

Adrian Niculcea

# Historical and systematic modern observation concerning the 'Filioque Addition'

## Abstract

The current ecumenical discussions concerning the procession of the Holy Spirit cannot advance without a proper understanding of the actual essence of *Filioque*. The Orthodox perception of this issue is greatly affected by remnants of ancient unionist efforts from before the fall of Byzantium. For example, in the Third Council of Toledo (589) the Spanish Church won the argument with the Arianist Visigoths of Reccared by admitting some participation of the Son in the act of the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Father. This particular idea has no counterpart in the historical reality of the Arian controversy. This comes into consideration not only when we think of the Orthodox perception of things but is also essential in understanding the failure of some of the Western theologians in providing so called compromise solutions. These are meant to reconcile the Western triadology, focused on the order of the proceeding and the Byzantine triadology, which is monopatristic and which rejects any

## THE AUTHOR



Prof. Dr. Adrian Niculcea is Professor of Systematic Theology at the Theological Faculty of University Ovidius in Constanța, Romania

causative participation from the Son in the proceeding of the Spirit. The present study is meant to offer the historically correct original interpretation of the Latin defeat of the Arianists, by identifying the exact meaning of supporting an *a patre Filioque* proceeding of the Spirit against the Arianist pneumatology of the Visigoths. This will in turn provide a better perspective for ecumenical discussions in general and those in Romania in particular. Thus the study will revolve around the idea that it is not the order of the proceeding that constituted the focus in the Toledo councils, particularly in 589, but the divine nature of the Spirit. The One who proceeds from the Son is not a creature but is the same as the One who, according to Scripture (John15:26) “proceeds from the Father”. By admitting the Arian statement that the Spirit is brought forth into existence through the will of the Father and through the actual act of the Son, the Latin Church only strived to show that the Father participates himself in this act by providing the Son with this power. The Latin phrasing of the proceeding of the Holy Spirit, meant to defeat the Arianism of Reccared’s Visigoths, would have been better understood by the Oriental Church if it wouldn’t have been expressed as: *nec a Filio solo procedit Spiritus Sanctus*, as the Arians contended, but *sed a Patre quoque*, the same way as Augustine writes in his works.

### Keywords

Trinity, Arianism, Augustine, Filioque, Holy Spirit, visigoths, monopatrism, Toledo.

---

## Introductory Considerations

There is a widely spread opinion according to which the *Filioque* addition in the text of the Creed in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Ecumenical Council of Toledo (589 AD) would have been the consequence of the association of the Son to the act of the proceeding of the Holy Spirit from God the Father, in order to confer on the Son the status of divine hypostasis, equal to God the Father, so as to free Him of the inferior, subordinationist status of the Arians. This is the case, for example, of the Russian theologian,<sup>1</sup> Sergei Bulgakov, who says: “The true origin of the notion of *Filioque*, not only theologically, but also ecclesiastically and dogmatically, is found, as we know, in the debate between the Spanish Church and the Arian influences therein. The Church wanted to glorify and affirm the divinity of the Son by attributing to Him a

---

<sup>1</sup> Sergei N. Bulgakov, *Le Paraclet*, (Paris: Aubier), 1944, P. 98.

part in the proceeding of the Holy Spirit.” Bulgakov was obviously referring to the Spanish Councils of Toledo in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries<sup>2</sup>. Indeed, the teaching according to which the *Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son* is officially stated for the first time in the Creed of the First Council of Toledo, in 400 AD, in which: “*Credimus (...) in Spiritum quoque Paracletum (...) ex Patre Filioque procedentem.*” A new council in the same city, in 589 AD, introduces the formula in the text of the Niceo-Constantinopolitan Creed (although some historians maintain that the intercalation would have occurred at a later date) thus officially setting up the basis of the great doctrinal separation between East and West on the theme of the Trinity. This was the famous 3<sup>rd</sup> Ecumenical Council in Toledo. The Council stated that “anyone refusing to believe that *The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son and the Father (Spiritus Sanctus a Patre Filioque procedit)* and that He is in the same degree divine and equal with the Father and the Son, be anathema.”<sup>3</sup>

Another example, this time more recent, of an author according the same importance to the affirmation of *Filioque* in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Council of Toledo as Bulgakov is Robert Haddad, Professor of Middle East History at Smith College in Massachusetts, US. In a study focused on the political and ecclesiastical evolution of the controversy around *Filioque*, Professor Haddad says: “The stress on *Filioque* (although the intercalation in the Creed took place much later after the conclusion of the Council of Toledo) clearly set out the eternal proceeding of the Holy Spirit *from the Father and the Son*, firmly denying the Arian statement according to which the Son is inferior to the Father.”<sup>4</sup> The Lebanese historian is clearly suggesting that the Spanish Church had defended the equality between the Son and the Father against Arianism by making the Spirit proceed not only from the Father but also from the Son. However, the Arians never denied that the Spirit is brought into existence *through* the Son, a fact which for them made the Spirit *a creature of the Son*. Of course, the Arians never formally affirmed that the Spirit proceeds *only from the Son (a solo Filio)*; however, by affirming that the Spirit was brought into existence *through the Son*, they meant it in the spirit of the Fourth Gospel (John 1:3), thus suggesting

---

<sup>2</sup> Alfred Vacant, Eugène Magenot (Eds.), *Dictionnaire de Theologie Catholique, Contenant l'exposé des doctrines de la théologie catholique, leurs preuves et leur histoire*, (Paris : Letouzey et Ané), art. Toledo (Concils), vol. XV, 1<sup>st</sup> part and Art. Filioque, vol. XV, 2<sup>nd</sup> part.

<sup>3</sup> Alfred Vacant, Eugène Magenot (Eds.), *Dictionnaire de Theologie Catholique, Art.: Toledo (Councils)*, vol. XV, 1<sup>st</sup> Part, col. 1178.

<sup>4</sup> R. Haddad, *The Stations of the Filioque*, a study from the 60<sup>th</sup> meeting of North American Orthodox-Catholic Theological Consultation assembled in New York in May 2001, translated and published in: *Studia theologica*, Nr. 3 (2008), P.170.

a coming of the Spirit into existence alike to the coming into existence of the whole of creation “through the Son”.

