

# 'Paradoxical Questions concerning the morals & actions of Athanasius & his followers'

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## **Paradoxical Questions concerning the morals & actions of Athanasius & his followers.**

### **Quest. 1.**

**Whether the ignominious death of Arius in a bog-house was not a story feigned & put about by Athanasius above twenty years after his death.**

How Arius died I reckon a question of no moment, but because it leads to other things of moment I chuse to begin with it. We are told in history that he was excommunicated by the council of Nice & banished by the Emperor Constantine the great, & some time after released out of banishment by the same Emperor, & that he died at Constantinople in a bog-house miserably by the effusion of his bowels the day before he was to have been absolved from excommunication. Now this story of his death was not spread abroad till about 24 years after his death, & then it was first vented by his greatest enemy Athanasius in a clandestine way. For Athanasius in the end of the reign of Constantius being forced to retire from his bishopric into the wilderness of Egypt, broached that story there by sending about a narrative of it in a timorous & cautious manner, charging them not to transcribe it but to return it back to him so soon as they had read it. And this appears by a letter which he sent about at the same time to those Moncks in which he writes thus. For the full condemnation & rejection of the heresy of the Arians ye are to beleive that the judgment of God in the death of Arius is sufficient, which ye have even now learnt from others. For what God has constituted let no man annull, & whom he has condemned who shall pronounce just. For who from so great <1v> a signe knows not that this heresy is hated of God notwithstanding that it is defended by men. When therefore you have read it, pray for us & exhort one another to it & straight way send back those things to us & publish no copy thereof nor transcribe any for your selves, but be ye content as just usurers with the bare reading of it altho ye may desire to read it often. † ffor it is not safe that those our writings should come to posterity which we composed as babblers & unlearned. Thus far Athanasius. In this epistle he mentions his own flight & the placing of George in the chair of Alexandria which happened A.C. 356.

He mentions also the subscription of Liberius A.C. 358 & both the lapse & death of Hosius the first of which happened at Sirmium A.C. 357, & the last in or after the Council of Ariminum as Baronius proves: & therefore this epistle was written between the Council of Ariminum & death of Constantius & by consequence A.C. 359 or soon after: that is 24 years after the ignominious death of Arius or above. For he died according to the relation of Athanasius before the Council of Tyre which met A.C. 355,<sup>[1]</sup> or according to the relation of the ecclesiastical historians soon after: & the Council of Ariminum sat A.C. 359.

Now at the same time that this libel or narrative of the death of Athanasius<sup>[2]</sup> went about in the wilderness among the Moncks, one Serapion upon a dispute whether Arius died in communion with the Church wrote to Athanasius to know his opinion about it: to whom Athanasius returned this answer.<sup>[3]</sup> I have read the letters of your Reverence in which you desire that I would write to you those things which are at this time done against me, & concerning the wicked Heresy of the Arians by which we suffer these things, & how Arius ended his life. Two of these three requests I have willingly performed & sent to your piety what I have written to the Moncks. ffor thence you may learn what relates both to our troubles & to the heresy. But concerning the third head, namely the death of Arius, I much doubted with my self about it fearing least in doing it, I should seem to insult over the death of the man. But yet because a dis <2r>putation amongst you concerning the heresy ended in this question, Whether Arius died in communion with the Church: for ending the dispute about his death I will tell you the truth, accounting it the same thing to tell this as to end the contention ffor I perswade my self that the miracle of his death being known, it will no longer be doubted whether the Arian heresy be odious to God or not Truly I was not at Constantinople when he died but Macarius the Presbyter was there & I learnt it by his relation. — Arius by the endeavour of the Eusebians being called to the Emperor Constantine & at his entrance being asked by the Emperor, if he kept the faith of the Catholick Church, affirmed upon oath, that he beleived aright, suppressing what he had been excommunicated for by Alexander his bishop & colouring over his profession with scripture expressions. When therefore he had sworn that he had done none of those things for which he was by Alexander excommunicated, the Emperor dismiss him with these words. If thy faith be right thou hast well sworn, but if impious & yet thou hast sworn God will condemn thee for thy oath. †<sup>[4]</sup> Him therefore thus departing from the Emperor, the Eusebians by their usual force would have introduced into the Church, but Alexander bishop of Constantinople contradicted it, saying that the inventor of a heresy ought not to be received into communion. Then the Eusebians threatned saying, As we have procured against your will that he should be called by the Emperor so to morrow notwithstanding tis against your mind we will bring Arius into communion with us in this Church. It was the Sabbath [that is Satturday] when they said this Which Alexander hearing & being much troubled he went into the Church, & lifting up his hands to God lamented & falling upon his face on the <2v> grownd prayed. Macarius was there present praying with him & hearing his words. Now he requested one of these things. If Arius, saith he, must to morrow be brought into the congregation, let thy servant now depart & destroy not the righteous with the wicked, but if thou wilt spare thy Church (for I know thou wilt spare it) look upon the words of the Eusebians & give not thy inheritance into destruction & disgrace & †<sup>[5]</sup> take away Arius least he being received into the Church his heresy may seem also to be received with him & so impiety be counted for piety. The Bishop having thus prayed went thence very thoughtfull & there followed a thing wonderfull & incredible. For the Eusebians threatning the Bishop prayed: but Arius confiding in the Eusebians & prating much went into a bog-house as if to ease himself & †<sup>[6]</sup> suddenly (as tis written) falling head long burst in sunder & died upon the ground being deprived both of communion & life. Such was the end of Arius. And the Eusebians being greatly ashamed buried their fellow conspirator: but the Church rejoycing Alexander celebrated the communion in piety & sound faith with all the brethren praying & greatly glorifying God: not as if he rejoyced at his death (far be it, for it is appointed all men once to dy,) but because this thing appeard above all humane judgment. ffor the Lord himself judging between the threatnings of the Eusebians, & the prayer of Alexander, condemned the

Arian heresy, shewing it unworthy of the communion of the Church & manifesting to all men that altho it be countenanced by the Emperor & by all mortalls yet tis condemned by the Church. — Certainly many of those who were deceived before were converted, namely because God himself had condemned the heresy & shewn it to be incommunicable to the Church. Wherefore let the Question cease among you. To them <3r> who moved this question let this be read together with what I wrote in briefe to the Moncks concerning this heresy, that they being thence instructed may more & more condemn it. But let no copy of these things be transcribed nor transcribe any for your self. ffor this I have also enjoyned the Moncks. But according to your candour if any thing be wanting in the writings add it & streight way return them to us, &c. Thus far Athanasius. So then the story of Arius's death was first broached by Athanasius at that time when Arianism was countenanced by the Emperor & by all mortalls, & by consequence after the compliance of the western Bishops in the Council of Ariminum; & Athanasius pretended no other author for it then Macarius a dead man, & propounded it amongst his ignorant & credulous Moncks with much timorousness, charging them to return the writings quickly to him, without letting any copies be taken least it should at length get into such hands as he could not trust. ffor, saith he, it is not safe that it should come to posterity. But a while after when the story was once spread abroad, so that he might tell it without danger of being reputed it's author, he tells it again in his first Oration without any such caution.<sup>[7]</sup>

Now the reasons which make me suspect the truth of this story are these.

1. Because the prayer of Macarius is contrary to the temper & spirit of true Christianity, & it is not likely that God would heare a wicked prayer

2. Because the story came to us not from Constantinople as it ought to have done, but from Egypt & was not broached there till 24 years after the death of Arius or above. Athanasius & the Bishops of Egypt when collected in a Council at Alexandria five years after the Council of Tyre knew nothing of it, as you may perceive by the letter which that Council wrote in defence of Athanasius against Arius & the Council of Tyre. Nor <3v> did Iulius Bishop of Rome know any thing of it whe{n} he wrote in defence of Athanasius. Nor did the Council of Sardica (where Athanasius & his friends were assembled together out of all the Empire) know any thing of it as you may perceive by their letters. Athanasius long after these times told it as a secret & out of his writings the Ecclesiastical historians have propagated it to posterity.

3. Because it was broached & spread abroad by the grand enemy of Arius without any pretence of proof or other evidence then the credit of the reporter. ffor detracting stories never look well when told by profest enemies. Such a person may be an accuser but not a witness, & accusations without proof are by the general rule of all courts of justice to be accounted calumnies.

4 Because Athanasius broached it as he confesseth, to blast the name & religion of his enemies, & that at a point of time when he was reduced to the greatest despare

5 Because he broacht it in a clandestine way in the wilderness amongst the Moncks of his own party who were ignorant of affairs of the world & depended on his mouth as on an oracle: & also because he was fearfull lest the writings by which he broacht it should come into other hands which he could not trust, or remain upon record. For, saith he, tis not safe that they should come to posterity

6 Because the story after he had broached it spread but slowly, being not generally known till the ecclesiastical historians about ninety years after the death of Arius set it down in their histories as <sup>† [8]</sup> Theodoret informs us. Sulpicius Severus who wrote his history above thirty years after knew nothing of it, It seems to have made little noise in the world before the Greek Historians met with it in the writings of Athanasius & put it about.

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7. And tho it came originally from Egypt & was not known in the world till about 24 years after the death of Arius, yet Athanasius to give credit to it amongst the Egyptian Moncks, told it then & there as if it had been well known at Constantinople from the beginning saying that at the ignominious death of Arius the Eusebians were ashamed & many of them were converted & the Church rejoiced greatly. ffor how it could be so publickly known there at first, & not spread thence into Egypt & other regions before Athanasius told it I understand not.

Lastly the main designe of the story is to represent that Arius died miserably without the pale of the Church, & for that end Athanasius in his letter to Serapion represents as if he died at Constantinople immediately after he was recalled thither from banishment before the Eusebians had time enough to receive him into communion. And in his letter to the Moncks when he had mentioned the ignominious death of Arius he subjoyns that the Eusebians not very long after accomplished what they had been endeavouring at Constantinople, receiving the Arians into communion (meaning at Ierusalem) & pretending the Emperors command & not blushing after the deposition of Athanasius to write in their letters (that is, in a letter of the Council of Ierusalem to Alexandria) that envy was ceased & that they had received the Arians & boasted the Emperors command for it, not fearing to add that the faith of the Arians was right. Thus does Athanasius in these his two letters that he may make Arius dye without the pale of the Church, place his death at Constantinople before the Arians were received at Ierusalem. And yet its certain that Arius went from Constantinople to Tyre & Ierusalem & Alexandria before he died & was one of those whome the Council of Ierusalem received into communion. ffor Constantine <4v> the great recalled him & Euzoius together from banishment & after he had allowed their profession of faith, sent them to the Council of Tyre to be received into communion, & that Council (which Eusebius represents a greater Council then that of Nice) removing to Ierusalem received them there & sent them with a recommendatory letter to Alexandria to be readmitted to their places. This story is told not only by the Ecclesiastical <sup>†[9]</sup> Historians but also by the Council it self in that letter & by the Bishops of that Council met again in the Council of Antioch where they write that they being judges of the faith of Arius had received him rather then followed him Tis acknowledged also by Athanasius himself in his book de Synodis Arimini et Seleuciaë where he recites the letter of the Council of Ierusalem & then adds that that Council <sup>†[10]</sup> after the banishment of Athanasius wrote in this letter to Alexandria, that they should receive Arius & those that were with him. And the memory & tradition of his reception at Tyre remained in Egypt till Athanasius by a contrary story extinguished it as is manifest by the opposition that the story of the death of Arius met with at first some disputing that he died in communion till Athanasius commanded them silence. Historians therefore finding that Arius was certainly received at Tyre & went thence to Alexandria have endeavoured to mend the narrative of Athanasius by placing the death of Arius not immediately after his return from banishment to Constantinople as Athanasius doth but after his return from Alexandria thither. And yet to allow, as they do, that Arius was received into communion at Ierusalem & by consequence died within the pale of the Church is contrary to the designe of the story. And to tell that the Eusebians after they had received him at Ierusalem, would have received him at Constantinople as if they had not received him before is contrary not only to the narrative of Athanasius but also to common sense. ffrom one excommunication there is but one absolution.

