

Defining Orthodoxy in Hilary of Poitiers’ Commentarium in Matthaëum

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Dedicated to the memory of Jean Doignon (1922–1997)

Despite the fact that Hilary had not yet heard of the Nicene creed before going into exile (356), most scholars have argued that the bishop did possess an awareness of the “Arian” disputes in the West. In answer to the question of whether the commentary underwrites this awareness, I shall demonstrate that Hilary, like the vast majority of western bishops of that time, knew nothing about these controversies such that it affected his theology and exegesis. At the same time, he does evidence concern over contemporary subordinationist interpretations of Christ whose views stemmed from a “logos-sarx” incarnational theology present throughout the West in the third and fourth centuries.

When Augustine wrote in 421, “Who does not know Hilary, the bishop of Gaul?”¹ he was echoing a generally shared sentiment in the Latin world. Within a half century of their first publication, the works of Hilary’s dogmatic corpus had already been copied and widely disseminated in varying collections,² valued almost solely for their polemical

1. *Contra Julianum* 1.3.

2. For example, Hilary’s *De synodis*, *De trinitate*, and *Contra Auxentium* form the main texts, along with Ambrose’s *De fide* 1–2 and the acts from the council of Aquileia, which contain the fifth-century “Arian” scholia (Codex Parisinus lat. 8907); the knowledge and refutation of *De synodis* by the Luciferian Faustinus (*ep.* 2.24 [CSEL 35:12–13]). Cf. P. Smulders, “Two Passages of Hilary’s *Apologetica Responsa* Rediscovered,” *Bijdragen* 39 (1978): 237f. for the development of a *corpus hilariana* in the middle ages; C. Kannengiesser, “L’héritage d’Hilaire de Poitiers,” *Recherches de Science Religieuse* 56 (1968): 435–56.

contribution. It was Hilary's celebrated reputation as a confessor and defender of Nicene orthodoxy³ that caused him to be counted among the "doctores et defensores ecclesiae,"⁴ a status that was no less engendered by a hagiographic account of the saint's life circulating by the middle of the sixth century,⁵ aptly epitomized by Gregory of Tours with the words, "Hilary, blessed defender of the undivided Trinity and for its sake driven into exile, was both restored to his own country and entered Paradise."⁶ From the earliest times, the name of the esteemed bishop and his literary activity had become synonymous with anti-"Arian" crisis literature.

Such an enduring influence made its mark on subsequent interpretations of Hilary's first known work, a commentary on the Gospel of Matthew (hereafter *In Matt.*).⁷ Despite the fact that Hilary had not yet heard of the Nicene creed⁸ before going into exile in 356, and in all likelihood, before he wrote the commentary, the operating assumption has been that Hilary must have had nevertheless some awareness of the disputes over what was being called "Arianism." After all, he wrote his commentary in the middle of the fourth century—at least twenty-five years after Nicaea—giving us good reason perhaps to have such expectations. The problem is whether the commentary itself underwrites this awareness, which is a much vexed issue given the generalities with which Hilary describes his opponents and even his own position. It may be rather that the commentary challenges the expectations which are often at work in our interpretive models of the early and middle fourth century. We are frustrated by what it does not say because of what we assume it is supposed to say.

My interest in tackling these problems stems from an English translation of the *In Matthaëum* which I am currently preparing, and I have found it necessary to review its theological and confessional character in light of the larger picture of intellectual development of the fourth-century West. I want to proceed first by making some general observations about the milieu in which the commentary was written and pointing out several places where the text reveals its context, and then I shall briefly focus on two important passages which, among others, are said to be

3. See especially Rufinus' *H.E.* 2.30–31 (PL 21:501AB).

4. Licinius of Carthage, *ep.* 1 (PL 72:689C).

5. Venantius Fortunatus, *Vita Sancti Hilarii Episcopi Pictaviensis* (PL 88:439–54).

6. *Historia Francorum* 3.prol. (PL 71:241).

7. The actual title is problematic since the *incipit* varies greatly among the MSS. Many scholars depend on Jerome's usage who refers to the work as "in Matthaëum," as I shall here, but this is most likely descriptive, not titular.

8. *De synodis* 91.

anti-“Arian” in their intent. The wider implications of this study have to do with the ongoing debate over how isolated (or not) the majority of western churches before the council of Ariminum (359) were from the doctrinal issues which stemmed from so-called Nicene-“Arian” conflicts. If most western bishops were only minimally affected by these conflicts, as seems probable, then we are obliged to ask how “orthodoxy” was generally defined in their churches. Indebted to the conclusions of the late Jean Doignon, I shall demonstrate that Hilary’s theological constructions at the time of his commentary are almost entirely dependent on the influence of third-century writers such that the constructions of his own christology were not yet informed by and inadequate to meet new challenges of the mid-fourth century.

I

Surprisingly few texts were produced by Latin Christians in the first half of the fourth century. Especially between the council of Nicaea and the early 350s, a time when we might expect a flurry of theological productivity given the high degree of conciliar activity, we find not even a handful of extant remnants from the period, and all of them from the genre of biblical commentary: an abbreviated (pre-Nicene) commentary on the Apocalypse by Victorinus of Poetovio (Pettau);⁹ a commentary in fragmented condition on the gospels by Fortunatianus of Aquileia,¹⁰ and Hilary’s commentary on Matthew.¹¹ One can only assume that the little which survives reflects the little that was written. Only Hilary’s provides a near complete text,¹² making it the first full Latin biblical commentary to

9. He was martyred in 304. In the preface to his translation of Origen’s homilies on Luke (*ca.* 388), Jerome writes that that he had in his possession a commentary on Matthew by Victorinus, along with Hilary’s, which is now lost (SC 87:97). Cf. *De viris illust.* 74 for the list of other commentaries which Victorinus was known to have published.

10. Probably written before his defection to anti-Athanasian forces in Milan (355). In his own commentary on Matthew, Jerome offers a list of sources which he has used, mainly Greek, but also “Latinorum Hilarii, Victorini, Fortunatiani opuscula” (SC 242:68).

11. One or two of the pseudo-Cyprianic sermons are thought to come from the fourth century, *De centesima, sexagesima, tricesima*, and *De montibus Sion et Sinai*, although Daniélou has argued for a late second-century date. Jerome tells of a commentary on the Song of Songs by Reticus of Autun (*ca.* 314), as well as a “great volume” against Novatian (*De viris illust.* 82), but neither survive.

12. The original preface appears to have been lost (2.1 opens with “ut quia diximus” though not in reference to anything said in chapter 1), and the commentary ends with Matthew 28.13, which is seven verses too short, and no epilogue. Jean

be preserved, and therefore of enormous value in reconstructing the exegetical and literary history of the West at this time. Nevertheless, this lacuna of available Latin literature is most unfortunate, and for our purposes quite problematic, since Hilary's commentary stands virtually alone in providing us with insight into the theological issues as they looked just before the "storm" of conflicting conciliar edicts and their imperial enforcement broke upon the West beginning with the councils of Arles (353) and Milan (355).

