Religious Studies* 19 (1998): 31-43; K. Cooper, "Empress and Theotokos: Gender and Patronage in the Christological Controversy," *Studies in Church History* 39 (2004): 39-51; Busch, *Die Frauen*, 119-122.

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¹⁰ On exile as a tool of imperial church politics see E. Fournier, "Exiled bishops in the Christian empire: victims of imperial violence?," in *Violence in Late Antiquity: Perceptions and Practices*, ed. H. Drake (Aldershot, England ; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006), 157-166.

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¹¹ The large number of cases recorded for 518 all refer to one incident, recorded in one single text, the seventh-century chronicle of Ps-Dionysius of Tel-Mareh: the banishment of 54 Miaphysite bishops which followed empress Lupicina-Euphemia's campaign for the inscription of the council of Chalcedon into the diptychs of the church of Constantinople. For reference, see the Appendix.

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¹² Older scholarship calls them Monophysites, but this distinguishes too imprecisely between followers of the archimandrite Eutyches, also condemned at the council, and other opponents of the council, whose traditions live on in the Coptic and Syrian churches and who,

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to this day, distinguish their teachings from that of Eutyches (on whom further below). Note that some scholars prefer the (somewhat anachronistic) labels ‘Syrian Orthodox Church’ and ‘Coptic Church’. On all this see Volker Menze, *Justinian and the Making of the Syrian Orthodox Church* (Oxford University Press, 2008), 2-3.

¹³ On this see Holum, *Theodosian Empresses*; Liz James, *Empresses and Power in Early Byzantium* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 2001); Busch, *Die Frauen*; Michaela Dirschlmayer, *Kirchenstiftungen römischer Kaiserinnen vom 4. bis zum 6. Jahrhundert. Die Erschließung neuer Handlungsspielräume* (Münster: Aschendorff, 2015); Diliana Angelova, *Sacred Founders. Women, Men and Gods in the Discourse of Imperial Founding, Rome Through Early Byzantium* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2015); Belinda Washington, *The Roles of Imperial Women in the Later Roman Empire (AD 306-455)*, diss. Edinburgh 2016.

¹⁴ See also Julia Hillner, “Approaches to Clerical Exile in Late Antiquity: Strategies, Experiences, Memories and Social Networks”, in *Clerical Exile*, ed. Hillner, Ulrich, Engberg, 34-43.

¹⁵ For the data underlying the charts in Figures 3-6 see the Appendix.

¹⁶ For examples see below, n. 108.

¹⁷ Holum, *Theodosian Empresses*; Busch, *Die Frauen*.

¹⁸ Averil Cameron, “The Cult of the Virgin in Late Antiquity: Religious Developments and Myth-Making,” *Studies in Church History* 39 (2004): 12.

¹⁹ Cooper, “Contesting the Nativity.” Note that for this reason the extent of her role has also been doubted, see Richard Price, “Marian Piety and the Nestorian Controversy,” *Studies in Church History* 39 (2004): 31-38.

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²⁰ Wilhelm Kraatz, *Koptische Akten zum Ephesinischen Konzil vom Jahre 431* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1904), 49-55: the acts record the people of Constantinople acclaiming Pulcheria after the council of Ephesus. On Theodore Lector and John Rufus see below.

²¹ On Eudoxia as Jezebel see, for example, Stebnicka, "Jezebel and Eudoxia," Barry, "Diagnosing Heresy".

²² On patronage as a traditional activity of the Roman empress since the early empire see Christiane Kunst, "Patronage/Matronage der *Augustae*," in Anne Kolb (ed.), *Augustae. Machtbewusste Frauen am römischen Kaiserhof* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2010), 145-161.

²³ On John Rufus see the introduction to Cornelia Horn, Robert Phenix, *John Rufus: The Lives of Peter the Iberian, Theodosius of Jerusalem and Abba Romanus* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008) and further below.

²⁴ For background see Timothy Barnes, *Athanasius and Constantius* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1993), 14-18; David Gwynn, *The Eusebians: The Polemics of Athanasius of Alexandria and the Construction of the 'Arian Controversy'* (Oxford University Press, 2006). Gwynn does not believe the actions of Eusebius and others who either supported Arius or who opposed Athanasius to have been coordinated. On Eusebius of Nicomedia see also Jennifer Barry's contribution in this volume.

²⁵ On Athanasius in Rome see Barnes, *Athanasius*, 47-55.

²⁶ Athanasius, *Apologia ad Constantium* 6, ed. Hanns Christof Brennecke Uta Heil, Annette von Stockhausen, *Athanasius Werke* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2006), 284.

²⁷ Theophanes, *Chronographia* AM 5827, ed. Carl De Boor (Leipzig: Teubner, 1883), 30-33.

²⁸ See Julia Hillner, "A Woman's Place: Imperial Women in Late Antique Rome," *Antiquité tardive* 25 (2017), 67-70.

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²⁹ Probably during yet another usurpation, by Eutropia's son, Nepotianus, quelled by Magnentius. On this see Kay Ehling, "Die Erhebung des Nepotianus in Rom im Juni 350 n. Chr. und sein Programm der urbs Roma christiana," *Göttinger Forum für Altertumswissenschaft* 4 (2001): 141-158.

³⁰ Barnes, *Athanasius*, 126.

³¹ Athanasius, *Historia Arianorum* 7, ed. Hans Georg Opitz, *Athanasius Werke*, vol. 2.1: Die Apologien (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1941), 186. The chapter details the praetorian prefects Philagrius and Philip's complicity in the banishment and death of Paul of Constantinople. See Barnes, *Athanasius*, 127.

³² There is general agreement that the beginning of *Historia Arianorum* is lost, but it is unclear how much we are missing. See Opitz, *Athanasius Werke* 2.1, 183.

