

The Council of the Thebaid, 362: Lucifer of Calaris, Eusebius of Vercellae, and the Readmission of the Clergy

by EMANUEL FIANO
Fordham University
E-mail: emfian@gmail.com

This article focuses on the Council of the Thebaid of 362. A close examination of Theodoret's version of events reveals that, upon the recall of the pro-Nicenes from exile, Eusebius of Vercellae organised in the Thebaid a non-rigorous meeting, which laid the groundwork for the Council of Alexandria of the same year. The Council of the Thebaid may have also included lapsed pro-Nicenes who had reverted to their original views after being deposed at Constantinople in 360, and may even have seen the participation of members of the homoiousian alliance.

After the death of the Emperor Constantius II, in 362 a decree was published in Alexandria by which the new emperor, Julian, authorised the return of the bishops exiled by his predecessor.¹ In 362, soon among these were the pro-Nicene bishops Lucifer of Calaris

ALO=Jerome, *Altercatio Luciferiani et orthodoxi*; *BLE*= *Bulletin de littérature ecclésiastique*; *CCSL*=Corpus Christianorum Series Latina; *CH*= *Church History*; *CSEL*=Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum; *GCS*=Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte; *HA*= *Historia Arianorum ad monachos*; *HE*= *Historia ecclesiastica*; *PG*= *Patrologia Graeca*; *PL*= *Patrologia Latina*; *RB*= *Revue bénédictine*; *REA*= *Revue d'études augustiniennes et patristiques*; *SC*= *Sources Chrétiennes*; *VC*= *Vetera Christianorum*; *VigCh*= *Vigiliae Christianae*; *ZNW*= *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche*

Unless otherwise noted, translations are my own.

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¹ *Historia acephala* 7.10, ed. A. Martin in *Histoire acéphale et index syriaque des lettres festales d'Athanase d'Alexandrie*, SC cccvii, Paris 1985.

and Eusebius of Vercellae, both exiled to the Thebaid after long wanderings. This article focuses on the Egyptian activities of these two bishops between their recall from exile and the beginning of the council summoned by Athanasius in Alexandria a few months later. Privileging Theodoret's version of the events over that of other ancient authorities, it is argued that a small synod that assembled in the Thebaid in 362, commonly considered to have promoted a sectarian, uncompromising agenda, aimed instead to form a coalition between pro-Nicenes of different doctrinal orientations and backgrounds. The conciliatory politics promoted by the Council of the Thebaid were to be realised more fully by the Council of Alexandria of the same year. As such, the Council of the Thebaid initiated a consequential rift between hardliners and moderates within the old-Nicene front.

When the news of Julian's edict reached the exiled Athanasius, he hastily returned to his episcopal see and began to work toward solving two pressing issues. First, there was the disciplinary question of the readmission of clergy who had compromised with 'Arianism'. On 31 December 359 the bishops who had gone on a mission from the Council of Seleucia to Constantius' court at Constantinople had underwritten the homoian creed of the Council of Ariminum. As Jerome famously stated in reference to this moment, 'the whole world groaned and was astonished to find out that it was Arian'.² Many of those same bishops who had reportedly been confounded by their own subscription to a heretical formula were now again supportive of the deliberations of the Council of Nicaea of 325. Under what conditions could these clergy be reintegrated into the Churches with which Athanasius was in communion?

The other issue that Athanasius needed to solve was a conflict in the pro-Nicene Church of Antioch, split between the communities of Bishop Meletius and of the Eustathian presbyter Paulinus. After the exile of Meletius, following his election as the successor to the heteroousian Eudoxius, the moderate pro-Nicenes of Antioch, galvanised by the heroic resistance of their champion, broke communion with anti-Nicene bishops, rejecting the leadership of the homoian Euzoius (360–75/6). Paulinus' followers, in turn, still refused to hold communion with the Meletians, deploring their leader's recent subscription to the homoian creed at the Council of Constantinople (360) and contesting his ordination by bishops tainted by 'Arianism'. The divide between Eustathians and Meletians had to be mended to strengthen the pro-Nicene coalition in the East.

² 'Ingenuit totus orbis, et Arianum se esse miratus est': *ALO* 19, ed. A. Canellis, in *Débat entre un luciférien et un orthodoxe = Altercatio luciferiani et orthodoxi*, SC cdlxxiii, Paris 2003, 158, 10–1.

