

Concordia Seminary - Saint Louis

## Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary

---

Bachelor of Divinity

Concordia Seminary Scholarship

---

5-12-1926

### The Arian Controversy Between the Councils of Nicaea and Constantinople (A. D. 325-381)

Richard J. Jagels

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, ir\_jagelsr@csl.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/bdiv>



Part of the [History of Christianity Commons](#)

---

#### Recommended Citation

Jagels, Richard J., "The Arian Controversy Between the Councils of Nicaea and Constantinople (A. D. 325-381)" (1926). *Bachelor of Divinity*. 649.

<https://scholar.csl.edu/bdiv/649>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Concordia Seminary Scholarship at Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. It has been accepted for inclusion in Bachelor of Divinity by an authorized administrator of Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. For more information, please contact [seitzw@csl.edu](mailto:seitzw@csl.edu).

THE ARIAN CONTROVERSY  
BETWEEN THE COUNCILS OF NICAEA AND CONSTANTINOPE.  
(A.D. 325-381)

In the year 318, a controversy had arisen between  
Alexander, bishop of Alexandria, and the presbyter Arius.  
Arius maintained that the Son was created out of nothing  
and therefore differed in nature from the Father. That  
he was the lower, Wisdom, Son of God, but in the end of the  
world he was to be the same as the Father, who is God.  
He maintained everything else and that through the Son  
everything was created.

B. D. T H E S I S.

THE ARIAN CONTROVERSY  
BETWEEN THE COUNCILS OF NICAEA AND CONSTANTINOPE.  
(A.D. 325-381)

In the year 325, at the Council of Nicaea, Arius was  
condemned, Arius and his followers fled to  
Constantinople, where they were again  
condemned and imprisoned.

However, this was not the end of the controversy.  
The Arians had developed a new doctrine, the  
Council of Constantinople in 381 was called to  
deal with the matter.

L. V. 325 to 381

Richard J. Jagels,  
Concordia Seminary,  
St. Louis, Missouri.

May 12, 1926.

THE ARIAN CONTROVERSY  
BETWEEN THE COUNCILS OF NICAEEA AND CONSTANTINOPLE.  
(A.D. 325-381)

In the year 318,<sup>1)</sup> a controversy had arisen between Alexander, bishop of Alexandria, and the presbyter Arius. Arius maintained that the Son was created out of nothing and therefore different in essence from the Father; that He was the Logos, Wisdom, Son of God, not in and of Himself but only by the grace of God; that He was created before everything else and that through Him the universe was created and administered; and finally that the Logos became the soul of the historical Christ.<sup>2)</sup> In order to settle this controversy, Emperor Constantine had called the First Ecumenical Council at Nicaea in Asia Minor in the year 325. At this council Arianism had been explicitly condemned, Arius and his two followers, Theonas and Secundus, banished to Illyria, and his writings publicly burned and interdicted.<sup>3)</sup>

However, this was not the end of Arianism, and to show the spread and development of Arianism since the Council of Nicaea shall be the aim and purpose of this thesis.

I. From 325 to 337.

At the Council of Nicaea a new party, called the Semi-Arians, had originated, who maintained that the Son

1) *New Int. Ency (Arianism)*; Herzog T, p. 262; Soc. T ch. 5-7; Soz T, 15. 16

2) *Encycl. Americana (Arianism)*; Soc. T, 5

3) *Schaff III*, p. 629; *Kidd II*, p. 22-49; *Newman ch. III*; *Soz. T*, 17-21; *Soc. T*, 8; *Herzog T*, 26

was not identical in essence but of similar essence (homoiousian) with the Father. This party, however, had been constrained to affix their signatures to the Nicene Creed, which contained the doctrine of consubstantiality (homo-ousian). Soon after the closing of the Nicene Council, the semi-Arians began to assail the Nicene Creed, and finally through the influence of Eusebius of Nicomedia and of Constantia, the sister of Constantine, they secured the recall of Arius and his companions about the year 330. 1)

Athanasius, through whose influence Arianism had been rejected at Nicaea, had in the meantime become Archbishop of Alexandria, succeeding Alexander in June 328. 2) After Arius had returned, he, in a personal interview with the emperor, declared his belief that the Son was born of the Father before all ages, and that, as the Word, He had made all things both in heaven and earth. 3) Upon hearing this, the emperor at once ordered Athanasius, now bishop of Alexandria, to receive Arius into the communion of the church, at the same time threatening him with deposition, if he should fail to do so. Athanasius, nevertheless, refused to reinstate him, and a series of tumults again followed.

The Eusebians centered their first attack upon Eustathius, bishop of Antioch, who had refused to receive some Arianizers among the clergy. He was deposed by a synod convened at Antioch in 331 on account of his ad-

1) Kidd T, 53  
2) Hastings (Arianism); Soc. T. 15; Hargog T, 264; Rainy p. 261  
3) Ayer p. 307; Soc. T, 26

herence to the faith of the Nicene Council and because he had accused Eusebius, Paulinus, bishop of Tyre, and Patrophilus, bishop of Scythopolis, of favoring Arianism. He was also charged with disrespect to St. Helena, the emperor's mother, Sabellianism, and seduction. He was banished to Thrace or Illyricum, where he died between 356 and 360. The Cappadocian Euphronius succeeded Eustathius, who in turn was succeeded by Flacillus (332-342), both of whom were infected with Arianism. 2)

Eusebius had in the meantime arranged with the Meletians, 2) a sect in Egypt dissenting on questions of supreme rule and church government, for their assistance on any occasion when he might wish for it. The Meletians soon adopted the same views concerning God which were held by Arius. Soon after this three Meletian bishops, induced by Eusebius, accused Athanasius of taxing Egypt to provide linen vestments for use in the church, of sending a purse of gold to a rebel, named Philumenus, for conspiring against the empire, of sacrilege, and of murdering Arsenius, a Meletian bishop, whose hand they claimed to show. 3) All four charges were carefully examined by the emperor and found untrue. The emperor, moreover, informed the Meletians that their plots would henceforth not be dealt with according to the ecclesiastical but according to the civil laws.