³³ See Cooper, *The Virgin and the Bride*, 11-12.

³⁴ Ammianus Marcellinus, *Rerum gestarum* 22.9.4, ed. Wilhem Seyfarth (Leipzig: Teubner, 1978), 271). Ammianus reports that Julian was a distant relative of Eusebius of Nicomedia, which could have been through his mother. Basilina's father, Iulius Iulianus, had been Licinius' praetorian prefect, see Arnold H. M. Jones, John Martindale, *The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*, vol. 1, "Iulius Iulianus," 478; "Basilina," 148 (henceforth PLRE).

³⁵ Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica* 3.19.3 (GCS n.F. 4: 133) relates that Eusebius was recalled from banishment on the instigation of Constantine's sister Constantia. See also below.

³⁶ Barnes, *Athanasius*, 64.

³⁷ See Richard Flower's contribution to this volume.

³⁸ Hans Georg Opitz, *Untersuchungen zur Überlieferung der Schriften des Athanasius* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1935), 157; Brennecke, Heil, v. Stockhausen, *Athanasius Werke*, xii.

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³⁹ On Gelasius see Friedhelm Winkelmann, "Charakter und Bedeutung der Kirchengeschichte des Gelasios von Kaisereia," *Byzantinische Forschungen* 1 (1966): 346-385. The state of the question is summarized in Philipp Amidon, *The Church History of Rufinus of Aquileia, Books 10 and 11* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), xii-xiv.

⁴⁰ Rufinus, *Historia ecclesiastica*, 10.12, in Eusebius, *Die Kirchengeschichte*, vol. 1, ed. Eduard Schwartz, Theodor Mommsen (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1908; Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller=GCS 9.2), 976-978. It is unclear whether Rufinus here implies the presbyter also baptized Constantine. Eusebius of Caesarea, *Vita Constantini* 4.61-62 (SC 559:529-531), reports Constantine was baptized on his deathbed in a suburb of Nicomedia, but does not say who the celebrant was. Jerome, *Chronicon* ann. 337 (GCS 47:234) claims it was Eusebius of Nicomedia. While Rufinus does not mention Eusebius of Nicomedia, the other fifth-century texts transmitting this story clearly distinguish between the presbyter and Eusebius of Nicomedia (though note that Theodoret, *Historia ecclesiastica* 1.32.2 (GCS n.F. 5:89), mentions that Eusebius of Nicomedia was present at Constantine's death. So does Philostorgius, *Historia ecclesiastica* 2.16 (GCS 21), who, however, also does not mention the baptism).

⁴¹ Philostorgius, *Historia ecclesiastica* 1.9, ed. Joseph Bidez (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1913; GCS 21), 10-11.

⁴² Julia Hillner, "Constantia, Half-Sister of Constantine and Wife of Licinius," *Oxford Classical Dictionary* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017):

<http://classics.oxfordre.com/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780199381135.001.0001/acrefore-9780199381135-e-8065> (accessed 15 December 2017).

⁴³ On the date of Helena's death: Drijvers, *Helena*, 73. On the date of Arius's recall Timothy Barnes, "The Exile and Recalls of Arius," *The Journal of Theological Studies* 60

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(2009): 109-129. Note, however, that Barnes believes Arius was exiled and recalled a second time between 333 and 335.

⁴⁴ On Arius' death see Ellen Muehlenberger, "The Legend of Arius' Death: Imagination, Space and Filth in Late Ancient Historiography," *Past & Present* 227 (2015), 3-29.

⁴⁵ Socrates, *Historia ecclesiastica* 2.1, ed. Günther Hansen (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1995; GCS n.F. 1), 92-93.

⁴⁶ Socrates, *Historia ecclesiastica* 1.25, 1.39, 2.2 (GCS n.F.: 72-73, 90-91, 93-94); Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica* 2.27, 34, 3.1, ed. Joseph Bidez (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1995, 2nd edn; GCS n.F. 4: 88-91, 99-100, 101); Theodoret, *Historia ecclesiastica* 2.3 (GCS n.F. 5: 96-97). I borrow the term 'synoptic' from Leppin, *Von Constantin dem Großen*.

⁴⁷ See Angelova, *Sacred Founders*, 134-135.

⁴⁸ Constantius was married three times, first to an unnamed daughter of his uncle Iulius Constantius, then to Eusebia and then to Faustina. While the empress is not named here and the date of Constantius' marriage to Eusebia, 353, seems relatively late in relation to the events reported, the identification with Eusebia is warranted as her closeness to the eunuch Eusebius is also reported on elsewhere: Theodoret, *Historia ecclesiastica* 2.16 (GCS n.F. 5: 131-136)

⁴⁹ Socrates 2.2 (GCS n.F. 1: 93-94).

⁵⁰ Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica* 3.1 (GCS n.F. 4: 101); Theodoret, *Historia ecclesiastica* 2.3 (GCS n.F. 5: 96-97).

⁵¹ Mark Granovetter, "The Strength of Weak Ties," *American Journal of Sociology* 78 (1973), 1360-1380. The terms 'broker' and 'structural holes' were coined by Ronald S. Burt, *Structural Holes. The Social Structure of Competition* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1992) and *Brokerage and Closure. An Introduction to Social Capital* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), who has developed Granovetter's model further.

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⁵² Charles Kadushin, *Understanding Social Networks. Theories, Concepts and Findings* (Oxford University Press, 2012, 74–89).

⁵³ The graph was laid out using the Harel-Koren Fast Multiscale layout algorithm. The node sizes are based on betweenness centrality values. The graph's nodes were grouped by cluster using the Wakita-Tsurumi cluster algorithm. The graph is undirected. Nodes: 13; Unique edges (links): 5.

