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Some Historical, Philological and Patristic Aspects related to the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Symbol of Faith

Abstract

The present study will analyze three themes: in the first part will be presented a few considerations on the origin and structure of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Symbol of Faith and in the second and third part will explore a few theological accents of the Nicene confession of faith and an aspect concerning the divinity of the Holy Spirit in the Constantinopolitan confession of faith, from the perspective of the *History of Dogmas*. This short analysis, therefore, singles out a few main ideas about the Nicene and Constantinopolitan confessions of faith. The Nicene Fathers only explained the relation between the Son and the Father, emphasizing the



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divinity of the Son. The teaching on the Holy Spirit, as it was defined by the First Ecumenical Council proved to be insufficient and had to be developed and rounded by the Second Ecumenical Council. If at Nicea the attention was focused on proving the consubstantiality of the Son with the Father and on mentioning the existence of the Holy Spirit, without adding anything on Him, Constantinople had a great contribution in emphasizing the hypostatic identity of the three and their relations together. Another conclusion of this Study will be referring to the structure and origin of the Symbol of Faith we conventionally called Nicene-Constantinopolitan.

Thus, taking into consideration the ideas presented, the Study will point out that the Constantinopolitan Symbol cannot be characterized as a modified or extended version of the Nicene Ekthesis, but, due to the use of the expressions and formulations in the Roman Creed, the Constantinopolitan Symbol is rather an enlarged version of the Roman Creed.

Consequently, the question we asked at the beginning can be answered by asserting that what we call the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Symbol of Faith is actually the Nicene-Roman-Constantinopolitan – an Ecumenical Symbol of the unity of the Christian West and East in the first Christian millennium, which, unfortunately became later the Symbol of the division of the Christian East and West.

Keywords

Jesus Christ, the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Symbol of Faith, the Roman Creed, *Ekthesis*, Ecumenical Council, canon of faith, *homoousios*

1 Introduction

“Religion is flawed, but only because man is flawed”. These words, belonging not to a Holy Father or an ecclesiastical

writer, but to the character that interprets the role of the Camerlengo in the film adaptation of the controversial book *Angels and demons*¹ of the equally controversial Dan Brown, undoubtedly contain a shred of truth. The perspective offered by the Orthodox Church, which knows and confesses itself as the integral guardian of the revelational treasure, proposes to the one who believes and accepts its teachings, the correct dimension of the act of faith, materialized in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Symbol of Faith.

We will not proceed to the analysis of the famous maxim “Credo, quia absurdum”² - “I believe because it is absurd”, a maxim which aims, it goes from a much more scholastic perspective – alien to the spirit of Orthodoxy and of the Church Fathers³ – at establishing the relation between faith and

¹ The online edition is available at the address: <https://onedrive.live.com/view.aspx?cid=81F2BB5E570F9567&authKey=%21AKFtoF1qXzmiAXQ&resid=81F2BB5E570F9567%214572&ihint=%2Epdf&open=true&app=WordPdf> (accessed on 25th July 2017), p. 241.

² The maxim represents the paraphrase of one of Tertullian’s assertions, in the work *De carne Christi* 5, 4, connected to the death of the Son of God: “prorsus credibile est, quia ineptum est” – “it is to be believed, just because it is absurd” (The text of this work can be consulted in the edition: *Tertullian's treatise on the Incarnation. Q. Septimii Florentis Tertulliani De carne Christi liber. Tertullian's treatise on the Incarnation. The text edited, with an introduction, translation and commentary, by Ernest Evans*, p. xliii. 197, S.P.C.K., London, 1956. The online variant is also available at this address: http://www.tertullian.org/articles/evans_carn/evans_carn_03latin.htm).

³ To believe against reason or, in other words, the absolute prevalence of faith over reason represented a theological trend in the eighteenth century in the Roman-Catholic Church, as a response to Enlightenment. Fideism was rejected in 1998 by Pope John Paul II, in the encyclical *Fides et Ratio* (the Latin text of this encyclical, with translations in various languages can be accessed here: http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/la/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_14091998_fides-et-ratio.html). Pope Benedict also remarked in the general audience in 2012 that this is not a formula interpreting the Catholic faith (the text of this audience can be accessed

reason, having as a starting point the words of Saint Paul the Apostle in 1 Cor. 10-31. We will not take this text as the point of departures for our discussion, but the text in Jn. 17,3: *And this is life eternal, that they might know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.*

In the present study we will analyze three themes: in the first part we will present a few considerations on the origin and structure of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Symbol of Faith and in the second and third part we will explore a few theological accents of the Nicene confession of faith and an aspect concerning the divinity of the Holy Spirit in the Constantinopolitan confession of faith, from the perspective of the *History of Dogmas*. The other aspects referring to the Symbol of Faith of the Second Ecumenical Council in 381, which completed the Symbol of Faith as we have it today, can be analyzed individually by anyone interested in these issues.