To address these issues, Athanasius gathered a council in Alexandria, of which there remains no synodal letter. A document known as *Tome to the Antiochenes*, composed after the council by Athanasius in concert with Eusebius of Vercellae, Asterius of Arabia and other colleagues, contained instructions for reconciling the Antiochene pro-Nicene community.³ The failure of the *Tome's* efforts to make peace between the two Antiochene factions is commonly blamed on the actions of Lucifer of Calaris.⁴ The Sardinian bishop decided not to partake in the Alexandrian synod, instead sending there two delegates and travelling directly to Antioch. Lucifer then proceeded to ordain the Eustathian priest Paulinus bishop of Antioch, with the aid of two other bishops.⁵ Once Lucifer's

³ For an interpretation of this document see E. Fiano, 'The presence of the Meletians at the Council of Alexandria (362)', *Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum* (forthcoming).

⁴ See, for example, M. Tetz, 'Über nikäische Orthodoxie: der sog. Tomus ad Antiochenos des Athanasios von Alexandrien', *ZNW* lvi (1975), 194–222 and H. C. Brennecke, *Studien zur Geschichte der Homöer: der Osten bis zum Ende der homöischen Reichskirche*, Tübingen 1988, 178; see Theodoret, *HE* iii.5; Rufinus, *HE* x.27; Socrates, *HE* iii.9; Sozomen *HE* v.12. On Lucifer and his theology see G. Krüger, *Lucifer Bischof von Calaris und das Schisma der Luciferianer*, Leipzig 1886; P. M. Marcello, *La posizione di Lucifero di Cagliari nelle lotte antiariane del IV secolo*, Nuoro 1940; C. Zedda, 'La dottrina trinitaria di Lucifero di Cagliari', *Divus Thomas* lii (1949), 276–329; M. Simonetti, 'Appunti per una storia dello scisma luciferiano', in *Atti del Convegno di Studi religiosi sardi, Cagliari 24–26 Maggio 1962*, Padua 1963, 67–81; I. Opelt, 'Formen der Polemik bei Lucifer von Calaris', *VigCh* xxvi (1972), 200–26; G. F. Diercks, *Luciferi Calaritani Opera quae supersunt: ad fidem duorum codicum qui adhuc extant necnon adhibitis editionibus veteribus*, CCSL viii, Turnhout 1978, pp. i–cxxxii; A. Piras, 'Kritische Bemerkungen zur Schrift "De Athanasio" des Lucifer von Calaris', *VigCh* clvi (1992), 57–74; M. Simonetti, 'Lucifero di Cagliari nella controversia ariana', *VC* xxxv (1998), 279–99 (in S. Laconi [ed.], *La figura e l'opera di Lucifero di Cagliari: una rivisitazione: atti del 1° Convegno Internazionale, Cagliari, 5–7 dicembre 1996*, Rome 2001, 9–28); L. M. Gastoni, 'La battaglia antiariana di Lucifero e il suo coinvolgimento in alcuni scismi del tempo', in A. Mastino, G. Sotgiu and N. Spaccapelo (eds), *La Sardegna paleocristiana tra Eusebio e Gregorio Magno: atti del convegno nazionale di studi, Cagliari, 10–12 ottobre 1996*, Cagliari 1999, 169–85; J. Ulrich, *Die Anfänge der abendländischen Rezeption des Nizänums*, Berlin 1994, 217–30; G. Corti, *Lucifero di Cagliari: una voce nel conflitto tra Chiesa e impero alla metà del IV secolo 2004*, Milan 2004; A. Alba López, 'El cisma luciferiano', in G. Bravo and R. González Salinero (eds), *Minorías y sectas en el mundo romano: actas del 3er coloquio de la Asociación Interdisciplinar de Estudios Romanos*, Madrid 2006, 177–91; A. Canellis, 'Écrire contre l'Empereur... Le *De Athanasio* de Lucifer de Cagliari', in F. Vinel (ed.), *Écrire contre: quête d'identité, quête de pouvoir dans la littérature des premiers siècles chrétiens*, Strasbourg 2012; C. M. Whiting, 'Christian communities in late antiquity: Luciferians and the construction of heresy', unpubl. PhD diss. Riverside, CA 2015; and A. T. Cibis, *Lucifer von Calaris: Studien zur Rezeption und Tradierung der Heiligen Schrift im 4. Jahrhundert*, Paderborn 2014.