The Eusebians, however, were only silenced for a short time, for they soon renewed their attack upon Atha-

1) Kidd II, 55; Soz. II, 19; Soc. I, 24

2) Soz. II, 21

3) Kidd II, 56ff; Soz. II, 22-23; Soc. I, 27

nasius and prevailed upon Constantine to convene a synod at Caesarea in Palestine, which he did in 334.<sup>1)</sup> Athanasius, fearing injustice on part of the Eusebians and also of Eusebius, bishop of Caesarea, refused to attend. Another synod was convened at Tyre<sup>2)</sup> in August, 335, and the emperor forced Athanasius to attend. More than 150 bishops were present; these, however, were divided into three factions. The strong Arian element was represented by Eusebius of Nicomedia, Narcissus of Neronias in Cilicia, Maris of Chalcedon, Theognis of Nicaea, Patrophilus of Scythopolis, George of Laodicea in Syria, Ursacius of Singidunum (Belgrade), and Valens of Mursa. These became the leaders of Arianism in the West in the next reign. The center party was headed by Eusebius of Caesarea. And finally there was Athanasius, who was supported by Marcellus of Ancyra, Maximus of Jerusalem, and Alexander of Thessalonica. Athanasius was outnumbered two to one, and therefore, received no fair chance, although Count Dionysius had been sent by Constantine as protector. According to Athanasius (Apol. c. Arianos) Flacillus, bishop of Antioch, presided at this meeting, the proceedings of which were disorderly. Others have it that this synod was conducted by the historian Eusebius. Before this synod Athanasius was accused of having broken a vase used in the celebration of the mysteries, of having thrown down the episcopal chair, of having deposed Callinicus, bishop of the Catholic Church at Pelusium, of having committed the bishopric of Pelusium to Mark, a deposed presbyter, and of a number of other calumnies. When the Eusebians again charged him with the killing of Arsenius, Athanasius produced Arsenius alive

1) Kidd II, 59; Newman Ch. IV, Sec. T, 2

2) Kidd II 60; Sec. T, 28; Soz. II, 25

with both hands attached to his body and asked them to show him the place where the third hand had been cut off. Athanasius tells us that his opponents could not even effect anything with the Eusebians as judges and the Meletians as accusers. After several sessions of the synod, which were conducted in a disorderly manner, the accusers cried aloud that Athanasius ought to be deposed as a sorcerer and a ruffian. The officers that had been appointed by the emperor to maintain order in the synod thereupon compelled Athanasius to leave the judgment-hall secretly, lest he be torn to pieces by the mob. Athanasius, realizing that his life was in danger in Tyre, fled to Constantinople.<sup>1)</sup>

In September 335, the Mareotic Commission,<sup>2)</sup> consisting of six Arians, Theognis, Maris, Ursacius, Valens, Macedonius, and Theodore of Heraclea in Thrace, was appointed; these were to go to the Mareotis, which is in the neighborhood of Alexandria, to investigate the charges brought against Athanasius. On the return of the commission to Tyre, Athanasius was condemned, deposed from the see of Alexandria, and prohibited from ever returning to that city.<sup>3)</sup>

While the bishops were still assembled at Tyre, the emperor invited them to come to Jerusalem for the consecration of the temple erected by him at Golgatha [in Jerusalem]; this took place September 13, 335.<sup>4)</sup> After the consecration of the temple, the synod was reconvened at Jerusalem, and Arius and his adherents were readmitted into communion<sup>5)</sup> in obedience to the wishes of the emperor, who was fully satisfied respecting

1) Soz. II, 25

2) Kidd II, 61 ff; Soz. II, 25; Soc. T, 31; Newman IV, Sec. T, 2

3) Kidd II, 63; Soz. II, 25; Newman IV, Sec. T, 2

4) Soz. T, 26; Soc. T, 33; Kidd II, 63

5) Kidd II, 63

the faith of Arius and Euzoius. Letters were at once addressed to all bishops of Egypt notifying them that Arius, who had formerly been misrepresented, had been received into communion again. In this letter, they did not directly state that Athanasius had been deposed; they merely said that all envy was now banished, and that the affairs of the church were established in peace.

Athanasius, who had secretly left the Council of Tyre, had come to the emperor at Constantinople for protection. The emperor, being informed of the disorderly proceedings at Tyre, at once summoned the bishops to appear before him at Constantinople, so that he might receive an exact account of their transactions. (For complete letter see Socrates, Eccles. Hist. B.I. ch.34 or Sozomen II.28). However, most of the bishops, being convinced of the unjust proceedings of the Council of Tyre returned to their own cities. Only the leaders, Theognis, Maris, Patrophilus, Ursacius, and Valens went to Constantinople, where they met February 5, 336 (Mansi II, 1167).<sup>2)</sup> At Constantinople they did not dare to revive the old calumnies against Athanasius, but they brought new charges, namely that he had threatened to prohibit the sending of the corn which was usually conveyed from Alexandria to Constantinople.<sup>3)</sup> The emperor, being deceived and excited to indignation against Athanasius, cut short the altercation by banishing Athanasius unheard (Apol. 87) to Treves in Gaul.<sup>4)</sup> It has been surmised that the emperor banished Athanasius to establish the unity of the church, for Atha-

1) Soz. II, 27

2) Kild II, 63

3) Soc. I, 35; Kild II, 64

4) Soz. II, 28; Soc. I, 35; Raimy 342



nasius was regarded as an obstacle to peace,<sup>1)</sup> or in order to protect him from the malice of his enemies.