2 Nicene-Constantinopolitan Symbol of Faith or Roman-Constantinopolitan Symbol of Faith? Considerations on the Origin and Structure in its Dimension of 'Canon of Faith'

The term *kanōn*, known especially starting with the second century and used as a constitutive element of the syntagms *canon or rule of truth* and the *canon or rule of faith*, illustrate its dimension of essential, indispensable guide leading to the correct interpretation of the Holy Scripture, which does not result in the truth by itself. Therefore, starting with the fourth century, the *canon of faith* will become the *symbol of faith*. Thus,

here: http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/audiences/2012/documents/hf_ben-xvi_aud_20121121.html).

one gets to a new level, much more precise of understanding the revealed truths, as this *canon* symbolizes the essential fact that the Scripture is not the one that precedes and generates *Ecclesia*, on the contrary, the faith of the Church is the one that precedes and generates the Scripture, which it analyses subsequently from a canonical point of view, that is, according to the divine revelation⁴.

This conformity with the divine revelation is expressed in a plenary way in the word, as it is righteously called *revelation of the Word of God*. It is the very difference between the pagan religions, which have to do with *dromena*, ritual, and not with *legomena*, confession. In Christianity, *the revelation of the Word of God* is transmitted, on the contrary, through the word, in such a way that the correspondent of the famous imperative commandment in Deut. 6, 4 – *Šema Israel* – is *Šahada* in Jn. 17, 3, the knowledge of the truth being identified with acquiring eternal life: *And this is life eternal, that they might know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.*

Consequently, Christianity is a religion of confession, not just private, but especially public, thus following *the Savior Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession* (I Tim. 6, 13). In their turn, Christians are called to be confessors (according to Mt. 10, 32), to hold fast their profession (according to Heb. 4, 14) and to give an answer, in the sense of an apology, to those asked to justify upon their faith (according to I Pt. 3, 15). These three dimensions: *martyria-homologia-apologia*, made not privately, but publicly, even at the expense of life, have turned Christianity into a global religion - without the state's support, on the contrary, sometimes against it. This

⁴ Ioan I. Ică jr., *Canonul Ortodoxiei*, vol. 1: *Canonul apostolic al primelor secole*, (Sibiu: Deisis, 2008), p. 205.

religion expressed itself in its confessions of faith, its adequate expression being what we call today the *Nicene-Constantinopolitan Symbol of Faith*⁵.

Unfortunately, the Church no longer possesses the original documents of the First Ecumenical Council in Nicea; such documents may even not have been written, because of the circumstances⁶. However, the Church has the testimonies of three major personalities who took part at the council: the Semi-Arian bishop Eusebius of Caesarea (in a letter addressed to the faithful in his eparchy, in which he apologizes, showing that he had suggested another terminology than the one adopted by the participants at the council⁷), Saint Athanasius the Great (in a confession addressed to Emperor Jovian and demanded by the latter, meant to explain which is the right faith⁸) and to Marcellus of Ancyra (the representant of neomodalism, whose doctrine came close to that of Sabellius⁹). Out of these, the most important from a historical point of view is, undoubtedly, that of Eusebius of Caesarea, the one who recorded a great deal of the events and proceedings of the council, even if not exhaustively; nonetheless, his main contribution is that of recording the text of the Symbol of Faith, as it was established by the participants at the council.

⁵ Reinhart Staats, *Das Glaubensbekenntnis von Nizäa-Konstantinopel. Historische und theologische Grundlagen*, Darmstadt, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1996, p. 3, 10, 122-124. See also Ioan I. Ică, jr., *Canonul Ortodoxiei*, vol. 1: *Canonul apostolic al primelor secole*, (Sibiu: Deisis, 2008), p. 206.