⁵⁴ Miller McPherson, Lynn Smith-Lovin, James M. Cook, “Birds of a Feather: Homophily in Social Networks,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 27 (2001), 415-444.

⁵⁵ Gwynn, *Eusebians*, 6-10. On Eusebius of Nicomedia’s kinship with Constantine see above n. 34.

⁵⁶ Philostorgius, *Historia ecclesiastica* 2.16 (GCS 21).

⁵⁷ Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica* 3.19.3 (GCS n.F. 4: 133).

⁵⁸ See Leppin, *Von Constantin dem Großen*, 40-59 about the differing attitude of Socrates, Sozomen and Theodoret to Constantine.

⁵⁹ Ps.-Vig, *Contra Arianos dialogus* 1.1-3 (PL 62: 155-6=Vigilius of Thapsa, *Contra Arianos, Sabellianos, Photinianos dialogus*, ed. P.-M. Hombert, CCSL, forthcoming). I would like to thank Robin Whelan for drawing my attention to this text.

⁶⁰ Busch, *Die Frauen*, 147.

⁶¹ A good overview on the women of the Constantinian dynasty and their activities is provided by Manfred Clauss, “Die Frauen der diokletianisch-konstantinischen Zeit,” in *Die Kaiserinnen Roms. Von Livia bis Theodora*, ed. H. Temporini (Munich: Beck, 2002), 340-369.

⁶² Robin Whelan, *Being Christian in Vandal Africa. The Politics of Orthodoxy in the Post-Imperial West* (University of California Press, 2018), 78-85.

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⁶³ *Anonyme Kirchengeschichte* 3.12 (Gelasius Cyzikenus, CPG 6034), ed. Günther Hansen (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2002; GCS n.F. 9), 131-132 (henceforth AKG). The flowery, highly rhetorical style may be an indication that AKG drew, alongside Gelasius of Caesarea and the extent church historians, on Philippus of Side's lost church history: See Hansen's introduction, xlvi-liv.

⁶⁴ AKG, Prooem. 9-13 (GCS n.F.: 2-3).

⁶⁵ Theodorus Lector, *Historia ecclesiastica*, epit. 402, ed. Günther Hansen (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1995; GCS n.F. 3), 112. On the events Rene Pfeilschifter, *Der Kaiser und Konstantinopel. Kommunikation und Konfliktaustrag in einer spätantiken Metropole* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2013), 567-568.

⁶⁶ For the use of this epithet in Miaphysite sources see Susan A. Harvey, "Theodora the 'Believing Queen': A Study in Syriac Historiographical Tradition," *Hugoye: Journal of Syriac Studies* 4 (2001): 209-234.

⁶⁷ John of Ephesus, *Vitae Sanctorum Orientalium* 48, ed. and transl. E. W. Brooks (PO 18: 686-7). He also dedicates a whole chapter (47) to Theodora looking after Miaphysite refugees (PO 18: 676-685).

⁶⁸ Liberatus, *Breviarium* 20 (ACO 2.5:135).

⁶⁹ John of Ephesus, *Life of John of Hephaisopolis*, ed. and transl. E. W. Brooks (PO 18:528-529); John of Ephesus, *Life of Z'ura*, ed. and transl. E. W. Brooks (PO 17:35).

⁷⁰ John of Ephesus, *Life of John of Hephaisopolis* (PO 18:528-537).

⁷¹ See Dirschlmaier, *Kirchenstiftungen*, 183, for the date.

⁷² *Life of Severus*, transl. Sebastian Brock, Brian Fitzgerald, *Two Early Lives of Severos, Patriarch of Antioch* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013; Translated Texts for Historians 59). The Life, preserved in Syriac, was probably written originally in Greek by John bar Aphthonia of the monastery of Qenneshre not long after Severus' death.

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⁷³ Hillner, Rohmann, *Clerical Exile* <https://www.clericalexile.org/network/person/411> (accessed 7 June 2018).

⁷⁴ See, most recently, David Potter, *Theodora. Actress, Empress, Saint* (Oxford University Press, 2015), 169-173.

⁷⁵ See Dirschl Mayer, *Kirchenstiftungen*, 186-187; Menze, *Justinian*, 211-228.

⁷⁶ See Julia Hillner, *Prison, Punishment and Penance in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge University Press, 2015), 169-177.

⁷⁷ On Gaianus, who was the candidate of a Miaphysite splinter group, see Liberatus, *Breviarium* 20 (ACO 2.5:135). The *Historia patriarcharum Alexandrinorum* 2.13 (PO 1:459) and the *Arabe-Jacobite Synaxarium* (PO 17:604-606), both in support of his rival Theodosius, do not mention Theodora and neither does the Chalcedonian Victor of Tunnuna, *chronica* 540, ed. Theodor Mommsen (MGH AA 11:199). On Silverius: Liberatus, *Breviarium* 22 (ACO 2.5: 137), *Liber Pontificalis* I:293, ed. L. Duchèsne (Paris: Thorin, 1886), 290-293; Victor of Tunnuna, *chronica* 542 (MGH AA 11:200). All mention Theodora.

⁷⁸ See Kate Cooper, "Insinuations of Womanly Influence: An Aspect of the Christianization of the Roman Aristocracy," *Journal of Roman Studies* 82 (1992): 150-164.

⁷⁹ See e.g. John of Ephesus, *Vita Sanctorum Orientalium* 47 (PO 18:676-685): Justinian takes care of and visits the Miaphysite refugee monastery in his palace. On John of Ephesus' relatively positive attitude towards Justinian see also Hartmut Leppin, "The Roman Empire in John of Ephesus' Church History: Being Roman, Writing Syriac," in *Historiography and Space in Late Antiquity*, ed. P. van Nuffelen (Cambridge, forthcoming).