Athanasius started on his first exile to Treves in Gaul on February 8, 336<sup>2)</sup> At Treves he was received in a friendly manner, for its bishop, Maximin (322-349), embraced the Nicene faith. As an exile, Athanasius enjoyed an interval of repose until his return to Alexandria on November 23, 337, of which we shall speak later.

The bishops assembled at Constantinople also deposed Marcellus, bishop of Ancyra in Galatia Minor (314-336), who was the most zealous against the Arians in the Eastern Church. Having refused all share in the proceedings because of the unfair treatment which Athanasius had received at Tyre and because of the reception of Arius at Jerusalem, the Eusebians accused him of disrespect to the emperor. An Arian sophist, Asterius of Cappadocia, had maintained that the Son was neither the Word, nor the Wisdom, nor the power of God, but only called so, as the locust and the palmer-worm are called the power of God in Joel 2, 25. Marcellus had attacked these views in his "Liber de Subjectione Domini" in which he affirmed the unity of God. Concerning Christ he taught the eternity of the Logos and the humanity of the Sonship, and that by a process of expansion this Logos became the Son. Marcellus was, therefore, accused of making a mere man of Christ, who was acted upon by a divine operation. The Arian Council at Constantinople asked Eusebius of Caesarea to refute the views of Marcellus, which he did in his "Contra Marcellum", whereupon Marcellus was

1) Soz. II, 25; Kidd II, 64

2) Kidd II, 64

deposed and Basil became bishop in his stead (336-360).<sup>1)</sup>  
Marcellus was later reinstated by the synod at Sardis.

Although Arius had been received into communion at Jerusalem, the people of Alexandria would not readmit him, because they were indignant at the restoration of such a heretic and also at the banishment of their bishop Athanasius. Arius was called back to Constantinople, where the Eusebians again tried to admit him to communion, but again he was refused by Alexander, then bishop of Constantinople.<sup>2)</sup> Being threatened with deposition by Eusebius, Alexander took refuge to God in prayer, asking Him that if the opinion of Arius were correct, he might not be permitted to see the day of its discussion; but if he himself held the true faith, that then Arius, as the author of all these evils, might suffer the punishment due him for his impiety.<sup>3)</sup>

Meanwhile the emperor had personally examined Arius, and Arius had subscribed the declaration of faith of the Nicene Synod in the emperor's presence. The emperor now ordered Alexander to receive Arius into communion on the following day.<sup>4)</sup> But "while Arius left the imperial palace, attended by a crowd of Eusebian partisans like guards, he paraded proudly through the midst of the city, attracting the notice of all people. On approaching the place called Constantine's Forum, where the column of porphyry is erected, a terror arising from the consciousness of his wickedness seized him, accompanied by violent relaxation of the bowels; he therefore inquired whether there was a

1) Kidd II, 64 ff; Soc. T, 36

2) Soz. II, 29; Soc. T, 37

3) Soc. T, 37

4) Soc. T, 38

convenient place near, and being directed to the back of Constantine's Forum, he hastened thither. Soon after a faintness came over him, and together with the evacuations his bowels protruded, followed by a copious hemorrhage, and the descent of the smaller intestine; moreover, portions of his spleen and liver were brought off in the effusion of blood, so that he died almost instantly" (Socr. <sup>7</sup>~~11~~, <sup>38</sup>~~33~~). )

This seems to be somewhat exaggerated; for, according to Athanasius, Arius died in the evening of this day. Whatever the case may be, the sudden death of Arius may be regarded as a fulfillment of Alexander's prayer and as a miraculous confirmation of the Nicene faith by the testimony of God Himself. Athanasius writes of his death: "While the church was rejoicing at the deliverance, Alexander administered the communion in pious and orthodox form, praying with all the brethren and glorifying God greatly; not as if rejoicing over his death, (God forbid! for to all men it is appointed once to die) but because in this event there was displayed somewhat more than a human judgment. For the Lord Himself, judging between the threats of the Eusebians and the prayer of Alexander, has in this event given sentence against the heresy of the Arians; showing it to be unworthy of ecclesiastical fellowship, and manifesting to all that though it have the patronage of emperor and of all men, yet that by the church itself it is condemned" (Epist. ad Scrap. 4, quoted in Newman chap. III, ii).