These are the reasons which incline me to suspect the story of the death of Arius. And whilst <5r> Athanasius wrote his book de Synodis Arimini et Seleuciaë long after the death of Macarius & therein relates the reception of Arius at Ierusalem: I suspect also that he knew nothing then of the story of Arius dying out of communion & therefore had it not from Macarius as he pretends, but invented it himself.

## **Quest. 2.**

### **Whether the Meletians deserved that ill character which Athanasius gave them.**

In Dioclesian's persecution there arose a controversy between Peter the Bishop of Alexandria & Meletius the first of the Bishops under him; which caused a schism in the churches of Egypt; both parties notwithstanding keeping communion with the Churches abroad. When Athanasius succeeded in the Bishoprick of Alexandria, he was accused of tyrannical behaviour towards the Meletians so as in the time of the sacrament to break the communion cup of one Ichyras a Meletian Presbyter in Mareote & subvert the communion table & cause the church to be speedily demolished, & some time after to kill Arsenius a Bishop the successor of Meletius in Hypselita. Whereupon the Meletians accusing Athanasius of these things, he was tryed & condemned in the Council of Tyre & banished by the Emperor Constantine the great. And this caused great enmity between Athanasius & the Meletians. Athanasius therefore in his second Apology<sup>[11]</sup> gives this character of Meletius, that he was by Peter the Bishop of Alexandria in a common synod of the Bishops convicted of many crimes, & particularly that he had sacrificed to idols & for these things deposed: & that he thereupon made a schism so that his followers instead of Christians were called <5v> Meletians. But Epiphanius<sup>[12]</sup> relates the original of the schi{sm} much otherwise. ffor he calls Meletius a Confessor, & saith that when he & Peter & other martyrs & Confessors were in prison together there arose a dispute about the reception of lapsed persons, Peter out of mercy being for a speedy reception & Meletius & Peleus & many other martyrs & confessors out of zeal for piety being for a competent time of penitence before they were received so that the sincerity of their penitence might first appear: & thereupon they divided; the greater part following Meletius. Afterwards Peter suffered martyrdom, & Meletius for some time was condemned to the mines. Thus Epiphanius.

Now that which makes me suspect the relation of Athanasius is first because the character given by the greatest enemy is always the most to be suspected & then because the Council of Nice did not receive Meletius & his party into communion as they would have done had they been excommunicate before, but without any absolution continued them in their bishopricks, & only for putting an end to the schism confined Meletius to his city & deprived him of the power of ordeining as you may see in the epistle of this Council to the Churches of Egypt.<sup>[13]</sup> ffor if Meletius & his party continued in communion without ever being absolved from excommunication (as its plain by the epistle of the Council of Nice that they did) then they were never excommunicate: & if so, then the Story of Athanasius about their being excommunicate for various crimes is a fiction.

## **Quest. III.**

### **Whether the Council of Tyre & Ierusalem was not an orthodox authentick Council bigger then that of Nice.**

The friends of Athanasius endeavour all they <6r> can to diminish the credit of this Council, & make it a conventicle of a few Bishops selected by his enemies for oppressing him. So Socrates tells us it consisted of but sixty Bishops. And yet by considering earlier records I suspect it was as big or bigger then the Council of Nice. For the designe of this Council being very great it needed great credit & authority to support it. They were not only to examin the cause of Athanasius but also to receive into communion Arius & Euzoius with their followers in Egypt, as men who had been opprest by a fals representation of their faith: & it was <sup>a[14]</sup> an ancient Canon of the Church as well as a necessary one that no man should be received by a less number of Bishops then those by which he had been ejected. And therefore the Emperor sent his letters into all the Eastern Empire requiring the attendance of the Bishops that the

Council might be full. For this the eighty eastern bishops in the letter which at their return from the Council of Sardica they wrote at Philippopolis, affirm in these words. Concilium . . . . post alterum annum in Tyro propter Athanasij facinora necessario iterum celebratur. Advenerunt Episcopi de Macedonia & de Pannonia Bithynia & omnibus partibus Orientis, Imperatoris jussione constricti. The eastern Bishops objected against Athanasius that by returning to his bishoprick without being restored by as many bishops as had deposed him he had violated the ancient Canon: but the friends of Athanasius never retorted the accusation upon the eastern Bishops as if they had broken the same Canon in receiving the Arians at Tyre. In the times next after the Council the Athanasians never excepted against it for not being big enough. They never desired that a fuller Council should be called in the east to examin the Acts of this: but as if a fuller could not well be called there, or if called would not be for their advantage, they appealed to the <6v> West. And thereupon arose a quarrel, not between the West & a few bishops of the east but between the eastern & western churches, as is plain by the schism which was thereby made soon after between them. But let us heare how Eusebius who was in both Councils & so is a good witness, describes this & compares it with the other.<sup>[15]</sup> For he tells us how the remoter regions of Macedonia, Pannonia, Mœsia & Persia sent their Metropolitans thither, & then adds Bithyni quoque et Thraces præsentia sua conventum ornabant, nec deerant e Ciliciæ Episcopis clarissimi quique. Ex Cappadocia item qui doctrina et eloquentia præstabant in medio consessu enituerunt. Ad hæc Syria omnis, Mesopotamia, Phœnice, Arabia et Palæstina, ipsa Ægyptus quoque & Libya & qui Thebaidem incolunt, omnes in unum congregati magnum illum Dei Chorum implebant. Quos ex omnibus Provincijs innumerabilis hominum multitudo sequebatur. And a little after. Hanc secundam synodum omnium quas novimus maximam, Imperator Hierosolymis congregavit, post primam illam quam in urbe Bithyniæ nobilissima collegerat. Sed illa quidem triumphalis erat; in imperij vicennialibus preces ac vota pro victoria de hostibus parta in urbe victoriæ cognomine persolvens. Hæc verò tricennialium festivitatem ornavit cum Imperator Deo omnium bonorum auctori, Martyrium velut quoddam pacis donarium in ipso servatoris nostri monumento dedicaret. Thus far Eusebius, giving the preeminence to the latter Synod as being called upon the more holy & solemn occasion to celebrate the Emperors greatest year.

This Council has been reputed Arian & on that account of no authority, but the accusation was never proved & an accusation without proof is of no credit. The accusation indeed has gained credit among the followers of Athanasius for a long time: but this makes it no more <7r> then popular fame, & popular fame without original evidence thô of two thousand years standing is but popular fame, nor can any man readily take up with it without making himself one of the giddy mobile. Such fame indeed when the original of it is forgotten may make a strong presumption, but when we know the original & see that it was spread abroad without evidence can be of no moment. Wise men must look only to the evidence. Now all the evidence that this Council was Arian is only this, that they received Arius into communion & banished Athanasius. This is all the ground upon which the fame of their being Arian was spread abroad by the mobile of Athanasius his party & this is no just ground at all. ffor they did not receive Arius without his disowning those things for which he had been condemned at Nice, nor condemned Athanasius for his owning the Nicene decrees: & tis not the receiving or condemning men but the receiving or condemning opinions that can make any Council heretical. So far was this Council from being Arian that the Bishops thereof in almost all their following Councils declared against Arianism & anathematized the opinions for which Arius had been condemned. If you say they dissembled & were Arians in their heart while they were orthodox in their language, I must ask you how you or any man else can know that. For an accusation without knowledge of the thing is that which the world calls clamour calumny & malice. Had Athanasius & his Moncks the guift of searching & knowing men's hearts? & is this a ground for us to rely upon? We have no other means of knowing men's faith but by their profession & outward communion & way of worship, & by all these characters the fathers of this Council <7v> were orthodox. They constantly profest against Arianism & were in communion with the Churches of al the world & worshipt as other Churches of that age did. For they were never reprehended by their enemies upon any of these heads. Should any Church of our age charge heresy upon any body of men of her own communion,

& should the men reply that they always were of the communion of that Church & always profest her faith & used her worship & & that they still continue in that profession & practise; & should the accusers grant all this & only reply that notwithstanding their communion profession & practise they were hereticks in their hearts; & should the Iudges upon this accusation condemn them to death: I think such proceedings would by all sober men be accounted as malicious & barbarous as any we ever heard of. And yet this seems to be the case of the Council of Tyre, who without any proof are accused of heresy by those of their own communion contrary to their constant profession & practise, & their authority murdered upon the accusation.

If you say that the ffathers of the Council of Tyre did afterwards in the Councils of Ariminum & Seleucia declare for Arianism, I answer that you may with better reason say that they declared against Arianism in the Council of Nice, or if you please that the Nicene Council was Arian because the Tyrian was so. For the Councils of Nice & Tyre being great & general Councils of one & the same Greek Church collected within the space of ten years under one & the same Emperor have a far greater affinity with one another then the Councils of Tyre & Seleucia collected under different Emperors at the distance of 23 years. If some of the Tyrian ffathers were at Seleucia many more of the <8r> Nicene were at Tyre. This Council being collected so soon after that of Nice consisted partly of the Nicene ffathers & partly of their immediate disciples & successors: nor had Constantine the great done any thing to make the ffathers of the Greek churches alter their opinion between these two Councils: And therefore to accuse the Tyrian Council of Arianism is in effect to say that the generality of the Nicene fathers were Arians in their hearts & dissembled in their subscriptions. For they refused to subscribe against Arius till Constantine came in person into the Council to overawe them & then they subscribed with reserves. But between the times of the Councils of Tyre & Seleucia there was time enough for Constantius to work a change in the bishops & Constantius was the more likely man to work it: so that if there was any change wrought in the greek Bishops between the Councils of Nice & Seleucia its much more reasonable to beleive that Constantius wrought it after the Council of Tyre then Constantine before.

But what if some of the Tyrian Bishops, what if many of them were Arians? Does this invalidate the authority of the Council of Tyre? Surely not. The Athanasians sometimes complain as if the Eusebians dissembled in the Council of Nice, but yet would never allow that the authority of that Council was invalidated thereby. The authority of a Iudge depends not upon his religion or sincerity but upon his incorporation into the body politick, & upon his Commission to act. And so the authority of a Council depends not upon the secret religion & sincerity of the men but upon their being in external communion with the Church catholick, & having a legal commission to meet & act in Council. For otherwise we could never be certain that any Council is authentick. And upon this ground the Council of <8v> Tyre was as authentick as any Greek Council ever was or could be since the Apostles days, they being in communion with the Church Catholick & legally convened by the letters of Constantine the great.

Now that this was an authentick Council is manifest also by the consent of all parties in that age. For Athanasius & his party in that age questioned not the authority of this Council, but only complained as if they had abused their authority by corrupt judgment. They endeavoured by fixing the imputation of Arian upon them not to invalidate their authority but to bring their sincerity into question. And therefore Iulius Bishop of Rome cited the eastern Bishops to appear before him in a Council to justify not their authority but their integrity. And when they would not appear the Council absolved Athanasius from excommunication, & received him into communion, acknowledging thereby that Athanasius by the sentence of the Council of Tyre did really & truly & regularly stand excommunicate from the western churches as well as from the eastern, & by consequence from the Church catholick untill that asbolution. And agreable to this it is that Athanasius to prove that Arius died out of the pale of the church represents that he died the night before he was to have been received into communion by the Eusebians. ffor by this story he acknowledges that those who were received into communion by the Eusebians were in

communion with the Church catholick. So then by the consent of Athanasius, Pope Iulius & all their party, the Eusebian Councils before the rupture between the eastern & western churches were authentick & their Acts valid & binding.

It remains therefore that we enquire whether the Council of Tyre dealt sincerely or corruptly in the cause of Athanasius.