⁸⁰ Compare eg. John of Ephesus on Theodosius of Alexandria with the *Historia patriarcharum Alexandrinorum* and Arab-Jacobite Synaxarium, as n. 79. The latter do not only ignore Theodora, they also do not detail that Theodosius was banished to Derkos, but

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4 imply he returned to Egypt. On the memory of clerical exile in the Coptic Church see also
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6 O'Connell's contribution to this volume.

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9 ⁸¹ Susan Asbrook Harvey, *Asceticism and Society in Crisis: John of Ephesus and the Lives*
10 *of the Eastern Saints* (University of California Press, 1990), 109-110. See also Susan
11 Ashbrook Harvey, "Spoken Words, Voiced Silence: Biblical Women in Syriac Tradition,"
12 *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 9 (2001): 105-131; Charlotte Methuen, "Widows, Bishops,
13 and the Struggle for Authority in the Didascalia Apostolorum," *Journal of Ecclesiastical*
14 *History* 46 (1995): 197-213, on women in authority in the early Syrian church.

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22 ⁸² 7-8 Esther, 2 Kings 11, 2 Exodus 5-10. I would like to thank Imogen Herrad for drawing
23 my attention to these passages.

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⁸³ See also Joshua 2:1-7: the story of Rahab, the prostitute who hid Israelites before the
taking of Jericho who provides an interesting parallel because Syriac authors also report that
Theodora was originally a prostitute: John of Ephesus, *Vitae Sanctorum Orientalium* 13 John
of Ephesus, *Vita Sanctorum Orientalium* 13 (PO 17:189).

⁸⁴ Harvey, *Asceticism*, 121, 131: "Monophysites in the sixth century needed women's
contributions more than they needed the institutional advantages of excluding women". See in
particular John's story of Susan and her leadership of a refugee ascetic community in Egypt:
John of Ephesus, *Vitae Sanctorum Orientalium* 27 (PO 18:541-558).

⁸⁵ Narratio de obitu Theodosii Hierosolymorum et Romani monachi auctore anonymo, ed.
E. W. Brooks, *Vitae virorum apud monophysitas celeberrimorum pars prima* (Louvain: L.
Durbecq, repr., 1955; Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, Scriptorum Syri 7-8). On
the text see Cornelia Horn, *Asceticism and Christological Controversy in Fifth-Century*
Palestine (Oxford University Press, 2006), 28-31; Horn, Phenix, *John Rufus*.

⁸⁶ Horn, *Asceticism*, 42.

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⁸⁷ Narratio de obitu 8-9 (CSCO 7-8: 25-26, 17-18). See also John Rufus, Plerophories 25 (PO 8:57-63) which also details contact between Eudocia and Romanus.

⁸⁸ Zachariah of Mytilene, *Historia ecclesiastica* 3.5, ed. E. W. Brooks (Louvain: L. Durbecq, 1965/67; Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, Scriptorum Syri 41-42), 109. The date for the story is 455. Note also that Zachariah's work may have been altered when it was translated into Syriac in the sixth century; see Geoffrey Greatrex et al., *The Chronicle of Pseudo-Zacharias Rhetor: Church and War in Late Antiquity* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2011), 28. For identification of Zachariah's empress as Eudocia see Greatrex, *The Chronicle*, 199 n. 125. Other scholars identify her as Pulcheria, see e.g. Horn, *Asceticism*, 92. John Bar Aphthonia, *Life of Severus* (PO 2:222) identifies the empress as Pulcheria, but clearly confuses her with Eudocia. The identity of the empress does, however, not matter for the purpose of my argument. Important is the unusual positive portrayal of her support for the banished.

⁸⁹ See Holum, *Theodosian Empresses*, 176-194; Busch, *Die Frauen*, 162-165.

⁹⁰ See Cornelia Horn, "Empress Eudocia and the Monk Peter the Iberian: Patronage, Pilgrimage, and the Love of a Foster-Mother in Fifth-Century Palestine," *Byzantinische Forschungen* 28 (2004): 197-213.

⁹¹ Leo ep. 123 (ACO 2.4, no. 69, p. 77); ep. 117 (ACO 2.4, no. 63, p. 69-70), from spring 453, to Julian of Cos, mentions a second, earlier letter to Eudocia. See also Priscus frg. 28, which mentions her support for Dioscorus, the bishop of Alexandria condemned at Chalcedon.

⁹² Theophanes, *Chronographia* AM 5945 (de Boor: 106-107); Nicephorus Callistus, *Historia ecclesiastica* 15.9 (PG 147:32) claims Eudocia supported Theodosius and her 'satellites' fought for the monks.

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⁹³ Busch, *Die Frauen*, 165. See also Hartmut Leppin, “Kaiserliche Kohabitation: Von der Normalität Theodoras,” in *Grenzen der Macht. Zur Rolle römischer Kaiserfrauen*, ed. C. Kunst, U. Riemer (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2000), 75-85 on the division of labor between emperor and empress at the fifth- and sixth-century Roman court.

⁹⁴ Cyril of Scythopolis, V. Euth. 30; Cyril, V. Saba 71, ed. Eduard Schwartz (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1939), 47-49, 173-174: When asked for help, the holy man Saba blamed Theodora’s infertility on her support for Severus. It remains unclear what the support consisted of.

⁹⁵ See above n. 70.

⁹⁶ Severus of Antioch, ep. 1.63, ed. and transl. E. W. Brooks, *The Sixth Book of the Select Letters of Severus of Antioch*, vol. 2.1 (London, Oxford: Williams & Norgate, 1903) 198-199.