In the following year, Emperor Constantine was attacked by a malady and died on May 22, 337, at the age of sixty-five, after he had received holy baptism from Eusebius of Nicomedia on his death-bed. )

) Herzog I, 264  
) Soc. 730. Soc. 7.34. Rainy 342

II. From 337 to 351.

After the death of Constantine, the empire was divided among his three sons, Constantius ruling the East, Constans over Italy and Illyricum, and Constantine II. over Spain, Gaul, and Britain. <sup>1)</sup>

Eusebius of Nicomedia and Theognis of Nicaea now once more put forth their utmost efforts to abolish the doctrine of consubstantiality and to introduce Arianism. <sup>2)</sup> However, their plans were balked when Athanasius returned to Alexandria with a letter from Constantine II., the ruler of Western Gaul, on November 23, 337. <sup>3)</sup> Athanasius was received with joy by his people, but the followers of Eusebius entered into a conspiracy against him and accused him of being a seditious person and of having reinstated himself in the Alexandrian church without the permission of a general council of bishops. Eusebius sent envoys to Rome to confer with Julius, bishop of Rome (337-352), who agreed to call a synod at Alexandria late in the year 338. About a hundred bishops attended this synod, who bore witness against their archbishop's accusers. <sup>4)</sup>

About this time, Eusebius of Caesarea died, and Acacius succeeded him in the bishopric. <sup>5)</sup> Constantine II. was likewise slain by his own generals in a war against his brother Constans, who then became ruler of the whole West, while Constantius ruled the East. Alexander, bishop of Constantinople, also died, and Paul, a defender of the orthodox faith succeeded him as bishop. Constantius, however, deposed him soon after,

1) Kidd II, 69; Herzog T, 265  
2) Soc. II, 2, Soz. III, 1

3) Kidd II, 71; Soc. II, 3; Soz. III, 2

4) Kidd II, 72

5) Soc. II, 4

6) Soz. III, 3

and Eusebius of Nicomedia was transferred to Constantinople. 1)

The old charges were again raised against Athanasius and Eusebius Emisenus was proposed as the new bishop of Alexandria. But the people of Alexandria would not have Eusebius because of their attachment to Athanasius, and consequently Gregory was appointed in his stead, who went to Alexandria soon after, being accompanied by 5,000 heavy-armed soldiers. Upon their arrival, Athanasius fled to Rome. While Arianism was thus gaining ground in the East, Julius, the bishop of Rome, and all the clergy of the West adhered to the faith of the Nicene Council. Athanasius was, therefore, received very kindly in Rome. Eusebius now wrote to Julius and asked for a judicial investigation of the charges against Athanasius; but Eusebius did not hear the decision of Julius, for he died soon after. After his death, Paul was reinstated in the church of Constantinople by the adherents of the Nicene Creed, while the followers of Eusebius at the same time ordained Macedonius. Thus the city was again filled with tumult until Paul was again expelled by the emperor. Gregory of Alexandria was also deposed by the Arians, because he had not shown enough zeal for their doctrine, and George of Cappadocia, a zealous Arian, was elected in his stead. 2)

Athanasius, Paul of Constantinople, Ascepas of Gaza, Marcellus of Ancyra, and Lucius of Adrianople, having all been deposed, laid their cases before Julius, bishop of Rome, who, by virtue of his being bishop of Rome, reinstated all in their

1) Soc. II, 4; Soc. II, 7

2) Soc. II, 9-14; Soc. III, 6.

respective sees, at the same time rebuking the bishops of the East for their unjust dealings. <sup>1)</sup>

In order to effect their purpose, Eusebius again called a synod at Antioch in Syria in 341. <sup>2)</sup> About ninety bishops were present, whose professed object was the consecration of the new church which had been erected at that place. The Eusebians again set forth their doctrine in ambiguous terms, confessing that the Son is with the Father, that He is the only begotten One, and that He is God and existed before all things. They neither affirmed nor denied the doctrine that the Son is co-eternal and consubstantial with the Father, as the Nicene Creed had it. <sup>3)</sup> The bishops assembled here addressed a letter to Julius in which they defended their actions and also rebuked Julius for having received Athanasius into communion. Paul was at once deposed again and sent into exile to Thessalonica, the metropolis of Macedonia. A new charge was also brought against Athanasius, namely that he had sold the grain sent to the poor of Alexandria by the emperor to his own advantage. <sup>4)</sup> When the Emperor Constantius threatened him with death, he again fled to Rome.

Constans now demanded an account of the deposition of Athanasius and Paul from his brother Constantius. <sup>5)</sup> Four bishops were sent to Rome, who presented another exposition of the faith. <sup>6)</sup> Emperor Constans at once perceived that Athanasius and Paul had been deposed on account of differences in doctrine, and not, as was alleged, because of immoralities. To heal this division between the East and the West, the two

1) Soc. II, 8; Soc. II, 15; Ager p. 311  
2) Ager p. 313; Kidd II, 77; Soc. II, 5  
3) Soc. II, 10; Kidd II, 80 f.

4) Soc. II, 17  
5) Soc. II, 18  
6) Soc. II, 18

emperors summoned a general council at Sardica in Illyria, in 343.<sup>1)</sup> According to Athanasius about 170 bishops were present, 94 from the West and 76 from the East. Hence the Nicene Party and the Roman influence prevailed. The Eastern bishops refused to meet with those of the West, unless Athanasius and Paul were excluded from the meeting. When the Western bishops would not yield, the Oriental bishops withdrew and held a separate council at Philippopolis in Thrace.<sup>2)</sup> This completed the break between the East and the West; a mountain called Soucis, between Illyria and Thrace became the dividing line. The majority, being thus left alone at Sardica, pronounced Athanasius innocent, who was thus fully vindicated.<sup>3)</sup> Constans addressed a letter to his brother Constantius threatening him with war, if he would not reinstate Athanasius and Paul in their sees. To this Constantius readily agreed, addressing four letters in succession to Athanasius begging him to come to Alexandria. Athanasius was reinstated at Alexandria, October 21, 346, and this period, from 346 to 356, is known as the Golden Decade of Athanasius,<sup>4)</sup> because during this period he had the support of the monks of Egypt. But when Constans had died in 350, and Constantius had become sole ruler of the empire,<sup>5)</sup> persecutions broke out anew.

