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A Dispute in Dispute: Forgery, Heresy, and Sainthood in Seventh-Century Byzantium

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A DISPUTE IN DISPUTE: FORGERY, HERESY, AND SAINTHOOD IN SEVENTH-CENTURY BYZANTIUM

THESIS

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Kentucky

By

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

A DISPUTE IN DISPUTE: FORGERY, HERESY, AND SAINTHOOD IN SEVENTH-CENTURY BYZANTIUM

The *Disputatio cum Pyrrho* purports to be a transcript of the 645 debate that took place in North Africa. The text initially addresses Monotheletism, the theology of the Constantinopolitan church that held that the Christ had a single will, then Monoenergism, which held that Christ possessed a single operation and which had in the 620’s and 630’s been the official position of the Constantinopolitan church, but which by 645 had been rejected and replaced by Monotheletism. Pyrrhus, the exiled, former Patriarch of Constantinople, represents the Monothelete and Monoenergist positions and Maximus the Confessor opposes them. Throughout the dialogue, Maximus repeatedly and overwhelmingly demonstrates the correctness of his position, eventually forcing Pyrrhus to renounce his position and to travel to Rome to receive absolution from the Pope. Traditionally scholars have accepted the authenticity of this document, and few have critically examined the claims the text makes about itself. The present study brings this authenticity into question, and reexamines the authorship, date, and purpose of the document, employing textual critiques and comparing the document with historical events later in the seventh century.

KEYWORDS: Maximus the Confessor, Pyrrhus of Constantinople, Forgery, Disputation, Seventh Century

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July 29, 2013
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To Janet, my love and support.
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Chapter One: Introduction

A Description of the Problem

The *Disputatio cum Pyrrho* is a seventh-century document which purports to give an account of a disputation which took place in North Africa between Maximus the Confessor and Pyrrhus, the Patriarch of Constantinople. The document contains two major sections, the first of which is a debate concerning Monotheletism, the theological position of the church in Constantinople which asserted that the incarnate Christ had a single divine and human will. The dispute about Monotheletism is followed by a secondary dispute concerning Monoenergism, which preceded and was replaced by Monotheletism and held that Christ had a single divine and human operation. Within these two broad sections a number of related topics are also discussed.

The dispute takes place between Pyrrhus, who represents the monothelete and monoenergist positions, and Maximus the Confessor, who was a known opponent of both doctrines. The text depicts a series of exchanges between the two figures in which Pyrrhus offers objections to the position of Maximus, who proceeds point by point to address the concerns of Pyrrhus and overwhelmingly demonstrate the correctness of his position. Pyrrhus in turn repeatedly concedes to Maximus’ responses. The account ends with Pyrrhus renouncing his positions and seeking permission to travel to Rome and receive absolution from the Pope.

The *Disputatio* is unique and tempting for the scholar of seventh-century Byzantine theology and political history. The text is unique in that it provides a rare systematic exposition of both imperial dogmas, as well as a point by point refutation by
the opposition. For this reason the *Disputatio* has long been considered a document of great theological importance. Likewise the *Disputatio* seems to provide a date for its composition, and depicts the words and thought of some of the most significant actors in seventh-century Byzantine history. Both features, which are extremely tempting to the scholar of a field in which such specificity is indeed a rare treat, have led scholars to use this document as the *terminus ante et post quem* for many letters of Maximus for which the date is otherwise obscure.

Traditionally scholars have attributed the document to Maximus himself, or to an impartial scribe who copied the text immediately after the commencement of the dispute.\(^1\) Moreover most scholars who have analyzed the text have accepted the date given in the prologue, namely July of 645\(^2\) as authentic.\(^3\) Likewise scholars have treated the *Disputatio* primarily as a theological text. It has been studied extensively as a resource for understanding monothelete and monoenergist theology, as well as a systematic resource for the theology of Maximus the Confessor, a writer notorious for his lack of systematization.

While significant attention has been paid to the *Disputatio cum Pyrrho* as a theological source and as a historical source insofar as it has served as a resource for dating, there has been a paucity of critical scholarship on the document itself. Considering the widely acknowledged importance of the text, there has been a significant gap in scholarship concerning the date, origin, and purpose of its production. Moreover the authenticity of the text has remained nearly unquestioned.

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\(^1\) c.f. Polycarp Sherwood, "Date-List of the Works of Maximus the Confessor," *Studia Anselmiana* 30 (1952).

\(^2\) Μηνὶ Ἰυλίῳ, ἱνδικτιῶνος γ’.

\(^3\) The notable exception of Noret will be discussed below.
I argue that the *Disputatio cum Pyrrho* must be understood in its polemical context. The following study will situate the document in the context of the widespread use of forgeries in polemic, a phenomenon which was particularly prevalent in the sixth century and which Patrick Gray has referred to as the use of forgery as an instrument of progress.\(^4\) While Gray’s study focused on sixth-century theological polemic, especially concerning the council of Chalcedon, his theory is equally applicable to the controversies of the seventh century, and I suggest that the *Disputatio cum Pyrrho* is best understood an example of this practice.

After a brief historiographical survey and examination of the historical context, I will demonstrate this by exploring the prolific nature of forgery in late antiquity, after which I will provide a close analysis of the document itself, especially the way Pyrrhus and his predecessor are treated, the type of evidence used by Pyrrhus in his objections and Maximus’ responses, and by examining the continuity of the *Disputatio* with the thought and style of Maximus the Confessor by comparing it to his other works. Finally, I will compare this evidence with that used at the Third Council at Constantinople in 680-681.\(^5\) Ultimately this paper will conclude that the *Disputatio* is a composite document consisting of an earlier text and a later redaction, edited by an anonymous follower or disciple of Maximus, likely from the Greek diaspora community in Rome. I will argue


\(^5\) To avoid the theological implications of the title "Ecumenical," I have chosen to avoid this term when referring to the assembly of bishops called by the emperor Constantine IV in 680-81 at Constantinople, and similar assemblies. But, since the Greek term σύνοδος applies to any convocation of bishops, I have chosen to use the term "Council" to capture the universal application intended by its conveners (regardless of actual extent of acceptance), and thus distinguish it from synods, which are gatherings of bishops that did not include representatives of the five major Patriarchates. At the same time, other scholars use refer to this council as ecumenical and will occasionally be cited using this term. However, I will use the term ecumenical, when relevant, to refer to perceptions of ecumenicity held by the subjects of this study.
that the document was redacted shortly before the Third Council at Constantinople to provide a resource for participants in the council to address what must have been common or anticipated objections of the monothelete party.

If I am correct, this new understanding of the *Disputatio cum Pyrrho* affects the way in which we understand seventh-century theological and political history. It will not only necessitate revisiting those dates which are based on the document, including but not limited to many of the letters of Maximus the Confessor, but also the way in which we understand the life of Pyrrhus, for which the *Disputatio* is one of precious few sources. Likewise, by placing the *Disputatio cum Pyrrho* in the context of the Third Council at Constantinople, we can consider it a new source concerning the preparations of the council which are otherwise poorly documented. Thus I will proceed first by examining previous scholarship to which I will contribute the following study.
Chapter Two: Historiographic Overview

Introduction

Since the years leading to the Second Vatican Council there has been a dramatic increase in scholarly interest in the figure of Maximus the Confessor. Such scholarship has ranged from numerous studies on Maximus’ theological anthropology and liturgical theory, translations of a handful of his numerous writings, as well as recent efforts to produce new critical editions of select documents written by or related to the confessor. While there has been some theological scholarship on the *Disputatio cum Pyrrho*, on the whole the document has not benefitted from these recent scholarly trends. The following chapter will examine previous scholarship related to the *Disputatio cum Pyrrho*, as well as recent scholarship concerning Monotheletism and the issue of forgery in Late-Antique Byzantium.

Pre Twentieth-Century Scholarship on the *Disputatio cum Pyrrho*

The first published edition of the *Disputatio cum Pyrrho* was edited by cardinal Baronius in 1599. François Combefis revised Baronius’ edition which he included in his edition of the works of Maximus, which was published, though incomplete, in 1675. Jacques Paul Migne reproduced the Combefis edition volume 91, columns 288-353 of his *Patrologia Graeca*. Migne, by grouping the *Disputatio* with theological works of Maximus in the section *Opuscula Theologica et Polemica*, set the standard of how this text would be understood, as a detailed theological treatise written by Maximus, well

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6 Marcel Doucet, "Dispute De Maxime Le Confesseur Avec Pyrrhus : Introduction, Texte Critique, Traduction Et Notes" (PhD diss., Université de Montréal, 1972), 483.
7 Ibid, 485.
8 Ibid., 492.
into the later twentieth century.\(^9\) Combeis’ edition, through Migne, was the last critical edition of the *Disputatio* until Doucet’s dissertation in 1972, and to this day is often used in lieu of Doucet’s edition since the latter remains unpublished and difficult to obtain.

The next major development in scholarship on the *Disputatio cum Pyrrho* came with Karl Joseph von Hefele’s landmark *Conciliengeschichte* in 1869.\(^{10}\) Hefele provided a significant discussion, as well as a translated paraphrase of the *Disputatio* in volume three, and along with the subsequent translations into English and French, provided the first translation of any portion of the *Disputatio* into modern research languages. It would not be until Doucet’s dissertation that the *Disputatio* would be translated in full in a modern language.

In addition to providing a translation into modern languages, Hefele’s work provided one of the first and most enduring scholarly analyses of the *Disputatio*, one which, with slight modifications, endures until this day. Hefele like most scholars since accepts the text as authentic and provides the following description:

> The complete acts have come down to us and contain a very complete discussion both of the orthodox Dyothelite doctrine and of the objections from the other side. Maximus showed in this much dialectical ability and great superiority to Pyrrhus, whom at times he treated with scant courtesy.\(^{11}\)

Hefele raised no questions about the authenticity of the text, nor was it in his interest to do so. Hefele, no doubt influenced by his own Roman Catholic faith, was a keen supporter of Pope Honorius’ orthodoxy. The *Disputatio cum Pyrrho*, and Maximus generally, were key witnesses in defense of Honorius and against the Constantinopolitan

\(^9\) Jean-Claude Larchet, *Saint Maxime le Confesseur (580-662)* (Paris: Cerf, 2003), 47
\(^{10}\) Karl Josef von Hefele, *Conciliengeschichte* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1869).
position which would ultimately win the day. Thus Hefele had no incentive to question the authenticity of the document. Hefele’s belief that the *Disputatio cum Pyrrho* as we have it today contained the “complete acts” of the disputation is one which until very recently has prevailed. Hefele essentially exemplifies the standard which would remain in place, with slight modifications, until the end of the twentieth century.

Post Nineteenth-Century Historiography on the *Disputatio Cum Pyrrho*

Maximus the Confessor remained a rather obscure figure until the run up to the Second Vatican Council. Two figures in particular, Hans Urs von Balthasar and Polycarp Sherwood helped to spark a revolution in the study of Maximus the Confessor. This renewed interest in Maximus has continued to grow until this day, and there has been an abundance of studies concerning Maximus, including new efforts to provide fresh critical editions of his works in the *Corpus Christianorum* series. However, despite the peaking interest in Maximus as an important theological figure, the new research has primarily been concerned with Maximus’ theology and the *Disputatio cum Pyrrho* has, with few exceptions, only been discussed in this context, with little discussion of the dating, authorship, or purpose of the document itself.¹²

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¹² As this study is less concerned with Maximus as a theologian and is focused on the *Disputatio cum Pyrrho* as a document, a thorough examination of scholarship on this nature is beyond the scope of this paper. However, the following articles provide a good picture and overview of the development of studies of Maximus the Confessor. For a review of scholarship from the beginning of this period of renewed interest, see Polycarp Sherwood, "Survey of Recent Work on St. Maximus the Confessor," *Traditio* 20 (1964). For an examination of more recent critical scholarship through 1998, see Andrew Louth, "Recent Research on St Maximus the Confessor," *St. Vladimir's theological quarterly* 42 (1998). For an examination of scholarship through 2009, including an extensive bibliography of all scholarship with any pertinence to Maximus the confessor see Peter Van Deun, "Développements récents des recherches sur Maxime Le Confesseur (1998-2009)," *Sacris Erudiri* 48 (2009).
The one important exception can be found in Sherwood’s foundational *Date List of the Works of Maximus the Confessor.*\(^{13}\) This study, which remains the authoritative starting point for scholarship on any document related to Maximus the Confessor, provided a synopsis and estimated date for every extant work attributed to Maximus or closely related to his life, using the arrangement found in Migne’s *Patrologia Graeca*. In his entry on the *Disputatio cum Pyrrho*, Sherwood accepted the authenticity of the document, saying: “The scribe wrote in Rome where Pyrrhus had made his profession of the apostolic faith, before, however, this latter had reverted to his heresy…\(^{14}\) Sherwood, like Hefele before accepts the information given by the document itself. However he provides further detail saying that the scribe, whom he did not identify, transcribed the document in Rome, before Pyrrhus’ eventual reversion. Indeed the document itself does claim that Pyrrhus travelled to “this glorious city of the Romans.”\(^{15}\) While Sherwood does not give his reasons for dating the document before Pyrrhus’ reversion in 647, I would suppose, it is because Pyrrhus leaves the dispute as a convert, and the document does not mention his reversion.

Sherwood’s work was revolutionary in that he seems to be the first to engage the matter of date and authorship. The date provided by the *Disputatio cum Pyrrho* plays a crucial part in Sherwood’s dating. Absent any obvious suspicion to the contrary, Sherwood would have had no incentive to question the document’s authenticity. Beyond this, this was not the purpose of his work, which was to catalog, describe, and place in

\(^{13}\) Sherwood, "Date-List of the Works of Maximus the Confessor."
\(^{14}\) Ibid., 53.
\(^{15}\) ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ μεγαλονύμῳ Ῥωμαϊῶν πόλει
chronological order those documents which consensus attributed to Maximus the Confessor, a task which was truly immense.

Hefele and Sherwood represent what may be called the traditional interpretation of the dating and authorship of the *Disputatio cum Pyrrho*. Both scholars trusted the information given by the document itself and had a general understanding that Maximus was directly responsible for the document’s content, either through his own hand or through a scribe transcribing the actual proceedings. I have suggested that the arrangement of Combefis and Migne’s critical edition has helped to influence this.

However the factor that has contributed most to the endurance of this traditional view has been the apparent lack of interest in the purpose of the document. Most scholars who address the *Disputatio cum Pyrrho* have done so as a source for theology or to compile a general summary of the life of Maximus. Questions of a more general, or historical nature have simply not been asked. It has only been within the last thirteen years that any questions have been raised about the dating of the *Disputatio*, and most scholarship, before and since, has continued to accept this traditional understanding.16

16 c.f. Doucet, "Dispute de Maxime le Confesseur avec Pyrrhus : introduction, texte critique, traduction et notes," Joseph P. Farrell, *The Disputation with Pyrrhus of Our Father Among the Saints Maximus the Confessor* (South Cannan, PA: St. Tikhon’s Seminary Press, 1990), Guido Bausenhart, *In allem uns gleich ausser der Sünde : Studien zum Beitrag Maximos’ Des Bekenners zur altkirchlichen Christologie : mit einer Kommentierten übersetzung der "Disputatio Cum Pyrrha"* (Mainz: Matthias-Grünewald-Verlag, 1992), Andrew Louth, *Maximus the Confessor* (London: Routledge, 1996), T. A. Watts, "Two Wills in Christ? Contemporary Objections Considered in the Light of a Critical Examination of Maximus the Confessor’s Disputation with Pyrrhus," *The Westminster theological journal.* 71, no. 2 (2009), and Cyril Hovorun, *Will, Action and Freedom : Christological Controversies in the Seventh Century* (Leiden; Brill, 2008), to name just a few. There have been other scholars, such as Paul Blowers, Josuha Lollar, and Despina Prassas, among others, who have done significant work with Maximus the Confessor, but have not worked directly with the *Disputatio cum Pyrrha* and do not address the issues at hand.
The first and so far only significant challenge to this traditional understanding of the *Disputatio cum Pyrrho* has been leveled by Jacques Noret.\(^{17}\) Noret astutely observes that in the *Relatio Motionis*, the record of the first trial of Maximus in Constantinople, when asked about the nature of the disputation and Pyrrhus’ subsequent conversion, Maximus makes no reference to the *Disputatio* or any record of the dispute at all. Noret suggests that this fact, coupled with the similarity in genre between the *Disputatio cum Pyrrho*, the *Relatio Motionis*, and the *Disputatio Bizyae* suggest that the document was written during this period, after it was realized that a record of the dispute between Maximus and Pyrrhus would be useful.\(^{18}\)

Noret suggests that the *Disputatio cum Pyrrho* was written between 655 and 667; that is to say between the date of the *Relatio Motionis* and the death of Anastasius, the disciple of Maximus who composed the *Relatio Motionis*.\(^{19}\) Noret leaves the question of authorship open, suggesting that Maximus and Anastasius are the most likely candidates, but that it cannot be known for certain who is responsible.\(^{20}\) Noret’s perspective seems to have gone largely unnoted by scholars who have written in English, although Noret’s dating has been accepted without debate by recent French scholarship.\(^{21}\)

Noret’s argument is a welcome change to the traditional view. By formally raising the question of the date and authorship of the *Disputatio* he has drawn attention to

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\(^{18}\) Ibid., 292-293.

\(^{19}\) Ibid., 296.

\(^{20}\) Ibid., 295-296.

a problem which is overdue for an examination. However, while Noret raises the question, his answer leaves a lot of room for expansion. His short article is not an extensive textual critique of the *Disputatio*, but some observations that occurred to him while editing an entirely different text. There are further internal problems within the text which, if he had considered them, may have led him to revise his assessment. I hope to build upon Noret’s work and expand the question further.