⁹⁷ See, for example, Pseudo-Zachariah of Mytilene, *Historia ecclesiastica* 9.20 (CSCO. SS 41-42: 95-96/137-140), which cites a letter by Severus in which he mentions the protection he had received from Theodora.

⁹⁸ Ashbrook Harvey, *Asceticism*, 117.

⁹⁹ Theodore Lector, *Historia ecclesiastica*, epit. 340 (GCS n. F. 3: 97). On Paulinus see PLRE II, “Paulinus 8,” 846.

¹⁰⁰ In addition to Nestorians, Miaphysite authors also allude to this role, if again with ambiguous attitude. See John Rufus, who wrote a treatise against the council of Chalcedon at the beginning of the sixth century, and recorded with dismay how Pulcheria, who as a champion of orthodoxy had been responsible for banishing Nestorius, would then sink into impiety by marrying Marcian and calling the council: John Rufus, *Plerophories*, 3.

¹⁰¹ Theodore Lector, *Historia ecclesiastica*, epit. 481 (GCS n.f. 3: 137). See also Theophanes, *Chronographia* AM 6002 (de Boor: 153); PLRE II, “Magna,” 700.

¹⁰² See Alan Cameron, “The House of Anastasius,” *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 19 (1978) 259-276. Magna’s son Probus was a leading Miaphysite, while her daughter

Imperial Women and Clerical Exile

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4 married a descendant of the Theodosian dynasty, who we can expect was a Chalcedonian.
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6 Anastasius' nephews through his sister Caesaria (who also may have had Miaphysite
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8 leanings, see Appendix) were Chalcedonians.
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11 ¹⁰³ Severus of Antioch, *L'apologie du Philatele*, ed. R. Hespel, *Sévère d'Antioche. La*
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13 *polémique antijulianiste*, vol. 3 (Louvain: Secrétariat du CorpusSCO, 1971; Corpus
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15 Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, Scriptores Syri 136-137), 15/13.
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18 ¹⁰⁴ Warren Treadgold, *The Early Byzantine Historians* (Basingstoke, New York, 2007),
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20 168-170.
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23 ¹⁰⁵ Cooper, *The Virgin and the Bride*, 19.
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26 ¹⁰⁶ Gregory of Nyssa, *Oratio funebris in Flacillam Imperatricem*, ed. A. Spyra, *Gregorii*
27
28 *Nysseni opera*, vol. 9: Sermones (Leiden: Brill, 1967), 475-490. Also see Theodoret, *Historia*
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30 *ecclesiastica* 5.19 (GCS n.F. 5:313-314) who details Flaccilla's many good deeds. See
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32 Holum, *Theodosian Empresses*, 26-27.
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35 ¹⁰⁷ See the Appendix for references to Eusebia.
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38 ¹⁰⁸ Palladius, *Historia Lausiaca* 46.2, 63, ed. C. Butler, *The Lausiaca History of Palladius*,
39
40 vol. 2 (Cambridge University Press, 1904), 134-135, 158-160. The story of the virgin is also
41
42 told in Festal Index 32 (SC 317:260), where she has a name, Eudaimonis.
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45 ¹⁰⁹ See Jill Harries, "The Empress Tale, AD 300-360," in *Being Christian in Late*
46
47 *Antiquity. A Festschrift for Gillian Clark* (Oxford University Press, 2014), 197-214.
48

49
50 ¹¹⁰ On cooperation of the imperial couple see Dina Angelova, *Sacred Founders*, 183-202.
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52 On Theodora: Dirschlmayer, *Kirchenstiftungen*, 207-208, who argues that Theodora's
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54 engagement for prostitutes and women parallels her engagement for Miaphysite banished
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56 clerics and ascetics.
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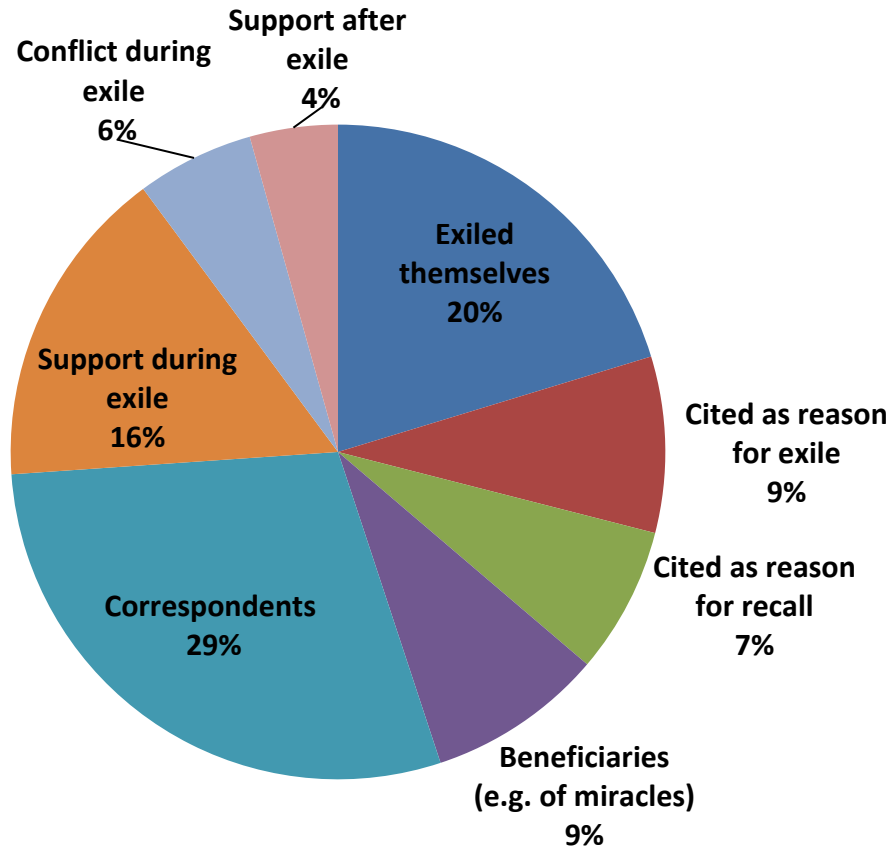
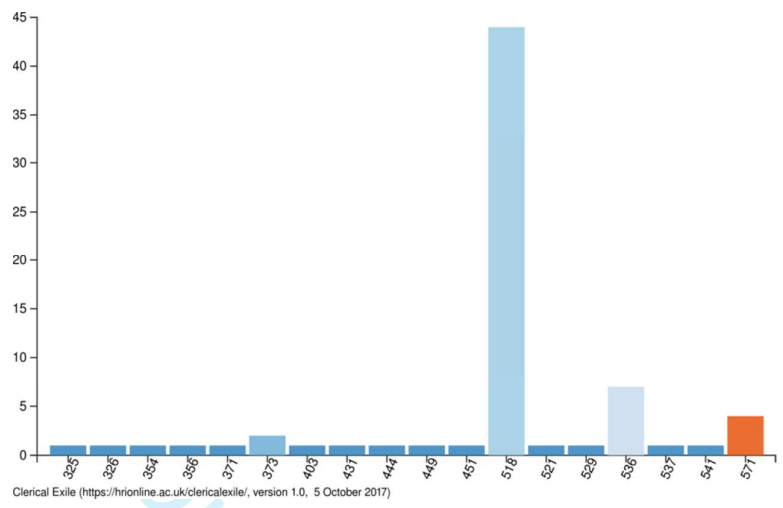


