



Dünzl, Franz.

*A Brief History of the Doctrine of the Trinity in the Early Church*

Translated by John Bowden

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Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth

New Jersey

## 1. Introduction

In this short volume Dünzl certainly accomplished what he set out to do in providing readers with exactly what the title promises, a brief history of the doctrine of the Trinity in the early Church. This work is by no means exhaustive yet the reader will not feel the least bit slighted after having completed it, on the contrary, they will be hungry for more. Designed to serve as an introduction to more in-depth works such as R.P.C. Hanson's *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God* or Rowan Williams' *Arius: Heresy and Tradition*, Dünzl provides us with an exciting recounting of the Nicene era of Church history.

Written in a narrative style Dünzl doesn't bore us with mere fact quoting nor does he bog us down with voluminous quotations from primary (or secondary) sources, but don't let that discourage you, he still manages to handle the issues he speaks on responsibly and with attention to detail. When reading through this little book one senses that he definitely has the (lay)student in mind as nothing is overly technical (only key Greek, Latin, and Hebrew terms are used and they are always transliterated) and everything is easily retain-able (the narrative style helps to inductively instill the information rather than have to rely on rote memorization). This tiny work can (and should certainly) be used pedagogically.

In the introduction Dünzl states the basic ‘problem’ which is ‘the early Christian effort to harmonize monotheism with the significance of Jesus for salvation and his place in the world and history...’ (2) He spends the rest of the book recounting the process in which they worked this problem out and the controversies that necessarily ensued.

## **2. The Beginnings of Christology**

In the first chapter “The Beginnings of Christology” Dünzl clearly accepts Markan priority (as well he should) and outlines Jesus as first being declared ‘Son of God’ at his baptism.

Therefore it is only consistent that the earliest gospel, the so-called Gospel of Mark (shortly after 70), dates the revelation of the title ‘Son of God’ to the beginning of Jesus’ public appearance. In the scene in which Jesus submits to John’s penitential baptism in the Jordan, as he rises from the water he is granted a vision: the heaven opens, the Pneuma — i.e. the Spirit of God — descends on him like a dove, and he hears a voice from heaven: ‘You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased’ (cf. Mark 1.9-11). (4)

We’re later told that ‘the integration and harmonization of different christological ideas did not come about even in the early church without controversies’ (7). The test case is the Ebionites who built an adoptionist Christology by focusing on certain portions of Mark while neglecting others. Dünzl rightly states:

The Gospel of the Ebionites therefore presents an interpretation of Jesus which does not fall in with the harmonization of the christological concepts of all four Gospels mentioned above; rather, it emphatically insists on the concept of the Gospel of Mark, which had begun only with the baptism in the Jordan. The Gospel of the Ebionites does not take up other traditions such as the miraculous birth of Jesus or even his pre-existence; instead, it points up the Gospel of Mark even more sharply: on the day of his baptism Jesus is ‘begotten’ as Son of God. And he becomes Son of God by the Spirit ‘entering into’ him. (8)

Interestingly Dünzl states:

...the archaic conception of the Gospel of Mark seems modest, almost inconspicuous — anyone who proclaimed Jesus as revealer and redeemer at the end of the first century could say more and deeper things about him than the Gospel of Mark. (6)

It's certainly true that after decades of reflection believers could elaborate on and extend their views concerning Christology, but this statement seems [to me at least] to intimate that Dünzl feels that Mark doesn't say 'deep' things about Christology. I realize that Christology is not the primary focus of the book (although it is of this chapter) and Dünzl is simply outlining the beliefs/struggles of the early Church, but I'm very persuaded by Simon Gathercole's *The Preexistent Son* that there is a Christology of pre-existence in Mark which goes a long way toward showing that Mark did say some very 'deep' and interesting things about Jesus — things that can rival even Paul's statements.

A slight pet peeve for me is Dünzl's assertion that 'Paul in his letter to the Philippians (around 53) hands down a hymn which he himself has not composed but taken over, as exegetical research has been able to show' (5). While I don't dispute that this is the majority opinion, I'm not persuaded that this is the case, and to make the assertion without so much as a footnote or an acknowledgement that there are dissenting voices to this view (e.g. N.T. Wright, Gordon D. Fee) strikes a funny chord with me. But this is about the harshest criticism I have for this work.