This erroneous opinion concerning the meaning of the Antiarian introduction of the concept of “*Filioque*” in the text of the Creed in Toledo is widely spread throughout the Orthodox Christianity, so that one cannot help but wonder what is the cause of such an error in perspective. An answer seems to be found with the Lebanese historian who, some pages further, offers a very precious piece of information which would allow us to suspect at least the true cause of that opinion: the anti-adoptionist councils in Frankfurt (794 AD) and especially in Frejus (797 AD). In the council in Frejus, Paulinus of Aquileia clearly affirmed that the intercalation of the phrase *Filioque* in the Creed was necessary “because of those heretics who whisper that the Holy Spirit is *only from the Father*”<sup>5</sup>. This event takes place only in the 8<sup>th</sup> century, long after the 3<sup>rd</sup> council of Toledo, where the target was not adoptionism but the Arianism of the Visigoths. Thus, if the adoptionist heresy confessed, according to documents, that the Spirit proceeds only through the Father, the Arians affirmed a doctrine which was completely opposite: coming into existence *through the Son*, the Spirit does not enter into a direct causal relationship with the Father.

This historical reality, ignored by the two theologians, and by many other Orthodox, demands a re-evaluation of the true meaning of the addition of *Filioque* in Toledo. The Spanish Church did not need such an argumentation, against the Arians, who recognized the Son's participation in the act of the creation. In reality the Church needed to argue a *relationship of the Spirit and the Father*, for this was exactly what the Arians were denying. This simple fact changes completely the perspective concerning the real significance of the introduction of the *Filioque* addition in the Creed. The true responsibility assumed in the councils of Toledo does not seem to be the argumentation of the equality of the Son and the Father, but that of the Spirit and the Father and Son. The Arians maintained an inferior status for the Spirit precisely by subordinating Him completely (causally), thus denying any participation of the Father in this act. To the Arians, the Son was a creature of the Father, and the Spirit a creature of the Son. The exclusion of the Father from the direct act of causation of the Spirit and the relinquishment of this act to the Son represented for the Arians an argument that the Spirit is an inferior being which comes into existence because of the Father, but not through Him

---

<sup>5</sup> R. Haddad, *The Stations of the Filioque*, P. 180, n.50. The author does not quote the Council documents but takes his information from J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds*, (New York: D. McKay Co.), 1972, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., P. 364.

directly, but only through the mediation of the Logos. Thus, what the Spanish council had to correct in the Christian teachings of the Recared's Visigoths was not "the inferiority of the Son" in relation to the Father, but "the inferiority of the Spirit". Of course, the interest in a change of perspective around the issue of the true origin of the *Filioque* addition is not done here out of purely historical reasons, but in order to reveal the potential of a correct evaluation of this thorny problem in the current ecumenical discussions. Understanding the fact that at the origin of the disputes with the Arians the arguments of the Latin Church were concerned mainly with the participation of God the Father in the proceeding of the Holy Spirit, and not with the participation of the Son, could relax to a great degree the discussions between the experts, decreasing the tension of the accusations on both sides. This is what I will try to argue in the following pages.

### Arianism in the Greek speaking world and the Eastern Fathers

I will start my argument by stressing the fact that the Arians never denied that the true cause of the Holy Spirit is the Son. If they did deny something, then it was the active or direct participation of the Father in this act. This is plainly seen from the early Arian controversy of the Eastern Fathers. An example is St. Athanasius of Alexandria; another is Basil of Caesarea. Quoting both of them will be sufficient for the chosen topic. Finding himself in the desert, after his flight on the night of 8/9 February 356 AD from the men of the Emperor Constantius, the great patriarch of Alexandria received an invitation from Serapion, the bishop of Timuis, regarding the doctrine of some heretics that he called "tropics", probably because they interpreted the Scriptural phrases about the Holy Spirit metaphorically. They had left behind Arianism as concerned the doctrine about the inferiority of the Son in relation to the Father, but had kept the old heresy regarding the Holy Spirit. Athanasius, in writing to Serapion in four letters dated around 356 and 361 AD, describes the doctrine of the tropics in the following terms: "Some, leaving the Arians because of their blasphemy against the Son, conspire against the Spirit and call him not only a creature, but one of the serving spirits and distinguishable from the angels only by a step. And this is only a fake stand against the Arians. Actually, it's a true fight against true faith. Because, just like those ones, denying the Son, they deny the Father, so these ones, by speaking ill of the Spirit, they speak ill of the Son. The two sides have split their share against truth: for if some are against the Word, and the other against the Spirit,

they direct the same blasphemy against the Holy Trinity.”<sup>6</sup> According to this text, the tropics admitted to the consubstantiality of the Son with God the Father, in accordance with Nicaea, but did not admit to the consubstantiality of the Spirit with the Son and of course, with the Father. For them, the Spirit was a creation of the Son, the same as the entire universe.

The truly relevant aspect of this is the fact that the tropics considered the Spirit a creation of the Son alone, with no intervention from the Father. In other words, the Tropics denied any direct relationship between the Spirit and the Father, even as a creature. Here are some illustrative texts from St. Athanasius: “They say that if the Spirit is not a creature, not one of the angels, but proceeds from the Father, it follows that He is Son as well, and thus, there are two sons: the Spirit and the Word. And if He is brother, then how can the Word be One Born? Or they are not equal, and one is named after the Father, and the other after the Son?” and again, “If He is from the Father, how come we do not speak of Him as being born? And if the Spirit is of the Son, it follows that the Father is the grandfather of the Spirit.”<sup>7</sup> Some lines further, St. Athanasius asks himself: „Therefore, which are their clever questions? ‘If the Spirit is not a creature (of the Son, but directly proceeds from the Father, n.n.), they say, He is Son and there are two brothers (coming from the Father): The Word and Him’”. And then he adds: „if the Spirit will take from the Son and will be given by the Son (...) it follows that the Father is a grandfather and the Spirit his grandson”<sup>8</sup>. “They say: ‘if the Spirit is not a creature, but is God and gives Himself from God, then He is also Son and are therefore we have two sons: Him and The Son. And if the Spirit is of the Son and receives all from the Son (...) then the Father is grandfather and the Spirit his grandson’”.<sup>9</sup> Here it is, the famous argument of the tropics, or as St. Athanasius says, “that ‘wise’ question of theirs (...) ‘if the Spirit is from God the Father, why is he not called son’”.<sup>10</sup>

Thus, what was it that the tropics of Serapion were teaching? They said first that the Holy Spirit cannot proceed directly ‘from the Father’, because the Spirit would become Son as well and therefore a brother of the Son, which would cancel the qualification of the latter as monogenes. They also said that the Spirit cannot proceed ‘from the Son’ either, that is ‘from the being of the Son’, because in that case the Son would become Father, He

---

<sup>6</sup> Athanasius of Alexandria, *First Letter to Serapion*, 1, (vol. 16, Fathers and Church Writers, EIBMBOR, Bucharest, 1988), P. 23.

<sup>7</sup> Idem, *First Letter to Serapion*, 15, P. 40.