⁵ The ordination of Paulinus is narrated in Theodoret, *HE* iii.5; Socrates, *HE* iii.9; Sozomen, *HE* v.12; and Rufinus, *HE* i.27. The assistance of two *confessores*, colleagues of Lucifer's, is implied by Jerome, *Chronicon, ad annum Romanorum XXXVI*, ed. R. Helm, in *Die Chronik des Hieronymus: Hieronymi Chronicon*, GCS xlvii; Eusebius

representatives arrived at Antioch, he rejected their subscriptions to the conciliatory *Tome*. Lucifer's fellow exile Eusebius, however, maintained a different attitude. Upon reaching Antioch from the Alexandrian council, Eusebius despaired of the possibility of reconciling the two anti-'Arian' communities and returned to the West.⁶

The ways in which the old-Nicene exiles began to organise their efforts upon their recall from Egypt are described differently by the sources.⁷ Both Socrates and Sozomen present Eusebius and Lucifer as holding onto a rigorist agenda with regard to the readmission of clergy who had lapsed doctrinally. The summoning of the Council of Alexandria also seems to be presented as inspired by the same objectives. Socrates has Lucifer and Eusebius consult about the best ways of preventing the continued violation of ecclesiastical canons and discipline; the pair agree on splitting—Lucifer to Antioch, Eusebius to Alexandria to hold a council with Athanasius.⁸ Sozomen's account, which like Socrates's report makes no

Werke vii, Berlin 1956, 242 (trans. M. D. Donalson in *A translation of Jerome's Chronicon with historical commentary*, Lewiston, NY 1996, 50). A scholion on that notice of Jerome's (*Die Chronik*, 242, in the apparatus) identifies those two bishops as Gorgonius of Germanicia and Cymatius of Gabala. This identification led E. Honigmann, 'Cymatius of Gabala (358, 362 A.D.)', in his *Patristic studies*, Vatican City 1953, 36–8 to provide a different emendation for the text of Athanasius, *HA* 5.2 (originally copied by E. Schwartz, 'Zur Geschichte des Athanasius: VIII', in *Nachrichten von der Königlich-Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen: Philologisch-historische Klasse* [1911], 367–468 at p. 406 n. 3 [= his *Gesammelte Schriften*, Berlin 1959, 188–264 at p. 238 n. 2]) than the one provided by H.-G. Opitz, *Athanasius Werke*, II: *Die 'Apologien'*. 5. Lieferung, Berlin-Leipzig 1940, 183–230 at p. 185. Honigmann's emendation is received by H.-D. Altendorf, 'Zur Bischofsliste von Gabala', *ZNW* 1 (1959), 48–61 at p. 52; F. Cesana, 'Annotazioni al testo di H. G. Opitz dell' "Historia Arianorum ad monachos" di Sant'Atanasio', *VC* xix (1982), 257–74 at pp. 258–9; and R. Westall, 'Review of R. Flower, *Imperial invectives against Constantius II: translated with introduction and commentary*', *Plekos* xxi (2019), 139–51 at p. 147. The emendation raises, in turn, textual and historical questions for the Antiochene events of the years 362 to 363; see A. Martin, *Athanasie d'Alexandrie et l'Église d'Égypte au IVe siècle (328–373)*, Paris 1996, 564 n. 71, and A. Camplani, 'Atanasio e Eusebio tra Alessandria e Antiochia (362–363): osservazioni sul *Tomus ad Antiochenos*, l'*Epistula catholica* e due fogli copti (edizione di Pap. Berol. 11948)', in E. Dal Covolo, R. Uglicone and G. M. Vian (eds), *Eusebio di Vercelli e il suo tempo*, Rome 1997, 191–246 at p. 194.

⁶ For a more complete summary of the events see R. Devreesse, *Le Patriarcat d'Antioche depuis la paix de l'Église jusqu'à la conquête arabe*, Paris 1945, 17–38.

⁷ On the council in the Thebaid see G. B. Armstrong, 'The Synod of Alexandria and the schism at Antioch in AD 362', *JTS* xxii (1921), 206–21, 247–355, 206–9; Manlio Simonetti, *La crisi ariana nel IV secolo*, Rome 1975, 359 (who sees it as a mere colloquy between Lucifer and Eusebius); C. Yeum, *Die Synode von Alexandrien (362): die dogmengeschichtliche und kirchenpolitische Bedeutung für die Kirche im 4. Jahrhundert*, Münster 2005, 27–32 (with a similar reading); and A. Segneri, *Atanasio: lettera agli Antiocheni: introduzione, testo, traduzione e commento*, Bologna 2010, 33 n. 42.