### **3. First Models of the Relationship Between 'Father' and 'Son'**

In the chapter that follows "First Models of the Relationship between 'Father' and 'Son'" we're introduced to early beliefs in Wisdom and Logos christology as well as early writings such as the *Shepherd of Hermas*. We meet patristic heavyweights Justin Martyr and Irenaeus and I was pleased to see a very terse treatment given to the theophanies (or what I feel is more correctly termed angelophanies) in the the OT (15). I think that Dünzl makes an important point regarding Justin's angel christology in saying:

The element of subordination present in this conception (and in the title 'angel') is not at all unusual for early Christianity — it corresponds to the perspective of salvation history, the economy (Greek *oikonomia*), which already shapes the New Testament writings. (16)

This point is especially poignant because there is a definite subordination presented in the NT writings, but it is one of function and order in the economy of the Trinity, not one of ontology. Dünzl notes:

Accordingly power (Greek *dynamis*) is regarded as a point of unity of the divine triad, whereas their differentiation is made plausible as (gradated) order (Greek *taxis*) in the sense of the economy of salvation. (19)

I would have liked to see a little more in terms of the presentation of Wisdom/Logos Christologies in this chapter but the few paragraphs he does devote to it are enough to pique one's interest.

One strange feature of this particular chapter is the way in which Dünzl opts to use the Greek term *Pneuma* where the English *Spirit* seems more appropriate, for example:

- But he was not just 'flesh', i.e. a frail human being; the pre-existent Holy *Pneuma* dwelt in him. (14)
- Irenaeus is not alone in having this 'economic' perspective; it can be demonstrated that the idea of a collaboration between the triad 'Father — Son — *Pneuma*' in salvation history finds linguistic expression... (18)
- (namely the unity and distinction of Father, Son, and *Pneuma*). (19)

Perhaps something was lost in translation—I don't know.

He concludes the chapter saying:

The awareness of the problem in the theology of the Trinity which here becomes explicit with Athenagoras can be regarded as an indication that such questions were increasingly rife among Christians. There were no ready-made solutions to which reference could have been made; they first had to be achieved laboriously through discussion about one's own (biblical) traditions and the help of models of understanding for metaphysical questions available in the environment of Christianity. That here divergent schemes could compete, and time and again led to bitter theological disputes, is amazing only from the perspective of a long-established doctrine of the Trinity which is taken for granted. (19-20)

In other words, if we place ourselves in the time of the doctrine's formation, it is no surprise that things got as heated as they did. But from our present perspective, we have been enjoying an articulated doctrine for more than 1600 years and it is easy to take it for granted that this has always been the case. This is not to say that the *Trinity* was hammered out in the 4th century disputes/debates—on the contrary, the Trinity is God—but this is to say that the formal *doctrine of the Trinity* took time to develop.

#### **4. The Controversy between Logos Theologians and Monarchians**

In the later second and third centuries the question of how the saviour as 'Lord and God' (cf. John 20.28 ) can be integrated into monotheism was not only a problem within the church but also played a role in the Christian mission... (21)

Dünzl begins this chapter by focusing attention on Justin Martyr and his Logos christology drawing in part from his *Dialogue with the Jew Trypho*. Commenting on Justin's use of the language of an 'additional God' (in reference to Jesus), Dünzl says:

In order to make the notion plausible nevertheless, Justin resorts to the Logos christology, which has its roots not only in the prologue to the Gospel of John but also in Greek philosophy. (22)

Here's the point in the book where overly zealous Christian apologists would love to object and point out that the doctrine of the Trinity is rooted in Scripture and not Greek philosophy, but what follows is a very succinct yet thorough treatment of the factors that influenced *Justin*. Justin didn't interpret the Bible apart from his philosophical leanings.

We're provided with very useful information tracing the conception of the Logos from the word's etymology ('from the verb lego' [22]) and (a nuanced) definition ('it denotes the content, meaning, and rationality of a statement' [22]) to its use by the pre-Socratic philosopher [c. 500 BC] Heraclitus who understood 'the ultimate principle of the world' as being 'in the Logos... It is the law of the world, the impersonal world reason which guides and directs everything...' (22). This introduction of Logos into philosophy was then adopted by the Stoa around 300 BC who viewed it as 'the rational principle according to which the world is built up and by which it is directed.' (23)

Brief mention is made of Philo of Alexandria saying that he 'sought to produce a balance between biblical theology and Greek philosophy' (24) but I was left wanting a little more concerning this character, nothing is developed past this statement. This sets the stage for more interaction with Justin's Logos christology. Dünzl quotes from *Dialogue* 61.1f in which Justin speaks of God begetting himself a certain rational power (Greek *dynamis logike*) and compares this to humans bringing forth a word, a word that is not separated from us nor does it diminish anything from us (24).