<sup>8</sup> Idem, *Fourth Letter to Serapion*, 1, (vol. 16, Fathers and Church Writers), P. 87.

<sup>9</sup> Idem, *Fourth Letter to Serapion*, 2, P. 88.

<sup>10</sup> Idem, *First Letter to Serapion*, 25, P. 54.



Himself becoming 'grandson' to the Father. St. Athanasius answers the first objection with the argument of the stability of names; that the *hypostases* maintain their own characteristics so that the Father cannot become grandfather, nor the Son father of the Spirit. "For if, because the Spirit is not creature, (you still) ask: ,therefore is the Spirit Son as well?' Those who think in this fashion are outside the Trinity and will be counted as godless, changing the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and understanding them after their own will with the human birth, calling them grandsons and grandfathers and imagining divine births (theogonies) like the Greeks (in their pagan mythologies). This is not the belief of the Church, as the Saviour said, in the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit; in the Father who cannot become grandfather, in the Son who cannot become Father and in the Holy Spirit who cannot be called anything else. This belief cannot change the names. For the Father is always the Father, the Son is always the Son and the Holy Spirit who is always the Holy Spirit. In men, a father is not always a father, nor a son always a son. For the one who becomes the father of a son is the son of another. And the son of a father becomes the father of another. Abraham, being the son of Nahor, becomes father to Isaac and Isaac, being the son of Abraham, becomes father to Jacob. For each *being a part of the one giving birth to him (n.n)* is born as son and becomes in his turn father to another. But in the Godhead this is not so, because God is not like man. The Father is not from another father. This is why He does not give birth to someone who becomes in turn father to another. The Son *is not a part of the Father*,<sup>11</sup> that is why He is not born to give birth to another son. This is why only in the Godhead the Father, being in his own way and alone (only himself) Father, He is and always will be Father. And the Son is in his own way and alone (only himself) Son. *Thus the Father is, and He is called always Father and the Son is always Son and the Holy Spirit is always Spirit.* And we believe that the Spirit belongs in God and that He was given from the Father through the Son. Thus the Holy Spirit remains unchanged, known as a single Godhead. Thus he who asks ,therefore the Spirit is Son as well?' imagines that the name can be changed and is not well in the head. Likewise, he who asks ,The Father is therefore grandfather?', by imagining another name for the Father, errs in his heart. But to answer further to the shamelessness of the heretics is not useful."<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> Tertullian stated this more than a century earlier in the Latin West in *Adversus Praxean* XXVI, 3,6.

<sup>12</sup> Athanasius of Alexandria, *Third Letter to Serapion*, 6, (vol. 16, *Fathers and Church Writers*), P. 92-93.

St. Athanasius' answer to the second objection of the tropics is that the Spirit cannot be a creature of the Son, because he is 'his own from the Son', that is as from the same being as the Son, just like the Son is 'his own from the Father', from the same being with the Father. "Why can't they realise that in the same way that they preserve the unity of the Trinity by not separating the Son from the Father, they destroy that unity by separating the Spirit from the Word, by adding to it a foreign notion and making the Trinity equal to the creatures? They show therefore that the Trinity is not one anymore, but a compound of two natures because of the distinct being of the Spirit-Creature? For it is either not a Trinity, but a Double plus a creature, or if it is a Trinity, how are they putting the Spirit of the Trinity in line with the creatures, inferior to the Trinity? For this means splitting and undoing the Trinity. For by blaspheming about the Spirit, they blaspheme about the Son. And if they would have thought rightfully about the Word, they would have thought rightfully about the *Spirit, who proceeds from the Father and being his own from the Son, is given by the latter to the disciples and to all those who believe in Him*. And by erring this way, they cannot profess the healthy belief about the Father either. For those who deny the Spirit, as the great martyr Stephen said (Acts 7.55), they deny the Son, and those who deny the Son do not have the Father either."<sup>13</sup> Additionally, Athanasius observes, he who makes the Spirit a creature, will eventually make the Son a creature: "*And the Spirit, having the same being and position towards the Son, that the Son has towards the Father, how can the one calling Him a creature help but think the same of the Son? And if the Spirit is a creature, it is natural that one would say that also the Word of the Father is also a creature*. This is the wrongdoing of the Arians, and it led them to the Judaism of Caiapha. And if the ones who say this about the Spirit do not appropriate the sayings of Arius, then they should also rectify his words and their unbelief in regards to the Spirit. Just like the Son, who is in the Father and in whom the Father is, is not a creature, but He is his own in the being of the Father (for you pretend that this is what you recognize as well), so thus the Spirit in the Son, in whom the Son is as well, and it is not allowed to think of Him within the creatures, nor to separate Him from the Word and thus maim the Trinity."<sup>14</sup> He continues: "For if those who heed Arius' words -for in their evil and nosy soul wisdom does not enter- cannot understand or believe the unified and holy Trinity, this is no reason to misinterpret the truth, or say that things that appear to lie outside their understanding cannot exist. They commit an insane act

---

<sup>13</sup> Idem, *First Letter to Serapion*, 2, P. 24-25. One should notice, at the same time, the way in which Athanasius avoids affirming the proceeding of the Spirit 'also from the Son', sticking to the safe letters of the Scriptures.

<sup>14</sup> Idem, *First Letter to Serapion*, 21, P. 48-49.



when, not being able to understand how the Trinity can be unified, on one hand the Arians *make the Son one with the creation and the tropics count the Spirit among the creatures.*<sup>15</sup> “This being the unity in the Holy Trinity, who could separate the Son from the Father and the Spirit from the Son or from the Father Himself?” „Or who would be so bold as to say that the Trinity is not homogenous in itself, or that the *Son is of a different being than the Father, or that the Spirit has no connection to the Son?*”<sup>16</sup>

Therefore, as it follows from the statements above, the tropics of Serapion expressly denied the direct proceeding of the Holy Spirit from God the Father, and attached Him causally only to the Son. They said that the Spirit couldn't proceed also from the Father for He would become a sort of brother to the Son; consequently He is not of the same being with the Father. Moreover, even if His causation is in the Son, He does not proceed *from the being of the Son*, but is brought into existence through the Son, by the Son, like any other creature. This is why He cannot be of the same being even with the Son. Against this argumentation of the tropics, St. Athanasius puts forwards the statement: “The Spirit with the same being and same position towards the Son, as the Son towards the Father” in the sense that the Spirit is ‚His own’ in the Son to the same extent that the Son is ‚His own’ in the Father. Faithful to Nicaea, Athanasius contents himself to affirm only the consubstantiality of the Spirit with the Son according to the model of the consubstantiality of the Son with the Father, admitted by the tropics as well. He does not affirm that the Spirit would have His cause “from the Son” or “through the Son”; he does not interpret the expression “the Spirit is his own in the Son” causally. He is happy to suggest that the Spirit is from the same being as is the Son, just like the Son is from the same being as is the Father. Bearing in mind at all times only the “consubstantiality” of the *hypostases*, as established in Nicaea, St. Athanasius does not seem to have noticed the clearly causal interpretation which the tropics conferred upon the relationship of the Spirit with the Son, nor the fact that they were thus denying any direct causal relationship with the Father. These aspects, although ignored by the great Holy Father until his death, did not go unnoticed in the work of Basil of Caesarea.