⁸ Socrates, *HE* iii.5–6.

mention of an official meeting, has Eusebius go to Alexandria ‘for a restoration and a shared composition of ecclesiastical matters’⁹ and to hold a council, in agreement with Athanasius, ‘for the purpose of the securing of the doctrines of Nicaea’.¹⁰ Lucifer, we are told, travelled instead to Antioch to visit the troubled Church there, sending one deacon with Eusebius to Alexandria.

Rufinus’ account introduces a difference between the programmes of Eusebius and of Lucifer, the former inclined to consult with Athanasius, the latter keener on springing into action. Rufinus makes no mention of an official meeting in the Thebaid (nor of one in Alexandria). He reports instead that Eusebius asked Lucifer to accompany him to Alexandria to confer with Athanasius about the situation of the Church, but the Sardinian bishop preferred to travel to Antioch, sending his deacons to represent him at Alexandria. Once in Antioch, he hastily ordained the divisive Paulinus, instead of choosing someone agreeable to both factions.¹¹ We are not told whether Lucifer conveyed to Eusebius his intentions of ordaining Paulinus before leaving the Thebaid. Regardless, their different travelling plans in Rufinus’ account reflect divergent ecclesiastical platforms, seemingly later realised at the Council of Alexandria and in Paulinus’ ordination respectively.

All that Rufinus, Socrates and Sozomen (the latter two depending on the former¹²) report is a conversation between Eusebius and Lucifer. Theodoret, however, apprises us of an official meeting taking place in the Thebaid:

But the Italian Eusebius and Hilary, as well as Lucifer, who happened to be the shepherd of the Sardinian island, were staying in the Thebaid, next to Egypt; for Constantius had relegated them. These, meeting [κατὰ ταῦτὸν γινόμενοι] with the others of the same mind [τοῖς ἄλλοις ὁμόφροσι], declared it necessary to bring back the Churches into harmony. For not only did those of opposite mind [οἱ τάναντία φρονούντες] besiege them [the Churches], but they themselves quarrelled with one another. For indeed [καὶ γὰρ] in Antioch the sound body of the Church was split asunder: those who, for the sake of the all-praiseworthy

⁹ ‘Ἐπὶ διορθώσει τε τῶν ἐκκλησιαστικῶν πραγμάτων κοινῇ συνθήκη’: Sozomen, *HE* v.12.1.

¹¹ Rufinus, *HE* x.28.3.

¹² So Martin, *Athanase d’Alexandrie*, 542 n. 4. On Socrates’s self-avowed dependence on Rufinus see Socrates, *HE* ii.1, and M. Walraff, *Der Kirchenhistoriker Sokrates: Untersuchungen zu Geschichtsdarstellung, Methode und Person*, Göttingen 1997, 186–9. On Sozomen’s dependence upon both Rufinus and Socrates see G. Schoo, *Die Quellen des Kirchenhistorikers Sozomenos*, Berlin 1911, and L. Jeep, *Quellenuntersuchungen zu den griechischen Kirchenhistorikern*, Leipzig 1884. More generally on the relationships between the three historians see H. Leppin, ‘The church historians (I): Socrates, Sozomenus, and Theodoretus’, in G. Marasco (ed.), *Greek & Roman historiography in late antiquity*, Leiden 2003, 219–54.

Eustathius, had separated from the remainder since the beginning were gathering by themselves; and those who had separated from the Arian company with the admirable Meletius were performing the divine liturgies in what is called the Palaea.¹³

The phrase *κατὰ ταῦτὸν γενόμενοι* clearly designates a purposeful coming together. In Theodoret's *Commentary on Isaiah*, the expression indicates the forming of a coalition.¹⁴ Elsewhere in *Church history*, Theodoret employs it to describe a reunion of bishops.¹⁵ The meeting described by Theodoret was not the private conversation between Eusebius and Lucifer of which the other three authorities speak.