III. 351 to 361.

In 351 Constantius convened a synod at Sirmium, where Photinus was deposed for advocating Sabellianism.<sup>6)</sup> About this time another man arose at Antioch in Syria, who maintained the same opinions as Arius; his name was Aetius.<sup>7)</sup> However, since

1) Kidd II, 83; Soc. II, 20; Soz III, 11; Herzog I, 266

2) Soz III, 11

3) Kidd II, 87

4) Kidd II, 101

5) Kidd II, 117; Rainy 345

6) Kidd II, 118; Soc. II, 29, 30; Euseb

7) Soc. II, 35; Soz III, 15

Arius had been admitted into communion, he separated himself from the Arians. His followers were called Aetians; and later, when Eunomius became their leader, they were called Eunomians.

In 351 Athanasius published his "Apologia contra Arianos", in which he defends himself against the charges brought against him by the Eusebians since 331. This Apology is the most authentic source of the history of the church in the first half of the fourth century. His "De Decretis Nicaenae Synodi" appeared in 352, his "De Sententia Dionysii" likewise in 352, and his "De Morte Arii" and "Vita Antonii" in 354.<sup>1)</sup>

In the winter of 353 another council was convened at Arles,<sup>2)</sup> where the Western bishops, after ill treatment by the Eusebians, consented to depose and even excommunicate Athanasius.<sup>3)</sup> Another synod was convened at Milan, Italy, in 355,<sup>4)</sup> where the Eastern Bishops demanded a ratification of the sentence against Athanasius. However, the Western Bishops protested and the meeting was dissolved. Finally all those acknowledging the doctrine of consubstantiality were again expelled from the church and even from the cities. Paul was not only expelled, but put to death.<sup>5)</sup> The emperor also demanded that Athanasius be put to death; but Athanasius heard of this and he fled once more (356).

Since the heterodox party had now swept the field against their common enemy, internal factions arose within the party itself.<sup>6)</sup> The semi-Arians, now headed by Basil of Ancyra and Gregory of Laodicea, had become nearly orthodox.<sup>7)</sup>

1) Kidd II, 108

2) Kidd II, 121; Herzog T, 268

3) Bieseler T, 338; Herzog T, 268

4) Kidd II, 122; Soc. II, 36; Soc. II, 9

5) Soc. II, 36

6) Kidd II, 149; Bieseler T, §83

7) Ayer 319; Kidd II, 149; Newman IV, Sec. 2



They taught that the Son was not of the same essence (homo-ousion) but of like essence (homoi-ousion) with the Father.

A second group consisted of the Homoeans or Acacians, being named after their leader Acacius, whose principles were to keep to Scriptural language in order to obscure the truth. He employed the term "homoion" instead of homo-ousion. 1)

A third party, the ultra-Arians, who were now called Anomoeans, 2) was headed by Valens and Ursacius in the West, and by Eudoxius, bishop of Germanicia, and particularly by Aetius and his pupil Eunomius in the East, who reduced the ultra-Arian position to a system. These taught that the Son was of a different essence (ἐξ ἑτέρας οὐσίας) and unlike (ἀρόμοιον) 3) the Father. These then came close to the original position of Arius; only these eliminated all mysteries, professing to know God entirely. Thus Arianism approached rationalism, and it was this that led to its decline. These were also called Eunomians, Heterousiasts, and Exukontians. 3)

The Anomoeans were the first to convene a council, namely at Sirmium in the West in 357 and at Antioch in the East in 358. At both councils the terms ὁμο οὐσίον and ὁμοι οὐσίον were rejected, and the term ἀρόμοιον was adopted instead. 4)

The Semi-Arians, opposing this new phase of Anomoeanism called a council at Ancyra in April, 358, 5) where they rejected

1) Kidd II, 150  
2) Newman IV, 4; Kidd II, 151  
3) Bieselert I, 340; Kidd II, 151f.

4) Bieselert I, 340; Kidd II, 154

5) Bieselert I, 340; Kidd II, 158; Soz IV, 13; Henry of T.

ultra-Arianism and still employed the term "homoi-ousion". Basil, Eustathius, and Eleusius were sent to Constantius to ask him for aid against the ultra-Arians.

The emperor, hereupon, convened a synod at Sirmium in 358, where the leading Anomoeans, as Eudoxius, Aetius, Eunomius, and Theophilus were exiled. The semi-Arians now pressed for a General Council, and it was agreed upon that the Western Bishops meet at Ariminum<sup>1)</sup> and the Eastern at Seleucia in Isauria, which they did in 359.<sup>2)</sup> At Ariminum the Nicene Creed and the use of the word "essence" were approved, while a number of Arianizers were banished. At Seleucia, the semi-Arians triumphed, having 120 bishops present out of a total of 160.

Finally, the third party, the Homoeans, also convened for a council at Constantinople in January, 360.<sup>3)</sup> Since the semi-Arians refused to attend, the meeting was completely dominated by the Homoeans. Many semi-Arians were banished, and so from this time forth the *ὁμοίως* alone became the official standard of the religion of the empire. Never before had the out-look of the Nicene faith been so dark. While the different parties were thus opposing one another, Emperor Constantius died on November 3, 361;<sup>4)</sup> and his death opened the way for the permanent victory of the Nicene orthodoxy.

