

tiefgehend in historischer Perspektive zur Diskussion gestellt werden sollen. Dafür hat er eine nützliche Vorarbeit geliefert.

Groningen

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The mode of theological Decision Making at early ecumenical councils: an Inquiry into the Function of Scripture and Tradition at the Councils of Nicaea and Ephesus, by Ralph E. Person (Bd. XIV der Theologischen Dissertationen, hrsg. Bo Reicke). Friedrich Reinhardt Kommissionsverlag, Basel, 1978.

This paper-covered dissertation of 245 pages printed by offset method treats of a particularly interesting subject. Its author has read widely and judiciously upon the theme, though it is a pity that he has not included in his bibliography either *Divine Substance* (1977) by G. C. Stead (indeed he seems to be wholly unaware of Professor Stead's contributions to the understanding of the Arian Controversy), nor M. Simonetti's *La Crisi Ariana nel IV Secolo* (1975). But as his book was apparently written in 1977, we must not blame him for missing R. Lorentz's weighty study, *Arius Iudaizans?* (1980).

He devotes much the larger part of his study to the Council of Nicaea of 325 (186 pages), and his treatment of it is on the whole highly satisfactory. He makes a good case from the scanty evidence available for concluding that the Arians at Nicaea, far from boldly stepping forward and dominating the initial proceedings, were reluctant and hesitant and knew themselves to be in a minority (pages 58–70). He denies the thesis of Harnack and Seeberg that Eusebius of Caesarea was the leader of a large Origenistic party which occupied middle ground, but argues convincingly that he was basically pro-Arian (as he had been before Nicaea) and was doing all he could to make the situation safe for himself and his friends; he put forward his own creed not only to vindicate his own reputation for orthodoxy (if we accept that the supposed Council of Antioch of 324/5 took place), but also in the hope of affording a formula which his friends could sign (pp. 75–79). Constantine, Person suggests, pressed for the inclusion of *homoousios*, not because he wanted to please an Origenist majority (so Harnack), but in order to give the Arians a loophole, for the term could be interpreted (as Eusebius Caes. interpreted it) simply as excluding materialistic concepts (pp. 79–81 and 106–107). Here Stead's evidence would have assisted the argument. Dr. Person has a useful discussion of the sources of the Nicene Creed (pp. 84–91). He rightly discounts the theory that the Western theologians favoured *homoousios* because it derived from Tertullian and was therefore pressed by Ossius (pp. 100–101). In fact the likelihood of Ossius having insisted on *homoousios* at Nicaea is much reduced by the consideration that 18 years later, at Sardica, he did not insert it in the statement of the Western bishops, though he had every opportunity to do so. Person also is right in rejecting the theory championed by Kraft and de Urbina (and earlier propounded by Zahn) that the council meant *homoousios* to be taken in the sense of numerical unity (p. 102). He sums up effectively (p. 105):

„As it stands in the creed, the *homoousios* can be read either as an affirmation of the divine unity or as an affirmation of the equal deity of the Son, and it is difficult in the light of the theological discussion which took place prior to the council to believe that this ambiguity was accidental.“

It is heartening to find Dr. Person showing scepticism about the connection of Lucian of Antioch with the „Dedication“ Creed of Antioch of 341 (p. 164, n. 62). No one has ever produced a satisfactory reason why Lucian should have been required to produce a creed; the links between „Arianism“ and the „Dedication“ creed run through Asterius, not Lucian; and the single doctrinal position which we can with confidence attribute to Lucian is denied in that Creed.

A few minor criticisms might be made of what is generally a good handling of the Council of Nicaea. Dr. Person states (p. 30) that the Arians regarded as irrational the view propounded by Alexander of Alexandria, based on Isaiah 53:8, that we cannot know how the Son is begotten. This might apply to the later,

radical, Eunomians, to whom nothing was mysterious, but does not apply to earlier Arians. Eusebius of Caesarea uses the same argument, and so does the Second Creed (the „Blasphemy“) of Sirmium of 357. Again, Dr. Person (here going astray with a large number of distinguished scholars, including Harnack and Kattenbusch) fails to distinguish between the baptismal creed and the rule of faith, which was a much more fluid and variable phenomenon than the bare, summarizing baptismal creed (pp. 81, 148). Nor does he realize (p. 101) how fragile is the evidence that Origen applied the term *homoousios* to the Son.

His treatment of the Council of Ephesus is much briefer and sketchier than his account of the Council of Nicaea. Indeed, the work might have been improved had he omitted this chapter and filled out the others. He has no difficulty in showing how unfair, hasty and unsubstantiated were the accusations which this Council made against Nestorius and in concluding that Cyril and Nestorius represented, not an orthodox and an heretical viewpoint, but two different ways of interpreting the Bible. And his general conclusions about Scripture and tradition, as far as any conclusions can be drawn from the far from abundant evidence about Nicaea, are sound. The ancients placed Scripture first and tradition second as sources, but were ready to interpret Scripture by tradition, and the two acted on each other in what Person calls a „Dialogic“ (? dialectical) way. This is, in short, a useful book for the student of patristic literature.

But it could have been a better book than it is, because its presentation is marred by a number of careless and unnecessary faults. Dr. Person, to his credit, quotes the original Greek of his sources freely; I counted no less than thirty mistakes in the Greek. Less excusably, I counted at least 35 mistakes in the English text. It is also possible to detect some curious spellings or expressions: „concensus“ on p. 37 (this is not an American mode of spelling but a mistake); „Syrian-speaking“ (? Syriac-speaking) on p. 49; „publically“ (a *vox nihili* for „publicly“) p. 136; „data“ as a singular noun on pp. 142 and 158; „Pneumatomacher“ (German-Greek?) on p. 190. Note 160 on p. 127 is displaced and inapplicable. A long sentence on p. 111, beginning „With important bishops...“ is quite obscure, for the reader cannot determine to whom „they“ (the subject) refers. Another sentence of baffling obscurity occurs on p. 160, n. 1. The clause on p. 56 „With the problem of transportation being what it was“ is deplorably clumsy, and the expression on p. 174 (Eusebius) „was not terribly pleased about accepting the *homoousios*“ made your reviewer think that he was reading a student's essay.

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Lorenzo Perrone - *La Chiesa di Palestina e le Controversie Christologiche: Testi e ricerche di Scienze religiose*, Brescia/Paideia editrice, 1980, pp. 335, Price 12.000 lire, stiff paper cover.

From the early years of the fifth century down to the Arab invasions, Palestine played a peculiar role in the ecclesiastical and doctrinal controversies of the Roman east. While Egypt was staunchly anti-Chalcedonian and most of Syria became so, Palestine at first sight presents the historian with a picture of baffling inconsistency. Immediately after the Council of Chalcedon in 451 feeling against the Definition equalled that prevailing in Alexandria. The Patriarch Juvenal was forced to flee and for two years his place was taken by the monk Theodosius. Thereafter, however a gradual change took place. While many prominent monks remained anti-Chalcedonian, the bishops followed the lead of the Patriarchs Martyrius (478-486) and Sallustius (486-494) and moved towards a mediating position between the Chalcedonians and their opponents. In the first decades of the sixth century, however, Palestine opted firmly for Chalcedon and was responsible with the clergy and monks of Syria II, for initiating the downfall of Severus of Antioch in 518. In Justinian's reign Palestine, though loyal to Chalcedon, became the centre for a revival of Origenism as well as the home of one of the great theologians of the east, Leontius of Jerusalem, who converted the Two-Natures concept of Chalcedon into a dynamic mystical theology capable of withstanding the argu-