<9r>

#### **Quest IV.**

**Whether it was a dead man's hand in a bag or the dead body of Arsenius which was laid before the Council of Tyre to prove that Arsenius was dead.**

#### **Quest V**

**Whether it was Arsenius alive or only his letter which Athanasius produced in the Council of Tyre to prove that he was not dead.**

#### **Quest. VI**

**Whether the story of producing the dead man's hand and the living Arsenius in the Council of Tyre was not feigned by Athanasius about five & twenty years after the time of the Council of Tyre.**

These three questions being of a kind I consider together as one. For Historians tell us that when Athanasius was accused of the death of Arsenius he represented that Arsenius was alive & thereupon the Accusers to prove that he was dead produced in the Council of Tyre a dead man's hand in a bag representing that it was the hand of Arsenius cut off by Athanasius for magical uses & Athanasius confuted them by setting the living Arsenius before the Council & pulling out the man's two hands from under his cloak to let the Council see that neither of his hands were cut off: at which the accusers of Athanasius were ashamed & the Council proceeded no further. in that accusation there being some among them who knew Arsenius. And the truth of this story I question because I find it was unknown in the times next after the Council even to Athanasius himself as well as to others till he published it. For Athanasius about <9v> five years after the Council of Tyre that is about the year 440, when he was ready to be expelled his bishoprick the second time called a Council at Alexandria of 90 Egyptian bishops & in their name wrote a large elaborate letter to all the world in his own defense against the accusations & proceedings in the Council of Tyre & seems to omit nothing that could be thought of in his behalf & yet says not one word of the dead mans hand, nor of Arsenius appearing alive at Tyre. Neither is there any mention of these things in the letter which Pope Iulius about two years after wrote to the eastern bishops from a Council at Rome in behalf of Athanasius who was then amongst them. Neither are they mentioned in the two large letters which Athanasius & the Bishops of his party, assembled about five years after out of Egypt & all the west in the Council of Sardica, wrote to the same purpose, the one to the Church of Alexandria the other to all the Churches In all these letters they talk of Arsenius & say that he was alive but do not say that he appeared alive at Tyre tho that one thing had it been true would have been more to



the purpose then all the rest which they say. They do not say that they or any of them had seen him alive, or that they had any witnesses of his being alive, as they might & surely would have done had he been seen alive before all the world at Tyre.

But that which makes me most doubt of the story is that I find it otherwise related by Athanasius & his friends in these very letters of the Councils of Alexandria & Sardica. ffor in these Letters, (which being recorded by Athanasius himself in his second Apology as well as writ by him & his friends are of unquestionable authority,) they tell the story as if the accusers produced before the Council not a dead man's hand but a dead body: & Athanasius produced against them not Arsenius alive but his <10r> Letter only & the accusers were so far from being ashamed that the Council notwithstanding the Letter proceeded to condemn Athanasius for the murder.

And first that it was a dead body, the Council of Sardica in their letter to the Church of Alexandria tells expressly in these words. They [that is the Council of Tyre] said & lamented that Athanasius had committed murder & killed one Arsenius a Meletian Bishop: which thing they bewailed with feigned groans & fals tears, καὶ ἠξίουσαν τοῦ ζωντος ὡς τεθνηκότος τὸ σῶμα ἀποδοθῆναι & commanded or desired the **BODY** of him that lived as if he had been dead to be brought before them. But their fallacies did not lie hid. ffor all men knew that the man did live & was proved to be alive [viz<sup>t</sup> by his letter.] And yet when these versatile men saw their figments thus confuted (for Arsenius being alive has [by his Letter] shewn that he was not killed nor dead) they would not thus acquiesce but [afterwards in the reign of Constantius] added new fals accusations to the old ones, that they might again involve the man in calumnies. So then it was not a magical salted hand but the the whole preserved body of a dead man which the accusers of Athanasius laid or desired to be laid before the Council. In cases of murder tis usual to have dead bodies viewed for passing judgment upon them; & this was done in the Council that by the features & other marks & wounds & testimony of those who knew Arsenius or had seen his body at the time of the murder & buried it & dug it up again the Council might be satisfied whether he was murdered & how. But it seems, to sham the proceedings of the Council some Iugler (I will not say Sorcerer) has transformed the whole body into a magical hand.

And on the contrary by the same art the <10v> Letter of Arsenius has been transformed into Arsenius himself. ffor that Athanasius & his friends had no other evidence of Arsenius's being alive besides that Letter, he & his Bishops in the Council of Alexandria have plainly acknowledged in these words. Athanasius say they was accused of killing one Arsenius & breaking the communion cup. But Arsenius is alive & [in his Letter] desires your communion, & expects not other testimonies that he should appear alive, but he himself confesses that he lives, writing in his own letters to our fellow Bishop Athanasius whom they assert his murderer. Nor were the impious ashamed to affirm him the murderer of one who was in a remote place divided from us by journeys both by sea & land living in a region at that time unknown to all men. Yea they studied to hide him & make him disappear when he suffered nothing. And as far as they were able they translated him into another world, being ready to kill him that either by his real or feigned murder they might kill Athanasius. But thanks be to the divine providence who suffers nothing unjust to prosper but hath before the eyes of all men produced Arsenius living & openly detecting their calumny & deceit. ffor he does not shun us as his murderers nor hate us as injurious to him (for he suffers no evil from us:) but desires to communicate with us & to be of our number as his Letter shews. And yet notwithstanding this they proceeded against Athanasius & banished him as a murderer. ffor it was not the Emperor Constantine but their calumnies which banished him. Here you see Athanasius & his Bishops are so far from pretending that he appeared alive at Tyre that on the contrary they insist only upon the evidence of his Letter & represent that no other evidence was to be expected & by consequence had no other, & magnify this evidence so much as if God had thereby produced Arsenius alive before the eyes of all men: & complain that notwithstanding this Letter the Coun <11r> cil of Tyre proceeded

against Athanasius & banished him as a murderer: This they wrote five years after the Council of Tyre when things were fresh in their memory & contrary stories were not yet invented.

So then this Letter is the whole ground of all the confidence wherewith Athanasius & his friends so constantly reported that Arsenius was alive. And tho they tell us sometimes that they knew he was alive, or that he had shewed that he was not dead, or that God had produced him living & openly detecting the calumny before the eyes of all men, yet they mean only by his Letter. This evidence they magnify thus extravagantly because they had no other For had they known where he was or where any witnesses were which had seen him (as they would have known of multitudes had he been seen by all the world at Tyre) they would have sent for him or the witnesses & had them in readiness at their Councils to satisfy all their party, & made a greater noise about such evidence then about a letter which no upright Court of Iudicature would allow for any evidence at all. And yet I cannot find that in all their endeavours to overthrow the Council of Tyre they ever pretended to have so much as one living witness who had seen Arsenius alive. So far are the Egyptian Bishops from saying that any of them or any body else had seen Arsenius at Tyre, that they insist only on the evidence of his letter & say that he expects no other testimonies of his being alive, that is, that he contents himself with having given them that testimony & therefore they are not to look for any other. So far are they from saying that he in person put the accusers to shame, or stopt the proceedings of the <11v> Council upon this accusation that on the contrary they say that the Council proceeded against Athanasius notwithstanding the evidence of the letter & banisht him as a murderer, which deserves well to be noted. For in this one pasage you have the concurrent testimony of both parties against his being seen alive in the Council: that of Athanasius & his Egyptian Bishops in objecting nothing more then the letter of Arsenius against the proceedings of the Council & that of the eastern Bishops in proceeding on to condemn Athanasius for the murder. For in doing this they adjudged & declared that Arsenius was murdered & by consequence not seen alive in the Council. Nor did they only adjudge & declare this in the Council but afterwards constantly persisted in it, as you may see in their Letter from the Council of Antioch to Pope Iulius, & in that which in their return from the Council of Sardica they wrote at Philippopolis to all the world: And for my part I can more easily beleive what both parties affirmed in that age before newer stories were invented; then that the Bishops of all the east should condemn Athanasius for murdering a man who appeared alive before them in the midst of the Council & owned himself to be Arsenius & was known by many there; & be able to satisfy the Emperor Constantine & the eastern nations of the justness of such a sentence. For upon Athanasius's appealing from the Council the Emperor heard the cause over again between Athanasius & the Legates of the Council & he & the East were satisfied in their proceedings.

So then the story of the dead man's hand & the living Arsenius at Tyre seems to be a fable unknown in those times & therefore invented afterwards. And I suspect Athanasius to be the inventor of it because he tells it first of any man in his second Apology written in the wilderness at the same time that he broached the story of the death of Arius. ffor if he knew it to be fals (as he did if it were so) then he was not imposed upon others, but told <12r> it to impose upon others & so is the Author.

## Quest. VII.

### **Whether the Letter of Pinnes for proving Arsenius to be alive was not feigned by Athanasius at the same time with the story of the dead man's hand.**

In all the times of the controversy about the Council of Tyre I cannot find that Athanasius or his friends pretended that Arsenius had been seen alive by any living witnesses The Councils of Alexandria Rome & Sardica knew nothing of any such witnesses. But afterwards when Athanasius was condemned by all the

world & so saw that the letter of Arsenius would not any longer support the beleife that Arsenius was alive, he put about a story amongst his credulous followers as if Arsenius himself in person had been found alive first in Egypt with one Pinnes & then at Tyre, & tells the story of his first finding thus

Now that Arsenius was hidden [by the Meletians] that they might make his murder more probable, his friends who were with him testified. ffor in seeking him we found one of them who wrote to Iohn (another actor in the same fals accusation) the following Letter.

## **To the beloved Brother Iohn, Pinnes a Presbyter of the house of Ptemengyris which is in the Nome of Anteopolis, wisheth health.**

I would have you know that Athanasius sent his Deacon into Thebais to search all places for Arsenius. Pecysius the presbyter & Sylvanus the <12v> brother of Helias & Tapenacerameus & Paul the Monck of Hypseles being first found confessed that Arsenius was with us. But when we had learnt that, we caused him to be put into a ship & carried down with Helias the Monck into the lower parts [of Egypt.] And soon after the Deacon with some others coming upon us went into our house & found him not by reason that we had sent him as was said into the lower parts: But me & Helias the Monck who had conveyed him away they carried away with them to Alexandria & brought us before the governour & I could not deny but confessed that he lived & was not killed The same thing also was confessed by the Monck who had carried him away. Wherefore, o Father I make known to you these things that you may not accuse Athanasius. For they said that he was alive & hidden with us & it was made known to all Egypt & cannot any longer be concealed. I Paphnutius a Monck of the same house who have written this Epistle salute you much. Farewell.

Now the truth of this Epistle I suspect for these reasons. ffirst because Athanasius & his ffriends knew nothing of this evidence in the Councils of Alexandria Rome & Sardica. So many living witnesses that Arsenius was alive & the proof thereof by some of those witnesses before the governour of Egypt, would have made a much greater noise in the Council of Tyre & afterwards then the single Letter of Arsenius: & yet Athanasius & his friends at that time insisted only upon the evidence of this Letter representing that Arsenius himself had shewed by his letter that he was alive & intended no other evidence of his being alive & complaining that the Council of Tyre had banished Athanasius notwithstanding that letter. This was all that Athanasius & his friends had then to allege as we have shewed out of the letter of the Council <13r> of Alexandria

And secondly I suspect the letter of Pinnes because it represents things contrary to what Athanasius & his friends did in the Letter of the Council of Alexandria. For here we are told that Arsenius at first lay hid in upper Egypt till the Deacon of Athanasius upon search discovered him & that he then retired into the lower Egypt & soon after, as Athanasius adds, wrote his famous Letter. But in the Letter of the Council of Alexandria we are told that the accusers of Athanasius were not ashamed to affirm him the murderer of one who was in a remote place divided from the Egyptians by journeys both by sea & land, living in a region at that time unknown to all men, & being hidden by them & translated as far as could be into another world untill he made himself known by his letter. /

And lastly the stories of finding Arsenius first in Egypt & then at Tyre are of a kind & were told by the same man at the same time & therefore must stand or fall together.

## Quest VIII.

### Whether the Letter of Arsenius was not feigned by Athanasius before the convening of the Council of Tyre

This famous letter pretended to be written by Arsenius after he had for some time lain hidden runs thus.