The only text which is roughly contemporary with Hilary's is Fortunatianus', but his commentary, surviving in three small fragmentary portions,¹³ offers minimal assistance for our understanding of the period. His exegesis is unrestrained in its allegorical explanations, arguing that the church, as the new people of grace, has replaced the synagogue which has been abandoned by the Holy Spirit. There is a complete absence of a theology or biblical allusions associated with Nicaea or Serdica, which might seem curious at first glance since Fortunatianus was among the episcopal subscribers present at the western council of Serdica¹⁴ (unless of course the commentary was penned before Serdica). Nor is there any allusion to trinitarian or christological formulation beyond a vague allegorical rendering of Christ's triumphal riding of the donkey into Jerusalem as "the Christian people therefore have God as their rider."¹⁵ What the writer does stress is that the faith has been preserved, not through any conciliar vehicle, but by being handed down through the apostles: Jesus is said to lead the people to himself by means of their learning the apostolic teaching and precepts ("doctrina et mandatis apostolicis"),¹⁶ presumably a reference to the faith that defined the Aquileian church. Exegetically

Doignon produced a new critical edition for the commentary in 1978 (SC 254:258), having provided a greater wealth of manuscript evidence for reconstruction of the text, apparatus for background sources, and rightly removed the *capitula* from the beginning of each chapter. Coustant included these chapter headings within the text but they have been shown to be written by a later hand. H. Jeannotte, "Les 'capitula' du *Commentarium in Matthaeum* de saint Hilaire de Poitiers," *BZ* 10 (1912): 36–45.

13. *Commentarii in evangelia*. The title is taken from Jerome, *De viris illust.* 97, who says Fortunatianus "in evangelia . . . brevi sermone et rustico scripsit commentarios" during the reign of Constantius II (in CCL 9:367–70). The three fragments consist of commentary on two passages from Matthew (21.1–9 and 23.34–38) and a prologue, perhaps intended for the whole commentary. The crudity of the composition could well indicate that Latin was not the writer's native language.

14. *Collectanea Antiariana Parisina* [CAP], ed. A. Feder (Vienne, 1916), B 2.4 (CSEL 65:137).

15. CCL 9:368.30.

16. CCL 9:368.26–28. Cf. 369.47–48.

and theologically, there is a primitive quality about these Latin fragments, and nothing about them, except their authorship, necessitates their being from the fourth century and not the early third.

Of all his known writings,¹⁷ the *In Matthaeum* (or *Commentarium in Matthaeum*) is likely to have been Hilary's earliest, written almost certainly before the council of Béziers (Bitterae) in 356, where the Gallic bishop was arraigned on unknown charges and sent into exile.¹⁸ It was only in the course of these proceedings and his ensuing experiences in Asia Minor that Hilary became familiar with the Nicene-"Arian" conflicts which had been raging in the East.¹⁹ The commentary, however, shows no unambiguous signs of the kind of theological awareness and terminology which will appear later in his *De synodis* or *De trinitate*, and is therefore attributed to Hilary's pre-exilic episcopate, circa 350. But the question of whether Hilary had any specific knowledge of pro- or anti-"Arian" arguments remains one of the most disputed points of the work. And if Hilary had specific knowledge of such arguments, there is the further question about what access he had to documents presenting those arguments.

Influenced by the discussion in P. Smulders' *La doctrine trinitaire d'Hilaire de Poitiers* (1944), the bulk of scholarship in this century has favored the idea that the bishop had some familiarity with "Arian" antagonists, ranging from an actual knowledge of Arius' writings,²⁰ to a vague acquaintance with contemporary subordinationist issues.²¹ Two

17. Listed in Jerome's *De viris illust.* 100 and *ep.* 70.5.

18. The reason for Hilary's exile is a much vexed issue among scholars: see H. Brennecke, *Hilarius von Poitiers und die Bischofsopposition gegen Konstantius II* (Berlin/New York, 1984), 216-43; D. H. Williams, "A Reassessment of the Early Career and Exile of Hilary of Poitiers," *JEH* 42 (1991): 212-17; T. D. Barnes, "Hilary of Poitiers On His Exile," *VC* 46 (1992): 129-40; P. Burns, "Hilary of Poitiers' Road to Béziers: Politics or Religion?" *J ECS* 2 (1994): 273-89.

19. It was just as he was about to go into exile, Hilary tells us, that he became acquainted with the Nicene creed (*De syn.* 91), probably as a result of the proceedings of the council of Milan (355) where the creed was introduced. The extent to which Hilary had become familiar with anti-Athanasian and Marcellan tactics at that time is still debated today, being determined in part by whether Hilary prepared his *Adversus Valentem et Ursacium* (first part) in light of his arraignment at Béziers or as a result of the Sirmium "manifesto" which was published in 357.

20. M. Simonetti, "Note sul commento a Mateo di Ilario di Poitiers," *VC* 1 (1969): 55f.; C. Kannengiesser, "L'exégèse d'Hilaire," in *Hilaire et Son Temps, actes du colloque de Poitiers, 29 Septembre-3 Octobre* (Paris, 1969), 132.

21. So M. Simonetti, *La crisi ariana nel IV secolo* (Rome, 1975), 298, 95-98; Paul Burns, *Christology in Hilary of Poitiers' Commentary on Matthew* (Rome, 1981), 22, 33 *et passim*; R. P. C. Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God* (Edinburgh, 1988), 473.

major preconceptions have tended to govern these viewpoints. First, the dearth of Latin sources in the first half of the fourth century has made reconstruction of the period susceptible to *a priori* assertions about the West's early acceptance of Nicene Trinitarianism on the grounds that it was known and valued by Julius of Rome and Ossius of Cordova. But in fact there were very few bishops who shared their exposure to the political and doctrinal issues. In the council of Serdica's letter to Julius, deep concern is expressed twice for the need of communicating the decisions of the council to bishops throughout Sicily, Sardinia, and Italy in order to prevent them from ignorantly extending communion to Valens and Ursacius and other anti-Athanasian proponents.²² Evidently, the majority of bishops in these regions were unfamiliar with the ecclesiastical matters at stake, to say nothing of their doctrinal implications. To what degree most western bishops were informed about conciliar creeds is notoriously difficult to determine, and seems to have been negligible at least until the middle 350s, when controversial synodical decrees began to be circulated for episcopal signatures under imperial mandate. Only then does the Nicene creed surface (as it did at the council of Milan) as a *sine qua non* of credal orthodoxy, and, even then, western bishops were able to accept another formula of faith if it could be demonstrated that it was faithful to the church's teaching, as happened at the council of Ariminum (359). Western notions of doctrinal orthodoxy did not have a single standard in these years.