Having framed the scholarly debate over dating the *Disputatio cum Pyrrho* between two camps, the traditional, which essentially accepts the document at face value, and that of Noret and his French following, the minority voice which openly questions the dating and authorship, I will now offer a brief remark on the accessibility of the document through critical editions and modern translations. As mentioned above, until Doucet’s dissertation, there had been no critical edition since Migne, and no complete translation into any modern language. Doucet’s work, while not concerned with the question of this present study and primarily theological, is extremely thorough. However it remains obscure and inaccessible, as the Greek text is hand written, and the dissertation itself was never published. For example, in the United States there is only one circulating copy available through the Yale Divinity School. It remains both the only modern critical edition and the only available French translation. There is apparently a plan to publish a new critical edition for the *Corpus Christianorum* series; however no dates have been given and the timeline is nebulous.

The only translation available in English is that of Joseph P. Farrell. Like Doucet, his interest in the document is primarily theological and he accepts the authorship of
Maximus and the date given by the document. However, Farrell’s translation is widely acknowledged as problematic on a number of levels. In terms of accessibility it suffers as it is out of print and difficult to come by. However, beyond this Farrell’s decision to use “King James” English for his translation at times renders it obscure. In addition to this there are entire sections of the Greek text which are missing from Farrell’s translation. Thus this particular translation does not satisfactorily fulfill the need for a quality English translation, and is not particularly useful for scholarship. Because of these factors I have chosen to provide fresh English translations for relevant quotations of the text in this present study.

In addition to the French and English translations mentioned there are two other translations which are particularly useful. Guido Bausenhart’s German edition with commentary is of considerable value. Although he is part of the traditional school of thought concerning the authorship and dating of the *Disputatio*, Bausenhart provides a valuable historical and theological introduction, but most importantly he provides an extensive commentary, which is longer than the text itself, including grammatical and historical analysis of key passages. Also useful is the Modern Greek edition of Ntinas Samothrake. Samothrake’s diglot text reproduces the text of Migne with a Modern Greek translation with brief notes, as well as a similar arrangement for Maximus’ letter to Marinus. Samothrake’s work is most useful for its reproduction of the text in a compact form, but the notes also provide valuable insight.

22 see footnote 15 above.
Scholarship on Forgery in Maximus and Late-Antique Byzantium

The practice of forgery in Late-Antique Byzantium is a significant component of my argument and has received increasing attention in recent years. This conversation has taken some time to develop, but there is significant recent scholarship which has some bearing on the present study which I will examine below. I will begin by examining recent discussions of the general practice of forgery in the 6th and 7th centuries, followed by two scholars who examined forgery in relation to works related to Maximus.

In recent years there has been significant scholarship on forgery as a practice, one which was particularly frequent beginning in the 6th Century. Perhaps most important is the work of Patrick Gray. In two important articles Gray demonstrated the rise in the use of “Select Fathers” as canonical authorities in determining doctrinal disputes, and the related phenomena of pious forgery of such authorities by polemicists to prove their particular perspective.25 Gray demonstrated that polemicists used sophisticated techniques to discover forgeries of their opponents, while simultaneously and without any dissonance forging documents to prove their own perspective. This phenomena, Gray suggests, is a result of the idea that the “Select Fathers” cannot contradict the truth, therefore instances when they do must be corrected. According to Gray, in discussing the use of forgery by Chalcedonians and monophysites, “forgery was an instrument of progress only in a modest sense; they were intense conservatives who had no conscious

desire to introduce anything genuinely new, though their distance from the past forced them to reconstruct it in a new image.”

Recent studies by Susan Wessel and Daniel Larison have applied this principle to the study of the Third Council at Constantinople. Wessel examines what she calls the “scrupulous use of deception” through literary forgery, and the interesting phenomena in Late-Antique Byzantine society of threatening punishment for those who read and believe forged documents, rather than the forgers themselves. Building off of Gray’s description of forgery as “an act of progress,” Wessel concludes:

The Acts of the Sixth Council reveal that early Byzantine forgers and falsifiers of Christian texts did not “intend to deceive” their opponents in the way that most modern scholars believe. The forgers merely thought that they were altering or fabricating texts in order to attest to the unchanging truth of their theological views.

Thus, according to Wessel, seventh-century theologians maintained the same constructive conservatism which while not admitting change led writers to alter and fabricate texts to address the “timeless truths” which the canonical fathers otherwise did not discuss.

Whether one accepts Wessel’s assessment of the purity of their motives, the practice was still present. Wessel discusses the paradox which Gray first demonstrates, namely the simultaneous use of forgery as tool and a charge to level against one’s opponents. Larison also applies this principle in his broader study of the Third Council at Constantinople.

26 Gray, "Forgery as an Instrument of Progress: Reconstructing the Theological Tradition in the Sixth Century," 289.
Two scholars who dealt specifically with forgery in documents related to Maximus the Confessor and forgery done specifically by Maximus are Rudolf Riedinger and John D. Madden. Riedinger in his landmark study of *Acta* of the Lateran Synod of 649 demonstrated convincingly that the *Acta* were actually composed by Maximus and did not represent an actual deliberation which had taken place, going so far as to say that the entire synod was forged and never happened. Although many scholars question Riedinger’s latter conclusion, his demonstration of Maximus’ authorship of the *Acta* is widely accepted.

John D. Madden in an article particularly relevant to this study explored the authenticity of the patristic evidence Maximus cites in defense of his definition of θελησις. Among other documents he examines the *Disputatio cum Pyrrho*, including a passage which Maximus, in the *Disputatio*, attributes to Clement of Alexandria. Madden, who accepts Maximus’ authorship, demonstrates that this particular reference is only found in the *Disputatio*, and suggests that it was quite likely that Maximus created this reference, along with other references in other works, to provide patristic evidence for a his particular definition of a word which was extremely rare in Greek authors, and nearly nonexistent in Christian authors. While I disagree with Madden’s assumption that

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Maximus is the author of the *Disputatio*, I applaud Madden’s insight, and that he opened the door for further critique.

The above discussion of particular instances of forgery and the broad discussion of forgery as a phenomenon in Late-Antique Byzantine culture are both useful in themselves. They have demonstrated the way in which theological discourse is often constructed was in many ways rhetorical. Likewise, particularly the studies by Gray, Wessel, and Larison have demonstrated that documents are often created for a specific purpose, either to force “canonical fathers” to conform to theological norms, or as is often the case to fuel polemic.

However there has not been an attempt to apply the broader insights offered by these theoretical studies of forgery to particular texts attributed to Maximus the Confessor. Likewise the discussion of forgery as a practice has so far only been discussed in the context of councils; Gray used Chalcedon as a basis for his study, while Wessel and Larison used the Third Council at Constantinople for their studies. The present study will apply Gray’s theory of forgery as an instrument of progress, and Larison and Wessel’s application to the seventh century, and apply it specifically to the *Disputatio cum Pyrrho*.

**Scholarship on Monotheletism**

Finally, it is worth briefly mentioning the overall lack of scholarship on Monotheletism. As I have mentioned on several occasions, the *Disputatio cum Pyrrho* has primarily been seen in terms of its importance as a theological document. This can be narrowed down further in its importance as one of few lengthy expositions of
Monotheletism. I would suggest that as a result, it has suffered from many of the problems associated with scholarship on the monothelete controversy.

As Larison has noted, there are very few monographs on Monotheletism, and nearly all studies of Monotheletism have essentially dismissed the doctrine as a mere political compromise in attempt to unify the Church in light of the Arab invasions. The idea that there could be serious adherents to Monotheletism is almost inconceivable to some scholars, and is the product of an anachronistic view of church-state relations. Cyril Hovorun, author of the most recent monograph on the subject, has referred to Monotheletism and Monoenergism as “quasi-doctrines,” considering them to be of little theological import and primarily politically expedient. Larison has critiqued this position and has attempted to study Monotheletism and the Third Council at Constantinople in a broader perspective.

I would suggest that traditional scholarship on Monotheletism has adversely impacted scholarship on the *Disputatio cum Pyrrho*. Since the document has been understood primarily as a discourse against Monotheletism, bias against the importance of Monotheletism has led scholars to miss the historical importance of the document. Likewise, the lack of consideration of the purpose behind the composition of *Disputatio cum Pyrrho* beyond the monothelete question, and what it tells us about the general nature of theological discourse in the seventh century has prevented inquiry regarding the date and authorship.

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34 c.f. Larison, "Return to Authority: The Monothelete Controversy and the Role of Text, Emperor and Council in the Sixth Ecumenical Council," 33-34.
Conclusion

The following historiographical overview has attempted to examine and critique the major historical trends and perspectives relating to the *Disputatio cum Pyrrho*. We have examined the varying perspectives on the authorship, date, and purpose of the document itself, major works of scholarship dealing with the *Disputatio*, scholarship relating to forgery as a theoretical apparatus, and scholarship relating to Monotheletism. The following study will build upon these scholars, and hopefully address a need for a fresh, close examination of the *Disputatio cum Pyrrho*, and ask new questions and perhaps bring us closer to some answers.
Chapter Three. The Historical Background of the *Disputatio cum Pyrrho*

Introduction

An examination of the *Disputatio cum Pyrrho*, its content, its structure and its purpose must first begin with an examination of the context in which it was written. There were within the Byzantine Empire of the seventh century a number of individuals, controversies, and historical circumstances which made the composition of the *Disputatio cum Pyrrho* possible, and as I will suggest below, extremely useful. What follows shall serve as a brief survey of the relevant history surrounding Maximus the Confessor, Pyrrhus and the composition of *Disputatio cum Pyrrho*. This will serve to frame the rest of this study and provide a reference point for the discussion which will follow.

The Seventh Century: Invasion, Discontent and Disunity in the Empire

The seventh century was a period of significant turmoil on a number of fronts. From the moment of his coronation at the hand of Patriarch Sergius of Constantinople (610-638) on October 10, 610, the Emperor Heraclius (610-641) inherited an empire in crisis. The reign of his predecessor, the usurper Phokas (602-610), had been marked with civil war and the beginning of a series of defeats the hands of the Persians under Chosroes II.

If military troubles were not enough, religious factionalism which divided the Christian Empire threatened to further undermine its stability. Chalcedonian and anti-Chalcedonian factions had been quarreling for decades over whether Jesus Christ, as God

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incarnate, had one or two natures. The desire for unification acquired a new sense of urgency as the very survival of the empire seemed to hang in the balance, especially when its most powerful enemy, Chosroes II, took advantage of this division by favoring anti-Chalcedonians over the imperially endorsed Chalcedonian party in a strategic attempt to provoke an internal rebellion.  

**Monoenergism—Union at Hand?**

Heraclius and Sergius believed that they had found a means for union through the concept of μία ἐνέργεια, or one energy or activity in Christ. The formula essentially maintained the status quo of Chalcedon, while adding the concept that the incarnate Christ had one “theandric” activity. The hope was to bypass discussion of the nature(s) of Christ by focusing instead on the oneness of his activity, a concept which seemed agreeable to both supporters and opponents of Chalcedon. Heraclius made a number of attempts to implement Monoenergism as a means of union, though his attempts met with mixed results. He met with greater success in Lazica in 626, where he convinced Cyrus of Phasis, who would eventually become the Patriarch of Alexandria, to accept Monoenergism. Ultimately military difficulties and continued defeat prevented Heraclius from being able to devote his full attention to ecclesiastical unification.

Heraclius and the empire itself received a respite as the tide began to turn in favor of the Romans. With the eventual recapturing of territory lost to the Persians, including the recapture of the Holy Cross in 628 from Ctesiphon, Heraclius, in his triumph, and with the apparent sanction of God Himself, acquired the conditions necessary to devote

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36 Louth, *Maximus the Confessor*, 12.
37 This interpretation of Ps. Dionysus’ “New Theandric activity” will be discussed further below.
38 Ibid., 13.
his attention to unification. Cyrus of Phasis was rewarded for his conversion by receiving both the ecclesiastical power, as Chalcedonian Patriarch of Alexandria, and secular command as Augustal Prefect of Egypt. Heraclius tasked Cyrus with achieving union under Monoenergism, who used his newly gained powers to this end. Cyrus fulfilled his charge as the anti-Chalcedonian party in Alexandra, under pain of persecution, capitulated to the imperial will. On June 3, 633 with the support of Patriarch Sergius, and with Heraclius himself in attendance a pact of union was achieved. Patriarch Cyrus presided over a solemn Eucharist, and the Nine Chapters, the official document of the union, was read by Cyrus from the ambo.

Sophronius, Honorius, and Monotheletism

Nearly as soon as the ink dried the union at Alexandria was jeopardized. Sophronius, a monk who happened to be in Alexandria at the time of the union, read a copy of the Nine Chapters and raised questions about its orthodoxy. He initially brought his concerns to Sergius, who issued a Psephos in August 633 which forbade the use of any language referring to one or two activities. The emperor confirmed this with an imperial decree shortly thereafter. Sophronius agreed not to discuss the activities any further. However, at his elevation to the patriarchate of Jerusalem in 634, Sophronius

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40 Larison, "Return to Authority: The Monothelete Controversy and the Role of Text, Emperor and Council in the Sixth Ecumenical Council," 72.
41 Louth, Maximus the Confessor, 17. According to Louth, modern Coptic Christians still remember Cyrus primarily as a persecutor.
43 Louth, Maximus the Confessor, 14.
suggested in his *Synodical Letter* that since activities were subordinate to natures, if Christ had two natures, he logically has two activities.\(^45\)

In the midst of his conflict with Sophronius, Sergius wrote to Pope Honorius (625-638) bringing tidings of the union, Heraclius’ role in facilitating it, as well as the single activity.\(^46\) In his response, Honorius recommended removing the expression “one activity” to avoid offense to those who may not understand. Honorius went beyond this, however, adding what would become an infamous phrase “we confess one will in our Lord Jesus Christ.”\(^47\) This correspondence effectively marked the end of Monoenergism and the beginning of its replacement by a new formula of unification: Monotheletism.\(^48\)

Monotheletism would eventually become the law of the land. However, Heraclius’ leisure to attend to ecclesiastical affairs was abruptly interrupted by invasion of Muslim Arabs in 634. By 641 Arabs had captured Syria, Upper Mesopotamia, the Holy Land, and Egypt. In March 638, Heraclius, determined to bring some resolution to religious matters despite, or perhaps because, of the military disasters he was facing, issued his controversial *Ekthesis*, which forbade the discussion of the “energies” of Christ, and advocated the agreement of one will instead.\(^49\) The *Ekthesis* carried no threat of punishment for those who did not obey. However in November of 638 Sergius convened a synod in Constantinople which confirmed the *Ekthesis*, and decreed that clergy who taught either one or two energies would be defrocked, and monks and lay

\(^{45}\) Ibid., 34.
people would be excommunicated.  

Sergius died a month later, and was replaced by Pyrrhus (638-641, 654). Pyrrhus affirmed the findings of the synod and promulgated them in an encyclical letter.  

Honorius died before news of the Ekthesis reached Rome, so it remains a mystery whether or not he would have approved of the interpretation of his letter taken by the emperor and his patriarchs. However after the brief pontificate of Severinus (640), Pope John IV (640-642) was elevated. John IV staunchly opposed Monotheletism and the Ekthesis, and took bold steps against both. In January 641, John presided over a Roman synod convened specifically to condemn Monotheletism. The synod condemned Monotheletism and Monoenergism, and anathematized Sergius, Cyrus and Pyrrhus. According to a letter of Maximus to Peter the Illustrious, John then sent a definition of the synod’s proceedings to Heraclius, who disavowed his own role and placed the blame for any innovation on Sergius.  

After the emperor’s death, John appealed to Heraclius’ first and short lived successor Heraclius Constantine to remove the Ekthesis from the Hagia Sophia.  

Convinced of Honorius’ orthodoxy, John IV sought to prove that the authorities in Constantinople misunderstood him by writing an extensive defense of his predecessor, the Apologia Pro Honorio, in which he wrote that Honorius had misspoken and was

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50 Ibid., 107-109.  
51 Stratos, Byzantium in the Seventh Century, 2:145. The significance of these “synods” will become a matter of further discussion in the Disputatio cum Pyrrho.  
53 PG 91:141-146. This account, which Hovorun accepts (see Hovorun, Will, Action and Freedom: Christological Controversies in the Seventh Century, 80) should be not be accepted without caution. It seems to be either an attempt to degrade the appearance of imperial support, or a way for Maximus and his confederates to distance themselves from critiquing the court.  
54 Sherwood, "Date-List of the Works of Maximus the Confessor,” 14. The dynastic struggle following the death of Heraclius will be discussed in further detail below.
merely asserting that Christ did not have two conflicting wills, as all other men inherited as a result of Original Sin. In other words, John asserted that Honorius was speaking on a very specific subject, and if he had only known how Constantinople would have taken his words, he too would have condemned Monotheletism. Maximus himself defended Honorius in his *Dogmatic Tome* to the priest Marinus, and in his letter to Peter the Illustrious. Maximus is again depicted as a defender of Honorius in the *Disputatio cum Pyrrho*, which will be given greater attention below.\(^{55}\) Honorius’ response to Sergius sparked the beginnings of Monotheletism, and allowed its supporters to cite its Papal origins. Honorius would eventually be condemned at the Third Council of Constantinople of 680-681.\(^{56}\)

**Imperial Scandal, a Crisis of Succession, and the *Typos***

In addition to periods of military strife and religious dissension, the reign of Heraclius was marred by scandal. In 622/623 Patriarch Sergius blessed a highly controversial incestuous marriage between Heraclius and his niece Martina.\(^{57}\) Upon his elevation, Pyrrhus, who was a close confidant of the Emperor and was entrusted with a significant sum of money on behalf of Martina, continued the ecclesiastical support for this marriage.\(^{58}\) With the death of Heraclius on February 2, 641 a bitter struggle for succession broke out between the children of Heraclius and Martina, and the children of Heraclius and his previous wife Eudocia. Finally when Constans II was securely installed as emperor, Pyrrhus fled Constantinople for North Africa. He was replaced by

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\(^{55}\) *Opusculum* 20, *PG* 91:228-245.