1) Ager 318; Soc. II, 37; Soz. IV, 17 ff.; Kidd II, 161 ff.

2) Soc II, 39; Soz. IV, 22; Kidd II, 168 ff.

3) Soc II, 41; Herzog T, 270; Kidd II, 174 f.

4) Kidd II, 181; Herzog T, 270

IV. From 361-381.

After the death of Constantius in 361, Julian, the Apostate, ascended the throne, who tolerated all Christian parties, hoping that they would destroy one another. With this end in view, he recalled all orthodox bishops from exile.<sup>1)</sup> However, in this Julian was mistaken, for under the pressure brought against Christianity by him, the parties but little removed from each other came closer together.<sup>2)</sup>

Athanasius, having returned from exile, was again welcomed to Alexandria and restored to his see on February 21, 361.<sup>3)</sup> In order to restore unity among the Christians against the emperor, Athanasius convened another synod at Alexandria<sup>4)</sup> in August 362. Their first endeavor was to unite the two orthodox parties, the Meletians and the Eustathians, at Antioch. They agreed to worship the one God as a Trinity and the Trinity as a Unity. Apollinaris,<sup>5)</sup> bishop of Laodicea, in Syria, set forth the doctrine that God was incarnate but not made man; for He did not take a human soul but became flesh in order that through flesh, as through a veil, He might consort with us men. He had not two natures, since he was not a complete man. Later, however, Apollinaris taught in conformity with the Nicene Creed that our Lord was not only incarnate, but was made man. But he claimed that He had not taken a rational soul, mind, or spirit; for he thought that mind could not be included in Christ without involving a dual personality and His liability to sin. At this council all was charity and equity under the guidance of Athanasius. This council was later referred to as a synod

1) Ayer 326; Soz. V. 5; Kidd II, 182

2) Ayer 331; Soz. III. 1

3) Kidd II, 206

4) Ayer 349; Kidd II, 208; Soz. III. 7; Soz. V. 1

5) Kieselner I, 349; Kidd II, 212

of "weary Confessors, who made unwarranted concessions; cloaking impiety under the name of peace, and contaminating the whole body of church people with heresy." <sup>1)</sup> After the Council at Alexandria, Eusebius and Hilary, bishop of Poitiers, a city of Aquitania, refuted the Arian tenets and restored those who were weak in the faith throughout the Eastern provinces and also in Italy, Illyricum, and Gaul.

Soon the pagans again instituted their infamous rites, <sup>2)</sup> especially at Athens and Alexandria, and accused Athanasius of not only desolating the city but all of Egypt. When the governor of Alexandria had received orders from the emperor to seize Athanasius, he again escaped by flight. After Julian had inflicted a variety of tortures on many Christians, he marched his army into the Persian territory, where he was killed in battle on June 26, 363. <sup>3)</sup> The church was at this time in a better condition than it had been for many years. After Julian's death Athanasius returned to Alexandria. On the day following Julian's death, Jovian was proclaimed emperor. He professed to be a Christian; this of course gave fresh hope to the Christians. Upon his return from Persia in October of 363, he openly declared that he preferred the Homocousian faith and that all his subjects should enjoy liberty of worship. <sup>4)</sup>

Another council was convened at Antioch in Syria <sup>5)</sup> by the Macedonians and Acacians, where the Nicene faith was again confirmed over against the Anomians. In a letter to the emperor, they again used the terms "Homocousion" and "consubstantial", declaring that the Son is begotten of the

1) Kidd II, 217

2) Kidd II, 218; Soc. III, 21; Soz. VI, 1

3) Soc. III, 25; Soz. VI, 1

4) Soz. V, 17-22

5) Kidd I, 219 ff; Soz. VI, B

Father's substance, and that he is like the Father as to substance and not made of things not existing, as the Arians claimed. Athanasius received encouragement from the emperor, and the Nicene faith became once more fully established.

But on February 17, 364,<sup>1)</sup> the sudden death of Jovian bereft the state and the church of an eminent protector. Valentinian, who succeeded Jovian as emperor, made his brother Valens his co-emperor. Valentinian, who respected the Nicene creed, offered no violence to the Arians; Valens, on the other hand, again disturbed the Homoousians to promote Arianism.<sup>2)</sup> Valentinian conducted the affairs of the state in the West, while Valens ruled the East.

During this unsettled period, troubles again arose within the church. The Macedonians convened for another council at Lampsacus<sup>3)</sup> (364), where they again acknowledged the likeness ( $\delta\mu\omega\iota\sigma\mu$ ) of the Son to the Father, as they had done at Antioch and Seleucia. In the Spring of 365, Valens once more expelled all orthodox bishops that had been recalled by Julian, thus following the policy of Constantius. Athanasius went into exile for the fifth time. Meletius, bishop of Antioch, and other bishops were likewise exiled. When Eleusus of Cyzicum could not be forced to accept Arian tenets, Eunomius, who has above been mentioned as the secretary to Aetius, was installed in his place. Eunomius now became the head of the Aetians, promulgating Arian dogmas. Of the Deity he wrote: "God knows no more of His own substance

1) Kidd  $\pi$ , 223

2) Ager 337; Soc. IV, 1

3) Soc. IV, 4; Soc. VI, 1

than we do; nor is this more known to him, and less to us: but whatever we know about the Divine substance, that precisely is known to God; and, on the other hand, whatever he knows, the same also you will find without any difference in us." <sup>1)</sup> The Novatians, who also embraced the doctrine of consubstantiality, were likewise persecuted and driven from Constantinople. <sup>2)</sup>

In 365, when the Macedonians were persecuted anew, they sent Eustathius, bishop of Sebastia, Silvanus of Tarsus in Cilicia, and Theophilus of Castabali to Rome to communicate with the emperor and Liberius, bishop of Rome. They delivered a letter in which they declared that they "maintained the catholic faith, which was established in the holy Council of Nicaea under the reign of Constantine; in which creed the term consubstantial is holily and devoutly employed in opposition to the pernicious doctrine of Arius" (Soc. IV, 12). After this confession of faith, which was in agreement with that of the Homousians, the Macedonians were received into communion by Liberius. <sup>3)</sup> Upon returning Eustathius called for a synod at Tarsus in Cilicia in 367, in order to confirm the Nicene Creed. But the emperor, influenced by Eudoxius, interfered, and the meeting did not take place.