Hilary's ignorance of the Nicene faith was not an isolated case but a generally shared condition of uninvolvement among western bishops. Without the invasive force of ecclesiastical politics that had so permeated sees in the East, western bishops had little need of Nicaea prior to the late 350s, since it provided nothing that their baptismal creeds could not offer as critical connections to the church's tradition.²³ It is noteworthy that Hilary of Poitiers, at the end of the twelfth book of his *De trinitate*, having provided a detailed defense of pro-Nicene Trinitarian theology

22. CAP B 2.2.5 (CSEL 65:130). Apparently, *epistolio* (literally, "short notes") were being circulated among western bishops by those who had been excommunicated at Serdica for the purposes of sidestepping the decisions of the council and seeking communion with the majority of bishops who had not attended the council. The urgency of tone used in the encyclical letter issued from the western bishops underscores this point (CAP B 2.1 [CSEL 65:103–26]).

23. For the enduring utility of local church confessions alongside "ecumenical" creeds throughout the fourth and fifth centuries, see my "Constantine, Nicaea and the 'Fall' of the Church," in *Studies in Christian Origins*, ed. L. Ayres and G. Jones (London, 1998), 117–36.

and exegesis, concludes with a prayer asking God to keep his faith undefiled, “so that I may ever hold fast that which I professed in the creed (*symbolo*) of my regeneration when I was baptized in the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.”²⁴ These local confessions still functioned as the primary vehicles for maintaining doctrinal and doxological coherence, despite the fact that they could be easily challenged by the broader authority of conciliar decisions. We can once and for all dismiss the historiographic legacy of Gwatkin and Harnack, which had been to posit the fourth-century conflicts in terms of two monolithic parties in polar opposition, and that the West particularly, was given to Nicene orthodoxy in a more or less uniform fashion.²⁵

The other preconception which links Hilary’s *In Matthaeum* with anti-“Arian” ideology is grounded on the view that Hilary was exiled at Béziers for his refusal to condemn pro-Nicene theology, which implies that if “Arianism” was an object of Hilary’s attention in the commentary, then it is easier to explain his “adoption of the Athanasian-Nicene cause” in 356.²⁶ I do not intend to revisit the reasons for Hilary’s exile here. Suffice to say that the charges laid against Hilary at Béziers, whatever their motivation may have been, were not doctrinal in nature, and that Hilary’s words with regard to the events of that synod, “I denounced the heretical ringleaders,”²⁷ do not mean he had become familiar with the confessional and theological ramifications of ecclesiastical politics as he can articulate so astutely several years later in *De synodis*. There is no sure warrant, therefore, for connecting the commentary and Béziers as a twin inauguration of the bishop into Nicene-“Arian” polemics. Of course such a conclusion does not imply Hilary was entirely ignorant of contemporary theological issues which were concerned with the subordinating of the divine substance of the Son to that of the Father—a subject to which I shall return.

Not all scholars have accepted the idea that the commentary reflects a knowledge of anti-“Arian” sentiments. Besides Loofs and Watson, there are the extensive labors of Jean Doignon, who argued in his critical edition of the *In Matthaeum* and in a separate monograph that the commentary’s theological constructions are drawn solely from third-century sources. Doignon rightly questioned previous evaluations of

24. *De trin.* 12.57 (NPNF 9:233).

25. D. H. Williams, *Ambrose of Milan and the End of the Nicene-Arian Conflicts* (Oxford, 1995), 3–5.

26. Burns, *Christology*, 22.

27. *De syn.* 2 (PL 10:481B–482A).

Hilary's earliest work which tended to depreciate its thought as but a developmental stage when compared to the more sophisticated christology of *De trinitate*. The first few years of Hilary's episcopacy in which he wrote the *In Matthaëum* is itself a noteworthy achievement, and should not be evaluated in light of the literature he later produced as a "confessor."²⁸ While Doignon's thesis has been criticized for not acknowledging sufficiently that Hilary is opposing contemporary antagonists,²⁹ it is nevertheless true to say that the internal evidence reveals a thought world that, for the most part, can best be described as "pre-Nicene." Limited space allows me to mention just a few examples that deserve to be highlighted.

1) There are three credal allusions or quotations that contain no echoes of any fourth-century conciliar statements:

a) *In Matt. 1.3*: Concerning the birth of Christ Hilary makes the statement, "For he was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary" ("Nam conceptum ex Spiritu sancto, natum ex Maria virgine") which is said to be the message of all the prophets. This line reads like a citation from a larger creed and if so, it may possibly be one of the earliest quotations of the Gallic form of the Apostles' Creed;³⁰ a form that was used liturgically, perhaps in Poitiers. It is tempting to see Hilary's remark about the creed confessed at his baptism at the end of *De trinitate*³¹ as another allusion to the confessional statement which is cited in part here.

b) *In Matt. 4.14* offers a sequence of christological truths presented in a manner much like that of the *regula fidei* found cited in Tertullian's works:

It is beyond the eloquence of human language that he is God from God, Son of the Father's substance and abiding within the substance of the Father, at first incarnate as a man, then subject to death in his human condition, after three days he returned from death to life, he brought to

28. *Hilaire de Poitiers avant l'exil* (Paris, 1971), 13–15. The attribution of the title "confessor" to Hilary is already in place by Jerome's *Apol. contra Rufinum*.

29. Burns, *Christology*, 20–22. Burns rightly insists that the number of parallels which exists between the *Commentary* and third-century writers "do not amount to proof that the opponents in the *Commentary* and the opponents in the writings of Tertullian are identical."

30. The phrase "conceptum . . . sancto" just before the *natum* is unique, differing from the old Roman creed, from Tertullian, and from every other creed that I have found in the 4/5th century. The "textus receptus" version of the Apostles' Creed, which is thought to have originated in southwest Gaul or northeast Spain, reads: "qui conceptus est de spiritu sancto, natus ex Maria virgine." Cf. Ambrose, *Exp. symb.* 11.