We're then introduced to Monarchianism (i.e. Modalistic Monarchianism) *ala* Noetus, Praxeas, and Sabellius and those who opposed it, i.e. Hippolytus, Novatian, Tertullian. In a section where it would have been easy to mis-characterize those whom we now consider heretical/unorthodox, Dünzl treats them fairly.

Of Noetus he says:

Noetus' concern emerges clearly from these lines: he is concerned about the oneness of God, about the identity of creator and saviour, and about the compatibility of transcendence and immanence in the Christian image of God. (26)

So often these ancient heretics are painted in such a way so as to seem like diabolical villains who had formulated some sinister plot to overthrow orthodoxy in an attempt at world domination when the fact of the matter is that they were men who sought to understand God and Christ and what they meant for their lives and salvation.

But as sincere as they may have been they were still ultimately wrong. For Noetus 'as long as the Father was not begotten or born, he was rightly called the Father; but when it pleased him to submit himself to birth, through birth he became his own Son...' (27)

Dünzl notes a tendency of the early debates that seemingly transcends time itself, i.e. that 'both sides exaggerated the teaching of their opponents polemically to an intolerable degree.' (29) In a debatable point Dünzl says:

The reaction of the Logos theologians to Monarchian teaching can be demonstrated through the Cathaginian Christian Tertullian, who in his treatise *Against Praxeas* (c.210) not only sought to refute it with exegetical perspicacity and polemical sarcasm but also presented the first sketch of a theology of the Trinity which is really worthy of the name. (30)

Gordon D. Fee's "Paul and the Trinity: The Experience of Christ and the Spirit for Paul's Understanding of God" in *The Trinity: An Interdisciplinary Symposium on the Trinity* (OUP, 1999), 49-72, offers a sketch of Paul's soteriology/theology that can indeed be rightly termed Trinitarian. One wonders where Tertullian would have been without Paul.

In what was perhaps the highlight of the chapter for me, Dünzl brings up a very important point that many in the modern era have lost sight of in their language of the Trinity (e.g., see Morey's *The Trinity: Evidence & Issues* or White's *The Forgotten Trinity*) when he says:

...Tertullian [...] has to keep his theology free from suspicion that it is abandoning monotheism. Therefore in *Praxeas* 9 he is concerned to a precise differentiation in trinitarian theological diction: for him, while Father, Son and Spirit are different from one another (*alius et alius et alius*), this differentiation must not be interpreted as radical difference (*diversitas*) in the sense of division (*divisio*) or separation (*seperatio*); on the other hand it can be described as distribution

(*distributio*), distinction (*distinctio*) and articulated ordering (*dispositio*), so as to make it possible at the same time to maintain the unity of the divine persons. (33)

The treatment on Origen is to be commended for its terseness. Dünzl accomplishes in four pages what many works require chapters for. Origen's emphasis on the distinction of the three persons over and above their unity is mentioned with the explanation that:

Origen did not succeed in grasping the *unity* of the three conceptually. In his time it was not yet possible for Greek theologians to speak of the one divine nature (*physis*) or of the one divine substance (*ousia*). For the terms substance and hypostasis, *ousia* and *hypostasis*, were still interchangeable. (35)

Origen's Platonic influences show in his belief of everything spiritual as eternal, to include Father, Son, Spirit, angels/demons, and human souls. What distinguishes the Son from all else that is spiritual for Origen is that 'the eternal Logos is begotten by the eternal Father as his image, but the spiritual beings have been created from eternity through the Logos and in him.' (37) This is certainly a helpful description but I would have enjoyed if more attention was given to Origen's doctrine of eternal generation.