\(^{58}\) Ibid., 305.
Paul II (October 11, 641-December, 653)\(^59\), who continued the Monothelete policies of his predecessors.\(^60\)

**The Greek Diaspora, North Africa, and Rome**

The Persian invasions of the beginning of the seventh century and the subsequent Arab invasions had a dramatic effect on the population and led to widespread displacement. A large number of the Greek population, among them important members of the intelligentsia and influential monastics, fled invading armies and found refuge in North Africa, in particular Carthage.\(^61\) In 626, during the siege of Constantinople, a number of monks who would grow to be influential fled the region, including Sophronius as well as Maximus.\(^62\) As we have seen, Pyrrhus found a comfortable refuge in North Africa after his flight from Constantinople.

Monotheletism and in particular the Emperor Constans II were met with great hostility in North Africa under the leadership of the Exarch Gregory. According to the *Disputatio cum Pyrrho*, it was under the auspices of Gregory that the disputation between Pyrrhus and Maximus took place. In 645, the same year as the disputation, Gregory led a revolt against Constans II. Gregory would eventually be killed by Arab armies in 647.\(^63\)

Rome was also home to a large diaspora community of military, political and religious refugees. After the fall of Jerusalem in 638, Rome became the sole patriarchate.

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\(^{59}\) Larison, "Return to Authority: The Monothelete Controversy and the Role of Text, Emperor and Council in the Sixth Ecumenical Council," 429.

\(^{60}\) Stratos, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century*, 2:197.

\(^{61}\) Averil Cameron notes "It may seem curious that the first half of the seventh century was to see a vigorous intellectual activity in Africa, all of it conducted in Greek." Averil Cameron, "Byzantine Africa: The Literary Evidence," in *Excavations at Carthage 1978*, ed. J.H. Humphrey (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1982), 32.

\(^{62}\) Louth, *Maximus the Confessor*, 5.

willing or able to resist Monotheletism. This made the Eternal City a particularly attractive location for those who fled due to imperial religious policy. Brandes speculates that the effects of the influx of dyothelite refugees may have been felt as early as 641 and contributed to John IV’s aggressive stance against Constantinople. At any rate, the number of refugees increased dramatically after the failure of Gregory’s uprising and the Arab invasion of North Africa, and the diaspora community became so influential that a number of Greek refugees were elected to the Papacy, including John IV’s successor Pope Theodore I (642-649). Theodore, who was a refugee from Palestine, continued an active resistance against Monotheletism. It was Theodore, with the help of Maximus, who arrived in 646, who initiated the process of holding a council to condemn Monotheletism outright.

Pyrrhus the Abbot and Patriarch: His Life Before the Dispute

We have precious little information about the life of Pyrrhus, Maximus’ interlocutor in the dispute and a puzzling individual in his own right. Only three documents by his hand survive, and only as fragments preserved in the Lateran and Third Council of Constantinople notes, both of which are hostile sources. It is known that he was an abbot at the monastery of Chrysopolis, located in the vicinity of Constantinople. Even before his election to the Patriarchate of Constantinople, Pyrrhus seems to have

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64 Louth, *Maximus the Confessor*, 15-16.
66 Larison, “Return to Authority: The Monothelete Controversy and the Role of Text, Emperor and Council in the Sixth Ecumenical Council,” 430.
67 Hovorun, *Will, Action and Freedom: Christological Controversies in the Seventh Century*, 81. The significant contribution of Maximus to the preparation of the Lateran Council of 649 is an integral part of this study and will receive greater treatment below.
68 *Decretum Synodale* (CPG 7615), *Epistula ad Iohannem IV papam* (CPG 7616), and *Tomus Dogmatics* (CPG 7617)
been well connected, or at least well informed in the affairs of the synod. It is known that he wrote to Maximus seeking his opinion about the *Psephos* somewhere between 633 and 634.\(^{70}\) The letter itself has been lost, but we have the response by Maximus.\(^{71}\) This response sheds light on the relationship between Maximus and Pyrrhus before the *Disputatio cum Pyrrho*. The letter reveals that relations between the two were not always hostile, and even seems to betray a friendship, or at least a respect on the part of Maximus for the abbot. The title of the letter refers to Pyrrhus as “the most holy priest and abbot,” and in his salutation, Maximus addresses him “God-honored Father.”\(^{72}\) This is a crucial contrast to the way Maximus treats Pyrrhus in the *Disputatio cum Pyrrho*, and will be explored in greater detail below.

Little is known about his life between this letter and his election to the Patriarchate. It has already been mentioned that he was particularly close to Heraclius and his family. It is known that, along with Sergius, Pyrrhus, as abbot at Chrysopolis, had significant input in the formulation of the *Ekthesis*, likely as a trusted spiritual advisor to Heraclius.\(^{73}\) Therefore it is no surprise that Pyrrhus was chosen to replace Sergius after his death in 638. Pyrrhus’ short reign as Patriarch seems to have merely maintained the status quo. Once he fled Constantinople, his life took on new significance as a figure of controversy.

\(^{70}\) Sherwood, "Date-List of the Works of Maximus the Confessor," 37.
\(^{71}\) *ep*. 19, *PG* 91:589-597.
\(^{72}\) *PG* 91:589. “ὁσιώτατον πρεσβύτερον και ἡγούμενον” and “Θεοτίμητε Πάτερ” respectively. This letter will be discussed greater detail below.
\(^{73}\) Louth, *Maximus the Confessor*, 15.
Pyrrhus seems to have made himself a precarious figure in Africa. He is the subject of a document by Maximus which predates the disputation by 1-2 years.\textsuperscript{74} The letter, which survives only in a fragment preserved by Anastasius Bibliothecarius, is a response to an inquiry from Peter the Illustrious, the \textit{Strategos} of Numidia.\textsuperscript{75} Though the letter from Peter does not survive, he seems to have inquired whether or not he should refer to Pyrrhus with the title customarily given to patriarchs, “most holy.” Maximus’ responds that Pyrrhus has been judged, and the title should be withheld until he repents of his heresy, the implication being that if he were to repent the title would be proper.\textsuperscript{76} Pyrrhus makes his next appearance in history in his disputation with Maximus the Confessor.\textsuperscript{77}

\textbf{Maximus the Confessor: Monk, Theologian, and Rabble Rouser}

There is significantly more information available about the life of Maximus the Confessor, at least in his later career. The events of the early years of his life and his origin are still a matter of debate. Traditionally, scholars have trusted the Greek life, which says that Maximus was born in 580 in Constantinople to noble parents and received a good education.\textsuperscript{78} However, recent scholarship has demonstrated that the information given in the Greek life is not particularly reliable until about 610.\textsuperscript{79} This information, coupled with the discovery by Sebastian Brock of a Syriac life of Maximus,

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{74} \textit{Opusculum}. 12, PG 91:141-146. Sherwood places this letter between 643-644, roughly 1-2 years before the disputation took place. Sherwood, "Date-List of the Works of Maximus the Confessor," 52.
\textsuperscript{75} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{76} PG 91:144. This opinion is significant to this study and will be discussed in greater detail below.
\textsuperscript{77} There is scholarly debate as to whether Pyrrhus fled voluntarily (c.f. Stratos, \textit{Byzantium in the Seventh Century}, 2:195), or whether he was deposed and banished (c.f. George Ostrogorsky, \textit{History of the Byzantine State} (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1969), 114). This particular letter is a small part of this puzzle.
\textsuperscript{78} For a traditional narrative, see Louth, \textit{Maximus the Confessor}, 15
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which, though hostile, is contemporary with Maximus, has led to a reexamination of the
traditional narrative. 80 Recently scholars have begun to argue convincingly that the
Syriac life is perhaps more correct in suggesting that Maximus came from more humble,
Palestinian origins. 81

While the question of Maximus’ origins remains a matter of debate, his life comes
into greater focus from 610 until his death in 662. With the overthrow of Phokas by
Heraclius, in 610 Maximus was made protosecretary of the Imperial Chancellery. His
tenure in government service was brief, as he abandoned public life for the monastic life,
and by 618 he acquired his first disciple, Anastasius. In 624 or 625 he transferred to the
monastery of St. George in Cyzicus where he wrote his earliest surviving documents, but
was forced to flee in 626 with the siege of Constantinople. After making stops in Crete
and Cyprus, he settled in Carthage around 630. 82

By at least 632, and as early as 628, Maximus had met Sophronius at the
monastery of Eucratas. 83 Sophronius established the monastery as a refuge for monks of
the Greek diaspora before his departure for Alexandria in 633. 84 It is here that Maximus
spent most of his time in Africa and wrote most of his advanced theological works.
According to correspondence between Maximus and the bishop of Cyzicus, Maximus
initially viewed his stay in Africa as temporary and expressed a desire to return; however
by 632-633 he seems to have accepted that his exile was permanent. 85 In 634, as we have
seen, we have our first evidence of Maximus’ acquaintance with Pyrrhus, who wrote to

81 Boudignon, "Maxime le Confesseur était-il Constantinopolitan"
82 Ibid.
83 Sherwood, "Date-List of the Works of Maximus the Confessor," 6.
84 Louth, Maximus the Confessor, 16.
85 Sherwood, "Date-List of the Works of Maximus the Confessor," 6.
him in exile. This bears witness not only to the established relationship between the future disputants, but also to the theological reputation Maximus had gained by this time.

While Maximus’ reputation as a doctrinal authority rose due to the significant number of texts he wrote on a number of theological matters, for the purpose of this short historical survey it will suffice to comment on his development as an authority against Monotheletism. Considering the reputation he would eventually earn as a defender of orthodoxy against Monotheletism, he did not come out openly against the doctrine until 640. Through a number of smaller treatises on the subject, which will be discussed further below, his reputation as the authority against imperial orthodoxy continued to grow. In 645 he had an opportunity to showcase his expertise in a formal debate with one of theologians who helped formulate the doctrine, Pyrrhus, the former Patriarch of Constantinople.

The Disputation, the Recantation, and the Lateran Synod

In July of 645 a formal debate took place between Maximus and Pyrrhus over the question of Monotheletism. While I am attempting to demonstrate that the document which claims to be the account of the disputation was written for purposes other than to provide an accurate transcript, the fact that the dispute took place and its outcome are witnessed elsewhere and generally accepted. Pyrrhus declared that he was in error and

86 Louth, Maximus the Confessor, 16. His first open attack against Monotheletism is found in the same Dogmatic Tome to Marinus mentioned above (Opusculum 20).
87 Cf. RM, 6 where Maximus is asked:

“Εἰπὲ ἡμῖν, κύριε ἅββα, τὴν μεταξὺ σοῦ καὶ Πύρρου γενομένην ἐν Ἀφρικῇ καὶ Ῥώμῃ περὶ τῶν δόγματος κίνησιν• καὶ ποίοις αὐτὸν ἐπείσας λόγοις ἀναθεματίσαι τὸ δόγμα τὸ ἰδίον, καὶ τῷ σῷ συνθέσθαι”
converted to the dyothelite cause. Pyrrhus immediately departed for Rome, according to the *Disputatio cum Pyrrho* to be restored by Pope Theodore in person. While the motives of Pyrrhus’ conversion cannot be known for certain, it is plausible that they were primarily political. As has been seen, the Exarch Gregory, under whose auspices the dispute took place, openly opposed Monotheletism and held ambitions of overthrowing the Emperor Constans II. Pyrrhus’ actions seem to demonstrate an attempt to gain the support of Gregory and perhaps use his favor to be reinstalled as Patriarch, either through the exarch’s influence in Constantinople, or in the event of a successful coup. Whatever his motives were, in 647, after the failure of Gregory’s uprising in North Africa, and a mere two years after his capitulation to Maximus, he left Rome for Ravenna where he reverted to Monotheletism. Pope Theodore immediately excommunicated Pyrrhus, having dipped the pen he used to sign the excommunication in the Eucharistic chalice. Pyrrhus would get his second patriarchy, but it would be short lived. He died in June 654, just six months after his elevation.

In Rome Maximus continued his opposition to Monotheletism at a greater pace than before. Here he worked closely with Pope Theodore I, working toward an eventual

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88 Louth, *Maximus the Confessor*, 17.


90 Louth, *Maximus the Confessor*, 17.

91 Louth, *Maximus the Confessor*, 17.

92 Larison, “Return to Authority: The Monothelete Controversy and the Role of Text, Emperor and Council in the Sixth Ecumenical Council,” 429.
council which would condemn Monotheletism once and for all. In October of 649, the Lateran Synod was convened for this purpose. When Theodore died before the synod’s conclusion, his work was continued by Martin I (649-655). Martin’s papacy marked an open rebellion against Constantinople. Upon his elevation he ignored custom; seeking confirmation from neither the emperor nor his exarch in Ravenna. The council continued this rebellion by condemning imperial orthodoxy. Though not condemning the Typos or Constans II by name, the council did anathematize Theodore of Pharan, Cyrus of Alexandria, and Patriarchs Sergius, Pyrrhus and Paul. Doctrinally it confirmed Chacledon and explicitly confirmed that the two natures of Christ necessitated two operations and two wills.

**Arrests and Trials**

Martin I’s lack of confirmation and both Martin and Maximus’ participation in the Lateran Synod made them guilty of treason in the eyes of the Imperial government. Constans II ordered Olympus, the Exarch of Ravenna to arrest Martin I and bring him to Constantinople. Olympus set out to complete this task, but when he arrived he found the population of Rome protected Martin. Faced with popular resistance, he not only abandoned his charge, but led a rebellion against Constantinople, in which he was killed in 651. Constans then sent Theodore Kalliopas to complete the task. Kalliopas successfully arrested Pope Marin in 653. Martin was brought to Constantinople where he

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93Louth, *Maximus the Confessor*, 17.
94Larison, "Return to Authority: The Monothelete Controversy and the Role of Text, Emperor and Council in the Sixth Ecumenical Council," 430.
95Louth, *Maximus the Confessor*, 17.
96Ibid.
97Ibid. The role of Maximus in producing the Acta of the Lateran Synod is crucial to this study and will be discussed in detail below.
98Louth, *Maximus the Confessor*, 17.
was tried, deposed, defrocked, ill-treated, and exiled to Cherson in the Crimea. He died in exile on September 15, 655.

Maximus too was arrested in Rome and tried in Constantinople for treason. He was accused of betraying North Africa to the Saracens and supporting the rebellion of Gregory, both of which he denied. Eventually the trial turned to doctrinal matters where Maximus denied that the Emperor was a priest or that he had any authority to intervene in doctrinal matters. Maximus was exiled to Bizya, but was tried again in Constantinople where any political pretense was dropped. He was tried and convicted of heresy, and his right hand and tongue were amputated. He was sent to exile in Lazica, where he died August 13, 662. Maximus’ theology and position was eventually vindicated at the Third Council at Constantinople of 680-681. Maximus himself was never mentioned by name, but his theology and reasoning permeates the acts.

Conclusion

All documents are written in a context, and understanding that context can illustrate the purpose of a document’s composition. This is particularly important for understanding the *Disputatio cum Pyrrho*. I contend, and will demonstrate below that the *Disputatio cum Pyrrho* was composed and later redacted for polemical purposes, and does not simply provide a transcript of historical disputation. The preceding has been a brief historical overview of major events and individuals of importance to the *Disputatio*

99 *RM*, 1, Allen and Neil, *Maximus the Confessor and His Companions: Documents from Exile:* 48-49; and *RM* 2, ibid., 50-52 respectively.
100 *RM*, 4, ibid., 54-55.
102 Larison, "Return to Authority: The Monothelete Controversy and the Role of Text, Emperor and Council in the Sixth Ecumenical Council," 206.
cum Pyrrho itself. This overview will provide the background for the remaining
discussion and references contained in the overview will be referred to when necessary.
Chapter Four: Structure and Content of the Disputatio cum Pyrrho

Introduction

Before discussing specific elements of the text, it is necessary to provide a brief description of the structure and content of the Disputatio cum Pyrrho. This will provide a foundation for later discussion of specific problems in the text which raise doubts about its authenticity. The following chapter will provide an overview in broad strokes, discussing the major divisions of the text.

The Disputatio cum Pyrrho can be divided into four sections based on the subject matter discussed:

1.) The prologue (288A)
2.) The debate about Monotheletism (288B-333B)
3.) The debate about Monoenergism (333C-353A8)
4.) The epilogue (353A9-353B4).

This is the most basic division of the text and is self-evident based on content. However I would suggest and will demonstrate that upon closer inspection, the text can be understood to be a composite of two texts, written on separate occasions. I will call these texts Disputatio α and Disputatio β. This division is as follows:

1.) Disputatio α (288A-328A7, and 333B9-11)
2.) Disputatio β (328A8-333B8, and 333B12-353B4)

The following chapter will first examine the four self-evident divisions of the texts in a very broad fashion, and provide an argument for the composite nature of the dispute. The subsequent chapters will explore specific problems within the text, as well as discuss the questions of authorship and purpose.

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All citations of the Disputatio cum Pyrrho will employ the numbering used in Doucet, "Dispute de Maxime le Confesseur avec Pyrrhus : introduction, texte critique, traduction et notes."
The Prologue

The prologue of the document contains significant information which reveals how its author shapes the readers’ understanding of the document’s nature, date, location, participants, and witnesses. It is difficult without further codicological analysis to determine the prologue’s exact relationship to the rest of the text. However I do believe there is evidence to suggest that the prologue is part of an original text which was later edited. This study will operate under this assumption while conceding the possibility that the prologue is a later interpolation.

The first matter worthy of consideration is the first words of the prologue, which describe what follows as “a record of the inquiry which took place on account of the disturbances which had occurred concerning ecclesiastical dogmas.” There are several things worth noting in these opening words. The document is described as a Παρασημείωσις, which in legal terminology is a technical term for a court document, the Greek equivalent of the Latin adnotatio, or a legal transcription. Taken in the context of event being described as a ζήτησις, which can carry the meaning of a judicial inquiry or investigation, it is reasonable to conclude that the author is describing this document as an official legal transcript of a formal judicial inquiry. Of further significance is the description of the matter investigated. The doctrines under consideration are called κεκινημένων, or disturbances. The attitude toward the subject under consideration is clearly hostile, and the stakes are high. Thus while the author clearly wishes his audience to regard the document as a legal document, he also reveals his partisanship.