To Athanasius the blessed Pope, Arsenius Bishop of the City Hypselita which was formerly under Meletius, & to the Presbyters & Deacons much health in the Lord.

And we loving peace & union with the catholick Church which you by the grace of God are set <13v> over, & desiring to be subject to the ecclesiastical canon according to the ancient law: do write to you beloved Pope promising in the name of the Lord that we will not hence forward communicate with Schismatics & such as are not in peace with the catholick church whether they be Bishops or Presbyters or Deacons; neither will we assemble our selves with them in any Synod, nor send them letters of peace nor receive such letters from them nor without the advice & assent of you the Metropolitan Bishop make any decree about Bishops or about any other common ecclesiastical opinion; but we will give place to the received canons after the manner of Ammonianus, Tyrannus, Plusianus & the other Bishops. Moreover we beseech your humanity therefore to write back to us as soon as may be & also to our fellow Bishops concerning us. & shew them that we now stand to the ancient decrees being at peace with the Catholick Church, & united to our fellow Bishops of those regions. And we beleive that by your prayers as being powerfull this peace will remain firm & indissolvable to the end according to the will of God the Lord of all things, through Iesus Christ our Lord. The whole Clergy that is under you we & they that are with us salute, & so soon as God shall permit we will come to your humanity. I Arsenius wish you may long fare well most blessed Pope.

Now the truth of this Letter I suspect, first because it has not the form & humour of a free letter but looks like some formal covenant of submission drawn up by a Lawyer to be imposed on Arsenius, or like a recantation imposed on him by a magistrate. Then because Arsenius had he been of the mind here exprest would certainly have made good his promise of coming to <14r> Athanasius. He would not have suffered the whole Roman world for many years to continue in war & confusion about his death but have speedily shewn himself to the Emperour & to the world to the confusion of all the enemies of his dear friend Athanasius. Thirdly because were this letter genuine Athanasius must have known how to write back to Arsenius & consequently knowing where he was would have sent & fetcht him by fair meanes or by foule & shewed him alive to the Emperour. Lastly because I find this letter directly contradicted by Athanasius himself. ffor he in his Apology pag 783 tells the story of the hand after this manner.<sup>[16]</sup> Arsenius, saith he, was first found hid in Egypt: afterwards those of our side found him hidden at Tyre. And, which is strange, when he was found he would not confess himself to be Arsenius untill in judgment he was convicted by Paul Bishop of Tyre. And from that time being ashamed he denied himself no more. Now he did that to keep the compact which he had made with the Eusebians, least he being found & discovered the plot should be laid open & dissolved. This passage I say wherein Arsenius is represented confederate with the Eusebians till the Council of Tyre does absolutely contradict his letter wherein he is made to renounce that party & side with Athanasius before. Nor can it be pretended that Arsenius turned to & fro, seing Athanasius with his Bishops in the Council of Alexandria four or five years after the Council of Tyre, pleaded from this letter that Arsenius then desired their communion. So then both these contradictory records cannot be true, or rather they must both be false, destroying one another. <14v> ffor had Arsenius been discovered in such a manner at Tyre, then would not Athanasius & his Bishops a while after in the Council of Alexandria have collected & pleaded from his letter writ before, that he did at that time desire their communion. And had the Letter been genuine Athanasius would not afterwards

have overthrown the credit of it by telling that contrary story of Arsenius at Tyre. But it seems his memory failed him.

## Quest IX.

### Whether the Letter of Ischyras was not feigned by Athanasius.

When Athanasius was accused of the above mentioned crimes by Ischyras, he pretended that Ischyras became penitent & wrote the following Letter.

### To the Blessed Pope Athanasius, Ischyras wisheth health in the Lord.

Seing upon my coming to you Lord Bishop to be received into the Church, you chid me for what I had heretofore spoken, as if I did that on my own accord, I have therefore sent you this Apology in my writing that you might know that there was force done to me & that I was beaten by Isaac & Heraclides & Isaac of Leotis & by their companions. But I calling God to witness upon this do say for my excuse that I am conscious of none of those things done by you of which they speak. ffor neither was there any cup broken nor holy Table overthrown, but all these calumnies they urged me to by force. These things <15r> I apologize for my selfe & give you in writing desiring to be one of your assembly. Farewell in the Lord. I have given this my hand to you Bishop Athanasius in the presence of the Presbyters Ammon of Dicelle, Heraclius of Phasco, Boccon of Chenebri, Achillas of Myrsene, Didymus of Taphosiris & Iustus of Bomotheus: & of the Deacons of Alexandria, Paul Peter & Olympius; & these of Mareote, Ammonius, Pistus, Demetrius & Gaius.

Now this Letter I suspect because it looks as if contrived rather for the interest of Athanasius then that of Ischyras, & seems more like a formal recantation or certificate then a free Letter, & also conteins a ridiculous story. For its ridiculous that men should go about to procure false accusers or witnesses by forcing or beating them? And were a false accuser or witness so procured tis not likely that after his discovering the knavery he would go on in accusing or witnessing as Ischyras did to the end. Could a beating bout make Ischyras so hearty in the cause?

And further if Ischyras went to Athanasius to be reconciled to him & received into communion as this letter represents, he went with designe either to confess his fault or not. If to confess, how came Athanasius to let him go without taking his confession before witnesses? If not to confess, how could he hope to be pardoned & received by Athanasius? And afterwards, if he sent this Letter of confession, how came Athanasius then to neglect sending for him & making his advantage of the opportunity? Would Athanasius send up & down the world to seek Arsenius & not accept of Ischyras when he offered to come in, but content himself with a bare letter? These things don't consist.

But that which looks most odly is the wit <15v> nessing of this Letter. For witnesses are never set to Letters. They are set to no sort of writings but such as are designed for evidence in legal proceedings & therefore shew that the author of this letter designed it for evidence: that is, he designed by those witnesses to make it evidence for Athanasius against Ischyras. For there was no need of such evidence against any body else. Were these witnesses added to give credit to this Letter with Athanasius? There was no need of that. Were they added to give credit to it with others? Then the designe of it was not to make an interest with Athanasius for Ischyras but to make an interest with others for Athanasius against Ischyras. Had Ischyras been penitent & desired to be reconciled to Athanasius as this Letter represents, he

would not have sent a certificate to Athanasius against himself, but have wrote an insinuating letter in general termes, & have reserved himself to be usefull to Athanasius as an evidence upon condition of pardon & reconciliation; & no doubt Athanasius would have accepted the condition with both hands.

There is another thing which looks very suspiciously. For many persons are named as witnesses but in such a manner as makes it plain that their hands were not to the letter. Would any man call his friends together to be witnesses to a writing & not make them set their hands to it? If Ischyras wrote this Letter he either designed it for evidence or he did not. If he did not he would have made no mention of witnesses. If he did he would certainly have caused them to set their hands to it. It looks therefore as written by somebody else who had a mind to give credit to it by witnesses, but knew not how either to procure or counterfeit their hands.

And the suspicion is much encreased by considering that the truth of this letter was never <16r> proved (that I can find) by the actual testimony of any of the witnesses. The Letter was written before the Council of Tyre & by consequence alleged in that Council, & in the Councils of Alexandria Rome & Sardica where Athanasius was present: but no witnesses that I can read of were ever brought to prove it Iulius Bishop of Rome in his letter for Athanasius, tells how Athanasius produced the authentick hand writing of Ischyras confessing that he was suborned. He does not say that Athanasius had proved by witnesses that Ischyras wrote that confession but lays the whole stress of the evidence upon the handwriting of Ischyras. I would ask therefore whether Athanasius & his friends did try to get this Letter proved in the Council of Tyre & on other occasions or not. If they did not, it argues a guilty conscience. ffor without any examination of the business they took it for granted that the witnesses would be against them & therefore did not beleive the reality of their testimony to the Letter. But if they did try & upon examining the witnesses found them against this Letter, then is the Letter false by the concurrent testimony of those very witnesses cited to prove it true. And this is to me a very great argument of suspicion. For the case is as if a man should produce a bond wherein tis written that the party pretended to be bound signed it before such & such witnesses but whose hands are not to the bond, & before a Iudge should produce none of the witnesses, but confess that he never spake with them or that they are all against him being the Defendants friends, & only plead that they are good witnesses because in the bond (pretended to be sent in a letter to the Plaintiff) tis written that the Defendant signed it in their presence. So impudent a case as this was scarce ever brought before a civil Magistrate.

<16v>

### **Quest. X.**

## **Whether the Recantation of Valens & Vrsatius was not feigned by the friends of Athanasius.**

When Athanasius being banished first by Constantine the great & then by his son Constantius appealed from the Council of Tyre to the Pope, & the eastern Bishops were thereupon summoned first to the Council of Rome & then to the Council of Sardica to appear & plead their cause but would not subject themselves to the authority of the Pope & jurisdiction of the Western Bishops: Constantius Emperor of the West by the impulse of the western Bishops wrote a letter to his brother Constantius, threatning that if he would not restore Athanasius & animadvert upon his adversaries, he would come himself & restore him by force. Whereupon Constantius being reduced to great straits called many of the eastern Bishops together & they advised him that it was better to let Athanasius have his Church then undertake a civil war. Constantius therefore invited Athanasius back by courteous letters, & a while after Vrsatius & Valens two Bishops of Pannonia who had been principal actors in the condemnation of Athanasius were

said to have written voluntarily two letters, the one from Aquileia to Athanasius wherein they declare that they desire his communion, the other at Rome to the Pope. The Epistles are as follows.

## **To our Lord & Brother Athanasius the Bishop Vrsatius & Valens Bishops.**

Having an opportunity by our brother & fellow Presbyter Musæus who is going to your humanity, dear brother we salute you much by him from Aquileia, & wish that you may read our epistle in health: whereof you will make us certain, if you please to write back to us. ffor that we have peace with you & ecclesiastical communion you may know by these our letters. The Divine Providence preserve you Deare  
<17r> Brother.

## **To our Lord the blessed Pope Iulius, Valens & Vrsatius wisheth health.<sup>[17]</sup>**

Since it is manifest that we formerly insinuated by our Letters many heinous things concerning Athanasius, & being convened by the letters of your Holiness, could not give an account of what we had signified: we confess to your Holiness in the presence of all the Presbyters our brethren that all things which heretofore came to our ears concerning Athanasius are false & feigned & of no force. And therefore we most willingly embrace the communion of the said Athanasius, especially since your Holiness according to your innate goodness hath been pleased to pardon our error. We profess also that if at any time the Oriental Bishops or even Eusebius himself shall with an evil mind call us into judgment concerning this thing, we will not go thither without your consent. And the heretick Arius & his followers who say there was a time when the Son was not & affirm that the Son is of nothing & deny that he was before all ages, as by our former confession which we made at Millain, so now & always we anathematize.

The second of these two epistles is said by Hilary to have been written (before the first) upon occasion of a Council convening at Sirmium against Photinus two years after the Council of Millain & by consequence four years after the Council of Sardica. ffor Petavius & Valesius agree with Socrates in placing this Council of Sirmium in the year 351, & the Council of Sardica met A.C. 347 & Liberius in his Epistle to Constantius written after George was made Bishop of Alexandria, & by consequence A.C. 356 or A.C. 357, reconns eight years from the Council of Millain to the writing of that Epistle, & therefore the Council of Millain was celebrated A.C. 348 or 349.

Now this second Epistle I suspect for many reasons.

1. It is a confession attested by nameless witnesses, & was never proved.

<17v>

2. The crime is too great & shamefull for Bishops to acknowledge voluntarily as Valens & Vrsatius are here represented to have done. Nor it is likely that after such a confession they could have acted in the western Councils with so great authority reputation & success as they did.

3. Eusebius who is mentioned in the Epistle as then living was dead some yeares before. And if with Hilary & Sozomen to avoid this objection you write Athanasius for Eusebius, the sense will be hard. ffor Athanasius will be accused of an evil mind; which is contrary to the designe of the Epistle.