The first one who seems to have noticed these aspects was, apparently, St. Basil in his dispute with Eunomius, bishop of Cyzicusus and the leader of the radical Arians in his time, against whom St. Basil wrote in 364 the well known work “Contra Eunomium”. According to St. Basil, Eunomius professed the following Trinitarian doctrine: “Let us assume that the eye starts from the created works and continues above these towards the

---

<sup>15</sup> Idem, First Letter to Serapion, 17, P. 43.

<sup>16</sup> Idem, First Letter to Serapion, 20, P. 47.

substances: *it thus finds that the Son is a creature of the Unborn and that the Paraclete is a creature of the Son (του μεν αγεννητου τον υιον ευρισκον ποιμα του δε μονογενους τον παρακλητον).*<sup>17</sup> *“There is, thus, a one God unborn and without beginning (εις εστι ο θεος αγενετος και αναρχος): He does not have any being anterior to Himself- for nothing can be anterior to the unborn, nor another being who can be in (with) Him -for He is simple and without composition. Being unique, being alone and forever unchanged, He is God, creator and artisan of all things: first of all and in a wholly extraordinary fashion of the monogenes, then through Him, of all those created. For before all creation, and only through His own power and activity, gave birth to Him, created Him and made the Son (τον μεν γαρ Υιον προ παντων και προ πασες κτισεος, μονου τε εαυτου δυναμει και ενεργεια εγεννησε τε και εκτισε και εποιεσεν) (...) And through Him (the Son) He created the Holy Spirit, the first among all and the greatest of them all, through His own strength and at his own command, but through the activity and the (creating) capacity of the Son (και δια τουτου προτον μεν παντων και μειζον το Πνευμα το αγιον εποιεσεν, εχοθσια μεν ιδια και προσταγματι, ενεργεια δε και δυναμει του Υιου)”*<sup>18</sup> Thus, Eunomius continues, “according to St. Paul’s teachings (...) the Son is subordinated to God the Father, (...) and the Holy Spirit, in turn, is clearly subordinated to Christ.”<sup>19</sup> Eunomius, like all Arians, understood the act of proceeding through the mirror of the creating activity of the Son: *“He (the Spirit) is honoured in the third stance as the first creation of the monogenes, the greatest of them all and the only one as such (τριτε ορα τιμομενον ος προτον και μειζον παντων και μονον τουτου του μονογενους ποεμα).*<sup>20</sup>

The most important aspect here is not that Eunomius understood the bringing into existence of the Spirit under the terms suggested by John 1:3, that is, in the same way as a creature, but the fact that, even under this perspective, the Spirit is created only by the Son; that the act of creation of the Spirit belongs only to the Son. This is what St. Basil notices as well and, intrigued by this aspect, he says: *“Is there a man on this earth who would not see clearly that no activity of the Son can be separated from the Father and that there is nothing among those existent that belongs to the Son, but is foreign from the Father? (...) For why, thus, does Eunomius attribute only to the Son the cause of the Holy Spirit (πος ουν του πνευματος τεν αιτιαν το μονογενει μονο προστιθεσι) and, to speak ill of His nature, uses the creative activity of that one (The Son, n.n)(και κατεγορεμα τες πηυσεος αυτου τεν*

<sup>17</sup> Eunomius of Cyzicus, *Apologia 20*, in: coll. *Sources chretiennes*, vol. 305 (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf), 1983, P. 275.

<sup>18</sup> Eunomius of Cyzicus, *Apologia (Apendice) 28*; in coll. *Sources chretiennes*, P. 297.

<sup>19</sup> Idem, *Apologia 27*; in coll. *Sources chretiennes*, P. 293.

<sup>20</sup> Idem, *Apologia 25*; in coll. *Sources chretiennes*, P. 287.

τουτου λαμβανει δεμιουργιαν)? (...) There is no obvious danger in separating the Holy Spirit from God the Father (διαρειν απο του θεου το Πνευμα) since on one hand, the disciple presents Him in his relationships sometimes as the Spirit of Christ and sometimes as the Spirit of God (...) and on the other hand, God Himself calls Him the Spirit of Truth (...) and says that He proceeds from the Father? Or, this one (Eunomius), in order to diminish the glory of Our Lord Jesus Christ, (αλλ' ουτος, εις καθαιρεσιν τεσ δοξης του Κιριος εμον Ιησου Χριστου) separates the Spirit from the Father and attributes Him to the Monogenes in a different manner (αφερει μεν απο του Πατρος του δε Μονογενει διαφεροντος); of course, in order to diminish the glory (of the Son) (επι καθαιρεσι τεσ δοξης προστιθεσιν).”<sup>21</sup>

Therefore, far from denying the Son any causal participation in the act of ‚proceeding‘, of the bringing into existence of the Holy Spirit, Eunomius, as the Cappadocian Father shows, attributed only to the Son the cause of the Holy Spirit, thus excluding God the Father, against Scripture (John 15:26). Even this text alone of St. Basil strips any support from the theory to which Bulgakov and so many others among the Orthodox subscribe to, the theory according to which the Latin Church would have defeated Arianism by imagining the Son as participating in the act of proceeding, by raising Him thus to an equal rank with God the Father, about whom nobody could doubt as participating in the act of procession of the Spirit. Let us move further and investigate directly the mode in which the Latin Church, St. Augustine in particular, devised the method of defeating the Arian doctrine about the procession of the Holy Spirit. Only after looking at these Latin documents can we establish once and for all if the theory has any support or if, on the contrary, it will need to be abandoned with all the great damage it has done to the ecumenical discussions so far.