104 288 Α. Παρασημείωσις τῆς γενομένης ζητήσεως χάριν τῶν κεκινημένων περί τῶν ἐκκλησιαστικῶν δογμάτων.
105 LSJ, 9th ed., s.v. “Παρασημείωσις.”
106 LSJ, 9th ed., s.v. “ζήτησις.”
In addition to dating the dispute “in the month of July, of the third Indiction,” the prologue provides interesting information about the presidency of the disputation and its witnesses. The prologue states that the dispute took place “in the presence of Gregory, the most blessed patrician, the most holy bishops who were found with him, and the rest of the God-loving and esteemed men.” This passage is particularly interesting. It identifies Gregory the exarch who, as we have seen, led an unsuccessful rebellion and was a known defender of Dyotheletism. By referring to him as the “most blessed patrician,” the author takes sides against Constans II and official Imperial policy. Beyond this, by identifying an unnamed crowd of “most holy bishops” and “God-loving and esteemed men,” the author immediately provides a sense of authority without entering into specifics. However if the document were immediately contemporary with the actual disputation, it is peculiar that the author would not include the names of individual witnesses present who could corroborate the account and lend legitimacy to the proceedings. By providing vague information it would be possible for an author who was not present at the disputation to create the impression that the event was well attended and approved by ecclesiastical and imperial elites; figures who would certainly have been present at an official inquiry into ecclesiastical dogmas. Thus the author is able to lend legitimacy to the document without having to be fully aware of specific details of attendance.

107 Ibid. μηνὶ Ἰουλίῳ ἰνδικτιῶνος γ’.
108 Ibid. παρουσίᾳ Γρηγορίου τοῦ εὐσεβεστάτου πατρικίου, καὶ τῶν συνευρεθέντων αὐτῷ ὅσιωτάτων ἐπισκόπων, καὶ λοιπῶν θεοφιλῶν καὶ ἐνδόξων ἀνδρῶν.
Any doubt about the author’s position is made clear when the prologue refers to Monotheletism as an “innovation.”\textsuperscript{109} In late antiquity, the accusation of innovation in theological discourse was, perhaps, the greatest attack one could level at an opponent. The entire phenomena of compilation or forging of patristic citations was done to maintain the appearance of conservatism and defend against charges of innovation.\textsuperscript{110} Moreover, the prologue makes clear that Maximus is the protagonist while Pyrrhus is the antagonist, juxtaposing Pyrrhus, the mere “former patriarch of Constantinople,”\textsuperscript{111} with “Maximus, the most pious monk.”\textsuperscript{112} It is clear from this information that any illusion of impartiality on the part of the author of the prologue is gone, and the author is certainly a partisan of Maximus.

Beyond the clear polemical information there is one final interesting aspect of the prologue which needs to be addressed. As I have mentioned above and will explore in greater detail below, the\textit{Disputatio cum Pyrrho} contains two separate debates, one about Monotheletism and one about Monoenergism. However, the prologue only mentions the debate about “the one will.”\textsuperscript{113} The absence of any mention of the debate about the energies of Christ in prologue is a significant matter which I will discuss in the next chapter in greater detail.

\textsuperscript{109} Ibid. χανοτομία.
\textsuperscript{110} cf. Gray, “’The Select Fathers’: Canonizing the Patristic Past.”
\textsuperscript{111} 288 Α. Πυῤῥου τοῦ γενομένου πατριάρχου Κωνσταντινουπόλεως.
\textsuperscript{112} Ibid. Μαξιμίου τοῦ εὐλαβεστάτου μοναχοῦ.
\textsuperscript{113} Ibid. τούτεστιν τοῦ ένός θελήματος.
The Debate about Monotheletism

The prologue is immediately followed first debate and lengthiest section concerning Monotheletism.\textsuperscript{114} An extensive theological analysis of the arguments provided is beyond the scope of this project. However the following will provide a brief overview of the types of questions and the major forms of evidence employed in the discussion.

Pyrrhus begins the debate by asking how he or his predecessor Sergius offended Maximus personally and why the \textit{Ekthesis} and the concept of a single will in Christ is disturbing to Christian teaching.\textsuperscript{115} Once the terms of the debate are determined Pyrrhus proceeds to pose basic objections to the idea that Christ would have two wills. Such questions include that it violates the oneness of God,\textsuperscript{116} that it is impossible for two wills to exist in one person without opposition,\textsuperscript{117} and other similar objections. A pattern continues in which Pyrrhus poses objections and agrees to Maximus’ extensive theological responses while following up with further objections. Thus the first section of the dispute could be considered a purely theological discussion.

After this strictly theological discussion, and after Pyrrhus has thus far conceded to Maximus’ arguments, Pyrrhus objects that since there is danger of abuse by heretics, it is best to avoid the discussion of the wills altogether and to be content with using the councils alone.\textsuperscript{118} This particular objection provides an interesting turn and can be considered a discussion of conciliar evidence. Maximus dismisses the idea that one can

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item\textsuperscript{114} 288 B-333 B11.
\item\textsuperscript{115} 288B-288C.
\item\textsuperscript{116} 288D-289A.
\item\textsuperscript{117} 289C.
\item\textsuperscript{118} 300C.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
only discuss that which is mentioned by councils; however he takes the argument a step further by arguing that the matter of the will was discussed in councils. He states that Apollinarius and Arius used the phrase “one will,” and were condemned, and cites the Second Council at Constantinople of 553, suggesting that Athanasius, Basil and Gregory and others taught “two wills.”

At this point the discussion shifts to what may be called a primarily philosophical discussion. This involves discussions of the different forms of life, and whether the faculty of willing is attached to nature. An in-depth analysis of the content is beyond the scope of this study. It is sufficient to say that this section provides answers to typical philosophical and anthropological objections, to all of which Pyrrhus concedes.

The discussion shifts from philosophical objections to a discussion of patristic evidence cited by Pyrrhus against Maximus. This section includes discussion of Gregory the Theologian, a reference which is particularly interesting and sparks an analogy which will be discussed in a later chapter, Gregory of Nyssa, Athanasius, and a particularly curious series of references attributed to Clement of Alexandria, which will also be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter. What is interesting is that each citation is proposed as an objection by Pyrrhus, and Maximus manages to explain how they actually prove his position, or offer a counter example.

Following the discussion of patristic evidence is a challenge from Pyrrhus to prove two wills from the “Old and New Testament,” which Maximus proceeds to do uninterrupted and without objection. Included are several examples from the Gospels in

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119 300D-301A3.
120 This grouping is 301A4-316B3.
121 316B4-320C15.
which Jesus makes any expression of will or desire, citations from Paul, as well as the multiple citations of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and specific references to Psalm 39 (LXX), and Genesis 1. Maximus includes exegesis of these verses, and Pyrrhus, as in previous sections, concedes without objection.

What follows, I would suggest, marks a sudden shift in discussion which seems to be a textual seam. Pyrrhus transitions from scriptural proof to a discussion of relatively recent proof texts, namely the *Libellus* of Menas, and the letter of Pope Honorius to Sergius, and a recapping of the exchange of letters to relevant parties concerning the advent of Monotheletism. This matter will be discussed in significant detail below, but it at this point is sufficient to say that this material, which received little attention in the sources outside of the *Disputatio cum Pyrrho*, took on renewed significance at the Third Council of Constantinople in 680-681, 35 years after the *Disputatio* is said to have been written. I would suggest that the original text ended with the proof from scripture, and the line that immediately follows this discussion of texts contemporary with the disputants, in which Pyrrhus says: “Your logic has made the proper demolition of everything I put forth, and the inquiry about the wills has wholly left nothing undone.”122 This would fulfill the mandate given in the prologue above, and would leave a well concluded disputation in which Pyrrhus admitted the error of Monotheletism. This discussion of recent proof texts is peculiar. The fact that it is immediately followed by a discussion of Monoenergism, raises further questions. These questions will be addressed in detail below.

122 333B9-11. Πάντων τῶν προταθέντων τὴν ἀνατροπὴν δεόντως ὁ λόγος ἐποίησατο καὶ οὐδὲν ὅλως ἐλλείπει ἣ περὶ θελημάτων ἡττησι.
The Debate about Monoenergism

Immediately after the Pyrrhus concedes to Maximus’ position on the two wills of Christ, Maximus insists that they must discuss the doctrine of Monoenergism, of which Pyrrhus along with Sergius was a principle proponent. Although the doctrine of Monoenergism had fallen to the wayside with the advent of Monotheletism, and its discussion had been forbidden by Sergius and Pyrrhus himself, Pyrrhus agrees reluctantly to defend his previous position. As I mentioned above, this section is particularly peculiar since there is no mention of Monoenergism in the prologue.

The format of this section is similar to the debate about Monotheletism, in that it consists essentially of Maximus answering standard objections posed by Pyrrhus. These questions focus on whether the unity of the person of Christ necessitates a single energy. The questions themselves are primarily self-sufficient, not relying on patristic evidence, with the exception of the discussion of Pseudo-Dionysius.¹²³ Within this section there are some elements worth noting for the present study. This includes an analogy used by Maximus to describe how one body can have two operations, and another, found in the same section is a discussion of the Chapters of Cyrus, the patriarch of Alexandria who, as we have seen, was instrumental in the union of 633.¹²⁴ This material will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapters.

The final next section of the debate about Monoenergism could be considered a brief discussion of patristic objections to the two energies. This involves two citations, one by Cyril of Alexandria, and most importantly for our study, one an extended

¹²³ The section before the Patristic evidence is 333B12-344A14.
¹²⁴ This material is found in 341B1-344A14.
discussion of what was meant by the famous phrase coined by Pseudo-Dionysius, “a new theandric energy.” The importance of the discussion about Pseudo-Dionysius will be treated in greater detail below. This discussion is followed by a brief and vague discussion of objections raised by Pyrrhus from “the Fathers,” none of whom are cited by name.125

The final section of the debate about Monoenergism is of particular importance and will be discussed in the following chapter. Pyrrhus concedes to Maximus in all matters and confesses that he and Sergius were in error. However, he pleads ignorance and asks if there is a way to deny what he calls “the absurdity” of his error while preserving the memory of Sergius. When Maximus says that this is impossible, Pyrrhus objects that it would negate the “councils” presided over by Sergius and later himself. This leads to a fascinating discussion about what constitutes a legitimate council and ends with Pyrrhus conceding, condemning Sergius, and asking for leave to travel to Rome to receive absolution. This fascinating exchange will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter.126

The Epilogue

The final section wraps up the *Disputatio*. Maximus and Gregory grant Pyrrhus permission to travel to Rome suggesting that it would unite the church and was good. The final paragraph says that Pyrrhus fulfilled his promise by condemning the *Ekthesis*,

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125 344B1-352B11.
126 352C1-353A8.
and making confession in Rome, thus uniting himself to the Church. It also includes the statement that Pyrrhus arrived “with us in this most glorified city of the Romans.”

The *Disputatio cum Pyrrho*: a Composite Document?

At the beginning of this chapter I made the assertion that the *Disputatio cum Pyrrho* is a composite document, with an older section redacted at a later date. I will discuss the purpose and authorship in a later chapter, but I will indicate what I suggest are seams in the document which suggest a later redaction of an earlier text.

I would suggest that sections 288A-328A7, and 333B9-11 represent the original document. This is based on the following considerations: these sections taken together form a coherent whole, and could form a coherent discussion and refutation of Monotheletism, which is the goal stated in the prologue. Moreover, these sections contain the primary appeals to authority that were relevant at this time; namely patristic tradition and scripture, as well as standard philosophical and theological objections.

The section including 328A8-333B8, while relevant to Monotheletism, is peculiar. The oddity of this particular section will be discussed further below, but it is sufficient to say that the arguments made in these sections do not appear again before the Third Council at Constantinople in 680-681. It is true that the material discussed was employed by Sergius in his attempt to win the support for Monotheletism. However no documents, aside from the *Disputatio cum Pyrrho*, employ the refutations attributed to Maximus. Thus while it is theoretically possible that they were discussed at an earlier time but not recorded outside the *Disputatio* until the proceedings of the Third Council at

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127 †Εν ταύτῃ ὁ ἦν τῇ μεγαλούμιῳ σὺν ἡμῖν γενόμενος Ῥωμαίων πόλει.
Constantinople, I would suggest that they are in fact a later interpolation, tacked on to the end of the debate about Monotheletism.

The debate about Monoenergism found in sections 333C-353A8 is similarly peculiar. As has been said before, by 638-639, Monoenergism had ceased to be relevant, having been replaced by Monotheletism, which overcame objections made by the likes of Patriarch Sophronius. Indeed the synod presided over by Pyrrhus threatened deposition to clerics who discussed the number of operations in Christ. Thus a debate about Monoenergism in this period seems out of place. In addition to this, the prologue fails to mention any discussion about Monoenergism, rather billing itself as a debate about the “one will.” If the Disputatio cum Pyrrho were a single document which included both debates when published, one would expect to find some mention of this discussion in the prologue.

However, Monoenergism did become relevant again during the proceedings of the Third Council at Constantinople, which included discussions about the Libellus of Menas and the letter of Honorius. Thus I would suggest that both sections 328A8-333B8 and 333C-353A8 were added at a later date for a similar purpose which will be discussed below.

Conclusion

The following chapter has described the major divisions of the Disputatio cum Pyrrho, and the content of these divisions. I have also argued that in addition to these self-evident divisions, a close reading reveals evidence of a later redaction. The
following chapters will examine in greater detail specific problems within the text, as well as a specific discussion of the authorship and purpose of the document.
Chapter Five: Issues and Problems Within the Text of the *Disputatio cum Pyrrho*

Introduction

In his study of forgery in the sixth century, Patrick Gray made two keen observations which are particularly applicable to the study of the *Disputatio cum Pyrrho*. Gray established the fact that “forgery was no respecter of party divisions, and the phenomenon of simultaneous use of forgery and critique of forgery in an opponent can be observed on both sides of the central Chalcedonian-Monophysite debate.”¹²⁸ I would suggest that this thesis is equally applicable in the seventh century, during the Dyothelite-Monothelete debate, and is evidenced in the *Disputatio cum Pyrrho*. This chapter will examine the ways in which the author(s) of document both employ forgery and critique its use by the character of Pyrrhus. Of particular interest will be the critique of forgeries which would be pivotal in the Third Council at Constantinople of 680-681, a council which took place 35-6 years after the historical disputation. However, before discussing these specifics, it is necessary to discuss briefly authority and forgery in the seventh century.

Forging Authority in the Seventh Century

In order to understand forgery in the seventh century and why one would forge or manipulate a text, it is necessary to discuss the what made a text authoritative in the seventh century. Jaroslav Pelikan described the theoretical notion of authority when he stated, “what was required of a theologian was not that he be independent or productive or original, but that he be faithful to the authority of Christian dogma as this has been set

¹²⁸ Gray, "Forgery as an Instrument of Progress: Reconstructing the Theological Tradition in the Sixth Century," 284.
down in Scripture, formulated by the fathers, and codified by the councils.”¹²⁹ This notion of the need to appeal to outside authority is certainly evidenced in the Disputatio cum Pyrrho. However, as Patrick Gray has established, the authority of a canon of “select fathers” had gained such traction by the sixth century that it became essential for a theologian to demonstrate that his doctrine was in strict conformity to the teachings of these fathers.¹³⁰ In other words while scripture was nominally the final authority, as theological arguments increased in sophistication and became increasingly difficult to prove by scripture, the “select fathers” began to surpass the scriptures as a source of authority.

With the increased importance placed on these “select fathers” as a litmus test for orthodoxy, it became increasingly important for theologians to demonstrate that their doctrines conformed to patristic tradition. This could become problematic when one’s theological position was not considered by previous generations of theologians. As has already been discussed, theologians, when necessary, increasingly resorted to the practice of pious forgery to adjust the text to make it conform to their concept of orthodoxy.

The use of the “select fathers” as an authority became particularly problematic in the discussion of the “operations” and “wills” of Christ, concepts which were nearly foreign to Greek theology until the seventh century. As Wessel has observed, literary forgery was widely employed in the Monothelete controversy.¹³¹ Forgery became so widespread in second half of the seventh century that significant effort was expended

¹³⁰ Gray, "'The Select Fathers': Canonizing the Patristic Past."
¹³¹ Wessel, "Literary Forgery and the Monothelete Controversy: Some Scrupulous Uses of Deception."
during the Third Council at Constantinople to determining the authenticity of proof texts.

As Larison observes:

Checking contemporary claims against the established patristic tradition was well-established practice by 680, but at the sixth ecumenical council there was a particular focus on verification and authentication of documents, comparison with official records, and an ‘archival’ mentality that defined the validity of certain claims by their official recognition in an archived collection…Rather than simply judging potentially spurious texts against the standard of a patristic author’s corpus or according to the standard of contemporary orthodoxy, the council also considered the physical state of manuscripts presented to them and tested controversial (typically monothelete) documents against the archival deposit to determine whether the claimed authorship of the document could be sustained.132

This “archival” nature of the council is important to understanding the purpose behind the production of the *Disputatio cum Pyrrho*, and will be treated in greater detail below.

However, this devotion to proving authenticity demonstrates that forgery was a widespread practice by the seventh century, and that if the *Disputatio cum Pyrrho* is in fact forged, its forgery is not without precedent.

**Forgery within the *Disputatio cum Pyrrho***

Separate from the question of whether the *Disputatio cum Pyrrho* is itself a forgery is the way in which the document itself employs a number of citations of dubious nature. These chiefly include the appeal to the Second Council of Constantinople in 553 by Maximus mentioned in the previous chapter, and citations attributed to Clement of Alexandria by both parties.