## 5. The Concern of Arius of Alexandria and the Reaction of his Opponents

Chapter 5 gives us a brief but enlightening summary of the arch-heretic Arius' position in regard to the Son's relationship to the Father. Dünzl cites Proverbs 8.22-25 (in the LXX) as a major, indeed, *the* major text from which Arius based his beliefs. We're told:

Arius inferred from the text that the Son of God, the Logos, had a *beginning* — certainly before the earth, the depths, the springs, before the mountains and hills and even before the time of the world (*aion*); but he did have a beginning, and for this beginning of the Logos scripture uses not only the metaphor 'begetting' (which is common in the church) but also the term 'creation'. (43)

And

Arius concluded from Prov. 8.22 that the pre-existent 'divine' Logos is a creature of the only true God. His doctrine focused and radicalized the older Logos theology and heightened the element of subordination that had already been inherent in this theology at an earlier stage by giving an ontological explanation of subordination in the economy of salvation... (44)

Arius' concern remains that of all those of his generation, he was concerned with reconciling Christology with monotheism. For him this was only possible if the Son was a creature. The

‘only true God alone is anachos’ (43) while the Son had a pre-temporal beginning. Dünzl next introduces us to Arius’ bishop, Alexander of Alexandria. Dünzl reports Alexander’s position as thus:

...God the Father was *always* the Father because the Son *always* existed. For Bishop Alexander the Son is in truth *God’s Logos and God’s wisdom* and therefore also *in his being* the Son of God; he is begotten *of the Father* — not from nothing! — and his divinity is quite indisputable. (45)

The disagreement led to Alexander excommunicating Arius and his supporters around 318/319 but Arius found support from Eusebius of Nicomedia and Eusebius of Caesarea. This was the major turning point in the so-called Arian controversy.

Dünzl closes the chapter by noting (quite profoundly in my opinion) that:

Alexander does not understand the metaphor of ‘begetting’ as the cipher for a quasi-temporal beginning but as the description of an eternal causality and he wants to maintain the true divinity of the saviour — a soteriological motive which was to take on decisive significance in this dispute. (48)

For Alexander the savior cannot save unless he is fully divine. This would seem to be the natural understanding from a strictly biblical standpoint as no creature, no matter how exalted, can redeem God’s fallen creation — indeed, such a creature would necessarily be part of this fallen creation.

## **6. The Intervention of Emperor Constantine and the Council of Nicaea**

It’s a modern misconception (perpetuated by such fiction as *The Da Vinci Code*) that the Emperor Constantine convened the Council of Nicaea in order to fabricate/invent the deity of Christ, but nothing is farther from the truth. Dünzl does well to summarize Constantine’s agenda in 4 points.

The unity of the cult, the unity of the church, the prosperity of the state and the success of imperial policy through the favour of the deity are the guidelines of the church-political programme which Constantine also pursued in his letter to Bishop Alexander and Arius. (50)

Constantine was concerned with unity and maintaining peace and prosperity in his empire, his goals were not theological. Dünzl also does well to mention that the dispute between Alexander and Arius was also not *merely* theological saying:



Nor was the dispute only over theology; it was also about the question of church discipline. Alexander, whose episcopal authority had been put into question by Arius and his friends, certainly did not want to suffer any further loss of face. (51)

To hear Arius' opponents tell it, he was a master propagandist and this factored highly into his gaining such a large following — this following threatened his bishop's see and fragmented his congregation—actions that obviously did not go unnoticed by the emperor.

We're also given a closer look at Eusebius of Caesarea and the part he played in the controversy. We're referred to a creed drafted by Eusebius in which he affirms that:

We believe in One God Father, Almighty, the Maker of all things visible and invisible. And in One Lord Jesus Christ, the Logos of God, God from God, Light from Light, Life from Life, Only-begotten Son, firstborn of all creation, before all ages begotten from the Father... (53)

But Dünzl is quick (and quite right) to note that 'the statements of the creed remained ambiguous — even Arius could have subscribed to them (if need be)...' (55) Eusebius was a master at playing the middle position, occupying a place between Arius and Alexander in the dispute but with closer ties to Arius.

Once again we're referred to the soteriological consequences for Christ's deity which is a point that I feel many histories have tended to gloss over or neglect but Dünzl highlights it nicely in this volume saying:

By contrast, for the majority of the council the divinity of Jesus Christ is no mere honour bestowed on the Son by grace, but is in full accord with reality. This has consequences for soteriology, since in Arius' system a (perfect) creature redeems other creatures; the council fathers differ, seeing redemption guaranteed by the true divinity of the saviour. (56)

Another area that I feel is given too much attention and is hyped up way beyond necessity is regarding the term 'homoousios'. Dünzl correctly notes that the term homoousios while being considered a core statement of the creed is in and of itself ambiguous (57) — both sides could affirm it and its semantic overlap with *homoiousios* was enough so as to make it ultimately irrelevant until a later period in history.