4. The saying that Valens & Vrsatius being required to prove the things charged against Athanasius could not do it is not consistent with the proceedings in the Council of Sardica. For there five of the six Bishops then living who had been sent from the Council of Tyre to Mareote to examin the business of Ischyras (two of which five were Valens & Vrsatius) propounded to the western Bishops that an equal number of both parties should be sent again to Mareote to examin things anew, & if the crime did not appear, they five would be excommunicated, but if it did, the like number of the western bishops who created the disturbance should be excommunicated by the eastern. But the western Bishops would not accept of equal terms. The eastern must submit to the authority of the Pope & jurisdiction of the western or go for criminals.

5. Pope Liberius <sup>a[18]</sup> in his Letters to Constantius in behalf of Athanasius, makes no mention of this confession of Vrsatius & Valens, as he would surely have done had it been newly made to his Predecessor

6. The great Council of Ariminum <sup>a[19]</sup> in their Letter to Constantius the Emperor, accused Vrsatius & Valens of a Confession made at Millain saying that after they had been excommunicated upon suspicion of Arianism they begged pardon & were absolved at the Council of Millain before the Legates of the Pope. But of this other Confession made two years after at Rome upon occasion of the convening of the Council of Sirmium they make no mention, tho <18r> that would have been much more material had it been true.

7. Vrsatius & Valens were excommunicated but once, that is to say in the Council of Sardica & one excommunication admits of but one absolution

If you place the Council of Millain before the Council of Sardica the first confession & absolution will be before the western bishops excommunicated any of the eastern for Arianism & the second before Athanasius went from Rome into the east: both which are plainly absurd. ffor the second confession was afterwards sent to Athanasius out of the west by Paulinus bishop of Treves. And further the Council of Sardica in their letters whereby they declare Valens & Vrsatius excommunicate for Arianism, would have taken notice of their former excommunication recantation & absolution had there been any such thing. But if you place the Council of Millain after the Council of Sardica as you ought to do, then Valens & Vrsatius will recant, & be absolved twice from one excommunication: & which encreases the absurdity, the Bishop of Rome alone will absolve them from what a Council, where he himself was present by his Legates, had absolved them before. ffor their second recantation plainly respects the proceedings of the Council of Sardica. So then there is no place for this second recantation.

## Quest. XI.

### Whether Athanasius was falsly accused or did falsly accuse Eusebius of adultery before the Council of Tyre.

Philostorgius<sup>[20]</sup> tells us that when Athanasius being impelled by the Emperors threatning, came to Tyre, he would not submit to stand in judgment, but sent in a big-bellied woman which he had hired to accuse Eusebius of Adultery: hoping that by the tumult which <18v> would probably be raised, he might escape being tried. But when Eusebius asked her if she knew the man & whether he was amongst the Bishops then present, she answered that she was not so senseless as to accuse such men of base lust & by those



words discovered the fraud. This story the other Historians Sozomen & Theodoret<sup>[21]</sup> invert as if the whore was hired by the Eusebians to accuse Athanasius & the fraud detected by one of Athanasius's friends to the confusion of his accusers But this last story was unknown to Athanasius & his friends in the times next after the Council of Tyre. For in the Letters of the Councils of Alexandria, Rome & Sardica, they mention it not tho they omit nothing which made against that Council: & this story had it been true would have made more against it then any thing else they say. Nor does Athanasius mention it in all his works. Whence I suspect his friends sometime after the writing of his Apologies inverted the story of the accusation.

## Quest. XII.

### Whether Athanasius did sincerely acquit himself of the crime of breaking the communion cup of Ischyras.

When Athanasius became bishop of Alexandria he was soon accused of tyrannical behaviour towards the Meletians so as with his own hands to break the communion cup of Ischyras a Meletian Presbyter in Mareote then performing sacred rites & to subvert the Altar & cause the Church to be demolished. This was the true accusation as I find by the letter of the eighty eastern Bishops at Sardica recorded in Hilaries fragments.

On the other hand Athanasius & his party <19r> represented that Ischyras was no Priest, the place no church, the day not the Lords day; that Athanasius went not thither himself but only sent Macarius who found Ischyras not celebrating the sacrament but sick in bed & charged him not to proceed in those things; & that Ischyras, so soon as well, fled to the Meletians & Eusebians who thereupon composed the accusation. But were this representation the truth there could have been no colour for framing an accusation. For cunning men never venture to frame fals accusations without some considerable colour of circumstances handsomly laid together. The mystery therefore I take to be this.

I find by a letter of Constantine the great to Athanasius that Athanasius & Macarius were both of them accused: & by the letter which the eighty eastern Bishops wrote at Philippopolis compared with some passages cited by Pope Iulius out of the Acts of the Council of Tyre, that when indeed Macarius was sent by Athanasius he found Ischyras sick in bed but that Athanasius was accused for coming also himself when Ischyras was administring the Eucharist & for breaking the communion cup & overturning the altar with his own hands. So then it seems (according to the accusation) Macarius was sent first to forwarn Ischyras of executing the office of a Presbyter; & afterwards when he would not desist, Athanasius coming at a time proper to find him in the act overthrew the sacred things & caused the place to be demolished, Macarius perhaps assisting him. Now the accusation lying only against this last Act Athanasius to acquit himself confounds this time with the former, & undertakes to prove (not before the Council of Tyre where the accusation was understood; but amongst the credulous western Bishops & others of his own party) that Macarius went alone <19v> without Athanasius & found Ischyras sick in bed in a place which was not a church on a day which was not the Lords day & only reproved him without breaking the communion cup & subverting the sacred things: & by consequence that the accusation that Athanasius found him on the Lord's day in a Church administring the Eucharist & subverted the sacred things was a figment. Now if Athanasius shuffled in making this defence, it's plain that he was gravelled and wanted a just defense. Which is enough to decide the Question.

### Quest. XIII.

## Whether Athanasius was not made Bishop of Alexandria by sedition & violence against the Canons of that Church.

Sozomen<sup>[22]</sup> tells us that in the Council of Tyre Athanasius was accused by all in common that he acquired the Bishoprick by the perjury of certain Bishops when all the Bishops had agreed before that no man should be ordeined before they had ended the brawls which were between them. ffor Eusebius<sup>[23]</sup> writes that when the Council of Nice was ended there burned an implacable fury of contention among the Egyptians. And Socrates<sup>[24]</sup> tells us (out of the letters of the Bishops written at that time) that this contention was about the Nicene decree of the word homousios, those who disliked it thinking that the opinion of Sabellius & Montanus was introduced by those who allowed it, & therefore calling them impious as if they took away the existence of the Son of God, & on the contrary those who allowed this word thinking that the worship of many Gods was introduced by their adversaries, & therefore shunning them as if they introduced the superstition of the Gentiles.

Vpon the death of Alexander therefore there being gathered out of Thebais & all Egypt forty & four bishops, as the <sup>d[25]</sup> accusers of Athanasius affirmed, they agreed under oath that no man should be ordeined before they had ended those brawls & then they should elect a new Bishop by common consent: <20r> {but} some of these Bishops violating their oath ordeined Athanasius privately without the consent of the rest. ffor <sup>e[26]</sup> Athanasius with a part of the people rushing one evening into the Church called Dionysius's & finding there certain Bishops shut the doors & caused the Bishops after much reluctancy to ordain him. Whereupon the rest of the Bishops anathematized Athanasius, but he sending letters in the name of the City to the Emperour procured a confirmation of his ordination & thereby silenced his adversaries. This was the accusation as 'tis represented by Sozomen & Philostorgius. And that there was some truth in it is confest by Athanasius himself & his Bishops in the Council of Alexandria collected about 15 years after this Ordination of Athanasius. Their words are these.<sup>[27]</sup> They [viz<sup>t</sup> the accusers of Athanasius] say that after the death of Alexander the Bishop, when some few made mention of Athanasius, six or seven Bishops ordeined him secretly in a hidden place. These things they wrote to the Emperor being not ashamed to write any kind of lye. But we & the whole City & Province are witnesses that all the multitude & all the people of the catholick church [that is, all whom they would acknowledge to be catholick] being assembled as with one soul & body cryed out with great acclamations, desiring that Athanasius might be Bishop of the Church. This they entreated of Christ by publick votes & this they adjured us to do for many days & nights neither departing from the Church themselves nor suffering us to depart. Thus you see, while the Council would seem to correct the accusation in point of circumstances they confess the sedition & violence of the people & that the imprisoned Bishops resisted them many days & nights together before they would ordein him, & that all the people by whose violence this was done were no more in number then one of the little Churches built before the reign of Constantine the great for the 12 Parishes of Alexandria was able to hold.

Nor indeed was Athanasius capable of being ordeined, for he was but a Deacon, & the Canon constituted by Mark the Evangelist & constantly observed till that time, was that there should be twelve Presbyters of that Church, & that out of them <20v> the Bishop should be always elected.

And besides he was scarce of age for such a dignity. ffor he was then but a youth scarce 25 years old. Whence the <sup>c[28]</sup> Meletians used to cry: O wickedness! He a Bishop or he a Boy?

To palliate these things the Athanasians have feigned as if Alexander upon his death bed recommended Athanasius for his successor & Athanasius out of modesty then hid himself. But this as it does not excuse

the matter so it looks like a story of later date. ffor the above-mentioned Council of Alexandria knew nothing of it, tho composed of Athanasius & all his Bishops. ffor Athanasius convened them in his own defense, & in their Epistle where they seem to omit nothing which made for his advantage & particularly defend his election, there is not a word of this story.

By comparing all circumstances its more to be suspected that Athanasius in the controversy between the Clergy of Alexander about the Son of God, inflamed differences, thereby to throw out part of the Clergy & make room for himself & his friends: & when he had thus gotten to be Deacon, the reputation & interest he had got with his friends by that controversy served him to invade the Bishoprick. ffor when the people of his party shutting up themselves with certain of the Bishops in a Church, importuned those Bishops for many days together to ordain him, I do not hear that he sided with those Bishops against the people This at least is certain, that the Bishops which ordeined him resisted for many days together & were all that time kept prisoners in a church by the Mob of his party till they yeilded. And whereas his adversaries objected that those Bishops were forced to ordein him contrary to their oaths; its observable that he & his Bishops in the Council of Alexandria make no answer to that part of the Objection.

### **Quest. XIV.**

## **Whether Athanasius was not justly deposed by the Council of Tyre.**

<21r>

The arguments for the justness of the sentence are very great.

1. The Council of Tyre was a very full one. So that if some Bishops would have been partial there were others numerous enough to reduce them to modesty. And if it be objected that the Council was not free because the Emperor was present there by his Deputy with guards of soldiers: the objection lies stronger against the Council of Nice where the Emperor was present in person & that with a designe to influence the decision of the Council: whereas at Tyre his Deputy was present only to see peace kept. The strange heats at Nice between the Bishops, admonished the Emperor to prevent the like at Tyre, & if he had not done so there could have been nothing but confusion, <sup>a[29]</sup> Athanasius bringing a great multitude out of Egypt to create disturbance & behaving himself very turbulantly in his tryall <sup>b[30]</sup> as the Council of Tyre in their circulatory letters complained.