Figure 1: Activities of women during clerical exile

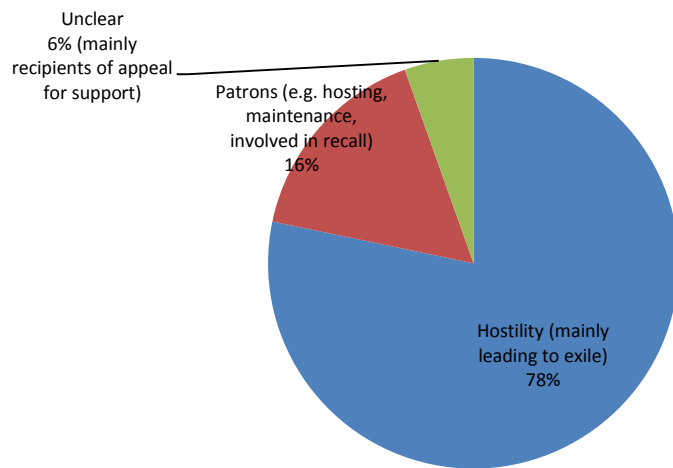
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Figure 2: Chronological distribution of the involvement of imperial women in clerical exile (ordered by start date of the exile in question)



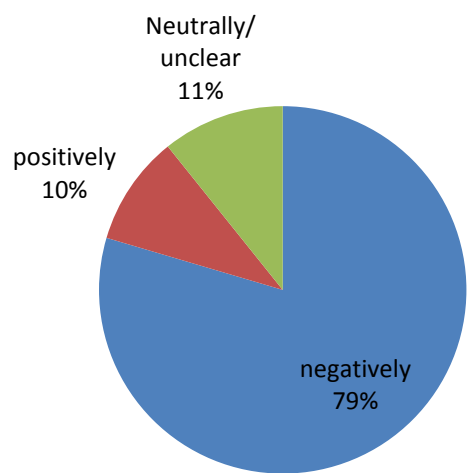
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3 **Figure 3: Imperial women: enemies or patrons of exiled clerics?**
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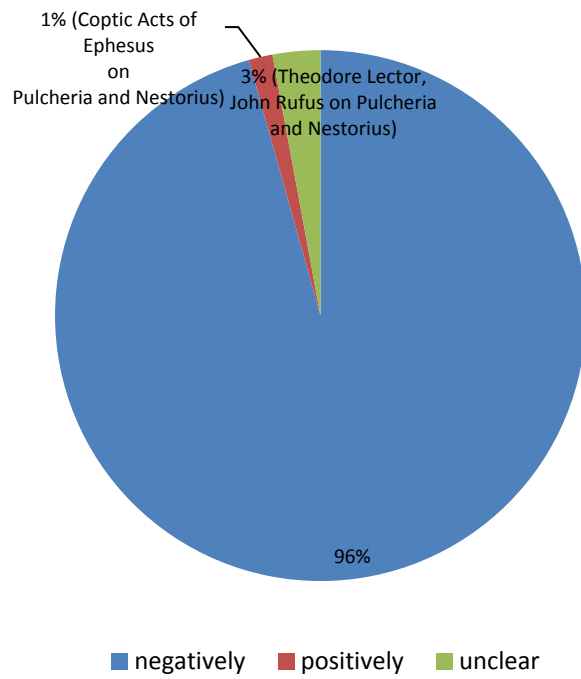
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Figure 4: Late antique assessment of imperial women’s interference with clerical exile overall



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Figure 5: Late antique assessment of female behavior in 'conflict' stories