After providing us with what I felt was a pretty good summary of the Council of Nicaea and taking the time to emphasize that the discussion concerned the Son's relationship to the Father,

Dünzl ends the chapter by wrongly identifying the discussion as one concerning the Trinity when he says, 'however, it was soon to prove that the dispute over the doctrine of the Trinity had by no means been settled with the council' (59). This is so because the doctrine of the Trinity wasn't the focus, indeed, the Holy Spirit was almost completely absent from the proceedings of Nicaea, meriting only a brief mention in a clause at the end of the Nicene Creed (a point noted later in the book).

## 7. The Development in the Period After the Council

The victory won by the pro-Nicenes at Nicaea was short lived as the years that followed saw many bishops deposed and exiled. Dünzl however recognizes that these events weren't really reversals of Constantine's objective when he says:

In truth Constantine did not in any way change the basic principles of his policy. The unity of the Christian church still remained the supreme norm for his action. (61)

The emperor would have been equally satisfied if an Arian creed were drafted and the church was united in Anti-Nicene doctrine but because this is not what happened he upheld the conclusions of the Council and did not rescind the Creed. Nevertheless, Arius and his supporters were reinstated with an obligation to submit to church peace.

At the emperor's request, Arius and co. sent him a creed to document their agreement with church's faith but this creed reads like a stripped down version of the Nicene Creed. After quoting a portion of the creed Dünzl correctly observes that: 'The Arians' creed did not represent a recanting because it avoided all of the anti-Arian statements of the Nicene creed.' (62)

The Arians knew well that they could not attack the theology codified in the Nicene Creed so they found alternative ways of having Nicene supporters deposed. We are introduced to Marcellus of Ancyra who was a companion to many of the bishops removed and exiled. Of him Dünzl says:

He certainly suspected that one day he would too become one of them. And he was clear-sighted enough to recognize that all these processes against Nicene bishops were not in fact about disciplinary questions but were introduced in order to make the Council of Nicaea in some way ineffective after the event. (64-65)

After the removal of Athanasius from his see Marcellus attempted to help Constantine see the situation more clearly and so dedicated a work on Christology to the emperor, in which he attacked his opponents. Dünzl tells us that:

He proved to have miscalculated badly. His considerations were based on a false assessment. The emperor was not so much concerned with the Nicene doctrine as such as with theological basis on which the unity of the church could be guaranteed. (65)

Dünzl outlines briefly Marcellus' theology saying: 'In Marcellus's view, at any rate, one cannot start from the three hypostases but only from the divine unity, the monad.' (66) He traces the roots of this theology to Neopythagorean mathematics and after giving a succinct statement of how such a system comported with Marcellus' thoughts on God states: 'Marcellus must have thought of the extension of the divine monad into the triad in a similar way.' (67)

Interesting as this theory may be, it is needless to say that he has greatly overstated his case here—again, a footnote or two would have been nice for such an assertion.

## **8. The Theological Split in the Empire**

This chapter can best be summed up by noting that the theological division was largely due to linguistic differences between the East and the West. Athanasius and Marcellus had both been removed from their respective sees in 339 and both fled to Rome seeking support from Pope Julius. Athanasius had no difficulty 'but Marcellus, who had been condemned for his theology, had to demonstrate his orthodoxy by a written confession...' (71).

Dünzl says that Marcellus was able to win over his Roman audience by branding his opponents Arians, arguing that they believed that the Father existed before the Son and that there was a time when the Son did not exist. It is at this point that Dünzl notes the linguistic difficulties. He says:

There had in fact been a Monarchian tendency to emphasize the unity of God in Roman theology for more than a century. But secondly, the linguistic problem came into play here: the Latin equivalent of the Greek term *hypostasis* was *substantia*. The two words correspond to some degree etymologically (*hypo-stasis* — *sub-stantia*), so intrinsically the translation is not wrong. But the content changes with the translation into Latin: if Eastern theology spoke of two hypostases, in Latin that amounted to a difference in substance between Father and Son. (72)