One particular instance of a dubious appeal is made by Maximus in answer to Pyrrhus’ objection that it is best to pass over in silence subjects not discussed by

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Ecumenical Councils, including the question of the number of wills in Christ. Maximus provides the following reply:

if the Councils anathematized Apollinarius and Arius, who each spoke about one will, each of them abusing this for the establishment of their own heresies, one wishing to demonstrate through this that the flesh was consubstantial with the Word, the other struggling to introduce that the Son is different from the Father, how is it possible for us to be pious, not confessing decrees which oppose the heretics? And the Fifth Council, in order that I may pass over the others, having prophesied, said the following: “All of the doctrines of Saints Athanasius, and Basil, and Gregory, and certain other accepted distinguished teachers,” in whom the two wills is found, be accepted, and they transmitted the two wills.133

In this appeal the author associates Pyrrhus with the “archheretics” Apollinarius and Arius, and associates his own doctrines with both the Second Council of Constantinople in 553, which Maximus refers to as the fifth council, and the select fathers themselves. However, this appeal is highly problematic.

The author does not provide any specific references from the authors whom he cites, which is unusual considering that generally Maximus, as portrayed in the document is able to give specific books and chapters within specific works, even if the works themselves are spurious. It seems that the author is unable to provide specific references, otherwise he would not miss an opportunity to disprove his opponent in a targeted fashion.

133 300D-301A: 
εἰ αἱ σύνοδοι ἐπὶ τῇ τοῦ ἑνὸς; θελήματος φωνῇ καὶ Ἀπολινάριον καὶ Ἀρειον ἀνεθεμάτισαν ἐκατέρου αὐτῶν ταύτῃ πρὸς σύστασιν τῆς ἱδίας αἱρέσεως ἀποχρησαμένου, τοῦ μὲν ὑμοιότσιον τῷ Λόγῳ διὰ τοῦτο τὴν σάρκα βουλομένου δείξαι, τοῦ δὲ τὸ ἐπερουσίου τοῦ Υἱοῦ πρὸς τὸν Πατέρα εἰσαγαγεῖν ἁγιωνιζόμενου, πῶς εὐσεβεῖν ἡμᾶς δυνατὸν τὰς ἐναντίας τοῖς αἱρετικοῖς φωνὰς οὐχ ὀμολογοῦντας;

Ἡ δὲ πέμπτη σύνοδος, ἵνα πάντα παραλίπω, θεσπίσασα αὐτολεξεῖν πάντα τὰ τῶν ἀγίων Ἀθανασίου καὶ Βασιλείου, καὶ Γρηγορίου καὶ ἄλλων τινῶν προσδιωρισμένως ἐγκρίτων διδασκάλων συντάγματα ἐν οἷς καὶ τὰ δύο ἐγκρίνεται θελήματα δέχεσθαι καὶ δύο παραδεδώκασι θελήματα.
It seems that the author is attempting to conflate θελὴμα, or simply one’s will, with θελὴσις, the faculty of willing, equivalent to the Latin voluntas. As Madden has demonstrated, this particular understanding does not appear until Maximus who transforms the word θελὴσις.\textsuperscript{134} So if indeed the authors cited above discussed the number of wills in Christ, which itself is unlikely, it is nearly impossible that they could be referring to the will in the sense of θελὴσις, which is the way in which the author would have us believe. In other words the author through clever deception turns Monotheletism into a rebirth of Arianism and Apolinarianism, and associates Dyotheletism with the Athanasius, Gregory, and Basil, none of whom addressed the problem at hand.

Another significant incidence of likely forgery within the text of the Disputatio involves references to the works of Clement of Alexandria. Both references are included in succession, which begins as a response by Maximus to Pyrrhus, who references a problematic citation from Athanasius. The exchange is as follows:

**Pyrrhus:** Indeed you have comprehensibly demonstrated the blasphemy of this understanding. And what also do we say concerning the things derived by them from the teaching of the great Athanasius? Of which this is one: “The mind of the Lord is not the Lord, but the will, wish, or energy toward something.”

**Maximus:** They also propose this against themselves. Wherefore true logic uses their own arguments against their heresy in every defense. For neither in this way before has the truth been in such need that it requires its own tools against adversaries. For if, according to the Father, “The mind of the Lord is not the Lord,” his mind is clearly something different than the Lord, that is to say, the mind of the Lord is not Lord by nature, that is to say, he it is not God; it is believed that it became his according to his hypostasis; and clearly this is from the teaching that it is either an will, or wish, or energy toward something; for this, he is using the rule of he who was the Philosopher of Philosophers, Clement, in his sixth book of the Stromateis, which defines the will, on the one hand, as “an appetitive mind”, and wishing as “reasonable desire,” or “the will for something.” And the same divine teacher says that “an energy toward something,”

\textsuperscript{134} Madden, ”The Authenticity of Early Definitions of the Will,” 62-ff.
because for all the things which happened divinely from Him, he employed a mind and logical soul united to him according to a hypostasis.

Pyrrhus: In truth, through those things by which they seem attack the blessed, they have unknowingly set up the refutation against themselves. And it is necessary to investigate another example, which they introduce from the Father, for leaving no motive for them against the truth.

Maximus: What example is this? For I do not know.

Pyrrhus: That which that wonderful man said: “He was begotten from a woman, having raised up the form of man from the first formation in himself, in the appearance of flesh, apart from the fleshly wills and thoughts of men, in the image of commonalty. For the will is only of divinity.”

The first citation attributed to the Sixth book of Clement’s Stromateis has been clearly demonstrated to be a false attribution by Madden, who notes “The Sixth book is extant in its entirety, and there is no such definition in it...at best Maximus is guilty of gross negligence in citing Clement, at worse he may be a forger.” This reference is

135 317B-320B. Emphasis Mine.

Π. Πάντα συνοπτικῶς τὸ βλάσφημον τῆς τοιαύτης ἐκδοχῆς παρέστησας. Τί δέ φαμεν καὶ περί τῶν παραγομένων αὐτοῖς ἀπὸ τοῦ μαγάλου Ἀθανασίου χρήσεων; Ὅν μία ἐστὶν αὕτη «Νοῦς Κυρίου οὔτω Κύριος ἀλλʼ ἢ θέλησις ἢ βούλησις ἢ ἐνέργεια πρὸς τι»

Μ. Καθ’ ἑαυτῶν καὶ ταύτην προβάλλονται. Διό καὶ ὁ ἄλληθ ἀλήθεια κατὰ τὰς ἑαυτῶν ἀπὸ τοῦ μαγάλου πρὸς ἀνάφρεσιν τῶν αὕτων ἐν πάσι κέκρηται προβλήμασι. Μηδὲ γὰρ ὁ δὲ παρὰ τὸν Πατέρα «Νοῦς Κυρίου οὔτω Κύριος» ἄλλο πάντως παρὰ τὸν Κύριον ἐστιν ὁ νοῦς αὐτοῦ τοῦ Κύριου ἀλλ’ ἢ θέλησις ἢ βούλησις ἢ ἐνέργεια πρὸς τι; αὕτω τῷ ὤντι διʼ ὧν ἀντιστρατεύεσθαι τῇ εὐσεβείᾳ δοκοῦσι δι’ αὐτῶν τὸν ἒλεγχον ἠγνόησαν. Χρὴ δὲ καὶ τὴν ἑτέραν ἣν ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς παράγουσι ἐπεξεργάσασθαι χρῆσιν πρὸς τὸ μηδεμίαν αὐτοῖς ὑπολείπειν πρόφασιν κατὰ τῆς ἀλήθειας.

Π. Τῷ ὤντι δι’ ὃν ἀντιστρατεύεσθαι τῇ εὐσεβείᾳ δοκοῦσι δι’ αὐτῶν τὸν ἐλεγχον ὑπομείναντες ἤγνόησαν. Χρὴ δὲ καὶ τὴν ἑτέραν ἣν ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς παράγουσι ἐπεξεργάσασθαι χρῆσιν πρὸς τὸ μηδεμίαν αὐτοῖς ὑπολείπειν πρόφασιν κατὰ τῆς ἀλήθειας.

Μ. Τίς αὕτη ἄγνωστο γάρ.

Π. Ἡ φησιν ο θαυμαστὸς ἐκεῖνος ἀνήρ «Ἐγεννήθη ἐκ γυναῖκος, ἐκ τῆς πρώτης πλάσεως τῆς ἀνθρώπου μορφῆν ἐν ἐκατούρ άναντισταμένος, ἐν ἐπιδείξει σαρκίς δίχα δὲ σαρκικῶν θελημάτων καὶ λογισμοῦ ἀνθρωπίνων, ἐν εἰκόνι κανόνι φιλοσόφων. Ἡ γὰρ θέλησις θεότητος μόνης».

interesting in that it is very specific, and not only convinces Pyrrhus, but provokes him to quote another text of “Clement” which itself is falsely attributed.

The second reference has not been studied at any length and is interesting on several levels. The text is quoted by Pyrrhus as a counter example from Clement. However, the quotation is not an authentic quotation from Clement but rather is a quotation from a pseudo-Athanasian author.  

Maximus claims not to know the reference, and rather than taking the opportunity to correct Pyrrhus, simply explains how the reference in fact supports his own position.

On the surface this seems incidental; it would not be unusual in the heat of a “debate” for a disputant to misattribute a source. However, Maximus was particularly familiar with this reference and quoted it in his so-called dogmatic tome to Marinus the Priest. Sherwood dates this document, whose significance will be discussed in further detail below, to 640. In it Maximus gives the entire reference with an additional line, and attributes it to Athanasius, saying:

As is expressed by the great Athanasius, writing such things against the ungodly Apollinaris “He was begotten from a woman, having raised up the form of man from the first formation in himself, in the appearance of flesh, apart from the fleshly wills and thoughts of men, in the image of commonalty. For there is a single will of divinity, since the whole nature is also of divinity.”

Thus it is clear that Maximus was entirely familiar with the citation Pyrrhus attributed to Clement in the Disputatio cum Pyrrho. Yet Maximus, as depicted in the text, chose not

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137 De incarnatione verbum Dei, contra Apollinaris libri ii, PG 26:1148.
138 PG 91:228-245.
139 Sherwood, "Date-List of the Works of Maximus the Confessor," 41-42.
140 PG 91:240 A-B: συμφθεγγόμενος τῷ μεγάλῳ Ἀθανασίῳ, γράφοντι τάδε κατ’ Ἀπολιναρίου τοῦ δυσσεβοῦς. «Ἐγεννήθη ἐκ γυναικός ἐκ τῆς πρώτης πλάσεως τὴν ἀνθρώπου μορφὴν ἐν ἐαυτῷ ἀναστημένος, ἐν ἐπιδείξει σαρκὸς δίχα σαρκικῶν θελημάτων καὶ λογισμῶν ἀνθρωπίνων, ἐν εἰκόνι καὶ τρόπῳ τῆς τηθετικῆς ζωῆς μόνη ἐπιπλάσθε τῷ ἐκ τῆς τηθετικῆς.»

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to take an opportunity to correct Pyrrhus’ “ignorance;” rather he accepted Pyrrhus’ attribution. He chose simply to correct Pyrrhus’ “misunderstanding” of the text to suit his own purposes.

Besides this discrepancy of attribution, there are some philological notes worth considering. Not only do both texts vary from one another, but they actually vary from the actual pseudo-Athanasian text which is as follows:

He was begotten from a woman, having raised up the form of man from the first formation in himself, in the appearance of flesh, apart from the fleshly wills and thoughts of men, in the image of commonalty. For the will is only of divinity, since the whole nature is also of the Logos.141

Thus the following variations are present:

1.) The text of the Disputatio cum Pyrrho includes a δὲ which is not included in either the Dogmatic Tome to Marinus, or the actual pseudo-Athanasian text. Likewise the final clause of the quotation does not appear in either text.

2.) The Dogmatic Tome differs from both the Disputatio cum Pyrrho and the pseudo-Athanasian text in that it substitutes θέλησις θεότητος μόνη for θέλησις θεότητος μόνης, which is contained in both. Thus the genitive adjective μόνης (alone, only) is changed to the nominative adjective μόνη, and is changed from modifying θεότητος (divinity) to θέλησις (will).

3.) The Dogmatic Tome differs from the pseudo-Athanasius text by substituting τοῦ θεότατος for τοῦ Λόγου. Thus, Maximus changes the specific reference to the Logos into a generic reference to “divinity.”

A number of conclusions can be reached based on this evidence. First, we note that the version of the quotation found in the Disputatio cum Pyrrho varies significantly from that found in the Dogmatic Tome, a document which itself seems to have been purposefully altered. Considering the fact that the Disputatio differs far more significantly from Maximus’ own letter than the pseudo-Athanasian quotation itself, while not conclusive, it is seems unlikely that the citation from the Disputatio cum

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141 PG 26:1148 C:
καὶ ἐγεννήθη ἐκ γυναικὸς, ἐκ τῆς πρώτης πλάσεως τῆς ἀνθρώπου μορφῆν ἐν ἑαυτῷ ἀναστησάμενος, ἐν ἑπεδίεξε σαρκὸς δίχα σαρκικῶν θελημάτων καὶ λογισμῶν ἀνθρωπίνων, ἐν εἰκόνι καὶ φύσις τοῦ Λόγου.
Pyrrho was written by Maximus. Moreover evidence suggests a familiarity with this text on the part of the author, a text with which Maximus was clearly familiar.

Taken together, these two quotations attributed to Clement present significant challenges to the authenticity of the Disputatio cum Pyrrho. The first has been demonstrated by Madden to be a whole cloth fabrication by the author of the Disputatio cum Pyrrho. The other appears to be a purposefully misattributed citation from another text which, though it was ironically proven to be a forgery, was frequently used and widely accepted.

The first example can be understood in terms of Gray’s concept of forgery as an instrument of progress. The author needed to prove his theology with a patristic citation, and when one could not be found, he created one, and attributed it to one of the most ancient authors in the patristic canon. This served to demonstrate both the continuity of the theology with patristic thought, as well as the added bonus of an ancient pedigree. The latter example is more troubling. This citation was extant, and though it was forged, neither disputant would have been aware of this. It is a citation which Maximus is on record as having an intimate knowledge of, knowledge confirmed by apparent alterations to the original text; yet Maximus is depicted as denying such knowledge in the Disputatio cum Pyrrho. What could account for this bizarre textual problem?

I would suggest that this is evidence of an interpolation by a disciple of Maximus. Such an interpolation would allow the citation to be presented as evidence and for Maximus to claim the evidence without the exchange appearing contrived. That is to say, if Pyrrhus had simply attributed the quotation properly, or if Maximus himself had cited
it, it would have been understood to be cliché and disingenuous. Pyrrhus would have presumably been aware of Maximus’ familiarity with the citation, so it is unlikely that Pyrrhus would have used it in an actual debate. By using this technique, the interpolator would have allowed the reader to be made aware of the citation without compromising the appearance of a real debate. The fact that this text, attributed to Athanasius, is used by the fathers of the Third Council at Constantinople can possibly be traced to this clever use of deception.

**Forgery Detection in the Disputatio cum Pyrrho**

Perhaps more interesting than the use of forgery by the author of the *Disputatio cum Pyrrho* is the significant attention paid to what may be called a critical examination of proof texts used by Pyrrhus in defense of his position. The *Disputatio cum Pyrrho*, which had hitherto been a discussion of theology ad proofs from scripture and patristic tradition, takes a sudden turn to questioning the authenticity of texts and interpretations of documents employed by Pyrrhus. Included in this examination are the *Libellus* attributed to Patriarch Menas, which would become infamous at the Third Council at Constantinople, the letter of Pope Honorius to Patriarch Sergius, and alteration of the formula “a new theandric energy” by pseudo-Dionysus the Aeropagite.

This textual examination begins with a discussion of the *Libellus* of Menas, in which the following exchange occurs

**Pyrrhus:** But how could Vigilius, the Bishop presiding over the Romans at that time, accept the *Libellus* from Menas, who was the imperial bishop, which held one will, when he was shown these things in the Imperial Privy Chamber of Council of the Emperor of the Romans at the time?
Maximus: I am amazed how both of you, who are patriarchs, tell brazen lies! Your predecessor [Sergius], writing to Honorius, said that “he received, on the one hand, but it was not given nor clearly shown;” and you yourself, to Pope John who is now among the saints, said that “it was given and shown clearly, having been read by Constantine the Quaestor.” Who are we to believe, you or your predecessor? For it is not possible for both to be true.

Pyrrhus: And so it was written by my predecessor?

Maximus: So it was written.

Pyrrhus: Let these things concerning Vigilius be granted…

In this fascinating exchange, Maximus calls both Pyrrhus and his predecessor Sergius liars, and manages to convince Pyrrhus to admit that the *Libellus* of Menas was a forgery!

It is difficult to overemphasize the importance of this particular passage and what it reveals about the authorship and purpose of this document. The *Libellus* was a significant weapon in the monothelete arsenal. If it were authentic, it would have provided a link between a respected patriarch and pope, whose orthodoxy had never been questioned, which attested the one will. This particular document was of unique importance to legitimizing the monothelete cause, and disproving its authenticity was critical to their opponents’ strategy during the Third Council at Constantinople.