2. Its objected that at the examination of witnesses at Mariote there was present but one party. The accuser Ischyras, say they, was there; but the Defendents Athanasius & Macarius were both absent nor were any of the Presbyters of Athanasius allowed to be present at the examination thô they desired it. Well but if the accusers of Athanasius brought several witnesses to Tyre as no doubt they did & after both parties had been heard face to face the Council had a mind to give themselves the outmost satisfaction by sending to the place such persons as they thought fit, some to cite witnesses others to take depositions, but none to act as Iudges or accusers, & if the Delegates at their return acted the part of witnesses before the Council & the Council as Iudges heard the evidence of these witnesses between Athanasius & Ischyras; is the Council to be blamed for this? For that this was the true case is manifest by the Letter of the Council of Alexandria, wherein Athanasius & the Egyptian Bishops say that <sup>c[31]</sup> the Delegates of the Council of Tyre were not ashamed of Iudges to become witnesses. Had Athanasius desired that witnesses might be examined for him as well as against him, & <21v> that somebody might go on his behalf to cite the witnesses which were for him as well as Ischyras went to cite the witnesses against him, the Council could not in justice have denied such a request. But he pretended not to have any witnesses: for he & his

friends never complained that their witnesses were not examined. All their complaint was that they were not admitted to except against the witnesses of Ischyras, as being either heathens or Catechumeni, or Arians or Meletians or Colluthians, or persons suborned if orthodox, or any thing else then the friends of Athanasius. For Athanasius & his friends exclaim against the Delegates for examining all those sorts of people as if heathens were not as good witnesses in matters of fact as any body else. So then whilst Athanasius affirmed there was no Church demolished no altar overturned, no cup broken, the day not Sunday, the place no church & he himself not there, he could produce no witnesses to prove what he affirmed but Ischyras produced many upon the place to prove the contrary. The Presbyters of Athanasius sent to the Council of Tyre in a letter by some of their members all the evidence they could & that was only their own testimony. This evidence (if men can give evidence in their own cause) the Council of Tyre had before them, to compare it with other evidence to the contrary & surely knew what stress to lay upon it. So that I see not what was wanting to enable them to judge righteously.

3. When the Legates returned from Tyre & Athanasius was fully heard & condemned, he fled from Tyre & appealed to the Emperor Constantine the great. Whereat the Emperor by an angry Letter summoned the Council to come & give an account of their proceedings. But they sent only six Legates. And then the Emperor heard all the cause over again between Athanasius & the Legates, approved the proceedings of the Council & banished Athanasius. Tis true that Athanasius represents that the Legates feigned a new calumny against him whereby the Emperor being incensed banished him in a passion without hearing the cases of Arsenius & Ischyras: but the eighty eastern Bishops in the Letter <22r> which in their return from Serdica they wrote at Philippopolis to the Churches, say the contrary. For relating how six Bishops who were sent to Mariote returned to Tyre & confirmed the truth of the accusations, they add. Vnde in præsentem Athanasium dignam pro criminibus sententiam [Patres] dicunt. Propter quod Tyro fugiens Imperatorem appellat Audit etiam Imperator, quique interrogatione habita omnia ejus flagitia recognoscens, sua illum sententia in exilium deportavit.

4. five years after was the Council of Alexandria of eighty Bishops called by Athanasius against the Council of Tyre: but whilst they examined not the cause between Athanasius & his accusers nor sent to Mariote to examin witnesses but relied on the feigned Letters of Arsenius & Ischyras & such other reports as Athanasius & some Presbyters of his party had spread abroad, but never proved, & whilst Athanasius himself (the party accused & condemned) presided in the Council & most probably penned their letter: what they did can amount to nothing more then prejudice. Neither did the Councils of Rome & Serdica examin the cause between Athanasius & his accusers or send to Mariote to inform themselves, but relied upon the credit of the Council of Alexandria & that of the Presbyters of Athanasius, & were also influenced by ambition, their designe being to make the Pope universal Bishop, & under him to exercise jurisdiction over the Eastern Churches. For the Pope summoned the Bishops of those Churches to the Council of Rome to be judged & when they checkt him for his ambition & refused to come & subject themselves the Council of Rome absolved Athanasius without any judicial process, as if the Eastern Bishops by not subjecting themselves & coming to plead had acknowledged themselves guilty. Afterwards the Council of Sardica proceeded upon the same ground, excommunicating the chief of the eastern Bishops because they would not come to submit themselves & making a Decree that Appeals might be made from all the world to the Pope. This intermixing <22v> of the concern for the Vniversal Bishoprick puts a prejudice upon the proceedings for Athanasius & makes them irregular & voyd. And the prejudice is increased by the case of Marcellus who was deposed by the Eastern Bishops for heresy & absolved & justified by the Councils of Rome & Sardica & yet afterwards acknowledged by all the world to be guilty of the heresy for which he was deposed. Now if the Councils of Alexandria Rome & Sardica neither acted judicially nor without prejudice, then has there been nothing done to dissolve the judgment of the Council of Tyre & therefore that Council is still in force.

5 The proceedings against Athanasius are further cleared by a proposal made at the Council of Sardica by five of the six Bishops which were sent from Tyre to Mareote, namely that an equal number of Bishops should be sent by both parties to the places where Athanasius had committed his crimes to examine things anew, & if the report which those five had made to the Council of Tyre appeared to be false they would stand excommunicated without complaining to any body; but if it were found true, then five of those Bishops who abetted Athanasius should be excommunicated & complain to no body. But this equal condition, the friends of Athanasius durst not accept of.

6. About six years after the Council of Sardica, viz<sup>t</sup> A.C. 353 Constantius being now Emperour of both East & West called a Council at Arles in Gallia to have the condemnation of Athanasius subscribed & for that end <sup>b[32]</sup> by a courteous Letter sent by Montanus invited Athanasius to his presence, <sup>c[33]</sup> designing that his cause should be heard anew before this Council for the satisfaction of the Western Bishops. But Athanasius <sup>d[34]</sup> declined the judgment as he had done that of the Council of Cæsarea before in the reign of Constantine the great. In this Council <sup>e[35]</sup> the Popes Legates Vincentius of Capua & Marcellus proposed that for the peace of the Churches they were ready to subscribe the condemnation of Athanasius provided the Here <23r> sy of Arius might be first condemned. But being told that it belonged not to them to prescribe the order of things or to go upon other business than what the Emperor had convened them for, all the Council subscribed except Paulinus of Treves who was therefore banished. And thereupon Pope Liberius <sup>f[36]</sup> in an epistle to Hosius complained that he beleived that the Gospel of God might have been preserved by his Legate Vincentius but yet he not only failed of obtaining the proposals he was to insist on, but was brought over to subscribe. Two years after this, another Council was called at Millain of 300 Bishops & <sup>g[37]</sup> Diogenes was sent to bring Athanasius by force, but being resisted by the people returned without him. In this Council therefore the Bishops all subscribed readily except Lucifer Calaritanus the Popes Legate & Eusebius Vercellensis. Eusebius <sup>h[38]</sup> laid down before the Council the Nicene creed promising to do what they desired if that were first subscribed: but when the sentence of <sup>k[39]</sup> Athanasius was insisted on as the business of the Council, he preswaded Dionysius of Millan that the Nicene faith was struck at, & fraudulently procured his name to be wiped out of the subscriptions. Whereupon these three were banished. In the beginning of the next year Syrianus being sent with an armed force to take Athanasius & place George in his room, after he had staid a while at Alexandria attempted to take him, & the same year a Council was called at Bituris in Gallia. But Athanasius after some resistance escaped & the Bishops now convened subscribed his condemnation except Hilary & Rhodanius <sup>m[40]</sup> who promised to subscribe if the Nicene faith were first ratified; but for refusing otherwise to subscribe they were banished. The next year Hosius subscribed at Sirmium but Liberius Bishop of Rome suffered two years banishment & then sent <sup>n[41]</sup> a Letter of submission to the Oriental Bishops, in which he writes thus. Ego Athanasium non defendo, sed quia susceperat illum bonæ memoriæ Iulius Episcopus decessor meus, verebar ne forte ab aliquo prævaricator judicaretur. At ubi cognovi <23v> quando Deus placuit juste vos illum condemnasse, mox consensum meum commodavi sententijs vestris &c. So then Athanasius was now condemned by all the West except six Bishops, & even those in not insisting at all upon his innocence, <sup>[42]</sup> but only objecting the danger of the faith & proposing to condemn him provided the Nicene faith might be first confirmed, did really condemn him. ffor this was as much as to say, that they beleived him guilty but did not think it safe to subscribe his condemnation before the Nicene faith was confirmed. So then all the West, as well the six Bishops which were banished as all the rest did freely condemn him in their judgments even before they consented to subscribe his condemnation. By making this proposal they all sufficiently confest that they had not seen Arsenius alive nor could prove that he had been seen alive either at Tyre or any where else, nor that the Mareotick Acts were false. By this they declined insisting upon the innocence of Athanasius & discovered that they durst not rely upon it. By this they confest that they had formerly defended him upon other considerations than his innocence & that in their consciences they were satisfied that they might justly & according to the Ecclesiastical Canons subscribe to his condemnation tho not safely till those other considerations were removed.

7. And if it was not enough for Athanasius to be thus condemned by all the world, it may be considered whether he was not also condemned by himself. For if the Council of Cæsarea was convened by Constantine the great to hear his cause & he would not go thither thô commanded by the Emperor, & the Council waited long for his coming; if the next year being threatned by the Emperor he came to the Council of Tyre unwillingly & brought with him a great multitude to create disturbances that judgment might not proceed; if when he came there he refused to stand in judgment (all which the Council of Tyre represented <sup>p[43]</sup> in their circulatory Letters;) if in like manner he refused to appear at the bar of the western Councils & when the Emperor sent an armed power to bring him he resisted that power & fled, & if also both before & after judgment he feigned several stories & Letters to justify himself; & if flying from justice & feigning false excuses be arguments of a guilty conscience: we must allow that Athanasius by doing these things has betrayd himself guilty. The very feigning of <24r> Letters & stories undermines & overthrows all that was ever said or done for his justification either by himself or others. ffor it resolves all his defense into a figment; & such a defense when detected is equipollent to a confession of guilt.

## Quest XV Whether Athanasius was not seditious.

<sup>[44]</sup>The Council of Tyre in their circulatory Letter wherein they declared his condemnation charged him with turbulent behaviour in the Council.

<sup>[45]</sup>Constantine the great, when Antony moved in his behalf replied that he was petulant, arrogant & the author of discord & sedition.

The Council of Philippopolis represented (as you may see at large in their letter to the Churches) that after his return from Gallia he was more turbulent & tyrannical then before creating & setting up Bishops against Bishops in the eastern churches where he had no authority to intermeddle & being as exorbitant in Egypt.

When he was ready to be banished by the Emperour a second time, he called the Council of Alexandria & together with them wrote a letter to all the world, in the end of which Letter they laboured to put all their friends into a tumult against the eastern churches & by consequence against their Emperor. ffor after a long complaint against the Eastern Churches they thus conclude with an exhortation to invade & destroy them by open force & violence. Therefore, say they, how these things are not to go unrevenged even you beloved may see. ffor they are grievous & remote from the doctrine of Christ. ffor this cause therefore we being assembled together have written in common to you praying your prudence in Christ to receive this our contestation & to grieve together with our fellow Bishop Athanasius & to conceive indignation against the Eusebians who endeavour these things, that wickedness & malice may not prevail against the Church. ffor we pray & implore <24v> you to be revengers of this injustice, citing the saying of the Apostle,<sup>[46]</sup> Put away from amongst your selves that wicked person. For the things which they do are wicked & not worthy of communion. Therefore hear them not if they write any more against Athanasius: for whatsoever comes from them is false even thô they set the hands of the Egyptian Bishops to their Epistles. For those Bishops are not us but Meletians. This was the carriage of Athanasius & his creatures towards their Emperor & his Churches: & this being certain record you may thence know of what spirit they were & judge of their carriage in all the rest.

A while after when their Emperor sent an armed force to displace Athanasius & place Gregory in his room (for Athanasius & his party would never yeild to any thing but force) he shut himself up in a church with a multitude against the soldiers & when they could defend the Church no longer left it on fire: of which action the Council of Philippolis make this mention. Constituto jam in Athanasij locum ex judicio

Concilij sancto et integro sacerdote, ut barbarus hostis, ut pestis sacrilega, adductis gentilium populis Dei templum incendit, altare comminuit, et clam exit de civitate occulteque profugit. It's true Athanasius laid the crime upon the friends of Gregory: but whether the Gregorians burnt a Church & defac't an altar they were to use themselves & must repair or the Athanasians defaced & burnt what they could use no longer, I leave to the Readers judgment.