Marcellus and Athanasius were eventually reinstated in 341 by a Synod in Rome that took place without Eastern participation. A brief discussion on the various Antiochene formulae ensues with the conclusion that the 'so-called fourth Antiochene formula . . . was thought of as the basis for the theological union of East and West . . . was conceived of as a compromise . . . [was] an implicit attack on Marcellus of Ancyra [due to statements of an infinite kingdom], but in order to

provide a balance at the end the text condemns Arianism. . . However, their proposal proved totally ineffective.’ (77)

Dünzl concludes the chapter by saying:

The situation seemed confused: East and West were not only divided in church politics but also split theologically and incapable of union on their own. For this reason the bishops around Julius of Rome and Athanasius sought political support from Emperor Constans, the ruler of the Western half of the empire, in order to get things moving again. (77-78)

This for me personally was one of the most educational chapters of the book — I enjoyed it thoroughly.

## **9. Serdica – The Failed Imperial Council**

In this chapter Dünzl recounts in a remarkably concise manner the events (or rather shenanigans) that took place in Serdica in 342.

Constantine’s two sons Constans and Constantius convened a council in Serdica in the autumn of 342 which gathered bishops from both the Eastern and the Western parts of the empire. Athanasius and Marcellus of Ancyra were in attendance, traveling with representatives from the West but this caused controversy because as Dünzl remarks:

In the Eastern view, both had been legitimately condemned and deposed and therefore had no right to take part in discussion of affairs of the church at a council. (80)

The Western bishops attempted a defense of the two exiled leaders by noting that they had been rehabilitated by the Roman synod a year earlier but this was not a decision that was respected in the East. Shortly after the council was convened Constantius received news of a victory against the Persians whom he had been at war with for some time — this caused him to lose interest in the proceedings and the Eastern bishops pulled out of the council. Dünzl tells us that they didn’t withdrawal before safeguarding their theological position. He says:

...the Eastern bishops once again condemned extreme theological positions, such as the doctrine ‘that there are three Gods or that Christ is not God; that neither Christ nor the Son of God existed before the ages, or that one and the same if the Father, Son and Holy Spirit; that the Son is unbegotten or that the Father did not beget the Son by decision and will’. (80)

But even after the Eastern withdrawal the Western bishops continued to meet with two primary objectives: ‘to safeguard the rehabilitation of Athanasius and other deposed bishops legally [and] . . . to give binding expression to their faith and publish it in an encyclical’ (80).

Again Dünzl notes the language barrier which led to controversy and disagreement between the Eastern and Western parts of the empire. After quoting a large portion of the aforementioned encyclical he comments:

Here a one-hypostasis doctrine is set against the three hypostases doctrine of the East, which first betrays the hand of Marcellus and secondly also sums up the traditional Monarchian tendency of the West. Again it should be noted that the Greek term *hypostasis* could be rendered in Latin with *substantia* and that the Latin West was accustomed to speak of the one divine substance; this was regarded as synonymous with the Greek talk of one divine hypostasis . . . It also becomes clear that here the terms hypostasis and ousia are regarded as synonyms and are referred in the singular to God. (81)

Dünzl also points out that the Western bishops sought to safeguard their view from charges of Sabellianism but ultimately didn’t succeed noting that: ‘In statements with which one side thought that it was defending monotheism, the others immediately suspected the danger of modalism — this was the dilemma of the controversy.’ (82) Dünzl concludes the chapter saying that ‘the efforts to resolve the conflict did not end with the failed Council of Serdica.’ (85)

It was refreshing to see Dünzl devote as much attention as he did to oft neglected council. In much larger works (e.g., Latourette’s *A History of Christianity, Vol. I*; Schaff’s *History of the Christian Church, Vol. 3*) this council is barely mentioned. The author is to be commended for being as detailed as he was in such a short volume.