According to Larison:

142 328 A-B:

II. ...Παίς οὖν τὸν ἐπιδοθέντα λίβελλον ὑπὸ Μηνᾶ τοῦ γενομένου ἐπισκόπου τῆς βασιλίδος ἐν θέλημα ἔχοντα ἐδέξατο Βιγίλιος ὁ τῆς Ρωμαίων τηνικαῦτα προέδρος καὶ ταῦτα ἐμφανισθέντος αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ βασιλικῷ σεκρέτῳ τοῦ τηνικαῦτα τῶν Ῥωμαίων βασιλεύοντος καὶ τῆς συγγλήτου;

Μ. θαυμάζω πῶς πατριάρχαι ὂντες κατατολμᾶτε τοῦ ψεύδους. Ὁ προηγησάμενός σε πρὸς τὸν ἐν ἁγίοις Ὁνώριον γράφων εἶπεν ὃτι «Ὑπηγορεύθη μὲν οὐκ ἐπεδόθη δὲ οὔτε ἐνεφανίσθη». Αὐτὸς δὲ ἐν τοῖς πρὸς τὸν ἐν ἁγίοις Ἱωάννην τὸν πάπαν ἐφης ὃτι «Καὶ ἐπεδόθη καὶ ἐνεφανίσθη ἀναγνωσθείς δία Κωνσταντίνου κοιαίστου. Τίνι οὖν πιστεύσωμεν; σοὶ ἢ τῷ πρὸ σοῦ; Οὐ γὰρ δυνατὸν ἓμφροτέρους ἀληθεύειν. Καὶ ὦτω γέγραπται τῷ πρὸ ἐμοῦ;

M. Οὕτω γέγραπται.

II. Ἑστὼ περὶ Βιγίλίου ταῦτα....
Proving the Menas forgery was vital in two ways: it was necessary to show that the monotheletes were using unreliable sources, but more than that it was necessary to prevent Monotheletism from partaking of the reputation of a venerated Constantinopolitan patriarch whose orthodoxy had never been in doubt.\textsuperscript{143}

Forgery in some cases could prove to be a double-edged sword. If the Libellus had been accepted, it would have proven a great victory for the monothelete cause, both as a documentary source of authority and by suggesting the continuity of Monotheletism. However, proving the document to be a forgery would render the remaining monothelete florilegia suspect.\textsuperscript{144}

Understanding the importance of this particular document places this exchange in perspective. This is the first extant reference to the possibility of the Libellus being a forgery that I am aware of, and it does not merely raise the possibility, but rather records one of the key monothelete proponents acknowledging that it is a forgery. In addition to this, it offers an insider argument against the authenticity of the Libellus well before the document was demonstrated to be a forgery during the proceedings of the Third Council at Constantinople.

If the Disputatio cum Pyrrho were authentic it would raise the question as to why the monotheletes would present the Libellus as evidence at the council. despite this supposed admission by Pyrrhus to Maximus. The fact that the Libellus was presented as evidence not only raises doubts about the authenticity of this section of the Disputatio, but also suggests a later interpolation, in close proximity to the Third Council at Constantinople in 680-681. It is reasonable to suggest that the delegates who opposed the

\textsuperscript{143} Larison, "Return to Authority: The Monothelete Controversy and the Role of Text, Emperor and Council in the Sixth Ecumenical Council," 269.

\textsuperscript{144} Ibid., 277.
Libellus at the council may have been familiar with the Disputatio cum Pyrrho and may have been emboldened by this exchange to challenge the document’s authenticity.

The next textual exchange follows on the heels of the discussion of the Libellus of Menas and refers to the infamous letter of pope Honorius to Sergius, in which the latter employed the phrase “one will in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,” and initiated the rise of Monotheletism. The exchange is as follows:

Pyrrhus: Let these things concerning Vigilius be granted. What do you have to say about Honorius? Clearly he taught one will of our Lord Jesus Christ to my predecessor.

Maximus: Who has been established as a trustworthy interpreter of such a letter, he who composed the letter for Honorus (who is among the saints), and who is still present and with his other good things, and who illuminated the whole West with the dogmas of piety, or those who are speaking these things from the heart in Constantinople?

Pyrrhus: The one who composed this.

Maximus: This same man who, writing to Constantine, who is among the saints, who was Emperor, again for Pope John, who is among the saints, concerning the same letter, said that “we said one will for Christ, not for his divinity and humanity, but only his humanity. For with Sergius having written that some say that the two wills of Christ are in opposition, we write against this, that Jesus did not have two opposing wills, I speak of flesh and spirit, as we have after the fall, but one, characterized by his humanity according to his nature.” And the clear demonstration of this is the mentioning of limbs and flesh; whatever those things are which cannot be applied to divinity. Then in anticipation of the reply being made, he said “if one says: ‘thinking about something concerning the humanity of Christ, do you make mention of his divinity?’ We say that the answer was made for a specific question; and after, according to the custom of scripture, as in all things, we have spoken in this; sometimes with the scripture speaking of divinity, as whenever the Apostle says ‘Christ is the Power of God, and the Wisdom of God,’ other times from his humanity, and only, as when he himself says ‘The folly of God is the wisest thing of men; and the weakness of God is the strongest thing of men.’”

Pyrrhus: This has demonstrated that my predecessor understood this simply, having been implicated in the text.145

145 328B-329C.Π. Ἑστῶ περὶ Βιγιλίου ταῦτα. Τί ἔχεις περὶ Ὑνωρίου εἰπέν φανερῶς πρὸς τὸν πρὸ ἐμοῦ ἐν δογματίσαντος θέλημα τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ;
Maximus’ support for pope Honorius was well documented. He wrote in defense of Honorius in his *Dogmatic Tome* to Marinus the priest and in his letter to Peter the Illustrious.\(^{146}\) However this particular defense is unique in the nature of its appeal. In the *Dogmatic Tome* Maximus wrote:

And indeed I do not think that Honorius Pope of the Romans opposes the two inborn wills of Christ, in that letter which was written to Sergius to speak about the one will, but I think that he was rather he agrees, and I think it is reasonable to affirm this, that he was not speaking in rejection of the human and natural will of our Savior, but that the will of the flesh by no means ruled over His unbegotten conception, or His uncorrupt birth, or was subject to desire.\(^{147}\)

\(^{146}\) PG 91:141-146 and PL 129:573 577 This letter survives only in the Latin translation by Anastasius Bibliothecarius, and even then only as excerpts which he used in his *Collectiana*. Migne included a version both in his collected works of Maximus (as PG 91 141-146) as well as his edition of Anastasius’ *Collectiana*. Strangely enough there are textual variants between the two editions; however the text of the present section is identical in both. I have chosen to cite the PL version.

\(^{147}\) PG 91:237C-D: Τὸν δὲ γε τῆς Ρωμαίων πάπαν Ὀνώριον, οὐ καταγορεύειν οἷς τῆς τῶν ἐμφύτων θελήματός ἐπὶ Χριστοῦ διάδοσιν ἐν τῇ γραφείσῃ πρὸς Σέργιον ἐπιστολῇ διὰ τὸ ἐν θελήμα τοῦ Σωτῆρος, οὐκ ἐπὶ τοῦ μηδαμῶς τῆς ἀσπώτου συλλήψεως αὐτοῦ καὶ τῆς ἀποκάλυψε τῆς ἀποκάλυψε τῆς ἀφθόνου γεννήσεως προκαθηγεῖσθαι θέλημα σαρκός, ή λογισμὸν ἐμπαθῆ.
In this passage Maximus defends Honorius by suggesting that he was misunderstood by Sergius in his letter. In other words this defense is based on explaining Honorius “real” meaning, as opposed to what the monotheletes have said that he means.

In his letter to Peter the Illustrius, which is dated by Sherwood to about 643\textsuperscript{148}, Maximus offers a different sort of defense for Honorius:

Concerning all of these things they are wretched, nor has the opinion of the Apostolic See been done, and that which is laughable, nay it is better that we say, most deserving of lament, in as much as it is demonstrative of the audacity of these men, nor did they hesitate to rashly lie to that very Apostolic See: but as if they had taken the counsel of that see, and just as if a decree had been received from that see, these men usurped the great Honorius for their own purposes in their own continuous actions on behalf the impious Ekthesis, making the most eminent man in the cause of piety a witness of their presumption to others.\textsuperscript{149}

In this text, Maximus accuses the monotheletes, Pyrrhus and Sergius in particular, of “usurping” Honorius for their own purpose. Thus Maximus suggests that rather than simply misunderstanding Honorius’ letter, the patriarchs willingly usurped the letter, and concealed their usurpation. Unfortunately since the letter only survives in an excerpt it is difficult to determine to what extent Maximus believes they “usurped” Honorius, but it is clear that, from Maximus’ perspective, Honorius is innocent in the affair.

Both of these defenses differ significantly from the defense offered in the \textit{Disputatio cum Pyrrho}. All three are interested in absolving Honorius of any belief in a single will as the monotheletes understand it. However, unlike the other two, the \textit{Disputatio cum Pyrrho} appeals not to Honorius’ words but to words of the papal scribe!

\textsuperscript{148} Sherwood, "Date-List of the Works of Maximus the Confessor," 52.
\textsuperscript{149} PL 129:575A, emphasis mine:
De quibus omnibus miseri nec sensus apostolicae facti sunt sedis, et quod est risu, imo ut magis proprius dicamus, lamento dignissimum, utpote illorum demonstrativum audaciae, nec adversus ipsam apostolicam sedem mentiri temere pigritati sunt: sed quasi illius effecti consilii, et veluti quodam ab ea recepto decreto, in suis contextis pro impia ekthesi actionibus secum magnum Honorium acceperunt, suae praesumptionis attestationem ad alios facientes viri in causa pietatis maximam eminentiam.
In *Disputatio cum Pyrrho* the author portrays Maximus as saying that the same scribe wrote both Honorius’ letter to Sergius and John IV’s letter in defense of Honorius, which explicitly opposed the doctrine of Monotheletism. Thus, he concludes that Honorius’ letter could not possibly be interpreted the way in which Sergius and Pyrrhus were attempting.

This appeal is particularly interesting in light of its context within the document, namely a discussion of the legitimacy of contemporary or near contemporary documents. Maximus, rather than attempting to redeem Honorius per se, is attempting to delegitimize the monothelete claim to this crucial piece of evidence. Although Honorius is redeemed as a result, it seems that the validity of the letter as a support for Monotheletism is the author’s chief concern. Again I would suggest that this is best understood in light of the Third Council at Constantinople’s archival emphasis. While ultimately Honorius would be condemned on the basis of the letter which the author of the *Disputatio* is trying to defend, this exercise reflects the efforts to critique the documentary evidence offered in support of the monothelete position, an effort not evidenced in the letters discussed above and which would reach its zenith at the Third Council at Constantinople.

**Pseudo Dionysius the Aeropagite**

Another section worth discussing relating to textual evidence is found in the second section of the *Disputatio cum Pyrrho* relating to Monoenergism. I have discussed above why this section as a whole is interesting, but within this discussion is an examination of the monenergist use of the phrase “a new theandric energy” by Pseudo Dionysius the Aeropagite. The section is as follows:
Pyrrhus: But what do we say about St. Dionysus, in his letter to Gaius the worshipper, who spoke of “a new theandric energy, of Christ, working in us.”

Maximus: Is the “newness” a quality or a quantity?

Pyrrhus: A quantity

Maximus: Then it will also introduce a similar nature to the same, if according to the definition of every nature, the principle establishes the same essential energy. And not only this, but also when the Apostle says “behold all things become new,” no one says he means “something else" or that he meant “behold all things become one;” whether you wish to call this nature, or energy, this for you must be power. But if the newness is a quality, then it is clearly not one energy, but a new and mysterious mode of the exhibition of the natural energies of Christ, mingling the natures of Christ into one another as is fitting, and his participation as man, being foreign and paradoxical, and unknowable by the nature of everything which exists, and a means of exchange according to the mystical union.

Pyrrhus: And is it not clear that the term “theandric” is one?

Maximus: Not at all! Quite the opposite, for the expression taught periphrastically the energies by the numbering of the natures themselves. For if one denied the highest things, there would be nothing of Christ in the middle. And if it was clearly one energy, Christ must have one energy, as God, which is different from the father. Therefore the Son will be of a different energy than the father, if “theandric” does not apply to the father; likewise the characterization of “theandric” must also be applied to nature. For the energy, being natural, is a component and inborn characteristic. And those who comprehend the orderings of these things, have said that it is another genus of quantity or quality

Pyrrhus: “Newness” is neither a quantity nor a quality, rather it is an essence.

Maximus: I am amazed how you say this with confidence. What is the opposite of an essence?

Pyrrhus: Nothingness

Maximus: What is the opposite of newness?

Pyrrhus: Oldness

Maximus: The result, therefore, is that newness is not an essence, but a quality. And if we understand the definition of one energy, indeed not as in the way he himself understood it, or the rest of the Fathers, how do we not reveal this God-revealing teacher to be in opposition with himself? For they all explicitly spoke and taught in common, that things which exist with the same essence have also the same energy; likewise those things which exist with the same energy have the same essence. And those things which differ in essence, also differ in energy, and those which differ in energy, likewise differ in essence.150

150 345C-348C
The use of Pseudo Dionysius the Aeropagite in the Third Council at Constantinople is one of the greater ironies of the seventh century. With all of the focus on authenticating texts, both sides appealed to Pseudo Dionysius as a source, and neither realized that the Dionysian corpus was itself a forgery. The phrase “a new theandric energy” was of particular importance to the monenergist controversy. It was one of the primary proofs

Π. Τί δὲ περὶ τοῦ Ἀγίου Διονυσίου φαμέν ἐν τῇ πρὸς Γαίον τὸν θεραπευτὴν ἐπιστολῇ φήσαντος «καὶνὴν τινὰ τὴν θεανδρικὴν ἑνέργειαν» περὶ τοῦ Χριστοῦ «πεπολιτευμένου»;

Μ. Ἡ καινότης ποιότης ἐστίν ἢ ποσότης;

Π. Ποσότης;

Μ. Οὐκόν καὶ φύσιν ἐαυτῇ συνεισάξει τοιαύτην, εἴπερ πάσης φύσεως ὁ ὁποῖος ἐστιν καὶ τῆς οὐσίας ψευδο σώς αὐτῆς ἑνέργειας καθέστηκε λόγος. Ὁ μόνον δὲ, ἄλλα καὶ οὕτω λέγει ὁ Ἀπόστολος· «Ἰδοὺ γέγονε τὰ πάντα καινὰ» οὐδὲν ἓτερον λέγει, ἢ ὁ Ἀπόστολος ἑαυτῷ συνεισάξει τοιαύτην αὐτῇ, εἴπερ ἀποφάσει τῶν ἃκρων οὐδὲν ἐστιν μέσον ἐπὶ Χριστοῦ. Ἡ γὰρ ἐνέργεια φυσικὴ ὑπάρχει συστατικὸς καὶ ἒμφυτος χαρακτήρ. Καὶ οἱ τὰ περὶ τῶν ὢντων διαλαβόντες ἀλλήλων τῆς ποσότητος καὶ ἀλλήλων τῆς ποιότητος εἶπον.

Π. Οὔτε ποσότης οὔτε ποιότης ἐστὶν ἡ καινότης ἀλλ' οὖσία.

Μ. Θαυμάζω πῶς τοῦτο εἰπεῖν ἐθάῤῥησας. Τῇ οὐσίᾳ τί ἀντιδιαστέλεται;

Π. Τὸ μὴ ὅν.

Μ. Τί δὲ τῇ καινότητι;

Π. Ἡ παλαιότης.

Μ. Ὅστε οὖν ὡς ὡς οὐσία ἤ καινότης ἀλλ' ὡς ποιότης.
employed at the Union at Alexandria in 633. While the rise of Monotheletism would cause this particular reference to lose some of its importance, the desire of the fathers of the Third Council at Constantinople to condemn Monoenergism along with Monotheletism created a need to answer the use of this text.

Pyrrhus raises the primary interpretation of this citation against those who opposed Monoenergism, that “newness” was synonymous with “oneness.” Maximus proceeds to object that newness refers to the quality of the energy, not a number. Pyrrhus then objects to both interpretations suggesting instead that it is an essence. The conversation continues, and Pyrrhus eventually, as usual, concedes his point.

This exchange is interesting in its wider context of a discussion about the energies, a matter, as I explained above, would have been moot by this time. It is also important as it provides in brief an answer to questions that would most certainly be raised, and were raised in the context of the eventual Third Council at Constantinople. This exchange, like the passages examined above, suggests that this discussion may not have actually taken place at the disputation in 645, but may have been added later for a greater purpose.

What Constitutes a Council?

The final exchange which I will examine in this chapter involves a discussion concerning the legitimacy of the synod presided over by Sergius in 638, and the

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151 Larison, "Return to Authority: The Monothelete Controversy and the Role of Text, Emperor and Council in the Sixth Ecumenical Council," 273.
continuation of the synod presided over by Pyrrhus in 639 which approved the
Ekthesis.\textsuperscript{152} The exchange is as follows:

**Pyrrhus:** By the truth, this inquiry concerning the energies has demonstrated that “one
energy” is absurd, in whatever way it is said, when applied to Christ; but I ask for pardon
both on my own behalf, and for my predecessors. For it was from ignorance that we
proclaimed these absurd opinions and arguments. And I ask you to find a way, so that
this alien absurdity may be destroyed, and the memory of my predecessors may be
preserved.

**Maximus:** There is no way to anathematize the dogmas while passing over the persons
in silence.

**Pyrrhus:** But if this happens, both Sergius and the Council which happened under my
patriarchate would be cast out along with the dogmas!

**Maximus:** It is amazing to me, how you call this a Council, which did not occur
according to the laws and canons for councils, or ecclesiastical ordinances; for there was
neither an encyclical letter for the assent of the Patriarchs, nor was the place or date for
meeting announced. Nor was there an introduction of charges or an accuser present.
Those who assembled did not have letters of recommendation, nor were there bishops
from the Metropolises, nor Metropolitans from the Patriarchates. There were no letters or
legates sent from the other Patriarchs. Therefore who by this logic would lift this up to
be called a council, which distributed scandal and discord throughout the entire Empire?