31. *De trin.* 12.57.

heaven the matter of the body which he assumed, being united to the Spirit and with his eternal substance.³²

More specifically, Hilary's language of Christ's incarnation, death, and resurrection in this passage is closely paralleled in Tertullian's *Apologeticum* 21.21–23, though the reference to "he brought to heaven the matter of his body which he assumed" is traceable to the Apocalypse commentary of Victorinus of Poetovio (5.8–9; 11.1).

c) *In Matt.* 15.8 speaks briefly of the confession "in the Son of God and his passion and resurrection" by which candidates for baptism are to believe, and by this "sacrament of profession the faith is given back" (*redditur*). This is clearly a reference to catechetical preparation, though we perhaps should not read "redditur" as having the same technical sense as it will have closer to the end of the century.³³

2) Throughout the *In Matthaeum*, Hilary discusses the views of or simply alludes to opponents with nebulous phrases such as "many irreligious people" (1.3) and "very depraved men" who claim that Mary could not have borne Christ as a virgin, or "the view of heretics" (5.8) with regard to what kind of body the believer will possess at the resurrection, or a reference to "churches of the heretics" where ignorance is no different from perversity (10.3), or those who "boil over into diverse schemes of heresy . . . by detracting from the Lord the dignity and communion of the paternal substance" (12.18). It is clear that various kinds of doctrinal error are being addressed, and in most cases, the mention of opponents, who are never named, has a literary function which suits Hilary's pastoral and didactic purposes rather than supposing he is confronting an actual polemical situation. This may account for the overall irenic tone which Hilary exhibits toward his adversaries, a point which Reinkens brought out over a century ago.³⁴ Even in *In Matt.* 31.3, a passage where Hilary is thought to be refuting "Arian" contemporaries, the latter are described as living potentially commendable lives and capable of understanding the gospels, which reveals a remarkable lack of hostility, as compared to

32. "et ultra humani sermonis eloquium est Deum ex Deo, Filium ex Patris substantia atque intra Patris substantiam consistentem, primum hominem corporatum, dehinc morti hominis condicione subiectum, postremo post triduum in vitam a morte redeuntem consociatam Spiritus et substantiae suae aeternitati materiem ad caelum adsumpti corporis retulisse." See Tertullian, *De praes. haer.* 13.1–5; *Adv. Prax.* 2.1; *De vel. virg.* 1.3.

33. As per the still useful warnings by H. J. Carpenter, "Creeds and Baptismal Rites in the First Four Centuries," *JTS* 44 (1943): 1–11.

34. R. H. Reinkens, *Hilarius von Poitiers* (Schaffhausen, 1864), 59–60.

Hilary's later works when he has actually engaged Homoian antagonists. He seems to be familiar enough with these contemporaries to make personal observations about them, yet the absence of specific names³⁵ and of animosity provides further proof that the *In Matthaeum* is not polemically oriented. The recent contention that the commentary was written just after the synod of Arles (353),³⁶ at which a group of western bishops were bullied and coerced to sign against Athanasius and Marcellus, is strained to the breaking point.

3) An important characteristic, and one generally acknowledged by scholars, is that Hilary still employs in his incarnational theology a two-stage Logos model, and does not know of the eternal generation of the Son. In 16.4, Hilary insists that the process of divine birth is "from the eternal God . . . God the Son has proceeded, to whom belongs eternity from his eternal Father." We are then told how he "is born the Word which was always in the Father." This is language strongly reminiscent of, if not directly drawn from, Novatian's *De trinitate* 31, where the Son receives his eternality from the eternity of the Father. Paul Burns is only partially correct in saying Novatian freed the idea of generation from the time of creation.³⁷ It is true that the Son is not generated simply for creation and that the only source for the Son's generation is the eternal substance of God, nevertheless, procession for Novatian is still linked (as

35. A minor point is the fact that Hilary mentions no nonbiblical names, except those of Cyprian and Tertullian, whose previous treatises on the Lord's Prayer, he says, permit him to bypass any treatment of Matt 6.9–13 (*In Matt.* 5.1). Such a statement assumes that his readers are sufficiently familiar with these writings, and that they are governing authorities for how one reads the Bible and understands theology. And although Hilary indicts Tertullian in that his "subsequent error has detracted from the authority of his commendable writings," the *In Matthaeum* is intellectually dependent upon Tertullian's thought and spirituality perhaps more than any other Christian writer from antiquity.

36. Burns, "Road to Béziers," 282; Smulders, *Hilary of Poitiers' Preface to His Opus Historicum* (Leiden, 1995), 105. In this latter work (pp. 115–18) Smulders believes he has found an echo of the edict placed before the bishops at Arles (353) and Milan (355) in *In Matt.* 10.12, which underlies his attempt to locate Arian antecedents in the *In Matthaeum*, and that this work was written partly in reaction to specific anti-Nicene forces in the West. Because Smulders dates the commentary to 353, he is able to attribute a certain knowledge of the issues to Hilary which an earlier date would render more questionable. But the dating of the work threatens to become circular since there are no indisputable internal or external factors for fixing the commentary.

37. *Christology*, 76. Burns admits that Hilary does not actually state the doctrine of eternal generation, but argues that he does refer to it (p. 77).

it is for Tertullian) to temporal stages in which the Son came forth as the visible God *after* the Father.

The same suggestion of the twin stages of the Word occurs in *In Matt.* 31.3 where the Son was in the Father before he “proceeded” as an independent entity.³⁸ Citing John 1.1, Hilary writes, “he is himself in possession of what he was before he was born, namely, that the one who generated and the one who is begotten have the same eternity.” It has been rightly noted that Hilary is making a distinction of time in the career of the Word, “before he was born,” that which he was in the Father, and that which he possessed by means of his birth, once he proceeded from Father. Such a position negates the eternal generation of the Son,³⁹ since he is eternal, not because his birth is eternal, but because by his birth he comes into full possession of the eternal divinity. This undermines the idea that Hilary had been exposed to the terminology and emphases which governed pro-Nicene theology. Significantly, Hilary never discusses or alludes to John 6.38, 10.30, 10.38, 14.11 or any of the Johannine prooftexts (except the prologue of John on this one occasion) so commonly employed in “Nicene-Arian” debates and found freely in *De trinitate* book 3 and elsewhere.

Moreover, any direct influence from *Contra Arianos*,⁴⁰ a work that Athanasius wrote while exiled in the West during the early 340s, can be ruled out. Absent from Hilary’s theology are the railings against Arius and his followers called the “Arians,” arguments for the correlativity of the Father and Son, and the Son’s eternal generation (*Contra Ar.* 1.9; 14; 21; 25; 28; 2.34–35), and Athanasius’ frequent use of the formula to establish divine relation: the Son is like the Father (1.6; 9; 17; 2.43; 3.14) (or “like the Father in all things”: 1.21; 38; 44; 52; 2.17; 3.10). The “Arians” themselves are said to teach the Son is unlike the Father and foreign to his essence, or that the Son is changeable because he is a creature per the long discussion in *Oration* 2 over Proverbs 8. Notably, the Athanasian insistence that all “created” or “made” language concerning

38. Hanson, *Search*, 468.

39. Smulders, *Doctrines trinitaire*, 78–79: “L’éternité du Fils consiste en ce qu’il est éternel par celui qui l’a engendré, c’est-à-dire du fait que lui a été communiquée la nature éternelle du Père. Ainsi donc, même ici, le Fils ne semble pas éternel par sa propre personnalité, mais parce que le Père lui a donné une nature qui, en lui-même, est éternelle” (79).