## **10. Constantius II and the Quest for Theological Compromise**

This chapter outlines Constantius II’s efforts to continue the mission of his father Constantine. Dünzl says of the Emperor, ‘in continuity with his father Constantine — saw himself called by God as Roman emperor to restore and safeguard the unity of religion. Disruption of the peace could not be tolerated.’ (87)

Constantius II sought the condemnation of Athanasius in two separate synods, one in Arles in 353 and one in Milan in 355 due to suspicion that Athanasius had conspired with Magnentius to usurp authority over his brother Constans in 350. Constantius II compelled the Western bishops to condemn Athanasius but they were his biggest supporters — Dünzl says, ‘anyone who

opposed this move was banished to the East' noting that 'As well as Dionysius of Milan and Lucifer of Calaris (on Sardinia), Pope Liberius of Rome was also exiled...' (88). Hillary of Poitiers was also exiled but used this to 'develop his own view of Eastern theology and to communicate to the West the insights that he had gained.' (88)

Constantius II's defining of religion rather than compelling unity actually undermined it. The common denominator in their bond was standing against the theology of Marcellus in the West but without an expected threat the group split only to interpret the three hypostases and subordination of the Son to the Father in different ways.

Dünzl's summary of the revival of Arianism by Aetius and Eunomius was extremely enjoyable. He notes the crux of their argument was in the Son/Logos' begottenness and the Father's unbegottenness. For 'it follows that the substance of the one and the substance of the other cannot be the same, since unbegottenness is diametrically opposed to begottenness.' (89) This according to the Arians proved that the Father and Son were not homoousios but heteroousios.

Along comes Basil of Ancyra and George of Laodicea to combat this notion claiming that the metaphor of begetting actually shows the likeness of substance because even when conceived naturally the one begotten is always like the one he is begotten of in substance. Dünzl says, '[t]hus the term 'begetting' does not focus, as with the neo-Arians, on the radical otherness of the Father and the Son, but specifically on their correspondence in substance.' (90)

Eventually a compromise would be made and recorded in the form of the fourth formula of the Council of Chalcedon in 451. This creed outlined the Son's relationship to the Father, made statements concerning the Holy Spirit, the Incarnation, and ended with a declaration of principle. Dünzl says that:

They aimed to win as many theologians as possible over to this compromise text. As long as there was an indeterminate statement about some similarity or likeness of the Son to the Father, the Neo-Arians could also agree, with the inner reservation that this similarity or likeness did not extend to substance. Thus Neo-Arians had no difficulty, for example, in assuming a similarity in will and activity between Father and Son — the 'harmony' of the two hypostases was in fact traditional doctrine in the East. (95)

The chapter closes by telling us that 'Constantius had now brought about something over which his father had ultimately failed: the unity of the imperial church.' (98) This may well be the case, but at the cost of compromise such a unity is not desirable. This chapter was without a doubt the one I learned the most from throughout the course of reading this work and for that I owe Dr. Dünzl a sincere thank you.

## 11. The Assembling of Neo-Nicenes

[Not Reviewed]

## 12. The Question of the Holy Spirit

In the shortest chapter of the book (next to the introduction), Dünzl sketches a brief picture of pneumatology in the development of the doctrine of the Trinity. Noting that the Spirit didn't immediately play a role in the debates he says:

The fact that the equivalent for 'spirit' in Greek is neuter (*to pneuma*) and thus evokes more the idea of a gift than that of a subject, and that talk of the Pneuma — unlike talk of the Son of God — did not immediately and automatically pose a question to monotheism must also have played a role in bracketing off the Spirit from the discussion. (117)

According to Dünzl 'Origen had developed the beginnings of an explicit pneumatology' (118) while he credits Athanasius as 'one of the first to develop orthodox pneumatology' (119) noting that:

Athanasius argues first with formal logic: the Holy Trinity (Greek *trias* — a term long current and recognized in early Christian theology) would not be a true triad if in it Creator (namely Father and Son) and creature (*viz.* the Spirit) were bundled together. (119)

Of Basil of Caesarea Dünzl says:

Basil emphasizes the equality of rank within the Trinity, as it is clearly expressed in the command of the risen Christ to baptize in the name of the Father *and* of the Son *and* of the Holy Spirit (cf. Matt. 28.19, *Holy Spirit* 10.24-26). Unlike the Eastern subordinationists, Basil thus sees Matt. 28.19 as documenting, not a gradated order of ranks, but the equality of Father, Son, and Spirit. (121)

For Basil the '...Spirit is to be glorified with the Father and the Son — in worship the Spirit is not to be separated from the Father and the Son...' (121)

Much like his role in Scripture, the Holy Spirit is not emphasized much in this book— Dünzl takes much the same approach as the framers of the doctrine that he has chosen to write about.

### **13. The Council of Constantinople and the Agreement with the West**

[Not Reviewed]

### **14. Prospects**

[Not Reviewed]