**Pyrrhus:** If therefore there is no other way than this, for the salvation of my all my
honors, I am ready to do this with full assurance; and asking for one thing, principally
that I be considered worthy on the one hand to pray at the apostolic sepulchers, and
especially, the chiefs of the apostles; and finally, to see the most holy Pope face to face,
and to give to him a letter concerning the absurdity of my errors.\textsuperscript{153}

\textsuperscript{152} For these synods see above, or Hefele, \textit{A History of the Christian Councils from the Original
Documents}, 5:64-65

\textsuperscript{153} Π. Ἐπ' ἀληθείας καὶ ἢ περὶ τῶν ἐνεργειῶν ζήτησις ἄτοπον ἔδειξε τὴν μίαν ἐνέργειαν καθ᾽ ὀινδήποτε
τρόπον ἐπὶ Χριστοῦ λεγομένην. Ἀλλὰ συγγνώμην αἰτῶ καὶ ὑπὲρ ἐμαυτοῦ καὶ τῶν προλαβόντων. Ἐξ ἀγνοίας γὰρ εἰς τὰς ἀτόπους ταύτας ἐξηνέχθημεν ἐννοίας καὶ ἐπιχειρήσεις· καὶ παρακαλῶ εὑρεῖν τρόπον ἵνα καὶ ἡ ἐπείσακτος αὕτη ἐνεργεία καταργηθῇ καὶ ἡ μνήμη τῶν προλαβόντων φυλαχθῇ.

Μ. Ἀλλος οὐκ ἔστι τρόπος ἢ παρασιωπηθῆναι μὲν τὰ πρόσωπα ἀναθεματισθῆναι δὲ τὰ τοιαῦτα δόγματα.

Π. Ἀλλ' εἰ τούτο γενηται, εὑρίσκονται τούτους συνεκβαλλόμενους Σέργιος τε καὶ ἡ ἐπὶ ἐμοῦ γενομένη σύνοδος.

Μ. Θαυμάζειν ὑπεστί μοι πῶς σύνοδον ἀποκαλεῖται τὴν μὴ κατὰ νόμους καὶ κανόνας συνοδικοὺς ἢ
θεσμοὺς γεγομένην ἐκκλησιαστικοὺς. Οὔτε γὰρ ἐπιστολὴ ἐγκύκλιος κατὰ συναίνεσιν τῶν
πατριαρχῶν γέγογεν οὔτε τὸ πόσως ἢ ἡμέρα ὑπαντήσεως ὡρίζησι. Οὔκ εἰσαγώγυμος τής ἢ κατήγορος ἢν.
Συναττάκας οἱ συνελθόντες οὐκ εἴχον οὔτε οἱ ἐπίσκοποι ἀπὸ τῶν μητροπολιτῶν οὔτε οἱ
μητροπολίται ἀπὸ τῶν πατριαρχῶν. Οὔκ ἐπιστολαὶ ή τοποτηρηται ἀπὸ τῶν ἄλλων πατριαρχῶν
This exchange too is interesting on a number of levels. History has remembered these two episcopal gatherings as local synods; indeed the word σύνοδος in Greek is used to mean both local “synods” as well as ecumenical councils, depending on the context. However, based on Pyrrhus’ reluctance to renounce the σύνοδος, and Maximus’ objection at the elements lacking from the “σύνοδος” seem to indicate that Pyrrhus and the monotheletes argued that this episcopal gathering had the status of an ecumenical council. This understanding may supported by a reference made by Maximus in his letter to Peter the Illustrious where he asserts that Pyrrhus and his predecessor “contrived robber councils and assemblies of bishops, who do not come together, but are dragged by violence; not hastening by exhortation, but leaving abroad out of flight from barbarians. Then they contrived orders and threats here and there, sent against the pious.” It is not clear from the letter which “robber councils” he is referring to, but it is possible that he could be referring to these two synods.

Whether or not these synods were considered councils, they would have created a significant problem of legitimacy for any future council which would overturn their findings. This exchange serves to place Pyrrhus on the record as denying the legitimacy of these synods, and denying their status as councils. Having this on record would be a significant weapon against anybody contesting the legitimacy of a council based on the

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154 PL 129 574C:
Deinde synodos latrocinales, et concursus episcoporum non voto convenientium, sed violentia contractorum, non exhortatione properantium, sed ex fuga barbarorum peregre profisciscement. Dein jussiones et minas hues atque illuc adversus pios transmissas.
authority of previous “councils,” or anybody asserting that Monotheletism was enshrined by decree of an “ecumenical council.” Likewise it sets up the standards for legitimacy of a future council, contrasting this with what was apparently lacking in the previous synods.

In addition to delegitimizing the synods of 638 and 639, Pyrrhus is placed on record as anathematizing Sergius, anathematizing his own “errors” and appealing to Rome for absolution. This is extremely significant for anyone attempting to delegitimize the previous patriarchates of Constantinople, and to promote the authority of Rome. Thus Constantinople, both in terms of its patriarchs and in terms of its synods, is delegitimized, while Rome is promoted and portrayed as a supreme authority, one to which even a patriarch of Constantinople must appeal to for absolution.

Genre and Tone

Having discussed problematic passages within the text, there remains one more important matter to consider which goes beyond inconsistencies within the text, namely the genre of dialogue itself and the tone of the *Disputatio cum Pyrrho*. The fact that the *Disputatio cum Pyrrho* is written as a dialogue in which Maximus is clearly the protagonist while Pyrrhus is the foil is indicative of its literary nature. Rather than being a mere stenographer’s account, the *Disputatio cum Pyrrho* is formulaic, with Pyrrhus continually raising simple questions which Maximus expounds upon, and Pyrrhus, though he may respond with an additional question, accepts the conclusions without protest. This either demonstrates that Maximus excelled beyond measure above Pyrrhus, or that this is a literary trope.
Dialogues have been used as pedagogical tools for centuries, at least since Plato. In the Christian age they became a common apologetic genre, particularly useful in reinforcing a particular orthodoxy within a given community. Stylized theological disputation developed as an important sub-genre of Late-Antique polemical literature. The *Disputatio cum Pyrrho* is a typical example of this genre. It is highly stylized with a clear protagonist and a passive foil who serves as an instrument to demonstrate the protagonist’s position, or to provide easy refutations to the opposition’s viewpoint.

Closely related to the genre is the way in which Pyrrhus is being treated. If this was written immediately after his recantation in Rome, as the epilogue indicates, but before his recantation in 647, we would expect a deferential tone, and based on Maximus the Confessor’s own criteria, the restoration of his honorific title. In his letter to Peter the Illustrious, on the very question of whether Pyrrhus, recently exiled from Constantinople, should be addressed with the traditional patriarchal title “Most Holy.” Maximus responds with the following:

Therefore I beseech you, my blessed lord, to warn everyone not to call Pyrrhus “most pious” or “most holy.” For sacred law does not allow him to be called such a thing. For he has fallen from all sanctity, who without a doubt departed from the catholic Church of his own will. For it is against divine law for him to be surnamed from any such praise, who was already cursed, and cast out by the apostolic see of the city of Rome on account of the thought of a strange belief, until he is received by her having returned to her, indeed to the Lord our God through pious confession and orthodox faith, by which he may recover sanctification, and a holy name.  

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155 *PL* 129:576A-B: obsecro igitur, benedicte domine mi, praecipere omnibus, ne Pyrrhum sanctissimum vel almificum nominent. Neque enim tale quid sacra regula eum vocari permittit. A cuncta enim cecidit sanctitate, qui nimirum ab Ecclesia catholica sponte prosiliit. Non enim fas est illum ex quacunque laude cognominari, qui jam olim damnatus est, et abjactus ab apostolica sede Romanae urbis, ob externae sensum opinionis, donec ab ea recipiatur conversus ad ipsam, imo ad Dominum Deum nostrum per piam confessionem et orthodoxam fidem, qua sanctificationem recipiat, sanctumque vocabulum.
Considering the fact that Pyrrhus fulfilled the prescribed requirements, one would expect this to be reflected in the document. Instead Pyrrhus is treated poorly, and is never addressed, even in the prologue or epilogue, by any honorific titles.

Conclusion

The passages examined in this chapter are both problematic and illuminating. They stand out in the text and serve specific apologetic purposes for those opposed to Monotheletism. I have also suggested that they point to the agenda and origin of the author, one tied to specific historical circumstances. In addition I have demonstrated that the genre, negative tone and lack of honorific titles for Pyrrhus make it clear that this document does not reflect reality, and had to be a later document. The following chapter will discuss this in more explicit terms and demonstrate the authorship and purpose behind the forgery of the *Disputatio cum Pyrrho.*
Chapter Six: Authorship and Purpose

Introduction

In Chapter Four, I examined the structure of the text, and suggested that the text is likely a composite text from two authors: an early text, which I have called *Disputatio α*, and additions to this text by a later redactor, which I have called *Disputatio β*. Several questions remain; namely, if Maximus is not the author of this text, who is, and who redacted it? Likewise, what purpose would the author have in publishing the initial text, and why would a later redactor add material? This chapter will seek to answer these questions by examining a number of features within the text itself, as well as considering what major historical events were taking place which would call for the initial publication of *Disputatio α*, and the later addition of *Disputatio β*.

Authorship of *Disputatio α*

A close examination of the text can provide some information about the author and his relationship to Maximus. I would suggest that textual analysis indicates that the author of *Disputatio α* was a close disciple of Maximus, certainly a contemporary and likely part of his inner circle. This can be inferred by a familiarity with texts used by Maximus, as well as the use of phrases which are uniquely used by Maximus in other documents. This familiarity is so close that aside from one peculiar section, it could be argued that this portion of the text is authentically from Maximus’ hand. The following section will analyze these features and compare them with other texts which are undisputedly from the hand of the confessor.
“Well Knit Logic”

There is a unique formula which appears in two documents by Maximus and also appears in the Disputatio cum Pyrrho. This formula is interesting on a number of levels, namely that it has no particular theological significance, it uses a word which appears in only one other extant author in Greek literature, and it has a rather conversational feel. Likewise it is used only when demonstrating the negative logical conclusions of an opponent’s argument. The formula is as follows:

[the opponent will be compelled to do something] εἴπερ εὐσυνάρτητον τὸν τοῦ οἰκείου δόγματος [form of aorist infinitive of δεικνύμι] λόγον βούλεσθε/ βούλονται.

[the opponent will be compelled to do something] if you/he wishes to demonstrate that the logic of his/your own teaching is well knit.

Aside from a variation in prefix for the infinitive of δεικνύμι, and variation of person in βούλομαι, depending on context, this formula is repeated verbatim in two documents by Maximus, and also appears in the Disputatio cum Pyrrho. I will briefly examine the significance of this phrase, compare the instances in which it appears in the works of Maximus, and explore the significance of its appearance in the Disputatio cum Pyrrho.

This phrase is significant primarily because of the use of the adjective εὐσυνάρτητος. This word, which literally means “well knit,” is extremely rare in Greek literature. In fact, a search of the Thesaurus Lingua Graeca reveals that there is only one other recorded use of this word outside of Maximus, by John the Grammarian, and then only once, as “ινα καὶ εὐσυνάρτητος ὁ λόγος γένηται.” Both

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156 A Patristic Greek Lexicon, s.v. "εὐσυνάρτητος." It should be noted that LSJ does not include an entry on εὐσυνάρτητος.
Maximus and John the Grammarian use the adjective to describe logic which suggests that the term was idiomatic, and its rarity suggests that perhaps it was more common in conversation than recorded prose.\textsuperscript{158} It can be inferred by the relative frequency of use in Maximus that he had an affinity to this particular phrase, and perhaps used it even more frequently in conversation.

It will be instructive now to compare the use of the aforementioned formula in other works by Maximus, namely \textit{ep. 13}\textsuperscript{159}, and his \textit{Ten Chapters on the Two Wills of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ}, with its use in the \textit{Disputatio cum Pyrrho}. The earliest of these texts is \textit{ep. 13}, which is an early letter written to Peter the Illustrious dated to 633-634, which is primarily concerned with refuting Monophysitism.\textsuperscript{160} The latter is a short treatise refuting the doctrine of the two wills.

The following excerpts are the places in which the formula appears, including context. The formula itself is in bold print:

\textit{Ep. 13}

\begin{verbatim}
Οὗ χωρὶς ποσὸν καθ ὅλου γνωσθῆναι ἀδύνατον, λέγειν αὐτὸς ἀνάγκη μετὰ τὴν ἐνωσιν· ἐπερ κατὰ εὐτακτὸν ἀκολουθίαν, εὐσυνάρτητον τὸν τοῦ ὅικείου δόγματος ἀποδείξαι βούλονται λόγον.\textsuperscript{161}
\end{verbatim}

Without which it will be necessary for them to say that it is not possible for the number to be known, on the whole, if, according to a well ordered sequence, they wish to demonstrate that the logic of their teaching is well knit.

\textsuperscript{158} This usage may also suggest an influence of John on Maximus which should be pursued in greater detail, though it is beyond the scope of this project.
\textsuperscript{159} \textit{PG} 91:509-533
\textsuperscript{160} Sherwood, "Date-List of the Works of Maximus the Confessor," 39-40. This is not to be confused with the later letter of Maximus to Peter the Illustrious, which survives only in a Latin fragment and is discussed above.
\textsuperscript{161} \textit{PG} 91:513C
Ten Chapters on the Wills

10. If they say that the person is united to the will, and because of this they are “not afraid of that which is fearful,” they are not content to speak of two wills of Christ, in order that the two persons, by necessity, might not be united to each other; then they will be compelled, if they wish to demonstrate that the logic of own teaching is well knit, either to say that because of the one will of the divinity, there is also one for the person; since according to them the person follows the will; or because of the three persons, there are also three wills, and to introduce the synthesis of Sabellius and the division of Arius.

Disputatio Cum Pyrrho

And if you speak of a synthesis of the wills, you will be forced to speak of a synthesis of other natural things; if indeed you wish to demonstrate that the logic of your teaching is well knit, namely, of the created and uncreated, of the infinite and limited, of the boundless and bounded, of the mortal and immortal, of the destructible and indestructible, you will also be delivered into foolish assumptions.

These three excerpts represent the only examples of this formula, aside from quotations of the same material, found in Greek literature. It is a formula that is unique to Maximus, including an adjective which is attested three of four times in these texts.

On the surface this would suggest an authentic document from Maximus’ own hand.

While this evidence, taken on its own would certainly lead to this conclusion, within the greater context of the Disputatio cum Pyrrho as a whole, it seems to me that another explanation is more likely.


163 296B-296C.
I would suggest that the use of this formula is evidence that the author of this text was a close disciple of Maximus, who was familiar with *ep. 13* and the *Ten Chapters*, and more importantly, who was familiar with Maximus’ colloquial speech. He was likely a disciple within Maximus’ inner circle who was familiar with Maximus’ unique locution. Maximus was known among other things for having many disciples who were well educated and prolific writers. Perhaps the two most famous of these disciples, Anastasius the disciple and Anastasius Apocrisiarius, composed a number of documents related to his life. While it is impossible to say exactly who composed this section, based on this familiarity with Maximus’ diction it is certainly reasonable to conclude that the author was among such disciples. Thus the author would find such a phrase useful to lend a sense of authenticity to the document by giving it a uniquely “Maximian” flavor.

**Patristic Texts**

In addition to this unique example, the author is familiar with many of the difficult texts which Maximus has addressed in his other letters. For example, Pyrrhus questions Maximus about a passage of Gregory Nazianzus in the following paragraph:

Τί οὖν; τὸ εἰρημένον τῷ θεολόγῳ Γρηγορίῳ «Τὸ γὰρ ἐκείνου θέλειν οὐδὲν ύπεναντίον τῷ θεῷ, θεωθὲν διὸν», σύκ ἐναντίον τῶν δύο θελημάτων ἐστί;\(^{165}\)

What about the saying of Gregory the Theologian “*For the will of that man in no way opposed to God, being wholly deified,*” is this not opposed to two wills?

This can be compared with the following from the *Dogmatic Tome* to the priest Marinus.

Περὶ δὲ τῆς εἰς τὴν χρῆσιν ἐρμηνείας τοῦ θεολόγου καὶ μεγάλου τῆς Ἐκκλησίας [ἀληθείας] κήρυκος Γρηγορίου, τὴν «Παρὰ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου τυποῦσθαι τὸν λόγον

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\(^{165}\) 316C.
Concerning the interpretation in the saying of the theologian and great herald of the [true] Church, Gregory, which is as follows, that “the word being spoken is formed by the man, who does not think in a way which is against the Savior. For the will of that man, and is in no way opposed to God being wholly deified”

However, the responses offered to the objections differ in striking ways. Maximus, in the

_Dogmatic Tome_ suggests a misreading in the manuscript tradition in the following:

>Todes dě γε παροξυτόνως ως έκ άντιγράφων τινῶν έκφωνεῖν τό θεωθέν δλον, καὶ μή μᾶλλον έξυπνόν, δει τού μή τό έν είσαχθηναι θέλημα πρός τῶν έναντίων, λαβήν δίδωσι καθ’ ἡμῶν, ὡς σχετικὴν καὶ ὑποστατικὴν υποφαινόντων, καὶ οἷον χάριτι καὶ ἀξίᾳ τήν ἐνωσιν, τῷ καὶ τούς ἀγίους ἐκ Θεοῦ προηγουμένως κινεῖσθαί τε καὶ ἐνεργεῖσθαί, διὰ τήν ὀλιγήν αὐτών πρός τε Θεον καὶ τά Θεία σύννευσιν καὶ διάθεσιν. Ἡ γαρ έξυπνος τού θεωθέν φράσις, οὔτε εἰς ταυτόν οὐσιώδους καὶ φυσικοῦ θελήματος ἀγεί τό, ὡς ἀνθρώπου κατά τόν Σωτήρα θέλειν, (τίς γάρ ὁ δεῖξαι δυνάμενος;) καὶ τήν άκραν ἐνωσιν τε καὶ συμφυΐαν παρίστησι. 167

And indeed with the accent on the penult, as τό θεωθέν δλον is rendered in some copies, it is not possibly the acute accent[θεόθεν], it would require no introduction of the one will from our enemies, an addition which they introduce against us, as with those who suggest that the union is non-essential and hypostatic, just as if from grace and dignity, by the reasoning that the saints from God are moved and affected, through their likeness both to God and their propensity and tendency toward divine things. The acute accent in the phrase “θεωθέν” does not provide either an essential nor a natural will, as they say the Savior wills like man, (for who would be able to demonstrate this?) and it demonstrates the highest union and commingling.