40. Written in the West, the first two orations may have been begun in *ca.* 340, with the third oration (also Athanasian) coming sometime later. For discussion, T. D. Barnes, *Athanasius and Constantius: Theology and Politics in the Constantinian Empire* (Cambridge, 1993), 53–54.

the Son must be in reference to his incarnation is not found in the *Commentary*, whereas Hilary refers to the Son at least in one instance as “the first work of God” (“primum Dei opus est”).⁴¹ As intelligent and resourceful as Hilary seems to have been, it is hard to imagine that he would not have made good use of such arguments had they been available to him. Whereas by the time Hilary writes *De synodis* (358), he exhibits a growing familiarity with eastern theology, and he found some of it attractive for expressing orthodox sentiments to his fellow bishops in the West.

II

Now we must turn and inquire what concrete evidence in the *In Matthaeum* shows that Hilary possessed an awareness of doctrines relevant to contemporary anti-“Arian” polemics. His description of the Son of God as “the eternal Son,” or “God from God, light from light,”⁴² or having a “unity of substance with Father,”⁴³ or the use of *paternae substantiae/spiritus*,⁴⁴ are easily found in the Latin christological tradition and are a part of Hilary’s doctrinal repertoire that needs no appeal to the aftermath of Nicaea. Of course, just because we can identify Hilary utilizing third-century theological material does not preclude his addressing contemporary concerns. Various scholars have argued that 12.17–18, 16.4, 26.4–5, and 31.2–3 are the primary passages which contain concepts and terminology that point to an acquaintance with “Arian” ideas. I want to revisit briefly two of these passages that have presented the stronger case for this view.

(1) The central concern of 12.17 is the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit which was committed by the Pharisees and by all those “who deny to Christ what is of God, and withdraw the substance of the Father’s *spiritus* residing in him” (“quam Christo negare quod Dei sit et consistentem in eo paterni Spiritus substantiam adimere”). Whether his statement is a response to a recent attack on the divinity of Christ is difficult to say, since, throughout the commentary, Hilary consistently relates the denial

41. *In Matt.* 8.5. Cf. n. 57 (*infra*) and the fragment of Victorinus of Poetovio from *De fabrica mundi* concerning John 1.1, “Ergo primus factus creaturae est.”

42. Tertullian, *Apol.* 21.11–12.

43. Hippolytus, *Adv. Haer.* 10.29; Tertullian, *Adv. Prax.* 2.4; 19.8.

44. Cf. Tertullian, *Apol.* 21.11; *Adv. Prax.* 14.10; Novatian, *De trin.* 18. The combination of divine descriptives with *paterna* as a part of the early Latin theological tradition is also borne out by its wide usage by writers such as Faustinus the Luciferian (*De trin.* 9 and 20) and pseudo-Eusebius (of Vercelli) (*De trin.* 8 [vel 10].7).

of Christ's abiding in the Father's divinity as blasphemy of the Spirit in accordance with his exegesis of Matt 12.31–32. In the next paragraph (12.18) he elaborates on those who blaspheme the Spirit: "through a malevolence of mind and heart, you detract from his excellence (*generositas*), which you are compelled to confess in name, having refused to him communion with the Father's substance."⁴⁵

Smulders has most recently put forward new arguments about 12.18 to show that Hilary is addressing "the controversy between Arians and catholics over the Son's relationship with the Father." Beyond his earlier and unlikely thesis that this passage contains an echo of Arius' *Thalia*, Smulders cites the passage as corroborating evidence that Hilary knew and used an otherwise unknown eastern confession of ca. 347 to which he also alludes in his *Against Valens and Ursacius*, where he charges the Arians with "blaspheming Christ by depriving him of the excellence (*generositas*) of the Father's infinity."⁴⁶ The problem with Smulder's complex proposal is that it is too hypothetical to be proven with any certainty,⁴⁷ and that he must make the tenuous assumption that Hilary had access to this eastern confession before his exile in the East.⁴⁸

But do we need to look to such elaborate explanations for an interpretation of the above passage? It is more likely that the connection between undermining the Son's divine nature and blasphemy of the Spirit was already known to Hilary through the tradition of Latin theology. In Tertullian's *Adversus Praxean* (29.19), to claim that Christ died according to the divine nature is blasphemy against God. Any denial of the

45. "per malevolentiam mentis et sensus generositatem eius, quam confiteri es coactus in nomine, abnegata paternae substantiae communione, decerpas." Cf. *In Matt.* 5.15: "Peccatum autem in Spiritum est Deo virtutis potestatem negare et Christo substantiam adimere aeternitatis, per quem, quia in hominem Deus venit, homo rursus fiet in Deum." The point is not christological or trinitarian, but soteriological.

46. CAP B 2.9 (6) (CSEL 65:149.14–15).

47. Because Hilary uses in *In Matt.* 12.18.23–30 and *Adu. V. et U.* the word *generositas* in the context of those who deny the Son's communion with the Father, Smulders believes he has found a parallel since the word is extremely rare in Hilary's works. Thus Hilary is said to have had in mind "a text" in *In Matt.* 12.18 which was the very same text as the creed of 347. This linkage between the two texts seems to have been initially suggested by Doignon (*Sur Matthieu* 1.286 n. 14).

48. Smulders likewise accepts the theory that Hilary's commentary was indebted to the doctrinal letter sent to Julius of Rome by the heads of the Serdican council as recorded in Theodoret, *H.E.* 2.8 (*Opus*, p. 103 n. 367). The letter in Theodoret, however, is a conciliar encyclical; the *Adu. V. et U.* (CAP B 2.2) is the only source which records the synod's letter to Julius, and it is, typical of the conciliar proceedings, not concerned with doctrine at all.

person of Christ was to commit this unforgiveable sin.⁴⁹ More pointedly, we can find examples in Tertullian and Novatian of *generositas* qualifying the integrity of divinity with respect to the Word's incarnation.⁵⁰

A more contemporary example of this exegetical connection is also available. If the authenticity of the *acta* from a small Gallic council which met in Cologne (Coloniae Agrippinae) in 345 or 346 is accepted,⁵¹ we discover that its bishop, Eufrata (or Euphratas), was unanimously condemned for blaspheming the Holy Spirit by denying "Christ, the Son of God, is God" ("Christum Deum dei filium").⁵² The first bishop, Maximinus of Trier, to subscribe to the condemnation quotes Matt 12.32 as illustrative of Eufrata's theology, and several other bishops reiterate the point

49. *Adv. Marc.* 3.22; 4.28.

50. Tertullian argued for the separation of the flesh, which is subject to contempt and suffering, from the celestial excellence (*coelesti generositate*) of the Son of God (*De carne Christi* 9.8 [CCL 2:893]). Likewise, when Novatian makes a case for the impassibility of Christ's deity, not being liable to human weakness, he writes, "For in any person whatever the soul possesses this excellence of immortality ('generositatem immortalitatis') that cannot be killed, much more does the excellence of the Word of God possess this power such that it cannot be slain" (*De trin.* 25.9 [CCL 4:61]).