In writing his *Church history*, Theodoret had at his disposal sources that he found in the archives of the Antiochene episcopate. Those included the synodal collections created under Euzoios and Meletius, preserving imperial and episcopal acts and letters, as well as written and oral testimonies from Meletian bishops such as Eusebius of Samosata and Acacius of Beroea.¹⁶ Theodoret also supplemented those materials with information about Antioch drawn from Theodore of Mopsuestia's lost work on Eunomius.¹⁷

¹³ 'Εὐσέβιος δὲ καὶ Ἰλάριος οἱ ἐκ τῆς Ἰταλίας καὶ Λουκίφερ ὁ Σαρδῶ τὴν νῆσον πομαίνειν λαχὼν ἐν τῇ Θηβαίων τῇ πρὸς Αἴγυπτον διήγον· ἐκεῖ γὰρ αὐτοὺς ὁ Κωνσταντῖος ἐξωστράκισεν. Οὗτοι σὺν τοῖς ἄλλοις ὁμόφροσι κατὰ ταῦτὸν γενόμενοι χρῆναι τὰς ἐκκλησίας ἔλεγον εἰς μίαν συναγαγεῖν συμφωνίαν. Οὐ γὰρ μόνον αὐτὰς οἱ τάναντία φρονοῦντες ἐπολιόρκουν, ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐταὶ πρὸς ἑαυτὰς ἐστασίαζον. Καὶ γὰρ ἐν Ἀντιοχείᾳ διχῆ τὸ ὑγαῖνον σῶμα τῆς ἐκκλησίας διήρητο· οἱ τε γὰρ ἐξ ἀρχῆς Εὐσταθίου χάριν τοῦ πανευφήμου τῶν ἄλλων ἀποκριθέντες καθ' ἑαυτοὺς συνηθοῖζοντο, καὶ οἱ μετὰ Μελετίου τοῦ θαυμασίου τῆς Ἀρειανικῆς συμμορίας χωρισθέντες ἐν τῇ καλουμένῃ Παλαιᾷ τὰς λειτουργίας ἐπετέλουν τὰς θείας': Theodoret, *HE* iii.4.2–3.

¹⁴ 'We have already said before how those people, *having come together*, both killed and took captive many thousands among them' ('προειρήκαμεν δὲ ἤδη ὡς πολλὰς αὐτῶν μυριάδας οὗτοι κατὰ ταῦτὸν γενόμενοι καὶ κατηκόντισαν καὶ αἰχμαλώτους ἀπήγαγον'): idem, *Commentaria in Esaiam* xviii, ed. J.-N. Guinot, in *Théodoret de Cyr: Commentaire sur Isaïe: tome II (sections 4–13)*, SC ccxcv, Paris 1982, 121 (italics mine). Guinot translates as 'se coalisèrent'.

¹⁵ "I cannot", said the admirable Eusebius, "give up the common deposit before all those who have entrusted it (to me) *have got together*" ('οὐκ ἀνέχομαι, ἔφη Εὐσέβιος ὁ θαυμασίος, τὴν κοινὴν ἀποδοῦναι παρακαταθήκην, πρὶν ἅπαντες οἱ δεδωκότες κατὰ ταῦτὸν γένοιντο'): Theodoret, *HE* ii.33.2.

¹⁶ See A. Martin, 'L'Église d'Antioche dans l'Histoire ecclésiastique de Théodoret', in B. Cabouret, P.-L. Gatier and C. Saliou (eds), *Antioche de Syrie: histoire, images et traces de la ville antique: colloque organisé par B. Cabouret, P.-L. Gatier et C. Saliou, Lyon, Maison de l'Orient et de la Méditerranée, 4, 5, 6 octobre 2001*, Lyon–Paris 2004, 481–506 at p. 483.

¹⁷ See L. Parmentier, *Theodoret Kirchengeschichte*, GCS xix, Leipzig 1911, pp. xci–xcv. In general, Theodoret used Rufinus or the latter's likely main source, the lost *Church history* of Gelasius of Caesarea: A. Guldenpenning, *Die Kirchengeschichte des Theodoret von Kyrrhos: eine Untersuchung ihrer Quellen*, Halle 1889, 26–39; G. Rauschen, *Jahrbücher der christlichen Kirche unter dem Kaiser Theodosius*, Freiburg 1897, 559–63;