Thus, Maximus argues that his opponents misread the phrase “For the will of that man is no way opposed to God, being entirely from God (θεόθεν),” instead of “being entirely deified (θεωθέν).

This analysis is missing from the _Disputatio cum Pyrrho_, which is ironic considering the attention paid to correcting monothelete “corruptions” and forgeries of texts which we explored above. Instead Maximus offers the following explanation:

166 PG 91:233B.
167 PG 91:233D-236A.
M. Ὅσπερ ἡ πῦρωσις τὸ πυρωθὲν καὶ τὸ πυρῶσαν ἑαυτῇ συνεισάγει καὶ ἡ ψύξις τὸ ψυχθὲν καὶ τὸ ψύξαν καὶ ἡ βάδισις τὸ βαδίζον καὶ τὸ βαδιζόμενον καὶ ἡ νόησις τὸ νοοῦν καὶ τὸ νοούμενον- οὐ γὰρ δυνατὸν τὴν σχέσιν ἄνευ τῶν σχέτων νοεῖν ἢ λέγειν- ἡ θέωσις τὸ θεωθὲν καὶ τὸ θεῶσαν.

ἀλλὰς τε δὲ εἰ ἡ τοῦ θελήματος θέωσις ἐναντία ἐστὶ τῶν δύο θελημάτων κατ’ αὐτούς, καὶ ἡ τῆς φύσεως θέωσις ἐναντία ἒσται τῶν δύο φύσεων. Ἐπ’ ἀμφοτέρων γὰρ τὸν αὐτὸν τῆς θεώσεως τέθεικεν ὁ Πατὴρ λόγον. 168

Maximus: Just as “burning” includes in itself that which is burned and that which burns, and “cooling” includes that which was cooled and that which cools, and “walking” includes the walker and that which is walked upon, and “sight” includes that which sees and that which is seen, and “thinking” includes the thinker and the thought; it is not possible think or speak about a relationship apart from those things which are related.

Thus, according to analogy, something deified (τὸ θεωθὲν) includes the deifier (τὸ θεῶσαν).

Otherwise, if the deification (θέωσις) of the will is opposed to the two wills, according to them, then the deification of nature is opposed to the two natures. For the father used the same word of deification for both.

These differing explanations demonstrate two matters of importance for our study. It seems that the author of Disputatio α was familiar with Maximus’ store of patristic texts and familiar with the problematic texts themselves. However he had developed an exegetical method which differed from Maximus. Secondly, if this text were part of the content of Disputatio β, which was so heavily focused on textual analysis and critique of monothelete sources, one would think that the author would have employed Maximus’ argument from the Dogmatic Tome, in which he suggested a mishandling of the manuscript tradition. This would have certainly strengthened his critique and fit well within his accusations of forgery and misreading of sources which made up the bulk of Disputatio β. Thus I would suggest this alternate explanation demonstrates that the author is neither Maximus nor the redactor of Disputatio β.
We may include the “Clementine” reference to Pseudo-Athanasius in this section category as well. As was demonstrated above, both Maximus and the author of *Disputatio a* used this text, but did so in different ways. Thus the problematic texts associated with Clement of Alexandria can be attributed to the author of *Disputatio a* just as the references to Gregory Nazianzus.

Based on this information we can compile the following profile of the author of *Disputatio a*: He was a contemporary of Maximus, most certainly a close disciple, with knowledge of his stylistic mannerisms and a familiarity with problematic patristic citations. However, the author’s responses to problematic texts differ significantly from those offered by Maximus in his extant corpus. This evidence leads me to conclude that the author of *Disputatio a* is indeed not Maximus.

**Purpose**

The question remains, why was *Disputatio a* composed to begin with? I have already demonstrated that internal evidence strongly suggests that this was written after 647 and the reversion of Pyrrhus. I would suggest that this reveals the purpose behind publishing an invective document which provided a published account of Pyrrhus’ recantation. Such a document would serve to undercut the authority and credibility of Pyrrhus and thus limit the damage he could inflict upon the dyothelete cause. One may speculate that perhaps this is among the reasons he was unable to regain his position until 654.

I would also suggest a strong possibility that it was written in the run up to the Lateran Synod of 649, at which Pyrrhus and Sergius were condemned, and the *Acta of*
which, as we have seen, were written beforehand by Maximus himself. It is impossible
to tell for certain, but it is highly probable that a close disciple of Maximus, perhaps at
Maximus’ own behest, upon news of Pyrrhus’ recantation, published a text that would
portray Pyrrhus himself undermining key monothelete positions. This would serve to
bolster the Greek diaspora in Rome who, as we have seen, were instrumental in the
preparations for the Lateran Synod.

**Authorship of Disputatio β**

As I have already suggested, there is strong reason to believe the second portion
of the *Disputatio cum Pyrrho* was redacted by a later writer. I would also suggest that a
close examination of the text can reveal clues which can help us assemble a profile of the
redactor, a person who is a follower of Maximus’ teachings, but not likely a member of
his inner circle, and certainly not as close to Maximus as the author of *Disputatio α*. It is
likely that the redactor is a member of the Greek diaspora in Rome at one of the
influential monasteries, with insider knowledge of the papal secretariat. Much of the
evidence of this has already been discussed, but the following section will clarify the
significance of this material in revealing the authorship, and will examine additional
evidence within the text which reveals the author’s relationship to Maximus.

**A Roman Author?**

There are several elements that suggest that the author of *Disputatio β* is a
member of the Greek diaspora in Rome. The author demonstrates a striking familiarity
with the way in which papal letters were dictated. As I discussed above, he demonstrates
insider knowledge that the same scribe wrote letters for both Popes Honorius and John
IV, using this to counter the use of Honorius’ letter to Sergius. While it is certainly true that Maximus had developed a strong relationship with the popes, especially after he travelled to Rome in 646, as I discussed above his arguments in defense of Honorius were primarily based on assertion of misunderstanding rather than textual arguments based on scribal identity.

While this evidence does not in itself rule out Maximus as an author, I would suggest that it is compelling evidence in favor of a Greek-speaking Roman author. This evidence is strengthened when one considers the pro-Roman tone which permeates Disputatio β. Pyrrhus and Sergius are continually disparaged as deceivers and heresiarchs, whereas Rome is portrayed as the See through which Pyrrhus must be reconciled to find redemption. I would suggest that this juxtaposition is not accidental, but rather it reflects the rivalry between Rome and Constantinople which existed through the greater part of the seventh century. This tone demonstrates at the very least a pro-Roman author, but taken as a whole with the remaining evidence, I would suggest that the author is actually from or living in Rome itself.

Finally, there is the evidence from the epilogue. As we have seen, the author says that Pyrrhus came to “us” in the great city of the Romans. I would suggest that this is a rare instance in which the document can be trusted. Considering the rest of the evidence mentioned above, there is no reason to doubt this particular assertion. Thus, taken as a whole, the familiarity with papal scribes, the overall tone, and the epilogue all suggest the redactor is a Greek-speaking Roman.
Relationship with Maximus

The redactor of Disputatio β demonstrates a familiarity with Maximus’ work and analogy, but does not use Maximus’ style in the same way as the author of Disputatio α. For example, using Maximus as a mouthpiece to discuss the “new theandric activity” of Pseudo-Dionysus would be a natural choice, considering Maximus’ extensive commentary on Pseudo-Dionysus. Likewise Maximus would be the most obvious person to use to defend Honorius, considering his well-documented position in Honorius’ defense. However the redactor, as we have seen, demonstrates an imperfect familiarity with Maximus. He gets the broad strokes correct, but he differs from Maximus in his execution.

Another example which I mentioned only in passing is the analogy of the red-hot sword which the redactor employs in his discussion of Monoenergism. Maximus employs the same analogy, ironically, in ep. 19, his letter to Pyrrhus.169 The analogy is used in both cases to describe how one object or person, in the analogy the sword, can have multiple operations, namely hot and cutting. However the vocabulary used in the two documents is strikingly different:

ep 19

...καὶ τῷ μυστηρίῳ τῆς θείας σαρκώσεως προσφυοῦς παραδείγματος, τῆς ἐκπυρωθείσης μαχαίρας, ἣς τὴν τομὴν ἐπιστάμεθα καυστικὴν, καὶ τὴν οἴδαμεν τιμητικὴν. Πυρὸς γὰρ καὶ σιδήρου καθ’ ὑπόστασιν γέγονε σύνοδος, μηδετέρου τῆς κατὰ φύσιν διὰ τὴν πρὸς θάτερον ἐνωσιν ἐκστάντος δυνάμεως...170

...And in the mystery of the divine incarnation which is a fitting example, as a red hot sword, the cut of which we know is hot, and the heat of which we know cuts. There has

169 PG 91:589-597. According to Sherwood, the dating of this letter is ambiguous, but is likely around 633.
170 PG 91:593 B-C1
been a union, hypostatically, of the fire and the blade, with neither of their natural powers having been displaced though the union to one another...

Disputatio cum Pyrrho

...Τί δ’ ἂν τις εἴποι καὶ περὶ τῆς πεπυρακτωμένης μαχαίρας, οὐχ ἢττον τῶν φύσεων, τοιούτης τοῦ πυρὸς καὶ τοῦ σιδήρου, καὶ τὰς αὐτῶν φυσικὰς ἐνεργείας, τὴν καύσιν φημι καὶ τὴν τομήν, σωζόντως, καὶ διὰ πάντων ἰάμα, καὶ ἐν ταύτῃ, ταύτας ἐνδεικνυμένης: Οὔτε γὰρ ἡ καύσις αὐτῆς, τῆς τομῆς ἄφετός ἐστι μετὰ τὴν ἑνώσιν, οὔτε ἡ τομὴ τῆς καύσεως... 171

And what would someone say also about the fire hot sword, not less of the natures, that is to say fire and iron, but their natural operations, I mean burning and cutting, for saving, or for all of these things together, united in this one thing, as this is demonstrated? For neither the sword’s burning is independent from the cutting after the union, nor is the cutting independent from the burning...

Here again we see a demonstration of familiarity with the thought of the Confessor. He understands the gist of Maximus’ analogies but lacks the same command of his vocabulary and style which was demonstrated by the author of Disputatio α.

Based on this information we can compile the following profile of the redactor of Disputatio β: He was at the very least a strong Roman sympathizer, but most likely a member of the Greek diaspora in Rome with a familiar knowledge of the inner workings of the papal scribal system. He was likely a product of the Greek monastery system in Rome, which was heavily influenced by the theology of Maximus the Confessor and played a significant role in Roman ecclesiastical affairs. As such he would have been familiar with Maximus’ thought and works, but not on the level of the author of Disputatio α.

Purpose

Again the question remains, why would somebody go through the trouble of redacting Disputatio α? I have hinted at the answer throughout my study, but I will now

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attempt to make the purpose more explicit. I have suggested that the materials in
*Disputatio* β would be out of place if they were included in what was ostensibly a
discussion about Monotheletism. One example we have seen is the discussion about the
*Libellus* of Menas. Considering the fact that Sergius had cited the document in defense
of Monotheletism, its appearance in the debate would not be unusual in itself.¹⁷²

However, while there were certainly reservations about the document, its authenticity
was not questioned in great detail until 680, 35 years after the dispute took place.
Moreover any discussion of Monoenergism, which had been willingly put aside with the
advent of Monotheletism would have been odd, and Pyrrhus’ adamant defense of a
doctrine which he would have most likely considered irrelevant is especially peculiar.
Likewise the close examination of monothelete documentary proof in general found in
this section seems out of place considering the material which preceded it.

However, all of this material, the *Libellus* of Menas, letter of Honorius, and the
interpretation of Pseudo-Dionysus were all used as evidence and subject to scrutiny
during the Third Council at Constantinople. The council was concerned not only with
anathematizing Monotheletism, but also Monoenergism which preceded it. Likewise
close textual analysis played a significant role in the Third Council at Constantinople, one
which earned it the nickname “the council of Archivists.”

These considerations, I believe, shed light on the purpose behind this redaction.
Thus I would conclude that the text of the *Disputatio* was redacted and interpolated by a
Roman party who was involved in the preparation for the Third Council at
Constantinople and who was privy to the textual proofs which would be offered up by the

monothelete party. Thus he took a document which was probably well known to him in which one of the founding members of Monotheletism was on record as refuting the doctrine, and rather than creating a document from whole cloth, simply modified the document to include material which would become relevant at the upcoming council.

Audience

This raises the final question, namely who did the redactor want to read this document? I have already emphasized the importance of the Greek diaspora community in Rome at this time. They were highly influential in papal policy, and several of the seventh-century popes were actually Greek-speaking members from the diaspora. This community, on the whole, was loyal to Maximus and would play a significant role in the Third Council at Constantinople. I would suggest that it is this influential group that the redactor had in mind. He wanted the Greek Roman participants to be prepared for whatever objections may be raised in Constantinople, and have a convenient reference to counter major theological and textual objections. I do not think that it is a coincidence that the Roman party raised immediate objections when the Libellus of Menas was entered into evidence, and although it cannot be known for certain, it is certainly possible that members of the delegation had read Disputatio cum Pyrrho with its extensive discussion of this controversial text.

Conclusion

I have demonstrated based on textual comparison that two different writers were involved in the text of the Disputatio cum Pyrrho as it exists today. I have attempted to use the text to glean some information about the authors and their relationship to
Maximus the Confessor. Ultimately it is impossible to assign a specific writer for either
*Disputatio α* or *Disputatio β*. However, as I have suggested, we can establish a
substantial profile of both authors based on a close analysis of the text, including the
similarity of their diction with Maximus and each other, topics raised for discussion and
historical circumstances in the seventh century.
Chapter Seven: Conclusion

What is the Disputatio cum Pyrrho?

The *Disputatio cum Pyrrho* has long been considered one of Maximus the Confessor’s most important theological texts, and a critical source of information about Monotheletism and Monoenergism. Most scholars have accepted the document at its word, as a transcript of a disputation which took place in 645. Few have questioned its authenticity, and fewer still have raised questions about its authorship and purpose.

This study has attempted to fill the void left by previous scholars by critically examining the document and attempting to determine if there is more than meets the eye, to question whether this document may have been written with a specific purpose in mind, aside from providing an official transcript of a disputation. I have argued that indeed this is not merely a record of a single event, but document composed well after the dispute itself took place, and then edited likely decades later for another purpose. The genre and tone of the document alone preclude it being an authentic rendering, but historical circumstances provided motivations for compiling both the original and the later redacted text.

The original, what I have called *Disputatio a*, was written after the reversion of Pyrrhus back to Monotheletism. It was written most certainly to impugn the former patriarch, but more likely still written in the run up to the Lateran Synod of 649 which would condemn him. It is clear from the style and sources used that the author, while very close to Maximus and likely a personal disciple, was not Maximus himself, but was familiar enough with Maximus to mimic his style, while presenting material in a way that varies enough from Maximus that it could not have been the confessor himself.
Disputatio β, the redacted text added to the original, demonstrates a strong affinity to Maximus, and suggests that the redactor was likely a follower of Maximus, though he may not have known the confessor personally. Similarities between the contents of the redaction and the proceedings of the Third Council at Constantinople are far too great to be mere coincidence, especially considering that the questions asked would not be explored again until the time leading to the Third Council at Constantinople. The author’s familiarity and affinity with the Eternal City suggests that he was a Roman, his language that he was a Greek, and his knowledge of papal scribal history suggests that he was part of the ecclesiastical elite.

The implications for the forgery of the Disputatio cum Pyrrho are significant. Scholars should be cautious using the document as a source for dates or prosopography. Moreover the realization that the Disputatio cum Pyrrho is not authentic will necessitate revisiting the dating of other documents within the corpus of Maximus the Confessor, a process which will certainly occupy scholars in the future, as well as the way in which we understand the development of intellectual history in the seventh century.

However beyond simply causing frustration for scholars, understanding the Disputatio cum Pyrrho as a composite document offers new data for analysis. It grants us a glimpse into the ways in which one of the foremost thinkers and theologians of the seventh century influenced his intellectual successors. It provides us a window into the mentality and creativity of seventh-century ecclesiastical writers. It provides a case study in the simultaneous use and critique of forgery in the seventh century, a practice so prevalent that significant time was devoted to authenticating texts at the Third Council at Constantinople. Moreover it may open up our understanding to the process of
preparation for the Third Council at Constantinople, a process which is otherwise poorly
documented.

The *Disputatio cum Pyrrho* will always remain an important theological text and
does document common monothelete arguments as well as systematic responses to them.
In this way it does in fact provide insight into this significant theological movement and
the responses of adversaries. However, I have attempted to offer up other facets of the
document which are worthy of further scholarship, and provide a close analysis of a
document which has hitherto been neglected.
Appendix: Abbreviations

The following is a list of commonly used abbreviations:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AB</td>
<td><em>Analecta Bollandiana</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BZ</td>
<td><em>Byzantinische Zeitschrift</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPG</td>
<td><em>Clavis Patrum Graecorum</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>ep.</td>
<td><em>Epistula</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>LSJ</td>
<td><em>Liddell Scott Jones</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>PG</td>
<td><em>Patrologia Graeca</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PL</td>
<td><em>Patrologia Latina</em></td>
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VITA

Ryan Wayne Strickler was born July 17, 1985 in Saginaw Michigan. After graduating from Clio Area High School, he earned a Bachelor of Arts in Theological Studies from Spring Arbor University in Spring Arbor, Michigan in 2008. He then enrolled in the graduate program in Comparative Religion at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, Michigan where he was awarded teaching assistantships from 2008-2010, until he earned his Master of Arts degree in Comparative Religion, specializing in Greek Patristic Christianity and Modern Eastern Orthodox Christianity. From Fall of 2010 until Spring of 2011, he served as a part time instructor in the Department of Comparative Religion at Western Michigan University, after which, in Fall of 2011 he enrolled in the graduate program in History at the University of Kentucky.

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