When Athanasius was thus displaced, he wrote a circulatory Letter to all his friends to stirr them up to sedition & revenge. The Letter begins thus.

## **The Epistle of Athanasius to the Orthodox of all regions when he suffered a persecution by the Arians.**

The things we have suffered are grievous & intollerable & cannot be sufficiently declared; but yet that I may in brief express their grievousness, it's proper to remind you of a history out of sacred writ. A Levite being injured in his wife & reflecting upon the greatness of the indignity ..... sent her body <25r> cut in pieces to all the Tribes of Israel, that they might look upon this common injury as done not only to him but to them all & that either if they compassionated his case they might revenge it or else if they neglected the wickedness they might be ashamed. Now the messengers told the fact & they that heard & saw it said there was never any such thing done since Israel came out of Egypt. Therefore all the Tribes were moved & all of them as if each had suffered were gathered together. In conclusion, they that had committed this wickedness were invaded & conquered & made an anathema by all. For they that came together respected not the kindred of the transgressors but the wickedness. You know the story brethren & what is reported in the scriptures concerning it, & I will say no more of it seing I write to them that know it & am earnest to shew you things which transcend these. For I have told you this history that by comparing those things with the present & understanding how these things exceed the cruelty of those, you may conceive a greater indignation then they did against the transgressors. ffor the bitterness of the persecutions against us is transcendent & the calamity of the Levite is but small if compared with what is now attempted against the Church &c Then after many things spoken about his expulsion to inflame the western Churches he thus goes on. This tragedy, saith he, Eusebius with his companions long since designed & now has put them in execution by means of calumnies by which they have traduced us to to the Emperor. Nor are they content with this but seek to kill me & shew themselves so terrible to my friends that they all fly & expect to be slain by them. But ye ought not to conceive fear from their wickedness but rather to revenge it & be incensed against these innovators. ffor if when one member suffers all the members suffer, & according to the blessed Apostle we must weep with those that weep: certainly so great a Church being hurt, every one ought to revenge the injury as if he himself were hurt. ffor it is our common saviour who is blasphemed by them & they are the Canons of us all which they violate. For if you sat in the Church & the people assembled <25v> without any complaint & suddenly by the Edict of the Prince a successor should be sent to any of you & such things should be done against you, would you not be moved with indignation? would you not seek to revenge it? It's therefore just that you should conceive indignation least if this thing be past by in silence the mischief creep by degrees into every Church & our discipline at length be bought & sold &c. Thus far Athanasius.

And this is enough to let you see the spirit of the man. For this shews plainly how for the sake of a Bishoprick he laboured to set the whole Roman world on a flame, to make a schism between the eastern & western churches & to raise a civil war against his own Emperor. ffor this end therefore he fled from Alexandria to Rome & ceased not to incense the western Bishops till by their interest with the Western Emperor Constans, he procured a Council to be called at Sardica wherein 'twas designed that the eastern Bishops should stand at the Bar as criminals & be judged by the western in order to their subversion. And when this usurpation would not be yeilded unto but ended in that schism between the east & west which

Athanasius & his Alexandrine Council solicited: he ceased not till by the same interest the Emperor Constans was prevailed with to threaten a civil war upon his brother Constantius unless he would restore Athanasius. Thus did this Egyptian Levite go on to revenge the loss of his deare Spouse the Bishopric of Alexandria, but the Eastern Bishops being men of a more Christian temper advised their Emperor to peace & so Athanasius was again restored to the mistress of his affections.

One would think he was now sufficiently revenged of his Emperor, & yet this great spirit stopt not here, but afterwards solicited the Tyrant Magnentius by a letter: which letter after the ruin & death of that Tyrant was found amongst his papers. Athanasius indeed in his first Apology saith this Letter was not written by him but feigned by them that found it: but he that could feign other mens letters could deny his own. In this Apology he answers three Objections, the first that he had stirred up the <26r> western Emperor Constans against his own Emperor Constantius, the second that he had endeavoured also by that Letter to stir up Magnentius against him & the third that he did not afterwards come into the west when the Emperor sent for him, but resisted the messengers. All these things were seditious in a very high degree & he endeavours to acquit him self of them by answering to the first that he did not stir up Constans, to the second that he did not write that Letter & to the third that he did not know it was the Emperors will that he should come into the west, the first of three Messengers which were sent for him delivering (as he represents) a lying letter from the Emperor, the next delivering none at all. This was his insincere way of answering. ffor what ever he pretends I must beleive that he who wrote two publick circulatory Letters to stir up the western Empire against the Eastern did endeavour also privately to stir it up, & that as well in the reign of Magnentius as in that of Constans. For they who found his letter to Magnentius amongst the papers of that Tyrant were good witnesses against him & his denial of the fact amounts to no more then a Prisoners pleading not guilty to invalidate the evidence of good witnesses. I must beleive also that he who refused to obey Constantine the great was as refractory to Constantius, as Sozomen tells us he really was.<sup>[47]</sup> For to me it seems incredible that Constantius should assemble two Councils in the west to hear his cause & send for him thrice, first by a messenger with a Letter & then by two other successive messengers with armed forces & he resist those forces & yet not understand all this while that he was sent for. The relation of Sozomen<sup>[48]</sup> therefore I rather take to be true, which was as follows

When the first Messenger [Montanus] brought the Emperors Letters, Athanasius & his friends were extreamply troubled, thinking it not safe for him to go nor without danger for him to stay. But the advice for his staying prevailed & so the Messenger returned without doing his business. <26v> The next summer [or rather, as Athanasius saith, after 26 months] another messenger [Diogenes] being sent from the Emperor & coming with the Rectors of the Province, forced Athanasius from the City & made a sharp war upon his Clergy. But when the people of Alexandria resumed courage, this messenger also seing the people prepared to fight returned without compassing his message. Not long after the Roman Legions were called out of Egypt & Libya [to Alexandria by Syrianus the chief commander] & it being told that Athanasius was hid in the Church called Theon, Syrianus & Hilary who was sent to hasten this business, taking the soldiers brake into the Church suddenly at an unexpected time of the night to seek for Athanasius but found him not. Thus far Sozomen. Athanasius represents that he & his people were passing the night together in devotion but by a Letter which they wrote four days after (viz<sup>t</sup> the last day of January) to all the people under Athanasius to stirr them up to their assistance, I find that they resisted the soldiers & by consequence were armed to guard their Bishop & that they kept the Church by force & there hung up the arms of the vanquished soldiers in triumph. Which is a notable instance of the seditious spirit of Athanasius & his followers. The Letter is in the works of Athanasius p. 866, & begins thus.

## **The people of Alexandria to the Catholick church which is under Athanasius the most reverend Bishop.**



We have long since protested concerning the nocturnal invasion which both we & the Church [or Temple] suffered altho there needs no testimony of what the whole city knows. ffor the bodies of the dead found afterwards were exposed to the people, & the arms & bows which were found in the Church do proclaim aloud their wicked fact. Then for stirring up the people to joyne with them they represent that the President Syrianus did it without the Emperors order & was afraid for what he had done & endeavoured by force to compell them to deny that there was any tumult or any body slain by the soldiers, & <27r> afterwards go on to tell the story thus. On the fift of the Calends of February we were watching [all night] in the Church & being at prayers because of the assembly that was to meet on the preparation, the Commander Syrianus with many Legions of soldiers having drawn swords & other weapons & being armed with helmets & other armour, suddenly set upon us whilst we were at prayers & reading the scriptures, brake the doors & some began to throw darts, others cried an All-arm, so that there was made a great clashing of arms the drawn swords shining by candle light & Virgins were slain & troden under foot. And whilst their leader marshalled his army, the Bishop sat in his throne & exhorted all to prayers, & being thrust hither & thither was almost pulled to peices, & when in a great deliquium he lay for dead & now does not appear, we know not what is become of him. A little after they further add that the arms which were left in the Church by those who brake in & which still hang up in the Church were no light argument of that hostile incursion so that they could not deny it. For Gorgonius the Governour of the City hath, say they, often sent a military hangman with a Captain to take them down but we would not suffer them that the thing may be known unto all men Then they go on to say how that as they had already resisted unto blood so if it were the Emperors pleasure that they should be thus persecuted they were all ready to suffer martyrdom, that is to dy in that resistance. Their words run thus. If it be the edict of the Prince to persecute us we are all ready to suffer martyrdom. But if it be not the Emperors edict we entreat the Prefect of Egypt Maximus & the other Magistrates that they desire the Prince that such things be no more committed, & we desire that this our prayer may come to him that no other Bishop be introduced here. In hindring which we have resisted unto blood, desiring the most reverend Athanasius.

The City being thus inflamed by these incendiaries, there followed other broiles before it could be quieted of all which Lucifer Calaritanus <27v> in a railing book which he wrote against his Emperor Constantius, makes this mention.<sup>[49]</sup> Recordare, Constanti, de scelerum tuorum memoria recenti quam tibi in Civitate Alexandrinorum inussisti: quantos per abrupta, una tincta subscriptionis tuæ dejecerit, quantos gladio demeti fecerit, quantos fame sitique exedi vel carceribus necari, quantos intercepto effecerit spiritu strangulari: et tamen his omnibus crudelitibus in sanctos martyres quos tuus interfecit gladiatorius animus, cùm sævieris; in nos crudelius sævis dum retines gladium.

Nor were these stirs of short continuance. ffor Athanasius exclaiming against the proceedings of Constantius as a vehement persecution & celebrating all those who were slain or taken prisoners, as martyrs & Confessors, plaid the trumpeter to the rebellion & kept it up for a good while as you may understand by that railing book which Hilary wrote against Constantius in which he has this passage. Adest mecum Alexandria tot concussa bellis, tantum commotarum expeditionum expavens tumultum. Brevius enim adversum Persam quam adversum eam armis certatum est. Mutati Præfecti, electi Duces, corrupti populi, commotæ Legiones ne ab Athanasio Christus prædicaretur. These words sufficiently shew that the sedition was both great & lasting. So great was it that Constantius whilst it was on foot wrote thus to the Citizens of Alexandria.<sup>[50]</sup> I know not, saith he, whether any thing ever happened which may be compared with these things seing many in this City were blinded & there presided a man who was emersed from the lowermost Hell: who as in the dark seduced the desirers of truth to lies – – – – & the common-wealth was carried as with a torrent all things as in a flood being contemned: & one ruled the multitude who differed nothing from the vulgar mechanicks, having contention with the city only because he could not cast it into hell. But that excellent man durst not come to plead his cause in judgment. And in

the end of the Letter. Whilst the most wretched Athanasius convicted of most foule crimes for which he can never be sufficiently punished, no not tho he should be ten times killed, wanders abroad from place to <28r> place 'twould be absurd to suffer his flatterers & ministers a sort of jugglers & such as it is not fit to name, to raise seditions here concerning whom I have long since commanded the Iudges to put them to death: who perhaps may not so perish if in time they return from their former crimes [viz<sup>t</sup> of raising seditions] & shun those to whom the most wicked Athanasius was Leader: who hurt the Common wealth & laid his most impious & wicked hands upon most holy men.

In short the Egyptians were so seditious that afterwards when Valens would have expelled Athanasius he could not effect it but found it necessary to desist. For it was not Alexandria alone but all Egypt & Libya which was inflamed by this sedition the people with their Bishops & Presbyters being every where stirred up by the above mentioned Letter of the Alexandrians & getting into bodies in the feild: whereupon at length followed a skirmish in the wilderness like that nocturnal one at Alexandria, as Athanasius in his first Apology thus mentions.<sup>[51]</sup> Whilst I was wondring, saith he, at these things behold there came again another grievous report concerning Egypt & Libya: namely that almost ninety Bishops were expelled & their churches given to the Arians; sixteen of them being banished & the rest being partly put to flight & partly compelled to dissemble. For the persecution there was said to be like that at Alexandria, the brethren being gathered together in a desart place neare a Cæmetary to pray on the Passover & on Sundays, & the Commander of the forces coming with more then three thousand soldiers armed with armour & naked swords & arrows & falling upon the Christians: whereupon followed such slaughters as use to follow in such assaults the impression <28v> being made upon weomen & children who did nothing else but pray. Thus does Athanasius palliate & sanctify these seditions as if his party were assembled out of all Egypt & Libya with so many Bishops & kept the feild in a great body together for no other end but to pray on Sundays, & as if the Roman Legions came armed to conquer nothing but weomen & children. But this is his poetical way of talking in all his writings.