One detail in Theodoret's narrative about the events in the Thebaid strongly suggests that he was using a special Antiochene source for those events, which were influential upon the course of the schism in Antioch. The addition of one Italian Hilary to the Eusebius-Lucifer pair at the beginning of the passage excerpted above has been a stumbling block for historians. Armstrong, oddly, identifies him with the homoian Hilary of Jerusalem.¹⁸ Some saw Theodoret's mention of a Hilary as a miswritten reference to Hilary of Poitiers, allegedly banished by Constantius to the Thebaid and allowed to return by Julian.¹⁹ Others saw in this figure the Aquitanian bishop, but considered the mention of his presence in the Thebaid a mistake on Theodoret's part.²⁰ As a result of the Council of Béziers of 356, in fact, the bishop of Poitiers was famously exiled to Phrygia, and, after several travels, in 360 Constantius had authorised him to return to Gaul.²¹ He had no reason to be in Egypt, and was certainly

Parmentier, *Theodoret Kirchengeschichte*, pp. lxxxiv–lxxxvi. On the debated relationship between Rufinus' and Gelasius' works see J. Schamp, 'Gélase ou Rufin: un fait nouveau: sur des fragments oubliés de Gélase de Césarée (CPG, N° 3521)', *Byzantion: Revue internationale des études byzantines* lvii (1987), 360–90; P. Van Deun, 'The Church historians after Eusebius', in Marasco, *Greek & Roman historiography*, 151–76 at pp. 156–67; and G. Marasco, 'The church historians (II): Philostorgius and Gelasius of Cyzicus', in his *Greek & Roman historiography*, 257–88 at pp. 284–8. Theodoret also occasionally used Socrates (Güldenpenning, *Die Kirchengeschichte*, 39–41) and Sabinus of Heraklea (Güldenpenning, *Die Kirchengeschichte*, 59–61), but not Sozomen, who wrote after Theodoret. Theodoret utilised the anonymous homoian source of the 360s edited in J. Bidez, *Philostorgius Kirchengeschichte mit dem Leben des Lucian von Antiochien und den Fragmenten eines Arianischen Historiographen*, GCS xxi, Leipzig 1913, 179–222 (= *Anhang VII*) and considered by Battifol the work of an Arian historian, but called by Burgess simply *Antiochene continuation of Eusebius* and possibly used by Philostorgius himself: see Güldenpenning, *Die Kirchengeschichte*, 49–56; P. Battifol, 'Un Historiographe anonyme arien du ive siècle', *Römische Quartalschrift* ix (1895), 57–97; R. W. Burgess, *Studies in Eusebian and post-Eusebian chronography*, II: *The 'Continuatio Antiochiensis Eusebii': a chronicle of Antioch and the Roman Near East during the reigns of Constantine and Constantius II, AD 325–350*, Stuttgart 1999. For the dating of this source to the 360s see H. M. Gwatkin, *Studies of Arianism: chiefly referring to the character and chronology of the reaction which followed the Council of Nicæa*, 2nd edn, London 1900, 219–24, and Brennecke, *Studien*, 114–57. On Philostorgius see Marasco, 'The church historians (II)', 257–88 at pp. 257–84.

¹⁸ Armstrong, 'The Synod of Alexandria', 348. On Hilary of Jerusalem see R. P. C. Hanson, *The search for the Christian doctrine of God: the Arian controversy*, 318–381, Edinburgh 1988, 399, 401.

¹⁹ Parmentier, *Theodoret Kirchengeschichte*, 387, s.v. Ἰλάριος. This onomastic entry has remained unaltered in the two further editions of Theodoret's *Church history* published in the same series: F. Scheidweiler edn, GCS xlv, Berlin 1954, 405; and G. C. Hansen edn, GCS N.F. v, Berlin 1998, 387.

²⁰ Sée J. Bouffartigue, A. Martin, L. Pietri and F. Thélamon (eds), *Théodoret de Cyr: Histoire ecclésiastique, t. II (livres III–IV)*, SC dxxx, Paris 2009, 109 n. 3.