This reality is reflected in Constantinople in 381 AD, while under the probable influence of St. Gregory the Theologian (Oratio 31.8). The Greek Father easily modified the Johannine formula of the procession of the Holy

---

<sup>21</sup> Basil of Caesarea, *Contra Eunomius*, II, 34; in coll. *Sources chretiennes*, vol. 305, (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf), 1983, P.141-143. His reproach that Eunomius “separates the Spirit from the Father and attributes Him to the Monogenes in a different fashion”, „attributes only to the Son the cause of the Holy Spirit” would seem to justify the statement of the Catholic theologians according to whom Basil would have professed here the teaching that *The Holy Spirit does not only proceed from the Son but also from the Father*; that He proceeds therefore *from the Father and the Son*, as the Latin Church teaches. The conclusion, rushed in the least, is an illusion, because Basil could not have a theology of the Holy Spirit different than the one affirmed formally by the Scriptures or by his no less famous predecessor, Athanasius of Alexandria. Even if some Eastern Fathers would have been tempted to admit an origin of the Spirit “through the Son”, like the Arians were teaching, they couldn't have overstepped the boundaries imposed by the explicit statement of the holy text. These aspects will be studied within a much broader study.

Spirit from the Father, replacing the Gospel text το πνευμα (...) παρα του Πατρος εκπορευεται with the formula το πνευμα το άγιον (...) το εκ του Πατροε εκπορευομενον.<sup>22</sup> The Pneumatomachi did not contest the divinity of the Son, but that of the Spirit; they were achieving this by defining the coming into existence of the Spirit through the mediation of the Son, thus denying any direct relationship between the Spirit and the Father. In other words, the created character of the Spirit was not given by the fact that He was simply declared a creature, a unique *ανομοιος hypostasis* with the Father and the Son; the created character of the Spirit was given by the interpretation of His coming into existence, of His ‚procession’ through the Son, in the same fashion as all creation. The Council used the preposition *ek* in order to deliver a mortal blow to this strange idea of the Pneumatomachi and the Arians in general according to which the Spirit is a *creature of the Son* because *He has his existence only through the Son*. The replacement of *para* with *ek* suggests the clear intention of the Council to focus on the direct causal root of the Spirit in the *hypostasis* of the Father and not on the origin of the Spirit in the being of the Son, since the Pneumatomachi, unlike the radical Arians, were acknowledging the Son as a divine person of the same being as the Father. In order to achieve a complete defeat, the Synod participants did not deem as sufficient the preposition *para*, which, in addition to meaning ‚from which’ (which suggests direct origin) also means ‚from’ (in the sense of an indirect origin, like in John 15:26) where the phrase *para tou patros* is associated with both the verb *pempso* and the verb *ekporeuetai*. By changing it with *ek* the Synod dismissed any nuance of mediation of the Son in this act of procession, which the Pneumatomachi could have substracted if the Johannine *para*. In this way, they would proclaim definitively the direct causal origin of the Spirit from the Father; the full divinity of the third hypostasis. Thus they put Him on the same plane as the Son, who is fully God because He is born of the Father, having his direct origin in the divine *hypostasis* of the Father.

### Arianism in the Latin speaking world and Augustine

Moving now to the Latin Fathers, if we look at the Latin text in this matter, we will discover the same vision of the “proceeding” of the Holy Spirit “through the Son” in the sense of His creation through the direct and effective activity of the *Son alone*. This is what Augustine affirms in two of

---

<sup>22</sup> This is what the *Commission théologique orthodoxe-catholique d’Amérique du Nord* notices in its treatise at *Saint Paul’s College (Washington DC)* on 25<sup>th</sup> of October 2003, which however, does not draw the conclusions deriving from this important modification (see *Oecuménisme Informations*, nr. 351, Paris, 2005, P. 14-20).

his minor works, occasioned by meeting with representatives of this heresy, which had for a long time infiltrated the Latin world. Around 418 AD, during his controversy with Emeritus, a Donatist bishop, Augustine was given a treatise which he calls “*A sermon of the Arians (Sermo arianorum)*” with the request of an answer to the statements therein.” The main doctrinal statements made in that anonymous treatise are the following: “10. The Son is born from the Father, and the Spirit is created through the Son (*Ergo Filius a Patre genitus, Spiritus Sanctus per Filium est factus*); 11. The Son preaches of the Father, and the Holy Spirit announces the Son (*Filius Patrem praedicat, Spiritus Sanctus Filium annuntiat*); 12. The first and main job of the Son is to reveal the glory of the Father, the first and the main job of the Holy Spirit is to manifest the dignity of Christ in the souls of men (*Primum et praecipuum opus est Filii, genitoris gloriam revelare, primum et praecipuum est opus Spiritus Sanctus, in animas hominum Christi dignitatem manifestare*); 14. The Son is sent by the Father, the Holy Spirit is sent by the Son (*Filius mittitur a Patre, Spiritus Sanctus mittitur a Filio*). 15. The Son is the minister of the Father, the Holy Spirit is the minister of the Son (*Filius minister Patris, Spiritus Sanctus Minister Filii*). 19. The Son adores and honours the Father; the Spirit adores and honours the Son (*Filius adorat et honorat Patrem, Spiritus Sactus adorat et honorat Filium*); 24. The Father is greater than the Son, the Son is incomparably greater and kinder than the Holy Spirit (*Pater major est Filio suo, Filius incomparabiliter major et melio est Spiritu*) 25. The Father is God and Lord over His Son, the Son is God and Lord over the Holy Spirit (*Pater Deus et Dominus est Filio Suo, Filius Deus et Dominus est Spiritui*). 26. The Father, through an unmovable and impassible will, gave birth to the Son and the Son, without effort, without tiredness, and only through His power, created the Holy Spirit (*Pater immobiliter and iimpassibiliter volens Filium genuit, Filiussine latobore et fatigatione sola virtute sua Spiritum fecit*).”<sup>23</sup>

How easy it is to notice, even easier than in the Oriental Arians which I quoted above, that the Arian author of this treatise expounds not only the classically Arian doctrine according to which the Spirit is a creature of the Son, but affirms explicitly the fact that this act of creation of the Spirit by the Son is an exclusive act on the part of the Son, with no direct causal relationship with God the Father. This essential aspect is outlined also in the commentaries of Augustine. For example, in commenting on the statement that, *The Spirit is sent by the Son as the Son is sent by the Father*’ (thesis 14), he says the following : “We read, indeed, that the Holy Spirit

<sup>23</sup> Augustine, *Sermo arianorum* 10-12, 14-19, 23-26, in: “Oeuvres completes de Saint Augustin”, Paris 1872, vol. 26, P. 571-572.