51. There is not agreement on the authenticity of these *acta*, which are preserved only in a tenth-century codex, though they are acknowledged in the eighth-century *Life of Maximinus of Trier* (CCL 148:26; SC 241:68–69). For the negative position, see L. Duchesne, "Le faux concile de Cologne (346)," *RHE* 3 (1902): 16–29, and H. C. Brennecke, "Synodum congregavit contra Euphratam nefandissimum episcopum," *ZKG* 90 (1979): 30–54. The introduction to the *acta* places the proceedings on 12 May 346 ("Post consulatum Amanti et Albani, iiii Idus Maias"), though it could have been the previous year. Fl. Amantius, who was consul in 345 with Numinius Albinus, might be identical with the Amantius of 346 (*PLRE* 1:51). Moreover, the exact identity of the Albinus of 346 is not certain. It may or may not be the same as the M. Nummius Albinus of 345 (*PLRE* 1:37). Cf. *Mansi* 2:1371 n. 1.

During this same two to three-year period Photinus of Sirmium was under investigation and condemned in Milan (345) and in Rome (347) (CSEL 65:144) for charges similar to those laid against Eufrata. That the proceedings are held in Cologne, Eufrata's own see, which led to his condemnation, finds a parallel to the sequence of events regarding Photinus. Twice Photinus is said to have been condemned which he apparently decided to ignore, as Hilary says, "Fotinus, apprehended as a heretic, and a long time earlier pronounced guilty and for some time cut off from united communion, could not even then be brought through a popular faction . . ." (B 2.9 [1] [CSEL 65:146]). The final straw was a synod of bishops in Sirmium itself. Eufrata had already been condemned by five bishops in an unknown location prior to the Cologne assembly (ch. 10) to no avail. Several bishops, in their condemnations, attest to Eufrata's continued activity in his position as metropolitan of *Gallia secunda*. Unfortunately, though not untypically, we never hear from Eufrata himself in the *acta*.

52. Chapters 7 and 14. Hilary is making a similar point in *In Matt.* 12.17 that the blasphemy of the Spirit is "Christo negare quod Dei sit . . . quia et in Christo Deus et Christus in Deo sit."

that denying Christ is God is nothing other than blasphemy of the Spirit.⁵³ It is absolutely clear from the *acta* that Eufrata was not condemned on account of “Arianism,” but for a form of subordinationist adoptionism⁵⁴ which was creating discord among western churches, as the western creed of Serdica and the case of Photinus of Sirmium confirm.⁵⁵ Were we to suppose that Hilary’s commentary reflected the views of any episcopal collaborations, we would certainly have to look to the events at Cologne.

(2) In another important passage from the commentary, chapter 31, Hilary speaks of an unnamed party who asserts the Son “proceeded not from eternity nor was he brought forth from the infinity of the Father’s substance, but through Him who created all things,⁵⁶ he was produced out of nothing, in that he was derived *ex nihilo* and had a beginning from the things that are made and was established in time.” A credible source for the notion that the Son was produced *ex nihilo* is the theological polemics of the fourth century. Doignon has no convincing alternative explanation for this passage which has persuaded so many others that Hilary must have written this part of his commentary in relation to the “Arian threat.”⁵⁷ But to exactly what documents Hilary might have had access for his information is uncertain.

Scholars have seen the council of Serdica (342/43) as the most logical place to look. Hilary is thought to have known of the Serdican creed which he quotes in *De synodis* 34 condemning “those who say the Son of God came forth from things non-existent, or from another substance and not from God.”⁵⁸ The creed in question, however, was produced by the *eastern* delegates who met at Philippopolis, and it is unlikely that more than a handful of western bishops had access to documentation from this assembly. That Hilary feels compelled after 356 to cite the creed produced

53. Chapters 4, 5, and 7. Of the fourteen bishops present at Cologne, eleven are listed among the subscribers to the conciliar encyclical of Serdica as per Athanasius, *Apol. c. Ar.* 50.

54. Eufrata is said to have denied “primordiale Dominum et Deum nostrum” (ch. 8), and “tantum nudum hominem asserit Christum” (ch. 8). Cf. Novatian, *De trin.* 15–16, “Si homo tantummodo Christus”

55. Another indication of the western sensitivity to “monarchial” theology is in Paulinus of Trier’s willingness to condemn Marcellus and Photinus at the council of Milan (355), though not Athanasius, for which he was deposed and exiled (Sulpicius Severus, *Chronicum* 2.37).

56. One family of manuscripts reads “per eum qui eum creavit effectum,” instead of “per eum qui omnia creavit” (PL 9:1007D). Doignon (*Sur Matthieu* 2.228) suggests that some copyists corrected the “eum” to “omnia” in order to preserve Hilary from any suspicion of Arianism.

57. Burns, *Christology*, 84; Hanson, *Search*, 468.

58. CAP A 4.2 (CSEL 65:72); *De syn.* 34 (PL 10:508A).

at Philippopolis on two occasions when writing to his western confrères about eastern episcopal activity implies that it was not generally known in Gaul, even though a Latin version of the creed was available in Africa and Italy soon after the council.⁵⁹

There are two pieces of evidence which indicate the synod's decisions had been circulated in some western sees: 1) in the preface of the encyclical letter from Serdica concern is raised that the condemnations reasserted at Philippopolis against Athanasius, Marcellus, and Asclepius⁶⁰ had been received by a select number of western bishops, among them, the dissident Donatus of Carthage, three bishops from Campania, and the clergy at Ariminum;⁶¹ 2) a synodical letter from Serdica (*supra*) to Julius urges the Roman pontiff to write immediately and acquaint bishops in Sicily, Sardinia, and Italy with the recent decisions to exonerate the accused.⁶² It would seem that the Italian bishops were sufficiently unaware of the current ecclesiastical turmoil that there was danger of their naively accepting the condemnations of Athanasius and Marcellus and perhaps the orthodox-sounding creed produced at Philippopolis. We should not assume, therefore, that the eastern creed was generally known among the westerners.

Exactly what influence the western creed of Serdica had on western bishops is also problematic. Between sixty and eighty bishops were present at the council, with only one from Gaul. The conclusion of the encyclical letter enjoins the reader to indicate his agreement by subscription,⁶³ which is why in later accounts of the council some 250 to 300 names are appended to the encyclical. When we look at the ancient sources for the creed, we discover that the two earliest versions of the encyclical (Athanasius and Hilary) do not contain the confession.⁶⁴ Furthermore, the creed

59. Hilary cites the creed only in *De syn.* 34–35, whereas in the *Adversus Ursacium et Valens*, we have the decree of the synod to Africa, the creed (a slightly different version), and the list of subscriptions (*CAP* A 4). Given the stated destination of the creed, we can presume a Latin translation was made at the council.