⁶ Hans Christof Brennecke, art. *Nicäa, Ökumenische Synoden*, here: § I. *Ökumenische Synode von 325*, in: Gerhard Müller, Horst Balz, Gerhard Krause (Herausgeber), *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* 24 (= TRE), (Berlin: Verlag Walter De Gruyter, 1994), p. 431.

⁷ Constantin Voicu, Lucian-Dumitru Colda, *Patrologie*, vol. I, second edition, revised, (București: Basilica Publishing House, 2015), p. 513.

⁸ *Idem*, vol. II, (București: Basilica Publishing House, 2015), p. 105.

⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 161.

Besides these accounts, we can also take into consideration the ones of the Latin Fathers, who certify the Western translations of the Symbol of Faith in the fourth century. Such Fathers are St. Hilary of Pictavium (Poitiers)¹⁰, bishop Lucifer of Calaris (Cagliari)¹¹ and Gregory of Eliberis (Elvira)¹². It is important to mention that the text can also be found in St. Basil the Great, as well as the documents of the first meeting of the Third Ecumenical Council in Ephesus (431) and in the material of the second session of the Fourth Ecumenical Council in Chalcedon (451). This text will subsequently be taken over by all the Greek manuscripts and by the early Latin translations as well¹³.

The text of the Nicene Symbol of Faith or the Nicene *Ekthēsis*, as it is called in the theological literature, is the one that is known, but we must notice that the article referring to the Son of God begins like this: “And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only-begotten, begotten of the Father, Light of light; true God of true God”, and the last article referring to the Holy Spirit ends briefly: “And in the Holy Spirit”, followed by the addition: “Those who say that ‘there was a time in which He did not exist’ and that ‘before He was born, He did not exist’ and ‘He was created out of nothing’, or the ones that claim that the Son of God has a different substance (*hypostasis*) or a different being (*ousia*), or that He is made or subject to change and transformation – are declared excommunicated by the Catholic and Apostolic Church”¹⁴.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, pp. 340-348

¹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 351.

¹² *Ibidem*, p. 353.

¹³ Ignacio Ortiz de Urbina, *Nizäa und Constantinopel*, in the collection *Geschichte der ökumenischen Konzilien*, edited by Dumeige, Gervais and Bacht, Heinrich, vol. I, (Mainz: Matthias-Grünewald-Verlag, 1964), p. 79.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, pp. 80-81.

The Second Ecumenical Council in Constantinople (381) will develop and complete the article referring to the Holy Spirit, adding the articles referring to Church, baptism, the absolution of sins, the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come, thus establishing the final text of the Constantinopolitan Symbol (= CS), as we know it today. A remarkable analysis of the historical and theological foundations of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Symbol of Faith (= NCS), published in 1996 by the Lutheran Church historian Reinhart Staats, puts forward a surprising conclusion – the fact that from a literary point of view, NCS is nothing else but an extended version of the Roman Creed (= RC), which constitutes its direct foundation, being almost entirely integrated in it¹⁵.

It must be remarked that the NCS, besides the Nicene *Ekthēsis* we mentioned earlier, comprises the Symbol of the Church in Jerusalem (= JS), as it was professed by Saint Cyril of Jerusalem and attested in his *Catechetical Lectures*¹⁶. What comes as a surprise is the proportion in NCS. Thus, in the 174 words of the Greek original, 100 are common with the 117 words of the JS, 80 (thus, a little more than half) of the 139 Greek words of the Nicene *Ekthēsis*, whereas 58 out of the 70 words of the RC are to be found in CS, which has 37 words. The addenda made in 381 aim, first of all, at answering the pneumatomachic heresy. The omissions in the Nicene *Ekthēsis* that we no longer find today in the texts that the Church has (NCS), including the mentions of excommunication of Arians can be explained through the liturgical character that the Church wanted to give

¹⁵ Reinhart Staats, *Das Glaubensbekenntnis von Nizäa-Konstantinopel. Historische und theologische Grundlagen*, (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1996), pp. 158-170.

¹⁶ Constantin Voicu, Lucian-Dumitru Colda, *Patrologie*, vol. II, second edition, revised, (București: Basilica Publishing House, 2015), pp. 234-235.

the NCS. What also stands out is the fact that whereas in JS there is reference to “a Holy Spirit, the Comforter” this formulation is eliminated in CS as having a contextual reference, being connected to the isolation and the spiritualist – charismatic exaltation of the Holy Spirit by the ascetic movements of the epoch, as well as the distortion and the overbidding of the motive of the Paraclete by the Manichean heretics¹⁷.