was sent as well...But He was never sent only by the Son (*nec a solo Filio missu esti*), as it written: ‚when I go, I will send Him to you’ (John 16.7), but He was sent equally by the Father (*sed a Patre quoque*), as it is also written: ‚My Father will send Him to you in My name’ (John 14.26). It is obvious then that the Holy Spirit was neither sent by the Father without the Son, nor by the Son without the Father, but by both one and the other (*ubi ostenditur quod nec Pater sine Filio, nec Filius sine Patre misit Spiritum Sanctum, sed eu pariter ambo miserunt*), for the gifts of the Holy Trinity are inseparable.”<sup>24</sup> Then, with reference to the statement “The Spirit is the minister of the Son just as the Son is the minister of the Father” (thesis 15), a surprised Augustine exclaims: “They say then that the Son is the minister of the Father and the Holy Spirit the minister of the Son. (...) According to these empty words of our heretics (...) the Holy Spirit is less than the Son, for He is only minister to the Son (*ac per hoc secundum istroum vaniloquia....minor este Spiritus, quia solius minister est Filio*).”<sup>25</sup> In his comment on thesis 26, Augustine concludes: “It remains to be seen in what sense the Arians say that the Son created the Spirit only through his power, for in this way they are forced to say that the Son did something which He has not seen His Father do (*videant sane quomodo dicant quod sola virtute sua Filius feerit Spiritus Sanctus. Isto enim modo coguntur fatei aliquid fecisse Filium, quod non viderit Patrem facientem*).”<sup>26</sup>

Ten years later, around 428 AD, Augustine encounters the same Arian doctrine of the creation of the Spirit only by the Son, without the active causal involvement of the Father. The occasion is the debate with Maximin, an Arian bishop, which Augustine confides to paper in “*Contra Maximin*”. The relevant fragment for our query is the amazed exclamation of Maximin when his Orthodox opponent, Augustine, argues that the Holy Spirit proceeds directly from the *hypostasis* of the Father like the Son: “I find myself in a daze, my dear brother, to hear that you say that the Holy Spirit is from the Father's *hypostasis* (*cum enim et Spiritum Sanctum de substantia Patris esse dicatis*). For if the Son is from the *hypostasis* of the Father, and the Spirit is as well from the Father's *hypostasis*, why is there only one Son and there are not two (*Si Filius ex substantia Dei Patris et Spirit Sanctus, cum unus Filius et alius non est filius*)? (...) If He is equal with the Son, then the one Son is no longer just one, because there is a second born as Him, who is of the same *hypostasis* as the Father, of whom you say, is also the Son (*Aut si awqualis, jam non unus unigenitus, habens et alterum secum genitum, et praeterea ex eadem substantia Patris, unde et Filium*

<sup>24</sup> Idem, *Contra sermonem arianorum*, IV, 4; in: “Oeuvres complete”, P. 579.

<sup>25</sup> Idem, *Contra sermonem arianorum*, XXII, 15, P. 599.

<sup>26</sup> Idem, *Contra sermonem arianorum*, XXVIII, 26, P. 604.



*dicitis esse*)... If you give the Spirit the name of brother, because you claim that the Holy Spirit is alike and equal to the Son, you testify that He is also from the *hypostasis* of the Father (*cui forte si ipse fratrem applicans, quia Spirituam Sanctum parem atque aequalum asseris Filio, aequae et de substantia Patris cum ess profiteris*). If this is so, then the Son is no longer unique, because there is another from the same *hypostasis* as Him (*Si ita est, ergo jiam non esi unigenitus Filius, cum et alter sit ex eadem substantium*).<sup>27</sup> Maximin also brings in another argument in favour of the idea that the Spirit could not have His cause in the Father alongside the Son: “It is settled, therefore, that in the beginning there was the Son...and that through Him all things were made and without Him nothing was made (John 1:3). But these words cannot be understood also about the person of the Spirit, for there is no passage in the Scriptures that would point to Him being equal to the Son (caused directly by the Father and therefore anterior to all creation like the Son, n.n).”<sup>28</sup> “We honour the Holy Spirit properly as a teacher, a guide, a revealer and a sanctifier; but we honour Christ as the Creator (of the Spirit, n.n).”<sup>29</sup>

Maximin clearly argues that the direct causation of the Spirit in the Father is impossible to conceive, because otherwise there would not be one Son in the Trinity but two. The answer of Augustine was the following: “You tell me, ,if the Son and the Holy Spirit are from the hypostasis of the Father, why then is there only one Son and not two?’ Here is my answer, whether you receive it or not: the Son comes from the Father, the Holy Spirit also from the Father, but one by way of birth and the other by way of proceeding; this is why one is called Son of the Father to whom He was born, and the other the Spirit of the Father and the Son, because He proceeds at the same time from one and the other (*Ecce respondeo, sive capias, sive non capias. De Patre est Filius, de Patre est Spiritus Sanctus, sed ille genitus, iste procedens; ideo ille Filius est Patris, de quo est genitus, iste autem Spiritus utriusque, quoniam de utroque procedit*). If, by speaking of Him, the Son said ,from the Father He proceeds’ (John 15:26) it is because the Father is the author of the proceeding; for He gave birth to a Son and by giving birth to Him, He gave Him the Spirit to proceed from Him as well

<sup>27</sup> Idem, *Collatio cum Maximino 14, 15*; in: “Oeuvres complètes de Saint Augustin”, vol. 27, P. 30.33. The Latin term used by Maximin is *substantia*. This term is a literal translation of the Greek term *hypostasis* and it should be translated in this context by *hypostasis* because Maximin, talking about the divine processions, is referring to the Trinitarian persons, to the *hypostases*, not the being, their „substance”. Actually, the Arians only referred to hypostasis as completely distinct realities, radically different ontologically. This is why a translation in this context of the term *substantia* as substance is completely inadequate.

<sup>28</sup> Idem, *Collatio cum Maximino 17*, in: “Oeuvres complètes”, P. 30, 33, P. 35-36.

<sup>29</sup> Idem, *Collatio cum Maximino 5*, P. 23-24.