60. "We think indeed that slanders against them have reached you too . . ." *CAP* B 2.1 (1) (CSEL 65:105).

61. *CAP* A 4.1 (CSEL 65:48). According to heading of the document, perhaps added by Hilary or a later excerptor, the letter was sent to Africa, presumably Carthage, since Donatus is mentioned as bishop.

62. *CAP* B 2.2 (5) (CSEL 65:130).

63. *CAP* B 2.1 (CSEL 65:126).

64. Athanasius, *Apol. c. Ar.* 44–49; Hilary, *Adv. V. et U.* (CSEL 65:103–26). The creed is attached to the end of the synodical letter in Theodoret, *H.E.* 2.8.1–52 and Codex Verona LX (58), fols. 81^r–88^r (*EOMIA* 1:645–53).

does not read like a creed. Its rambling series of denunciations and affirmations suggests that it was rather composed to refute some specific propositions than to serve as a creed for general dissemination. It is possible, if not likely, that the synodical letter was first circulated without the creed since ecclesiastical matters, not doctrinal, were the primary reason for the council. One may conjecture that there were two Latin versions of the synod's proceedings, the official one without the creed for general promulgation, and the other containing the creed issued to particular parties.⁶⁵ To repeat: the main worry of the western Serdican council was not about doctrinal matters but about the ecclesiastical politics which were consuming the vitality of the church. And it is not at all certain that western bishops were made familiar with the theological statements generated by the council.

Now to come back to Hilary's commentary. If he knew of the Serdican creed, it is odd that he never refers to the designations used in it like "Arian," or "Ariomaniac," or controversial statements, such as that the Son is "true God," or that the unity of Father and Son is not merely a concord of will and agreement, or, especially, that begotten does not mean originated. Just as significantly, Hilary never uses the theological catchphrase of Serdica, *una substantia* (the equivalent of *mia hypostasis*), nor does he make reference to the embattled Proverbs 8 passage in 31.3 or elsewhere.⁶⁶ The Serdican creed makes no mention of those who teach the Son's creation *ex nihilo*, which rules it out as Hilary's source for his use of

65. S. Hall has proposed that the creed was composed later, perhaps as a polemical guide to clergy designed to counter arguments made by Valens and Ursacius against Marcellus: "The Creed of Sardica," *SP* 19 (1989): 183–84. Following Athanasius' lead (*Tomus ad Ant.* 5.1), T. D. Barnes argues that the synodical statement was not a creed in any formal sense and, although originally drafted as part of the synodical letter, it was omitted in the final form which was published (*Athanasius and Constantius*, 77).

66. About Hilary's language in 31.3, Doignon observes that the bishop is completely unaware that his description of the Son's generation is drawing on, hardly modified, the terms of expressing the Son's generation from *Adv. Hermog.* 18 which is a commentary on Prov 8.22—the Wisdom of God (= Son) was born and created when in the thought of God it began to assume motion (*Hilaire*, 364). If Prov 8.22 was a locus classicus of the "Arians," and should be avoided or reinterpreted, Hilary knows nothing of this (as he does in *De trin.* 4.10). Compare Hilary's view above and *De trin.* 2.22 (CCL 62:58) where he discusses the Son's generation in a succinct way.

Obviously absent also is any comment on the Son's ignorance of the hour of his coming (Matt 24.36, 26.38–39, see *In Matt.* 26.4), whereas Hilary demonstrates the centrality of this argument in anti-Nicene polemics, *De trin.* 10.8–9, 29, 36–37. Indeed, book 10 is essentially a reponse dedicated to refuting these polemics which demonstrates an awareness that is indicative of his post-Béziers experiences.

the words. Overall, this dearth of correspondence with the Serdican creed suggests that the creed cannot have exerted an influence on Hilary's earliest thought.

It has been argued that there exists some direct connection between article 1.2 of the western creed⁶⁷ accusing Valens and Ursacius of stating "that the Logos, even the spirit, was wounded and was killed and died and arose," with Hilary's complaint in 31.2 of those who "want to attribute neediness to his spirit because of the weakness of the body, as if the taking flesh in his helplessness corrupted that power of the incorruptible substance, and eternity was engulfed by a nature of frailty." But the parallel is only an approximate one; the Serdican accusation is a polemical restatement, nor does its wording directly correlate with the language of the Commentary. In any case, Hilary would have been well fortified by arguments from Novatian and Tertullian which, for his own christological purposes, refuted those who allow the infirmities of the Son's flesh to exclude his powers of divinity.⁶⁸ The teaching that claimed the Son proceeded (*prolatum*) not from the Father's eternal substance but was produced *ex nihilo* represents not a dependency on any document(s) or persons in particular, but was rather part of a larger christological pattern of thought which attributed weakness to the divinity of the Son and (in Hilary's opinion) jeopardized the ability of the Son to redeem the world in its weakness.⁶⁹

67. Using the numeration in Hall's translation, "Creed of Serdica," 175–77.

68. Novatian, *De trin.* 11: "Quasi hominis enim in illo fragilitates considerant, quasi Dei virtutes non computant; infirmitates carnis recolant, potestates divinitatis excludunt" (CCL 4:28–29); Tertullian, *De carne Christi* 3.7: "tu potentiori deo auferes, quasi non valuerit Christus eius vere hominem indutus deus perseverare?" (CCL 2:877).

69. Emphasized by the conclusion of 31.3: "Mori igitur nihil in Deo potuit neque ex se metus Deo ullus est. In Christo enim Deus erat mundum reconcilians sibi." Hilary would have been already hardened to the feasibility of his opponents' argument on account of *Adv. Prax.* 7.6–8: "I, on the contrary, contend that nothing empty and void could have come forth from God, seeing that it is not put forth from that which is empty and void, nor could that possibly be devoid of substance which has proceeded from so great a substance . . . nothing can be made by that which is a void and empty thing. Is that Word of God then a void and empty thing which is called the Son who Himself is designated God?" (CCL 2:1166–67; ANF 3:602); *De carne Christi* 3.5: "Sed nihil deo par est; natura eius ab omnium rerum condicione distat" (CCL 2:876). Cf. Tertullian's *Apol.* 21.11 for key terms relative to the generation of the Son.

III

Hilary's response to the theological issues which he discusses is drawn largely from the perspective he inherited from the third-century Latin sources. Like the commentary of Fortunatianus, his standard for orthodox theology was not based on conciliar formulas produced in the fourth century. While he may refer to contemporary arguments that offend what he already knows about the nature of the Son, there is no concrete evidence that he is acquainted with "Arian" doctrine, much less pro-Nicene argumentation. There was certainly an awareness of what we call modalist, adoptionist, and subordinationist theologies in the West during the 340s and 350s, as demonstrated in the council of Cologne. Rather than attributing Hilary's abiding passion for defending the Son's consubstantial divinity along with the reality of his human sufferings to non-descript "Arian" ideologies, I suggest that we need to consider the place of "logos-sarx" christology which was an implicit standard in western thought and was capable of presenting very different christologies.