²¹ See Sulpicius Severus, *Vita sancti Martini Turonensis* 7.1, ed. J. Fontaine in *Sulpice Sévère: Vie de Saint Martin*, i, SC cxxxiii, Turnhout 1967, 266; *Chronica* ii.42.1–2;

not relegated there. It is difficult to imagine that Theodoret committed here a blunder of this size. It appears much more likely that the Hilary referenced by Theodoret is the deacon Hilary of Rome, the author of pamphlets (*libelli*)²² on the need to rebaptise those who had received their baptism from heretical clergy.²³

This is the same Hilary who was at some point identified with the elusive Ambrosiaster.²⁴ He travelled to Milan in 355 with Lucifer of Calaris and the presbyter Pancratius, in order to deliver to Constantius a missive on behalf

ii.45.2–4, ed. P. Parroni, in *Sulpicii Severi Chronica*; CCSL lxiii, Turnhout 2017, 99, 194; ed. G. de Senneville-Grave, in *Sulpice Sévère. Chroniques*, SC cdxli, Paris 1999, 322, 328–32. On Hilary's exile and its reasons see A. Wilmart, 'Les "Fragments historiques" et le synode de Béziers de 356', *RB* xxv (1908), 225–9; D. H. Williams, 'A reassessment of the early career and exile of Hilary of Poitiers', this *JOURNAL* xlii (1991), 202–17; P. Smulders, *Hilary of Poitiers' preface to his Opus historicum*, Leiden 1995, 126–31; H. Ménard, 'Exil et déploiement d'une théologie, le cas d'Hilaire de Poitiers', in P. Blaudeau (ed.), *Exil et relegation: les tribulations du sage et du saint durant l'antiquité romaine et chrétienne (Ier–VIe siècle ap. J.-C.): actes du colloque organisé par le Centre Jean-Charles Picard, Université de Paris XII-Val-de-Marne, 17–18 juin 2005*, Paris 2008, 233–40; T. D. Barnes, 'Hilary of Poitiers on his exile', *VigCh* xlvi (1992), 129–40; J. Barry, 'Heroic bishops: Hilary of Poitiers's exilic discourse', *VigCh* lxx (2016), 155–74, and *Bishops in flight: exile and displacement in late antiquity*, Oakland, CA 2019, 18–20. On Hilary's return from exile to Gaul see Y.-M. Duval, 'Vrais et Faux Problèmes concernant le retour d'exil d'Hilaire de Poitiers et son action en Italie en 360–363', *Athenaeum: studi periodici di letteratura e storia dell'antichità* xlvi (1970), 251–75. The return of Hilary is mentioned in Sulpicius Severus *Chronica* ii.45 (Parroni edn), *Sulpicii Severi Chronica*, 98–9; and *Altercatio Heracliani et Germinii*, *PL* Suppl. i. 345–50 at 345, '[p. 134]'.²² *ALO* 27 (Canellis edn), *Débat*, 196.

²³ On Hilary of Rome see F. Cavallera, *Saint Jérôme, sa vie et son œuvre*, Louvain–Paris 1922, i. 56–7, and J. Pérez Mas, *La crisis luciferiana: un intento de reconstrucción histórica*, Rome 2008, 45–51, 183–6, 267–75, 361–3. See also J. Rüpke, *Fasti sacerdotum: a prosopography of pagan, Jewish, and Christian religious officials in the city of Rome, 300 BC to AD 499*, trans. David Richardson, Oxford 2008, 716, s.v. 'Hilarius' (no. 1898), with references to ancient sources for his activity; C. Pietri and L. Pietri, *Prosopographie chrétienne du Bas-Empire*, II: *Prosopographie de l'Italie chrétienne (313–604)*, Rome 1999–2008, i. 985–6 (s.v. 'Hilarius 1'); C. Pietri, 'Appendice prosopographique à la Roma christiana (311–440)', *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome: Antiquité* lxxxix (1977), 371–415 at p. 386. The possibility of this identification is raised also in Pérez Mas, *La crisis luciferiana*, 126. Jerome mentions Hilary in *ALO* 21, 25–7 and, along with Lucifer and Pancratius, in *De regibus apostaticis* 5.

²⁴ See *PL* xxxv.2007/2008; *PL* xvii.43. J. Langen rejected this theory: 'De commentariorum in epistulas Paulinas qui Ambrosii et Quaestionum biblicarum quae Augustini nomine feruntur scriptore dissertatio', unpubl. PhD diss. Bonn 1880, 5, as did Krüger, *Lucifer*, 88. A. Souter refused to accept the possibility that Ambrosiaster was a deacon: *A study of Ambrosiaster*, Cambridge 1905, 175. For the debate about the identity of Ambrosiaster see T. S. de Bruyn, S. A. Cooper and D. G. Hunter (eds), *Ambrosiaster's Commentary on the Pauline Epistles: Romans*, Atlanta, GA 2017, pp. xxiv–xxv, and D. G. Hunter, 'Presidential address: the significance of Ambrosiaster', *Journal of Early Christian Studies* xvii (2009), 1–26.