(*Sed ideo cum de illo Filius loqueretur, ait: De Patre procedit (John 15:26) quoniam Pater processionis ejus est auctor, qui talem Filium genuit, et gignendo ei dedit ut etiam de ipso procederet Spiritus Sanctus*). If the Spirit did not proceed from Him as well, He would not have told his apostles ,take the Holy Spirit' (John 20:22) and He would not have given Him to them by breathing upon them; to clearly show that through this breath, the sign that the Spirit proceeds also from Him, He (The Son) gave the Holy Spirit to them through the mystery of His breath (*Nam nisi procederet et de ipso, non diceret discipulis: Accipite Spiritum Sanctum (John 20:22) eunque insufflando daret, ut a se quoque procedere significans, aperte ostenderet flando, quod spirando dabat occulte*). If the Spirit had not been born only from the Father or only from the Son but from both at the same time, He would have no doubt been called the Son of the two (*Quia ergo si nasceretur, non tantum de Patre, nec tantum de Filio, sed de ambobus uteque nasceretur, sine dubio filius diceretur amborum*). Consequently, because He is not the Son of the two, He cannot be born of the two at the same time. Therefore, the Holy Spirit comes from both, but by way of proceeding from one and the other (*Ac per hoc quia filius amborum nullo modo est, non oportuit nasci eum de ambobus. Amborum est ergo Spiritus, procedendo de ambobus*). What is the difference between birth and proceeding? Which man, in talking about the high substances, can explain such a thing? The one who proceeds is not born, although the one who is born proceeds; just like not all bipeds are men, although all men are bipeds. This is my knowledge! But to distinguish between birth and proceeding I do not know, I am incapable of knowing."<sup>30</sup>

The Arian teachings in the West were therefore the same as in the East; that the Spirit was created at the command of the Father, but 'through the effective activity of the Son', that is 'only through His power' (*sola virtute sua*). For this reason, the Arians said, He was sent into the world ,only by the Son (*a solo Filio missum est*)'. This exclusion of the Father from the act of the direct bringing into existence of the Holy Spirit by the Son determined Augustine to affirm that, on the contrary, the Spirit does not proceed only from the Son, but from the Father as well, *de utroque, de ambobus*, that is *De Patre Filioque*, because, according to Scripture, the Spirit was not sent only by the Son, but also by the Father (*nec a solo Filio missum est, sed a Patre quoque*). This being said, it is clear that in the Latin translation of the proceeding of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son, the stress falls on the proceeding of the Spirit from the Father, because this clause was the one contested by the Arians and not the proceeding from the Son. This is also the reason for which the Latin Father

---

<sup>30</sup> Idem, *Contra Maximinum, Book II, cap. XIV, 1*, in: "Oeuvres complètes", P. 87.

insists on the idea that, by giving birth to the Son, the Father gave Him through this very act the ability to proceed{again, is proceed right?} the Holy Spirit out of Him. Here, as in his previous work, *Contra Sermonem Arianorum*, the focus is on the involvement of the Father in the act of the proceeding of the Holy Spirit. The proof stands in the commentary that Augustine delivers to the 10<sup>th</sup> thesis of the anonymous Arian treatise 'The Son is born of the Father, and the Spirit is created through the Son' (*Ergo Filius a Patre genitus, Spiritus Sanctus per Filium est factus*); by attacking that particular thesis, Augustine cannot find anything better to affirm than the proceeding of the spirit from the Father, because he felt that this is precisely what is being contested by the heretic author. "Those to whom we agreed to answer (...), say that the Son was born of the Father, while the Holy Spirit was created by the Son. This has no Scriptural support! The Son Himself says that the Spirit proceeds from the Father (*Isti sane, quorum disputationem accepi, cui respondeo (...), ita ut a Patre Filium genitum dicant, factum vero a Filio Spiritum Sanctum. Quod in Scripturis Sanctis nusquam legunt cum Filius ipse dicat, quod Spiritus Sanctus a Patre procedit*).<sup>31</sup> The affirmation of the proceeding of the Spirit from the Son is dry, and with no further comment Augustine turns to the following 11<sup>th</sup> thesis.

The formula for the procession of the Spirit from the Father and the Son would have been, therefore, more expressive and more adequate to the historic context which had created it if, instead of a *Patre Filioque procedit*, it would have looked more like: *nec a solo Filio procedit, sed a Patre quoque*. However, in order to completely eliminate the idea that the Latin formulation for the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son had initially spoken of the Son's contribution to this act, as it is still acknowledged today by many Orthodox theologians, it is necessary to explain the formulation that Augustine uses almost obsessively, which states that: The Son was given birth by the Father, in such a way as, by this very act of birth, He has received the power to proceed, from Himself, the Spirit. Maximin had said regarding the Holy Spirit: "Regarding the Holy Spirit, we honor him as we would a teacher, a guide, illuminator and a holy man; we adore Christ, however, as the Creator (of the Spirit, n.n.)." Augustine comments upon this phrase respectively: "If you have given the Father the title of author (cause), because the Son comes from Him, while He (the Father) does not come from the Son, but also because He has given the Son the power that the Holy Spirit could proceed from Him, because He has given the Son this power by the very fact that He gave birth to Him (*Si auctorem propterea dicis Patrem, quia de ipso est Filius, non est autem*

---

<sup>31</sup> Idem, *Contra sermonem arianorum*, XXI, 10, in: "Oeuvres complètes", P. 598.

*ipse de Filio; et quia de illo et Filio sic procedit Spiritus Sanctus, ut ipse hoc dederit Filio gignendo cum talem, ut etiam de ipso procedat Spiritus Sanctus*), ... then your language is the same as ours. However, if you place in your hearts such idols that force you to say there are two gods, one greater: the Father, one smaller: the Son, and you build a Holy Spirit so inferior in connection with the other two as you cannot call Him a God - that is not our faith for it is not Christian teaching and, therefore, it is not faith in any way.”<sup>32</sup>

At the end of this detailed historical analysis we can make a more qualified evaluation of the thesis that the Latin Church, through its formula *Spiritus Sanctus a Patre Filioque procedit*, would have corrected the Arian doctrine of the inferiority of the Son in His relation with the Father. St. Athanasius said: “Those who speak ill of the Spirit speak ill of the Son also. For if they would have spoken the truth about the Word, they would have also spoken the truth about the Spirit who comes from the Father...” It is notable that the tropics of Serapion did not believe ill of the Spirit because they denied a cause-effect relationship between this one and the Son, robbing the Son of something that they would have attributed only to the Father. Quite on the contrary, they strongly denied a cause-effect relationship between the Spirit and the Father, limiting the cause of the third person only to the Son. This is what St. Basil confirms, referring to the Eunomius' pneumatology: “In order to weaken the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, he separates the Spirit from the Father and attributes him to the Monogenes in a different way.” And which way is that? The answer to that question is in the same citation, when the grand hierarch says that Eunomius “attributes the cause of the Holy Spirit only to the Son (separating the Spirit from the Father)”. Why would this exclusivity in the causality of the Holy Spirit be a sign of inferiority of the Son in relation to the Father? Bringing the Spirit to existence “by its creative capacity only”, explains Augustine, „they (the Arians) are forced to say that the Son did something he did not see the Father do”. This doctrine forced the Arians to “say that there are two gods, one greater, the Father, one smaller, the Son, and to build a Holy Spirit so inferior to the other two that they could not call Him God” as they did to the Father and Son.