However, what is bewildering is the fact that CR is included almost entirely in NCS; or, as it is known, the Council in Constantinople (381) was purely an eastern one, without the participation of the West. The explanation consists in the fact that, just as the Council in Nicea (325) had been anticipated by the one in Antioch in the winter of 324-325¹⁸, the one in Constantinople had been preceded by another council, held in Antioch as well, in 379¹⁹, which sought a reconciliation with the

¹⁷ Ioan I. Ică, jr., *Canonul Ortodoxiei*, vol. 1: *Canonul apostolic al primelor secole*, (Sibiu: Deisis, 2008), pp. 213-214.

¹⁸ See also Charles Pietri, Christoph Marksches, *Theologische Diskussionen zur Zeit Konstantins: Arius, der „arianische Streit“ und das Konzil von Nizäa, die nachnizänischen Auseinandersetzungen bis 337*, here: § IV. *Das Eingreifen Konstantins in den Streit und das „Vorspiel“ auf der Synode von Antiochien (324/325)*, in: Jean-Marie Mayeur, Charles (†) and Luce Pietri, André Vauchez, Marc Venard (coordinators for the French edition)/Norbert Brox, Odilo Engels, Georg Kretschmar, Kurt Meier, Heribert Smolinsky (coordinators for the German edition), *Die Geschichte des Christentums. Religion – Politik – Kultur*, vol. 2: *Das Entstehen der einen Christenheit (250-430)*, (Freiburg/Basel/Wien: Herder, 1996), pp. 300-302.

¹⁹ See also Charles Pietri, *Vom homöischen Arianismus zur neunizänischen Orthodoxie (361-385)*, here: § III: *Die orthodoxe Restauration. 1. Die ersten Zeichen: Das Konzil von Antiochien (379) und das Edikt des TheodHosius (380)*, in: Jean-Marie Mayeur, Charles (†) and Luce Pietri, André Vauchez, Marc Venard (coordinators for the French edition)/Norbert Brox, Odilo Engels, Georg Kretschmar, Kurt Meier, Heribert Smolinsky (coordinators for the German edition), *Die Geschichte*

see of Rome, the Church of Antioch being divided in those times by a long schism with implications in the whole Christian world. Most likely the articles referring to Church, baptism, the absolution of sins, the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come had already been elaborated at this Antiochian council, by inserting the RC articles in the JS, the council in Constantinople doing nothing else but drawing up and completing the article referring to the Holy Spirit and taking over these articles already finished. Therefore, NCS will not be an *Ekthēsis*, as in Nicea, that is, an official exposition of the faith of the bishops through an imperial decree, but will become a *symbolon*, a *liturgical confession par excellence*²⁰.

3 The Nicene *Ekthesis*

Taking into account the preceding Antiochian council mentioned earlier (the winter of 324-325) and its resolutions, it becomes clear that the Nicene *Ekthēsis* does not represent in itself a novelty from the theological statements it contains²¹.

Regarding the text from the point of view of its theological construct, one notices the fact that it is based mainly on the idea of the existence of the Holy Trinity, however with the mention that from the point of view of the construct of each phrase or article, the *Ekthēsis* in itself does not put forward a monotheist confession first and only then a trinitary one, of the type: *We*

des Christentums. Religion – Politik – Kultur, vol. 2: *Das Entstehen der einen Christenheit (250-430)*, (Freiburg/Basel/Wien: Herder, 1996), pp. 448-449.

²⁰ Ioan I. Ică, jr., *Canonul Ortodoxiei*, vol. 1: *Canonul apostolic al primelor secole*, (Sibiu: Deisis, 2008), pp. 214-217.

²¹ Ignacio Ortiz de Urbina, *Nizäa und Constantinopel*, in the collection *Geschichte der ökumenischen Konzilien*, edited by Dumeige, Gervais and Bacht, Heinrich, vol. I, (Mainz: Matthias-Grünewald-Verlag, 1964), p. 83.

believe in One God: a) the Father Almighty; b) the only-begotten Son; c) the Holy Spirit, but it rather proposes a confession of the type: We believe in a) in one God, the Father; b) in one Lord Jesus Christ; c) in the Holy Spirit²².