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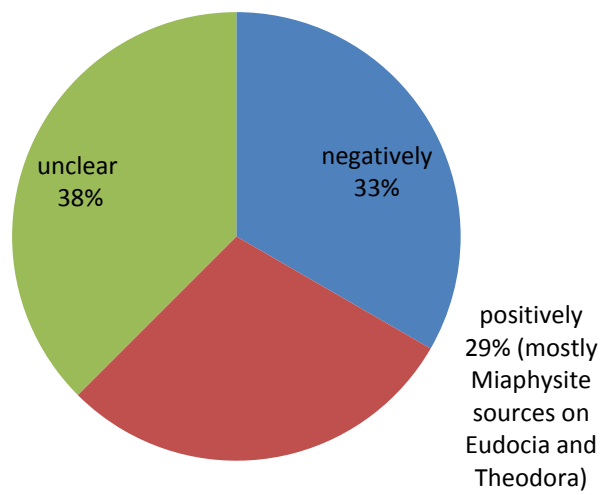


Figure 6:
Late antique assessment of imperial women as patrons of exiled clerics

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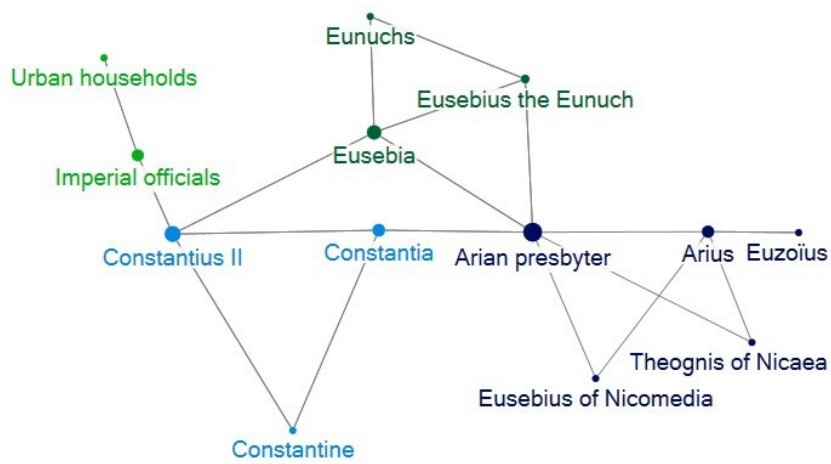


Figure 7: Social network that led to the recall of Arius; based on Rufinus, *Historia ecclesiastica* 10.12; Socrates, *Historia ecclesiastica* 1.25; Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica* 2.27; Theodoret, *Historia ecclesiastica* 2.3; Anonymous of Cyzikus, *Historia ecclesiastica* 3.12; Vigilius of Thapsa, *Contra Arianos, Sabellianos*, Photinianos dialogus 1.1-3.

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Legend*

*Applies to network lines only.

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- support_2
- Conflict
- conflict_2
- Allegiance
- Kinship
- Marriage
- Violence
- Subordinate



Figure 8: Exile Network under Justinian 518-565
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Appendix: List of imperial women involved in cases of clerical exile (ordered by date of death of imperial woman)

Imperial woman	Exiled clerics or ascetics	Date	Role of imperial woman	Sources
Helena, mother of Constantine, d. 328/330	Eustathius of Antioch	325-330	Eustathius is exiled for insulting Helena.	Athanasius, <i>Historia Arianorum</i> 4
Constantia, sister of Constantine, d. after 328/330	Eusebius of Nicomedia, Theognis of Nicaea, Maris of Chalcedon	325/6-8	Influences Constantine to recall these bishops.	Sozomen, <i>Historia ecclesiastica</i> 3.19.3
	Arius	327/8	Influences Constantine to recall Arius.	Rufinus, <i>Historia ecclesiastica</i> 10.12 Socrates, <i>Historia ecclesiastica</i> 1.25 Sozomen, <i>Historia ecclesiastica</i> 2.27 Theodoret, <i>Historia ecclesiastica</i> 2.3 Anonymous of Cyzikus, <i>Historia ecclesiastica</i> 3.12 Vigilius of Thapsa, <i>Contra Arianos</i> , Sabellianos, Photinianos dialogus 1.1-3
Basilina, mother of Julian, d. 333	Eutropius of Adrianople	325-333	Persecutes Eutropius.	Athanasius, <i>Historia Arianorum</i> 5
Eutropia, half-sister of Constantine, d. 350	Athanasius of Alexandria	339-342	Hosts Athanasius in Rome.	Athanasius, <i>Apologia ad Constantium</i> 6
Constantina, daughter of Constantine, d. 354	Liberius of Rome	358	Hosts Liberius in her villa outside Rome (the episode is anachronistic)	<i>Liber pontificalis</i> I:207 <i>Passio Felicis</i> (BHL 2857)
Eusebia, wife of Constantius II,	Theophilus, 'the Indian'	354-358	Theophilus is recalled to cure Eusebia from illness.	Philostorgius, <i>Historia ecclesiastica</i> 4.7