These texts, as many others, suggest the idea that it was not the absence of the Son in the act of the procession that Augustine and the entire Latin

---

<sup>32</sup> Idem, *Contra Maximinum*, Book II, chapter V, in: “Oeuvres complètes”, P. 73. The last phrase in particular seems to echo the observations of St. Athanasius in his time on the doctrine of the tropis concerning their Divine Double (The Father and Son) to which they associated a creature, the Holy Spirit (see footnote 13).

Church attempted to correct in the Arian doctrine of Recared's Visigoths, but the created character of the one who proceeds from the Son. The apparent intention of the councils of Toledo was, therefore, to convince the Visigoths of the idea that the one who comes from the Son is the same one who according to Scriptures (John XV, 26) proceeds from the Father himself. The fundamental conclusion that derives from all these arguments, therefore, is that it was not the order of the procession that was promoted in 589 at Toledo, but the idea that the one who comes from the Son is not a creature, but is of the same divine condition as the one who comes from the Father. What the Latin formula was proclaiming in its original essence was that the divine nature of the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from the Son, was certified and supported by His direct relationship with the Father. The Latin thesis *Spiritus Sanctus a Patre Filioque procedit* thus opposes the Arian thesis *Spiritus Sanctus per Filium est factus* in its creative capacity, and the reason it cannot be understood in its authentic historical significance only in connection with it, only as an opposition to the idea that, if the Spirit comes from the Son as fully God, (and not as a semi-divine creature, an intermediary between the Father and the Spirit) is because He (the Spirit) comes principally from the Father himself.

Further evidence in support of the thesis that it was not the involvement of the Son in the act of the proceeding of the Spirit from the Father, was considered by the Latin Fathers from the Council of Toledo (589). The involvement of the Father in this act is also the Creed of Ulfilas, the Goth bishop, the one who converted them to Arianism and whose Creed was shared by Recared's Visigoths as well: "I, Ulfila, bishop and confessor, have always so believed, and in this, the one true faith, I make the journey to my Lord; I believe in one God the Father, the only unbegotten and invisible, and in his only-begotten Son, our Lord and God, the designer and maker of all creation, having none other like Him (so that one alone among all beings is God the Father, who is also the God of our God); and in one Holy Spirit, the illuminating and sanctifying power, as Christ said after his resurrection to his apostles, 'And behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you; but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be clothed with power from on high' (Luke 24:49), and again 'But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Ghost is come upon you' (Acts 1:8); being neither God (the Father) nor our God (Christ), but the minister of Christ ... subject and obedient in all things to the Son; and the Son, subject and obedient in all things to God who is His Father ... (whom) he ordained in the Holy Spirit

through his Christ.”<sup>33</sup> Ulfilas does not refuse to acknowledge the Son’s participation in the act of coming to existence of the Spirit anywhere, quite on the contrary. As all the great Arians, he affirms without hesitation that the Spirit is obedient ,in all’ to Christ, as the Son is obedient ,in all’ to His Father. At the end of his Creed he also refers to the relationship of the Spirit with the Father; the Father is the one who orders all ,through his Christ’. Therefore, Ulfilas’s Creed does not bring anything fundamentally new with regards to the relationship between the Son and the Father, or between the Spirit and the Son, and through him with the Father. The Spirit is the direct creation of the Son and the indirect creation of the Father; He is basically the creature whose bringing in to existence was ordered by the Father but effectively executed by his Son; “All things have been done through the Son and fore mostly the Holy Spirit.”<sup>34</sup>

This general Arian doctrine about the procession of the Spirit only from the Son, as mediator and intermediary in regard to the Father who could not directly initiate this act, is taken into consideration by Augustine at the end of *De Trinitate*, when he offers a final answer to this problem saying: “The one who can understand the birth of the Son, born from the Father outside time, understands the proceeding of the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from one and the other outside time as well. And the one who can understand what the Son is saying: For as the Father has life (the Holy Spirit) in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself (John 5:26) - not that the Son was without life when the Father gave Him life but because the Father gave birth to the Son outside time in such a way that the Life He gave to the Son by giving birth to Him is co-eternal to the Life of the Father who gave it- that one understands, also, that as the Father has within Him what makes the Spirit proceed from Him, so He gave the Son what makes the same Spirit to proceed from the latter, also outside time. And if it is said that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father, it is in such a way that it is understood that if He comes from the Son also, the Son has it from the Father *atque ita dictum Spiritum Sanctum de Patre procedere, ut intelligatur, quod etiam procedit de Filio, de Patre esse a Filio*. It is true that if all that He has comes from the Father, He has also from the Father what makes the Spirit proceed from Him, as well , *si enim quidquid habet, de Patre habet Filius; de Patre habet utique ut et de illo procedat Spiritus Sanctus*.”<sup>35</sup> This has been the reference used by the Spanish councils to exemplify what they considered to be, just as did Augustine, the

---

<sup>33</sup> Heather and Matthews, *Goths in the Fourth Century*, P. 143, from *Wikipedia*, art. *Wulfila*.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>35</sup> Augustin, *De Trinitate XV, 26*, in: “Oeuvres completes de Saint Augustin”, vol. 27, P. 555.



belief of the Council of Nicaea. This is why the Council decree which states sanctions against those who reject the belief that *Spiritus Sanctus a Patre Filioque procedit* cannot be rightly understood unless one considers the contrary Arian doctrine which states the Spirit is brought into existence by the order of the Father, but ,through' the effective direct and exclusive activity of the Son.

## Ecumenical conclusions

The Latin formulation *Spiritus Sanctus a Patre Filioque procedit* makes sense only in contrast to the Arian formulation *Spiritus Sanctus procedit a solo Filio*. The interest Augustine held, as against the great Arian heresy, was to affirm the relationship of the Holy Spirit not only with the Son but also with the Father. The Latin pneumatological doctrine would have probably been clearer for the following ages if it would have appeared in the documents as *Spiritus Sanctus a Filio Patreque procedit* or even better, as Augustine himself suggests in his answer to the Anonymous Arian treatise: *Nec a solo Filio, ..., sed a Patre quoque (procedit Spiritus Sanctus)*. A long time before them, the Eastern Fathers' reasoning affirmed the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father. The same Arian thesis that the Spirit has no direct causal relationship with the Father, but was brought into existence, like all creation, by the Son alone, means that the debate around the *Filioque* addition, to this day, might have a chance to be simplified and even solved if we could come back to the time when the common focus of the Latin and Greek Fathers was on the argumentation of the role of the Father in the act of the procession of the Holy Spirit and not on the role of the Son.

## Translation

Ana-Maria Niculcea (Oxon)