## **Quest. XVI.**

### **Whether Constantius persecuted the Athanasians for religion or only punished them for immorality.**

What sort of Martyrs & Confessors those were which Athanasius so much celebrates in his works, you have already heard & may further understand by what Athanasius says of them in his epistle to the Moncks, where speaking first of the Bishops which were banished before the above-mentioned skirmish in the wilderness & then of the Bishops of all Egypt Libya & Pentapolis which in that skirmish were partly put to flight & partly taken prisoners & those banished who would not submit, he saith.<sup>[52]</sup> Be it that against Athanasius & the other Bishops which they have banished they could feign false pretenses of crimes, yet those things are nothing to this new kind of evil. For what crime could they feigne against all Egypt Libya & Pentapolis? For they have not attempted them severally that they might be able to feign fals accusations but have set upon all together, so that if they should feign any thing they should presently be condemned for lyars. To the same purpose Athanasius has another passage in this Epistle.<sup>[53]</sup> Be it, saith he, that they have made Athanasius a criminal yet what have the other Bishops done? What pretenses of crimes have they against them? What Arsenius was killed by them? or what Macarius or <29r> broken cup are they concerned in? Or what Meletian acts a part? Therefore by the things laid to their charge those objected against Athanasius are shewed to be false; & mutually by what has been framed against Athanasius, it is manifest that the things against them are feigned. These passages sufficiently shew that the best of Athanasius's martyrs & confessors suffered as evil doers & seditious persons, & that Constantius & his bishops studiously avoided punishing them for their faith, & that rather then do it they chose to feigne fals accusations if you will beleive Athanasius.

Now by the Egyptian martyrs & confessors you may know what those were in other places: of all which Lucifer Calaritanus<sup>[54]</sup> gives you the following account in speaking thus to Constantius. Mactasti quamplurimos in Alexandria, laniasti certos toto in orbe, disperdisti resistentes tibi varijs in locis. Sed hi omnes, quod tu audire minime vis, martyres sunt: illos omnes beatissimos tuo mactatos gladio in paradiso esse credimus. Thus you see the martyrs of the Athanasians for which Constantius is in history recorded a persecutor, were such as perished by the sword in resisting the higher powers

To these you may add the six or seven bishops who were banished for not subscribing the condemnation of Athanasius. For they were deposed by Councils of their own religion, & therefore suffered not for their faith. They endeavoured to keep up a schism between the eastern & western Churches, & so were banished as enemies to peace. They refused to debate upon those matters for which the Emperor called the Councils unless they might have their own matters first dispatcht, & so suffered as polyticians for usurping upon the Emperors right. They profered to comply if the Nicene creed were first ratified & so acknowledged it lawfull to comply & by consequence were banished for resisting the higher powers where it was their duty to obey

So Soon as the Councils of Ariminum & Seleucia were over, Athanasius & his friends falling into a rage at the Emperors success, began to write railing books against him; & Athanasius indeed laboured to persuade the Egyptians that the Emperor overcame the western bishops by tyrannical asperity & terror; & yet the contrary is certainly true. For Hilary,<sup>[55]</sup> in a railing book which he wrote at that very time against the Emperor attributes the success to his clemency. He calls this book a confession, & wishes that he had wrote it in the reign of Nero or Dioclesian that <29v> he might have suffered for it. For, saith he, I could have endured any death whether to be sawn in pieces with Isaiah, or burnt with the three children, or crucified, or cast into the Sea: & then he goes on in these words. *Adversus enim absolutos hostes felix mihi illud certamen fuisset, quia nec dubium relinqueretur quin persecutores essent qui ad negandum te pænis, ferro, igni compellerent, neque ad testificandum plus tibi nos quam mortes nostras liceret impendere. Pugnaremus enim in palam & cum fiducia contra negantes, contra torquentes, contra jugulantes: et nos populi tui tanquam duces suos ad confessionis religionem intelligentia persecutionis publicæ comitentur. At nunc pugnamus contra persecutorem fallentem, contra hostem blandientem, contra Constantium Antichristum, qui non dorsa cædit, sed ventrem palpat; non proscribit ad vitam sed ditat ad mortem: non trudit carcere ad libertatem sed intra palatium honorat ad servitutem: non latera vexat sed cor occupat: non caput gladio desecat, sed animam auro occidit: non contendit ne vincatur, sed adulatur ut dominetur: Christum confitetur ut neget: unitatem procurat ne pax sit: hæreses comprimit ne Christiani sint: Ecclesiæ tecta struit ut fidem destruat.* All which is as much as to say that Constantius persecuted not the men but the faith, & did it not by tortures, proscriptions prisons & deaths, but by deceiving flattering tickling enriching & honouring the western clergy & building their churches. And to the same purpose he adds a little after. <sup>[56]</sup>*Omnia sævissima sine invidia gloriosarum mortium peragis. Novo inauditoque ingenij triumpho de diabolo vincis et sine martyrio persequeris. Plus crudelitati vestræ Nero, Deci, Maximiane debemus: Diabolum enim per vos vicimus &c. At tu omnium crudelitatum crudelissime damno majore in nos et venia minore desævis. Subrepis nomine blandientis, occidis specie religionis, impietatem peragis, Christi fidem Christi mendax prædicator extinguis. Non relinquis saltem miseris excusationes, ut æterno judici suo pænas et aliquas laniatorum corporum præferant cicatrices: ut infirmitas defendat necessitatem. Scelestissime mortalium omnia ita temperas ut excludas et in peccato veniam et in confessione martyrium. Sed hæc ille pater tuus artifex humanarum mortium docuit, vincere sine contumacia, jugulare sine gladio, persequi sine infamia, odire sine suspicione, mentiri sine intelligentia, profiteri sine fide, blandiri sine bonitate, agere quid velis nec manifestare quæ velis.* Thus does Hilary in one & the same breath rail at Constantius as the most cruel of persecutors, & yet declare that his {persecution} consisted in nothing but love & kindness. By this means he had better success then the heathen persecutors by violence, & therefore was in Hilary's opinion more cruel, not to the bodies but to the <30r> souls of men. Hilary therefore finding himself deserted by almost all the world, & being

thereby reduced to despair, wrote this railing book, & to provoke the Emperor to kill him presented it to him at Constantinople A.C. 360 (as Baronius shews)<sup>[57]</sup> hoping thereby to fix the name of persecutor upon him & that of martyr upon himself. But altho this railery was crimen læsæ majestatis, & in that government punishable with death: yet the Emperor was so far from being provoked to do any thing which might but look like persecution that on the contrary he thereupon released Hilary out of banishment & licensed him to return home into Gallia, thus endeavouring to overcome evil with good.

How far this Emperor was from being a persecutor is further manifested by a story told of him by Gregory Naziansen which in the words of his Interpreter is as follows.

<sup>[58]</sup> Constantium autem (nam referre hoc convenit  
Ne vetera sola digna quis verbis putet)  
Verbum extulisse memoria dignum ferunt.  
Quodnam hoc? eum in nos Principum cum quispiam  
Quondam incitaret, non ferens nos consequi  
Tantos honores (namque erat pius admodum  
Vt siquis alius Principum quos novimus)  
Ac multa fatus tale quid mox subderet:  
Animalne fingi mitius potest ape?  
Atqui legentes pungit hæc favos tamen.  
Audivit: Hocne te fugit, vir optime,  
Stimulus nec ipse quo vacet periculo?  
Namque ipsa pungit, sed tamen quoque interit.

The same Gregory Nazianzen also in his first Oration against Iulian thus expostulates with the soul of the deceased Constantius for making Iulian Emperor. Quid tibi accidit, O Imperatorum divinissime Christique amantissime (eo enim provehor ut tecum velut cum præsentate atque audiente expostulem, etsi multò præstantiorem te esse scio quam ut a me reprehendi debeas, utpote qui Deo adjunctus sis, cælestisque gloriæ hæreditatem acceperis atque in tantum a nobis migraris ut imperium cum meliore commutares,) quodnam hoc consilium suscepisti, qui omnes non tuæ solum sed etiam superioris memoriæ Imperatores animi solertia & acumine longe antecellebas? And a little after excusing Constantius for doing this, he saith: Cum benignitatem dixi id aperte dixi quod eum crimine omni ac culpa liberet. Cui enim vel ex ijs quibus non perinde cognitus erat, dubium est quin ipse ob pietatem amoremque erga nos ac propensissimam bene de nobis merendi voluntatem, non modo illum [sc. Iulianum] aut totius generis honorem imperijque incrementum neglexisset, verum imperio quoque ipsi omnibusque fortunis, atque ipsi denique vitæ qua nemini quicquam est charius, incollumitatem nostram ac salutem haud illibenti animo prætulisset. Neque enim usquam unquam <30v> ullius rei tam acri amore atque cupiditate correptus est, quam ille Christianos crescere atque in summam gloriæ potentiæque amplitudinem pervenire cupiebat. Ac neque domitæ et subactæ gentes nec respublica præclaris legibus constituta & gubernata nec pecuniarum copia, nec gloriæ magnitudo, nec quod rex regum et esset et appellaretur, nec omnia alia quibus hominum felicitas declaratur, nec denique quicquam ex omnibus rebus tantum ipsi voluptatis afferebat, quantum ut et nos per ipsum et per nos ipse tûm apud Deum tum apud homines floreremus ac firma semper et stabilis nobis potentia permaneret. ——— Qui quidem et siquid nobis molestiæ exhibuit, non nostri contemptu id fecit nec ut nos contumelia afficeret aut quod alijs quibusdam potius quam nobis commendare cuperet: sed ut omnes in unum coiremus, animorumque consensione jungeremur nec per schismata inter nos dirempti atque dissecti essemus. Thus far Gregory. And this testimony coming freely from the mouth of an enemy & an eye-witness of things, is as great as can be desired. So Libanius a heathen & therefore another enemy, gives him the same character. For in his Oration called Basiliscus, after he had described the behaviour of Constantius in war, he goes on thus. Verum cum adeo illustris esset in armis, longe præstantior alijs in rebus quam in bellicis fuit: ut de eo enunciare liceat, Rex probus hic, bellator et acer.

Non enim eò se tum meliorem quam alij visum iri autumabat cum magis quam cæteri sæviret, sed si magis quam alij clementia gavisus, omnes nihilo secius superaret, &c. In short, the vertues of this Emperor were so illustrious that I do not find a better character given of any Prince for clemency, temperance, chastity, contempt of popular fame, affection to Christianity, justice, prudence, princely carriage & good government, then is given to him even by his very enemies. He kept up the imperial dignity of his person to the height & yet reigned in the hearts of his people, & swayed the world by their love to him, so that no Prince could be farther from deserving the name of a persecutor. Ammianus indeed objects that he took off his Vnkles, & prosecuted his victory over Magnentius too far: but he did the first because they poisoned his father & the last to secure not himself but Christianity from the attempts of the heathens. And these objections being removed, the character which Ammianus gives of him is great; & agrees with that of Hilary Libanius & Gregory Nazianzen. And if these four witnesses suffice not, let me add a fift. ffor <sup>† [59]</sup> Epiphanius saith that he was merciful & good & pious in all respects as the son of the great & perfect & pious Constantine, this one thing excepted that by the influence of his bishops he erred in the faith. All <31r> these witnesses lived in the reign of this Emperor & therefore knew what they wrote, & being his enemies would not favour him. ffor they wrote after his death, & so were at liberty to speak their minds. And therefore if any later Author affirms the contrary, he ought to be corrected.