

350 January - Magnentius Augustus was proclaimed emperor in Gaul by his troops.

Constantius came up from Syria with the troops of Illyricum and went forward to the Julian Alps to deal with the strife between the house of Magnentius and the house of Constantine.

350 Death of Constans

351 September 28, 351 The battle of Mursa, on the Save River, saw Magnentius defeated.

353 The **death of Magnentius** in the Cottian Alps. Constantius was still master of the Empire.

Eusebians renew the contest

In all this mess, the Eusebians refreshed the fires of controversy. Their exiled leaders, following the death of Constans, were able to return to the fray. Marcellus and Photinus were again deposed by a council at Sirmium. Ancyra was restored to Basil and Sirmium given to Germinius of Cyzicus. Athanasius was safe under Constantius' protection.

Once Constantius was assured master of Gaul, he tried to force on the Westerners the condemnation of Athanasius and the Nicene faith.

He could hardly endorse Arianism in the West however. Liberius of Rome, Hosius of Cordova, Paulinus of Trier, Dionysius of Milan and Hilary of Poitiers were stalwarts of the faith and in command of great influence.

So, leaving doctrine aside, Constantius pressed the bishops to give a summary of the lawless condemnation of Athanasius.

353 October, **Council of Arles** where Constantius was settled for the winter. In the end the council yielded. The Roman legate Vincent of Capua gave way and Paulinus of Trier was sent away to die in exile.

At the instigation of Liberius of Rome - who disowned his own legate's weakness at Arles - Constantius agreed to another council at Milan. This took place in the Autumn, when he had returned from fighting the barbarians.

355 Julian is Caesar in Gaul - a necessary move to drive the Alemanni out of Gaul.
October Council of Milan.

Lucifer of Calaris was an orthodox mind, but so fearless as to be reckless, was not ashamed to rebuke the Emperor. His fleshly temperament was not a good weapon to win the battle against the Arians.

Hilary of Poitiers

Was a bishop of some standing in 355 and the deepest thinker in the West, matching Athanasius. He was totally behind the Nicene faith, and yet had been put at the head of the Nicene opposition by Constantius. So the emperors' minion silenced Hilary by exiling him to Asia on a trumped up charge in the Spring of 356.

Hosius of Cordova and Liberius of Rome

It was to Sirmium that Hosios was sent and detained there. He was tortured and eventually came to peace with the Arians but would not denounce Athanasius. Neither would Liberius denounce Athanasius unheard.

Athanasius

Syrianus, the Roman general in Egypt, surrounded Alexandria with his troops. Athanasius agreed with him to refer the matter to Constantius - but he broke the agreement. He surrounded the

church at Theonas on Feb 8, 356 with 5000 men. They broke through but Athanasius was spirited away. The flock were ravaged.

356 [February 8-362 Feb 22] **The Third Exile of Athanasius**

During this time, and the installation of George of Cappadocia at Alexandria, Athanasius governed Egypt from the desert. He wrote many letters to keep alive the faith of the flock - all this from an inaccessible retreat. It was a defying of the Empire in the name of God and it was a national uprising - without war however. Greeks and Copts were united in defence of the Nicene faith.

It weakened the Roman empire since Egypt was no longer compliant and was, by its absence of action, decisive for the Saracen gains over Rome later.

Arians attempt to secure their position

Misconstruing the situation, the Arians now saw that with Athanasius now in the desert they moved to cement their position. What they forgot was:

[a] the West was only over awed for amoment

[b] Egypt was devoted to Athanasius

[c] the strong opposition to Arianism in the East and the conservatives there were unlikely to come back to Arian convictions.

Among the Eusebians were Valens and Ursacius, who were within the emperor's circle. They called a few bishops to Sirmium in 357.

357 Sirmian Manifesto

They issued a manifesto which made it clear that the words "essence, of the same essence, of like essence " were not to be used, because not found in Scripture, and because the divine generation is beyond our understanding ". This made the mystery of the subject an excuse for ignoring the fact.

This was the turning point in the contest. Because Arianism fell over as soon as it had to state a policy of its own. it disturbed the West, and dismayed the East who were looking for rest.

The conservative reply

358 [Lent] The Council of Ancyra

The conservative reply came from twelve bishops who had met to consecrate a new church for Basil. Starting with the Lucianic Creed they;

[a] rejected materialising views of the Lord's sonship

[b] 18 anathemas

When they went to present this to the Court at Sirmium, eventually a peace was found in Semi-Arian terms. And just when they had, it seemed won the battle, they threw it away by excessive reactions to the defeated. The Easterns wanted to tyrannise the others in their turn. The Anomoeans were sent into exile - and the strife began again.

What this meant politically was, that the Semi-arians, the Nicene and the Anomoeans could not settle the matter. So a new party - formed by Acacius in the West and Ursacius and Valens in the East - came into existence, which forbade closer definition over the matter of 'essence'; these were the Homoeans.

However, under such circumstances, things began to re-group.

Homoeans - Acacius, Ursacius and Valens

Nicene

Homoeans

Semi-Arians

Hilary de Synodis

Addressed to his Gaulish friends at the end of 358 Hilary:

[a] reviews the Eusebian creeds to show they were indefensible

[b] compares the two phrases "of like essence" and "of one essence". He shows that either of them may be rightly or wrongly used. He sees them as identical, in that there is no likeness but that of unity. Only the Nicene phrase, however, guards against Sabellian confusion.

A new council was proposed

- but lest it be too independent, the Westerns were to meet at Ariminum in Italy, and the Eastern at Seleucia in Isauria. If they disagree, then 10 deputies would come before the emperor.

359 [May 22, Pentecost] Conference at Sirmium. The 'dated' creed was drawn up by Homoeans and Semi-Arians. "the Son is like the Father in all things..." This was actually a loss for the Semi-Arians, because they attempted a compromise a fundamental contradiction. Ursacius and Valens took this to Ariminum- where 200 bishops awaited them.

At Ariminum, [a] the Dated Creed was rejected

[b] the Nicene Creed affirmed, and the word "essence" defended.

At Seleucia, things went on for four days with nothing coming of it.

Athanasius de Synodis

Maintains an eirenic spirit and looks for the respect for Basil

[a] That the Lord is a true Son of God and not a creature is the decisive issue

[b] 'like essence' is misleading, pertaining to properties and qualities, not of essence. One essence is better.

At Seleucia, the western deputies are sent back [having been long detained] to Ariminum.

Valens says that he is not an Arian. It seemed harmonious, except for a minority that disputed the conclusions at Seleucia.

The Conference at Constantinople dominated by Acacius, who abandoning conservatism for pure Arianism, now was treacherous toward the Anomoeans - having anathematised "unlike" in Seleucia.

As the final report came from Ariminum, Valens gave a disingenuous meaning to the anathema of Phoebadius. The Homoeans made out clear they were not Arians. Under the emperor's threat the Seleucian deputies signed the decisions of Ariminum.

Acacius and his Homoean party were victorious at Constantinople, but this was limited to the east. However it would last for 20 years. The Eusebian doctrine was worn out, the Nicene doctrine had not yet replaced it. The Homoean formula seemed reverent and safe

The Homoeans were, at first, less hostile to the Nicene faith than the Eusebians had been. They appointed quiet men of Nicene leanings.

Acacius replaced Eudoxius with Meletius at Antioch. However, when asked to preach on "The Lord created me" he came out Nicene and was promptly exiled. He was replaced by Euzoius, and old friend of Arius and so he remained.

360 [Jan] Julian Augustus at Paris

Council at Constantinople. The Semi-Arians are exiled.