While Valens was occupied in the West during a period of four years (367-371), the majority of the semi-Arians drew closer to the Nicenes, and semi-Arianism disappeared. Another division occurred among the Arian parties because of a disagreement between Eudoxius and Eunomius. <sup>4)</sup> Another disturbance,

1) Soc. IV, 7  
2) Soc. IV, 9

3) Soc. IV, 12  
4) Soc. IV, 13; Soc. VII, 24

caused by Eudoxius, arose at Alexandria, which again forced Athanasius into concealment for a period of four months.<sup>1)</sup> But after this the emperor ordered that Athanasius should preside over the churches unmolested, which he did from this time on until his death.

Upon the death of Eudoxius at Constantinople, the Homoousians elected Evagrius, who adhered to the Nicene faith, bishop of Constantinople. But when the emperor Valens heard of his being ordained by Eustathius, he exiled both.<sup>2)</sup> After this (371), the Homoousians were again persecuted very severely. They sent a commission of eighty ecclesiastics to the emperor with a complaint, but the emperor ordered them to embark a ship, as though they had been exiled, and then had the ship set on fire in mid sea.<sup>3)</sup> Soon after a famine arose throughout all Phrygia, so that many people were obliged to leave the country. But this did not affect the emperor in the least, for he went to Antioch in Syria and continued persecuting the Homoousians.

Before his death, Athanasius once more attacked the views of Apollinaris, which he had set forth at the Council of Alexandria in 362. In his book "Contra Apollinarium" he writes concerning Christ: "Our Lord's human nature cannot be co-essential with the Godhead. But the completeness of his human nature must be maintained from such passages as 'was troubled in spirit' and 'now is my soul troubled'. Our redemption was incomplete, if he had not both body and soul.<sup>4)</sup> Human nature in its entirety was his, only sin being excluded."

Having so to speak dwelt in peace the last seven years of his

1) Soc. IV, 13

2) Soc. VII, 13 Soc. IV, 15

3) Soc. VI, 14; Soc. IV, 16

4) Kidd II, 248

life, he died in the year 373,<sup>1)</sup> after he had governed the church for a period of forty-six years amid the greatest perils.

Peter, a devout man, succeeded Athanasius as bishop of Alexandria. The churches of Alexandria and Egypt at large had not been molested during the latter part of Athanasius's life, but with the accession of Peter persecutions began anew in this part of the country. Euzoius, the Arian bishop of Antioch, begged permission of the emperor to ordain Lucius, an Arian, as bishop of Alexandria; this he did, imprisoning Peter. Thus the Arians gained a new foothold in Egypt, for all those favoring the Homousian doctrine were driven out of the country. After the death of Athanasius, Basil of Caesarea and Gregory of Nazianzen became the chief exponents of the orthodox faith, while Eunomius was the main champion of the Arians.<sup>2)</sup>

After the death of Valentinian, Valens again persecuted the Homousians very severely.<sup>3)</sup> About this time the Goths beyond the Danube were engaged in a civil war, and Valens assisted one of the parties, defeating the other.<sup>4)</sup> To show their gratitude to the Roman emperor, the victorious party embraced Christianity, which meant Arianism at this time.<sup>5)</sup>

Ulphilas, the translator of the Bible, who was the bishop of the Goths at this time, therefore was an Arian. Soon after Valens had to protect his own empire against the Goths, and therefore had to cease from persecutions. Since Valens had left Antioch and gone to Constantinople, the Homousians in the East took new courage and reinstated Peter as bishop of

1) Kidd II, 249; Soc. IV, 20

2) Soc. IV, 21

3) Soc. IV, 21

4) Kidd II, 257

5) Soc. VI, 27; Soc. IV, 33



Alexandria in place of Lucius. The Goths soon threatened Constantinople itself, whither Valens had gone when he left Antioch. The Goths were driven back, but while pursuing them, Valens fell in battle at Adrianople, August 9, 378, and with him fell Arianism.<sup>1)</sup>

Gratian, who had succeeded Valentinian in the West, recalled all orthodox bishops and expelled the heretics. He took Theodosius as his imperial colleague. A minority of the Macedonians again rejected the word consubstantial of the Nicene Creed and withdrew from the orthodox party.<sup>2)</sup> Upon the return of Meletius to Antioch, he found Paulinus in possession of the see, and, therefore, he went to Constantinople to confer with Gregory of Nazianzen, who was now bishop of Constantinople.<sup>3)</sup> In the summer of 380, Gregory delivered five theological orations at Constantinople. The first oration was directed against the Eunomians; the second ruled reason out of theology; the third and fourth treated the Person of Christ ("Christian monotheism is belief in a God who is one but in three persons"); and the fifth was concerning the Holy Spirit.<sup>4)</sup> Theodosius, who professed the Homoousian faith,<sup>5)</sup> ordered the Arian bishop of Constantinople either to assent to the Homoousian faith or to leave the city. Demophilus would not assent and therefore had to leave.<sup>6)</sup> Thus the Homoousian party was in possession of the churches in the East once more as well as in the West,