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d. 360	Liberius of Rome	355-6	Sends Liberius a sum of money for his sustenance.	Theoderetus, <i>Historia ecclesiastica</i> 2.13, 14, 17
	Theophilus, 'the Indian'	358	Induces Constantius to banish Theophilus. (Philostorgius mentions the women of the palace without naming Eusebia).	Philostorgius, <i>Historia ecclesiastica</i> 4.8
Domnica, wife of Valens, d. after 378	Meletius of Antioch, Pelagius of Laodicea, Eusebius of Samosata,	373-8	Converts her husband to 'Arianism' upon which he banishes the bishops.	Theodoret, <i>Historia ecclesiastica</i> , 4.12-13
Eudoxia, wife of Arcadius, d. 404	John Chrysostom	403, 404	John is accused of having insulted her and preached against erection of her statue; induces her husband to banish John.	Ps-Martyrius, <i>Funerary Oration</i> 36, 66, 87, 121 Palladius, <i>Dialogus</i> 8-9 Joh. Chrys. <i>ante ir. in ex.</i> 4 ; <i>cum ir. in ex.</i> 2 Socrates, <i>Historia ecclesiastica</i> 6.15, 16, 19 Sozomen, <i>Historia ecclesiastica</i> 8.16, 18, 20, 28 <i>Vita Epiphani</i> 61
Galla Placidia, mother of Valentinian III, d. 450	Flavian of Constantinople	450	Writes letter to Pulcheria and Theodosius to plead for Flavian's return.	<i>Acta conciliorum oecumenicorum</i> 2.1.1, p. 5-6, n. 3; p. 49-50, n. 14
Pulcheria, sister of Theodosius II, d. 453	Nestorius	431	Conflict over the cult of the Virgin Mary and Pulcheria's involvement in liturgy and insult (Nestorius accused Pulcheria of incest with her brother).	Wilhelm Kraatz, <i>Koptische Akten zum Ephesinischen Konzil vom Jahre 431</i> (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1904), 49-55 Nestorius, <i>Heracleides</i> 470 Elias, <i>Letter to Cosmas</i> 5-8 John Rufus, <i>Plerophories</i> 1, 3 Theodore Lector, <i>epit</i> 340 Barhadshabba 'Arbaya 27-30 <i>Chronicle of Seert</i> 70 Nicephorus Callistus, <i>Historia ecclesiastica</i> 14.37

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				Sliba, Hymnos (PO 13: 303, 305)
	Theodoret of Cyrrhus	450	Theodoret appeals to Anatolius <i>patricius</i> to intervene with Marcian and Pulcheria to call a council that will allow him to return to Cyrus.	Theodoret, ep. 138
	John Chrysostom	438	Arranges for John’s relic translation.	Theophanes, AM 5930
	Flavian of Constantinople	449-450	Written to by pope Leo and Western imperial family to intercede with Theodosius on Flavian’s behalf.	Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum 2.1.1, p. 49-50, n. 14; Leo epp. 31, 45, 60
		450	Arranges for translation of Flavian’s relics.	Theodore Lector, epit. 357, 532 Theophanes, AM 5941
	Bishops exiled after council of Ephesus II	450	Announces imperial order that bishops can return.	Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum 2.1.1, ep. 9, p. 10.
Eudocia, widow of Theodosius II, d. 460	Peter the Iberian	455	Eudocia tries to prevent his banishment. For identification of Eudocia in this text see n. 88.	Zachariah of Mytilene, chron. 3.5
	Abba Romanus and all other banished monks	c. 458	Eudocia secures their return from exile.	John Rufus, De ob. 8-9.
Licina Eudoxia, wife of Valentinian III, d. c. 493	Flavian of Constantinople	450	Writes letter to Theodosius to plead for Flavian’s return.	Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum 2.1.1, p. 7, n. 4
Magna, sister-in-law of Anastasius, d. after 509	Dorotheus	509	Magna passes Dorotheus’ book on the council of Chalcedon to emperor Anastasius, who banishes him.	Theodore Lector, epit. 481 Theophanes, AM 6002 Severus, <i>L’apologie du Philatele</i> , 14-15/12-13
Caesaria, sister (?) of Anastasius	Severus of Antioch	518-538	Correspondent of Severus. On her possible identification as	Severus of Antioch, epp. n. 53, 54, 55, 56, 97, 98, 99, 101, 105, 117; possibly also n.

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			sister of Anastasius see PLRE II, Caesaria 1 and 2.	63, 100, 103, 104, 106
Euphemia, wife of Justin I, d. 523	54 bishops, names are recorded by the source, but not listed here.		Euphemia forces the bishop of Constantinople to inscribe the council of Chalcedon into the diptychs upon which resistance breaks out and these bishops are banished.	Chronicle of Zuqin, Third part, 517-518
Theodora, wife of Justinian, d. 548	Mare of Amida, Isidore of Quenneshrin	521-529	Theodora arranges for their relocation from Petra to Alexandria and for return of Mare’s relics to Amida.	John of Ephesus, Lives of the Eastern Saints 13 Pseudo-Dionysius, chronicon 3.32 = Chronicle of Zuqin, Third part, 517-518, 525-526
	Anthimus of Constantinople	536	Hides Anthimus in the palace after his deposition.	John of Ephesus, Lives of the Eastern Saints 48
	Gaianus of Alexandria	536	Theodora intervenes for his deposition and banishment.	Liberatus, Breviarium 20
	Theodosius of Alexandria and three-hundred of his clergy, and the holy man Z’ura	536	Theodora provides sustenance for the banished Theodosius and three-hundred of his clergy.	John of Ephesus, Life of Z’ura (PO 17:35) John of Ephesus, Life of John of Hephaistopolis (PO 18:528-529)
	John of Hephaistopolis	536 and after	Theodora provides sustenance and hosts him in the palace and an imperial villa in Sykai.	John of Ephesus, Life of John of Hephaistopolis (PO 18:528-537)
	Severus of Antioch	536 and after	Theodora hosts Severus in Constantinople and helps him to escape. She possibly already had hosted him in 531 (Cyril). On his way back to Egypt in 536 Severus sends her a book.	Cyril, V. Saba 71 Life of Severus 76 Ps. Zachariah, chron. 9.19 Severus of Antioch, ep. 63
	Silverius of Rome	537	Theodora intervenes for his	Liber Pontificalis I:293

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			deposition and banishment.	Victor of Tunnuna, chronica 542 Liberatus, Breviarium 22
Sophia, wife of Justin II, d. c. 601	Elias of Sardis, Stephen of Cyprus, Paul of Antioch	571-2	Visits the bishops in prison and invites them to the palace to try and change their minds, but in vain. They are banished.	John of Ephesus, Historia ecclesiastica 3.1.11 and 26.

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