In its whole, the construct of the *Ekthēsis* aims at highlighting three essential aspects connected to the person of the Son of God, that is, the fact that He is begotten of the Father before all ages, that He is not a creature and, as such, he is “of one essence (*homoousios*) with the Father”, that He is of the being and hypostasis of the Father. The term *being* was understood in the sense of *hypostasis*. Thus, by using the expression of one essence with the Father”, the council meant to show the fact that the Son is begotten of the Father before all ages of the Father’s hypostasis²³.

If the Nicene confession and the Symbol of Faith of the Church in Caesarea mention the unique God – the Father, the Maker of all things visible and invisible, this is done not in the perspective of the substance or divine nature, but in the viewpoint of the idea of person. In other words, the term Unique refers here to the Person of the Father, not to the divine substance²⁴. For Arius²⁵, such a personalist approach, as it was represented by the Nicene Fathers became questionable, because, in his opinion, this would lead to the idea of the division of the divine, simple, uncomposed substance, as well as to the notion of

²² *Ibidem*, p. 84.

²³ Ioannis Romanides, *Dogmatica patristică ortodoxă: o expunere concisă*, translated by Dragoș Dâscă, (Sibiu: Ecclesiast Publishing House, 2010), p. 23.

²⁴ Ignacio Ortiz de Urbina, *Nizăa und Constantinopel*, in the collection *Geschichte der ökumenischen Konzilien*, edited by Dumeige, Gervais and Bacht, Heinrich, vol. I, (Mainz: Matthias-Grünwald-Verlag, 1964), p. 86.

²⁵ Constantin Voicu, Lucian-Dumitru Colda, *Patrologie*, vol. II, second edition, revised, (București: Basilica Publishing House, 2015), pp. 87-89.

changingness and transformation. Why? Because the council uses for the concept of person the term *hypostasis*, which, in general, in those times was translated by substance. Thus, Arius claimed that, if there are three *hypostasis*, this means that the divine substance has divided, generating three divinities, which was absurd. Nevertheless, the Nicene Fathers will use the term *ousia* to designate divine nature. The confusion occurred especially because of the Latin vocabulary, which rendered hypostasis both through *substantia* and *persona*, for this last term the East using the term *prosopon*.

As for the term *homoousios*, a term which is not of biblical origin, one must say that it was subject to much controversy because in 268 it had been blamed as heretic, having been used by Paul of Samosata²⁶ to illustrate his anti-trinitarian modalism. It seems that the decisive role in its adoption as an Orthodox term at Nicea goes to the representative of Pope Sylvester I, the bishop Hosius of Cordoba²⁷, the theological counselor of Emperor Constantine the Great and his private guide, who was also designed to lead the meetings of the council. The irony of fate is that, paradoxically, a special merit in adopting this term - if one can say so - goes to the semi-Arian subordinationist bishop Eusebius of Nicomedia. The theory according to which St. Alexander of Alexandria was the one who persuaded Hosius of Cordoba through subversive means to adopt this term is false, this theory being put forth by Arians. In fact, the term was considered by Eusebius of Nicomedia a blasphemy, which determined the Fathers at the council to see in this term the main weapon to fight Arians; consequently, any reserve

²⁶ *Ibidem*, vol. I, second edition, revised, (București: Basilica Publishing House, 2015), p. 491.

²⁷ *Ibidem*, vol. II, second edition, revised, (București: Basilica Publishing House, 2015), pp. 348-350.

regarding it, dictated by the condemnation in Antioch, in 286, was cancelled through the intervention of Eusebius of Nicomedia, who did not obtain in this way the anticipated effect, that is the condemnation of the term, but the opposite one. Hence, Eusebius of Nicomedia became, without wanting to, the promoter of the homousian terminology²⁸.

4 “The Giver of Life” – Considerations connected to the Philological-Theological Construct of the first Part of the Article on the Holy Spirit in the Constantinopolitan Confession

Almost sixty years later, more exactly in 381, the last article of the Nicene confession, the one on the Holy Spirit, was developed and completed through what the Fathers wanted to oppose the pneumatomachic heresy.