In order to establish the Nicene Creed, Theodosius convened the second Oecumenical Council at Constantinople in May 381.<sup>7)</sup> The Homoousian party was represented by 150

bishops, among whom were Timothy of Alexandria, Cyril of

1) Soz. II, 40; Soz. IV, 38

2) Soz. V, 4

3) Soz. V, 5; Soz. VII, 3

4) Kidd II, 376ff.; Soz. VII, 5

5) Binseler T. 351; Kidd II, 281

6) Soz. VII, 5; Kidd II, 281

7) Kidd II, 281ff.; Soz. V, 8; Soz. VII

Newman p. 385; Binseler T. 357

Over 252: Nam - T 212

Jerusalem, and Meletius of Antioch. The Macedonians were at first represented by thirty-six bishops, but they would not assent to the Homousian doctrine and therefore departed. Gregory having returned to Nazianzen, Nectarius was elected bishop of Constantinople. 1)

After a few business affairs had been attended to, they again confirmed the Nicene Creed. In Canon I. they proclaimed anew the faith of Nicaea and anathematized all heretics: the Arians, semi-Arians, Macedonians, Marcellians, Photinians, and Apollinarians 2) The see of Constantinople was given an honorary preeminence after the bishop of Rome. 3) At the close of the council on July 30, 381, Theodosius commanded that all churches be handed over to those bishops, who believed in the equal divinity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. 4) Thus ended this council which meant so much to the Christian Church. The relation of Christ to the Father involved the general question whether Christianity is truly divine, the highest and absolute revelation of God. The whole of Christianity, all reality of redemption, everything which makes Christianity the perfect salvation, would be utterly null and meaningless, if He, who was to reconcile God unto man, was not Himself absolute God. Arianism, which substituted a created demigod for the truly divine Redeemer, was based on human reason, while Athanasianism was based on divine revelation. While Arianism became divided into factions, the Nicene faith remained true to itself under all outward changes. 5)

Arianism was now virtually abolished in the Roman empire, but it continued to spread among the German nations through

1) Soc. V, 8; Kidd II, 285      2) Ayer 354; Kidd II, 287  
 3) Ayer 353; Kidd II, 287      4) Kidd II, 281      5) Schaff III, 641

missionary efforts. Bishop Ulfilas had been the means of converting the West Goths to Arian Christianity, and they adhered to it until the synod of Toledo in 589. The East Goths, the Vandals, the Burgundians, the Suevi in Spain, and the Longobards also adopted Arianism; but in all instances the Nicene doctrine ultimately prevailed, most slowly among the Longobards, who retained the Arian Creed until the middle of the seventh century. These barbarians, however, held Arianism through accident rather than from conviction, for they scarcely knew the difference between it and the orthodox doctrine. The Arian controversy has never excited any great interest in modern times; yet among Englishmen, John Milton was at least a semi-Arian. It was for a time revived by the writings of the learned Dr. Samuel Clarke (1675-1729) and also by William Whiston (1667-1752). More recently, a part of the Arian doctrine, the denial of the eternal Sonship, was introduced in the Wesleyan Methodist church by Dr. Adam Clarke (1762-1832) and a few followers; but it was soon suppressed by the conference. Pure Arianism has gradually lapsed into Unitarianism."

1) Hastings ("Arianism")  
Schaff III

(how Herdo)

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

B.J.Kidd - A History of the Church to A.D. 461. (1922)

Based on:

Gibbon - Decline and Fall of Roman Empire.  
Eusebius - Ecclesiastical History.  
Socrates - Ecclesiastical History.  
Tillemont - Memoires.  
Theodoret - Ecclesiastical History.  
W.Bright - Age of the Fathers.  
A.Robertson - Athanasius.  
Sozomen - Ecclesiastical History.  
Rufinus - Ecclesiastical History.  
Athanasius - Epistola ad episcopos Aegypti (356)  
Apologia contra Arianos.  
Orationes contra Arianos.  
De Decretis.  
Historia Arianorum.  
Ad Afros.  
De Fuga.  
Gregory Nazianzen - In Laudem Athanasii.  
J.H.Newman-Select Treatises of St. Athanasius.  
Hefele - Conciles.  
Letters of Arius and Athanasius  
Philostorgius - Ecclesiastical History  
H.M.Gwatkin - Studies in Arianism.  
Newman - The Arians of the Fourth Century.  
Augustine - De Haeresibus.  
Ambrose - De Fide.  
H.P.Liddon - The Divinity of our Lord.  
Hilary - Fragmenta.  
W.Bright - Canons.  
H.R.Percival - The Seven Occ. Councils.  
Eutychius - Annales.  
Letters of Egyptian Bishops.

Socrates - Ecclesiastical History (From A.D. 305- 445).  
Sozomen - Ecclesiastical History.  
Newman - The Arians of the Fourth Century.  
Hastings - Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics.  
The Encyclopaedia Americana.  
The New International Encyclopaedia.  
Schaff - History of the Christian Church.  
Rainy - The Ancient Catholic Church.  
Ayer - A Source Book for Ancient Church History.  
Gieseler - Ecclesiastical History.  
Herzog - Kirchengeschichte.