Making a categorical separation between the operations of *spiritus* (i.e., divinity) and *corpus* is a major and immediate issue for Hilary's commentary. Any interchange between the two natures or the coalescing of the two into one substance had often led to "monarchial" interpretations of the incarnation, such that (as Hippolytus put it) "the deity became susceptible of suffering" and did not remain "according to nature, God infinite."⁷⁰ At the same time, Hilary is not occupied purely with refuting fourth-century versions of monarchianism, however prevalent they may have been. He was sensitive to the fact that monarchian-like christology—or what could just as appropriately be considered "traditional christology" among westerners—lent itself to the easy endorsement of reducing the Son's divine status in relation to the Father. This may have been the case with a Gallic colleague, Potamius of Lisbon, who sided with anti-Nicene theology in the 350s and is quoted as teaching, "in the flesh and spirit of Christ, coagulated through Mary's blood and reduced to a single body, was God made passible" (*passibilem Deum factum*).⁷¹ We can reckon that the structure of Potamius' christology, stressing the unity of the person of Christ, ultimately enabled him with little effort to embrace the Homoian view of Christ as the suffering and subordinate God.⁷² For him,

70. *Frag.* 5; 2 (NPNF 5:233; 232).

71. Quoted by Phoebadius of Agen, *Contra Arrianos* 5.1. This is the only indisputable text that comes from Potamius.

72. M. Conti, *The Life and Works of Potamius of Lisbon* (Turnhout, 1998), 133–34. There are no grounds for thinking that Potamius abandoned an orthodox (pro-

the simple language of the gospels in which a composite nature is portrayed was sufficient to define the *sacramentum* of the Son. Saturninus of Arles, Hilary's *bête noire*, apparently took a position that represents another similiar case.⁷³ The outcome of the council of Béziers (Hilary's exile) would suggest that Saturninus' views were shared by other Gallic bishops.

For good reason Hilary is pressed to clarify as carefully as possible his separation of the *spiritus* and *corpus* in the incarnation such that Christ's infinite nature is not violated. The sufferings of Christ in the Matthew commentary constitute the primary theme of Hilary's opponents' attack on the Son's divinity. Hilary thus warns his readers in 6.1 that "we ought not treat the incarnation of the Word of God haphazardly or incompetently." For there are those "who have turned against us," "shattering our incompetence and faith with sharp points of contradictions." Presumably the "contradictions" posed are related to impugning the eternal substance with the weakness of the flesh (cf. *In Matt.* 31.2).

But Hilary himself is working from an inconsistent (and perhaps unconscious) "logos-sarx" perspective, and it is clear that he does not have a developed theology to deal with the present challenges by making a functional distinction between the human and divine in Christ.⁷⁴ Christ's expression of anxiety in the garden of Gethsemane, for example, was a reality only in the sense that Christ feared not for himself but for his disciples who might succumb (31.4). Similarly, Christ's prayer that the cup of suffering may pass from him is not about himself but for the perseverance of his followers, since his own sufferings, Hilary claims, were "without the despair of hope, without a sense of sorrow, without the fear of death" ("sine spei diffidentia, sine sensu doloris, sine metu mortis").⁷⁵ And yet a "logos-sarx" pattern that is closer to Tertullian's chris-

Nicene) position in order to embrace Homoian theology as per M. Meslin, *Les Ariens d'Occident 335-430* (Paris, 1967), 31-34.

73. Saturninus became bishop sometime after the council of Serdica, since Valentinus of Arles is listed among the episcopal subscriptions (Athanasius, *Apol. c. Ar.* 50), but before the council of Arles (353). Like Potamius, he did not replace a bishop deposed under Constantius, but eventually came to adopt theology that was hostile to Marcellus and Athanasius, perhaps for anti-monarchical purposes.

74. Very similiar to the inconsistency in Novatian's *De trin.* 15.4; 21.9-12; 22.9-10; 25.6-10. In an illuminating chapter on Hilary's christology, P. Burns observes that, in view of Hilary's concern of the "Arian" use of theopaschite language to undermine Christ's divinity, it is surprising that he does not make use of the possibilities inherent in his own language to resolve the challenge (*Christology*, 92-93). If my argument is correct, then it is not surprising.

75. *In Matt.* 21.7. Cf. 3.2.

tology seems evident at the moment of Christ's death on the cross when, Hilary states, the cry unto God was the voice of the body as it was departing from the Word of God,⁷⁶ or when it is declared in 3.2 that the Son's *virtus* was not affected by the forty days of fasting, but had "abandoned the humanity from his nature."

Whoever the "heretics" in chapter 31 may have been, then, it appears they were familiar enough to Hilary that he was acquainted with their views, which had recently departed from his own.⁷⁷ To cast these opponents into the role of "Arians" because they teach a type of "logos-sarx" subordinationism is forcing on them a typology of doctrinal categories that had yet to crystallize in the West. As Grillmeier once observed, "subordinationism is still no Arianism."⁷⁸ Yet given the lack of further evidence, such a conclusion must remain tentative.

Finally, even if one can prove that Hilary has a vague notion of "Arian" subordinationism, that does nothing to change the larger picture, namely, that his understanding of Christian orthodoxy is not at all built upon the polemics of an anti-"Arian" framework. At this early stage of his career, the Gallic bishop is not interested in propounding a trinitarian doctrine of God or establishing an ontology of divine relations, as much as he wants to invalidate any deficient christologies which would risk the salvific ability of the Son to act as the divine redeemer for humanity.⁷⁹ It is this preoccupation with a carefully crafted incarnational theology that, like his Latin predecessors, lies at the very heart of his commentary.

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76. *In Matt.* 33.6. On the Sermon on the Mount (4.1) Christ is said to have "yielded the service of his mouth to the movement of the Spirit's eloquence." See Tertullian, *Adv. Prax.* 26.4–6; 27.6–7; 30.2. The *sermo dei* was not transfigured by the incarnation but remained unchanged as the eternal and divine substance.

77. Hilary observes in 16.5 that catholics and heretics alike preach about the Lord's passion, and even share "one and the same confession" on this matter, but differ concerning the unity of the Father and Son and their common deity.

78. *Christ in the Christian Tradition* 1 (Atlanta, 1975²), 190, and he proposes that a doctrine of incarnation may have been the starting point for the whole "Arian" system before it was "Arian." According to a fragment from the writings of Marcellus of Ancyra, Asterius arrived at a distinction of the hypostases of the Father and Son on the basis of his incarnational doctrine (p. 191 n. 1).

79. For this reason Hilary concludes two passages (31.3 and 16.5) where he has defended the divinity of the Son with the words, "For in Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself."