

THE COUNCILS OF THE MID FOURTH CENTURY

The Development of the Doctrine of the Trinity

POST-NICEAN DEVELOPMENTS

EVENTS

There is little discussion of Arianism between 328 and 340

- 335 Council of Tyre
- 338 Council at Alexandria
- 340 Council at Rome
- 341 Council at Antioch
- 343 Council at Sardica
- 351 Council at Sirmium
- 353 Council at Arles
- 353 Athanasius convened a council in Alexandria with more bishops than Sirmium; they request a council at Aquileia: Athanasius's *Defense before Constantius*
- 355 Council in Milan: Reading of the creed of Nicea; pressure to support Sirmium
Athanasius was deposed by Constantius
- 358 Council at Ancyra
Athanasius in hiding: *Letter to the Bishops of Egypt and Libya, Defense of his Flight, History of the Arians*
- 359 Councils at Selucia and Arminum
- 359 Council at Constantinople
- 362 Council of Alexandria

HOMOIANS

The general position of many bishops; the "traditional" position

"DEDICATION CREED" OF ANTIOCH

- The three persons are particular hypostases, not mere names, and have a particular order
- They are three in hypostases, one in agreement
- Nothing existed before the Son
- The Son is not a creature like other creatures or a product (*gennema*) or something made
- He is an image of the substance of the Father
- It counters Sabellian readings of Nicea

SIRMIUM 351

LIBERIUS OF ROME

Sent delegates to Milan in 355 but refused to support Sirmium. He was brought before the Emperor at Milan and pressured to sign; when he refused, he was exiled to Beroea

In 357, Liberius agreed to condemn Athanasius and then to support the homoian cause, probably in affirming Sirmium 351. Felix remained strong against Sirmium

LETTER FROM LIBERIUS IN HILARY'S *COLLECTIO ANTIARIANA*

So then that you should know surely that I am professing the true faith in this letter of mine, my lord and comradely brother Demophilus [homoian bishop of Beroea in Thrace] has been kind enough in his goodness to set out your creed and the Catholic creed which was explained and accepted at Sirmium by many of our

brothers and fellow-bishops (that which follows is Arian treachery, and I have branded it, not the renegade Liberius), by all who were present (or, were in the imperial Presence). This creed I have accepted with a free assent (*the holy Hilary pronounces anathema against him, anathema has been declared to you, Liberius, and to your companions!*); I have contradicted no part of it, I have conceded my agreement, I follow this creed, this is held by me (*again anathema to you, for a third time, traitor Liberius!*).

BASIL OF ANCYRA AND THE HOMOIOUSIANS

Life

- Bishop in 336 on the deposition of Marcellus
- Attended the council of Antioch in 341 (probably)
- Signed the Macrostich creed
- Signed the Eastern version of Serdica
- Called a council at Ancyra in 358 to denounce Eudoxius and the heterousians
- George of Laodicea had complained that Eudoxius was promoting anhomiois as the relationship between Father and Son

COUNCIL OF ANCYRA 358

- Called by Ehiphianus semi-Arian, but homoiousion is better
- The letter includes Antioch 341 (probably the 2nd creed), Serdica East, Sirmium 351, Macrostich of 345
- Objects to a new definition
- Defends like in essence
- Likeness in ousia must be upheld
- What is like is not the same
- Prefers eikon tes ousias
- If the Son is really Son and not creature, he must be homiois kat'ousian
- To say he is anomois kat'ousian is to deny that he is Son
- Such language is condemned, along with the assertion that the Son is homousious or tautousios with the Father

...We are not baptized into a 'creator and a created' but into a Father and a son, and creator/created is one thing and Father/Son another. If we argue from our human experience of fathers and sons we can observe certain points: (i) we notice that the Son is like (homoion) the Father; (ii) we must not allow the thought of possibility to enter this relationship (as we must in the case of human fathers and sons), nor of corporeal existence; but with these safeguards we can apply the words 'creature' and 'creator' to Son and Father...

...the begetting of a living being that is like in *ousia*, because every father is thought of as a father of an *ousia* which is like his"...

...For as he who was in the likeness of men and was a man yet not a man in all respects, human he took human flesh, for 'the Word became flesh', yet not human in that he was not born as men are (not, that is, from seed and copulations), so the Son before the ages is God in that he is a Son of God (just as he is man as Son of man), but not identical with the God and Father who begot him (just as he is not identical with human nature) in that there is no question of emanation and process (just as there is no question of insemination and sexual pleasure). And as he was in the likeness of sinful flesh, in that he experienced hunger and thirst and sleep in the flesh, passions by which bodies are motivated towards sin, yet while experiencing thee passion which I have mentioned he was not motivated towards sin by them, so also the Son, since he was the Son of God and 'being in the form of God' and 'equal to God', had the characteristics of Godhead and was in his *ousia* incorporeal and like the Father in Godhead, incorporeality and activities. And just as he is like flesh in that he is flesh and experiences the passions of the flesh, but is not identical with flesh, so though he is God (theos) but he is not the form of God (ho theos), but of God (theos), nor is he equal to God (ho theos), but to God (theos), nor as genuinely as the Father...