The appearance of the pneumatomachic or macedonian heresy revealed to the Church an important fact, that is, that the pneumatology professed by it was still in a primitive stage, or better said an embryonal one. This Ecumenical Council and the Fathers laid the foundations of Orthodox pneumatology, through which the Holy Spirit is considered and confessed as being true God. Despite all this, the way through which this was demonstrated is different from the way in which the divinity of

²⁸ See Charles Pietri, Christoph Marksches, *Theologische Diskussionen zur Zeit Konstantins: Arius, der “arianische Streit” und das Konzil von Nizäa, die nachnizänischen Auseinandersetzungen bis 337*, here: § V. *Das Konzil von Nizäa*, in: Jean-Marie Mayeur, Charles (†) and Luce Pietri, André Vauchez, Marc Venard (coordinators for the French edition)/Norbert Brox, Odilo Engels, Georg Kretschmar, Kurt Meier, Heribert Smolinsky (coordinators for the German edition), *Die Geschichte des Christentums. Religion – Politik – Kultur*, vol. 2: *Das Entstehen der einen Christenheit (250-430)*, (Freiburg/Basel/Wien: Herder, 1996), pp. 302-311.

the Son was demonstrated in Nicea. The contribution of some Fathers and Church writers, such as Athanasius the Great, Basil the Great, Gregory of Nazianzus, Epiphany of Salamina and Didymus the Blind was essential²⁹.

We will focus in the following part on a few important aspects connected to the attributes conferred to the Holy Spirit through the Constantinopolitan confession. Hence, He is called *Kyrios zōopoion* – *the Lord, the Giver of Life*. If we analyze the original text, we will notice that the article that accompanies the term *Kyrios* is neutral in gender - *to*, although the noun *Kyrios*, otherwise specific to the Son, to the divine Logos, is masculine in gender. The reason why the Fathers used the adjectival *Kyrion* instead of the noun *ton Kyrion* does not have to do with the ignorance of grammatical rules, but with the wish to underline the fact that the Holy Spirit is a Lord, that He is the Lord par excellence, *the Lord, the Giver of Life*. Thus the idea of His divinity was assured. The Holy Fathers also wanted to avoid any vagueness related to the relations of the Son to the Holy Spirit, the Son being called par excellence Lord - *in one Lord Jesus Christ*. This was done in order to affirm the clear distinction between the hypostases of the Holy Trinity, avoiding the idea of any modalist manifestation in the spirit of that supported by Paul of Samosata, who claimed that God at times manifests as Father, other times as a Son or as Holy Spirit, thing which could have somehow been suggested if one had kept the masculine article for the Holy Spirit and He would have been called just like the Son, *one Lord*. Certainly, the use of a different article related to the Holy Spirit makes it difficult to translate

²⁹ Ignacio Ortiz de Urbina, *Nizäa und Constantinopel*, in the collection *Geschichte der ökumenischen Konzilien*, edited by Dumeige, Gervais and Bacht, Heinrich, vol. I, (Mainz: Matthias-Grünewald-Verlag, 1964), p. 218.

the expression in other languages. The translation *the Lord, the Giver of Life* must be understood in the sense that the Holy Spirit is the one that belongs to the category of *Lord*, just like we would say, for example, about a person with the name John that he belongs to the category of man; or, in other words, the Holy Spirit is the One Who ought to have the attribute *Lord*³⁰.

After all, what stood behind the reasoning of the Council Fathers was, actually, the theology of Saint Basil the Great, who, although no longer alive at that moment, had dominated the spirit of the theological discussions of the council. Hence, he shows in his well-known treatise *Against Eunomius*³¹ that there are only two broad categories connected to the order and reason of what exists: the category of those that exist through themselves, that is, the Divinity, and the category of those that exist by receiving their existence from the Divinity, but not through emanation, but through creation; therefore, this category is actually the category of what is created. Following this reasoning, the things created are made to serve the Creator; or then, the relation of the two must be expressed according to the scheme *servant – Lord*.

At the beginnings of creation, the Holy Spirit was the One Who was borne over the water (Gen. 1, 2) and showed God's rule over creation. Therefore, He is *par excellence, the Lord, the Giver of Life*. In another treatise, *On the Holy Spirit*³², Saint Basil the

³⁰ *Ibidem*, pp. 219-220. See also Adolf Martin Ritter, art. *Ökumenische Synode von 381*, in Gerhard Müller, Horst Balz, Gerhard Krause (Herausgeber), *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* 19 (= TRE), (Berlin: Verlag Walter De Gruyter, 1990), p. 521.

³¹ St. Basil the Great, *Against Eunomius*, 3, 2, in J. P. Migne (ed.), *Patrologiae cursus completus, Series Graeca*, Tomus XXXII, (Paris: Imprimerie Catholique, 1857), col. 659ABCD.

³² Idem, *On the Holy Spirit*, 56-57, in J. P. Migne (ed.), *Patrologiae cursus completus, Series Graeca*, Tomus XXXII, (Paris: Imprimerie Catholique, 1857), col. 173ABC.

Great draws attention to some places in the Bible, where the appellation *Lord* is only about the Holy Spirit. Hence, the text in II Thes. 3,5, where it is said: *“And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ”*, suggests that *the Lord* cannot be another but the Holy Spirit, the text being obvious as concerns the existence of the other two personae or hypostases: God (the Father) and Christ (the Son). The same thing is suggested by the text in 1 Thes. 3, 12-13: *“And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you. To the end, He may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints”*. Moreover, in Corinthians 3, 17, St. Basil the Great identifies a third indication: *“The Lord is Spirit, and Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty”*³³.

5 Conclusions

Our short analysis singles out a few main ideas about the Nicene and Constantinopolitan confessions of faith. Thus, the Nicene Fathers only explained the relation between the Son and the Father, emphasizing the divinity of the Son. The formulation (...) *“Whose Kingdom shall have no end”*, taken from Lk. 1, 33 – *“moreover he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end”* - seems to have

³³ Ignacio Ortiz de Urbina, *Nizäa und Constantinopel*, in the collection *Geschichte der ökumenischen Konzilien*, edited by Dumeige, Gervais and Bacht, Heinrich, vol. I, (Mainz: Matthias-Grünewald-Verlag, 1964), pp. 220-221.

been chosen not to refute first of all the heresy of Arius, but to reject the Sabellianist neomodality of Marcellus of Ancyra³⁴.

The second remark we would like to make has to do with the fact that the teaching on the Holy Spirit, as it was defined by the First Ecumenical Council – actually, it is only a mention – proved to be insufficient and had to be developed and rounded by the Second Ecumenical Council.

Thirdly, we must state the fact that, if at Nicea the attention was focused on proving the consubstantiality of the Son with the Father and on mentioning the existence of the Holy Spirit, without adding anything on Him, Constantinople had a great contribution in emphasizing the hypostatic identity of the three and their relations together³⁵.

As a sort of conclusion, we can take into account the first part of the study, referring to the structure and origin of the Symbol of Faith we conventionally called *Nicene-Constantinopolitan*. Thus, bearing in consideration the ideas presented, we must point out that the Constantinopolitan Symbol cannot be characterized as a modified or extended version of the Nicene *Ekthesis*, but, due to the use of the expressions and formulations in the Roman Creed, the Constantinopolitan Symbol is rather an enlarged version of the Roman Creed. Consequently, the question we asked at the beginning can be answered by asserting that what we call the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Symbol of Faith is

³⁴ Charles Pietri, *Vom homöischen Arianismus zur neunizänischen Orthodoxie (361-385)*, here: § III: *Die orthodoxe Restauration. 1. Die ersten Zeichen: Das Konzil von Antiochien (379) und das Edikt des Theodosius (380)*, in: Jean-Marie Mayeur, Charles (†) and Luce Pietri, André Vauchez, Marc Venard (coordinators for the French edition)/Norbert Brox, Odilo Engels, Georg Kretschmar, Kurt Meier, Heribert Smolinsky (coordinators for the German edition), *Die Geschichte des Christentums. Religion – Politik – Kultur*, vol. 2: *Das Entstehen der einen Christenheit (250-430)*, (Freiburg/Basel/Wien: Herder, 1996), p. 452.

³⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 453.

actually the Nicene-Roman-Constantinopolitan – an Ecumenical Symbol of the unity of the Christian West and East in the first Christian millennium, which, unfortunately became later the Symbol of the division of the Christian East and West³⁶. Moreover only because to paraphrase the beginning, *humanity is flawed and consequently religion is flawed*.

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³⁶ Ioan I. Ică, jr., *Canonul Ortodoxiei*, vol. 1: *Canonul apostolic al primelor secole*, (Sibiu: Deisis, 2008), p. 217.

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