of Bishop Liberius of Rome.²⁵ In the letter Liberius besought the gathering of a council that would reexamine the case of Athanasius, whose condemnation, issued by the Council of Tyre of 335, had been ratified at the Council of Arles of 353 by the action of Valens of Mursia. Liberius also wrote to Eusebius of Vercellae and Fortunatian of Aquileia asking them to join the delegation in Milan, as we learn from three letters of Liberius to Eusebius contained in an ancient *Life* of the latter.²⁶

As a result of the embassy a council did gather in Milan in 355, but it did not go the way that Liberius had hoped.²⁷ Eventually the legates were enjoined to underwrite Athanasius' condemnation, and were exiled for their refusal.²⁸ Athanasius informs us also about some gruesome tortures that Hilary had to undergo.²⁹ Within a span of seven years, Eusebius and Lucifer were transferred to three different locations. Lucifer reached the Thebaid from Germanicia in Syria, *via* Eleutheropolis in Palestine. Eusebius was banished first to Scythopolis of Palestine, then to

²⁵ *Epistula legatorum*, apud Hilary of Poitiers, *Fragmenta historica*, ser. A, VII, ed. A. Feder, *S. Hilarii episcopi Pictaviensis opera. Pars IV*, CSEL lxxv, Vienna–Leipzig 1916, 89–93. See also *Eusebius Vercellensis, Filastrius Brixianensis, Hegemonius (Ps.), Isaac Iudaeus, Archidiaconus Romanus, Fortunatianus Aquileiensis, Chromatius Aquileiensis: Opera quae supersunt; Diversorum hereseon liber; Adversus haereses; Opera quae supersunt; De reconciliandis paenitentibus; Commentarii in evangelia; Opera quae supersunt*, ed. B. Bischoff, V. Bulhart, F. Heylen, A. Hoste and A. Wilmart, CCSL ix, Turnhout 1957, 120.

²⁶ These letters are edited in *Eusebius Vercellensis*, 120–3. See V. Saxer, 'Fonti storiche per la biografia di Eusebio', and M. Simonetti, 'Eusebio nella controversia ariana', in Dal Covolo, Uglione and Vian, *Eusebio di Vercelli*, 121–52 at pp. 123–4, 155–79 at pp. 156–7. On the *Life* see R. Grégoire, 'Agiografia e storiografia nella *Vita antiqua* di Eusebio di Vercelli', in Mastino, Sotgiu and Spaccapelo, *La Sardegna paleocristiana*, 187–200.

²⁷ The sources for the Council of Milan of 355 are Rufinus, *HE* x.20; Socrates, *HE* ii.36; Sozomen, *HE* iv.9; Theodoret, *HE* ii.15; Lucifer, *Moriundum esse pro dei filio* i (Diercks edn), *Luciferi Calaritanus Opera*, 265–300 at pp. 265–6; Athanasius, *HA* 31–4, 76 (Opitz edn), *Athanasius Werke*, II: *Die 'Apologien'*. 5. Lieferung, 199–202, 224–6; Hilary, *Ad Constantium Liber primus* viii, *PL* x.557–64 at p. 562; *S. Hilarii episcopi Pictaviensis opera* (Feder edn), 181–7, 186–7. On the eclectic nature of the tripartite *Ad Constantium* (of which chapter 8 constitutes the third part) see A. Wilmart, 'L'Ad Constantium liber primus de Saint Hilaire de Poitiers et les fragments historiques', *RB* xxiv (1907), 149–79, 291–317; D. H. Williams, 'The anti-Arian campaigns of Hilary of Poitiers and the "Liber Contra Auxentium"', *CH* lxi (1992), 7–22 at p. 9 n. 11; and L. Wickham, *Hilary of Poitiers: conflicts of conscience and law in the fourth-century Church*, Liverpool 1997, p. xxvi, and 'Shaping Church-State relations after Constantine: the political theology of Hilary of Poitiers', *CH* lxxxvi (2017), 287–310 at p. 287 n. 1.

²⁸ No explicit mention is made of the exile of the presbyter Pancratius. More clergymen were exiled at the council than just the Roman delegates. The names of the exiles of 355 are provided varying by different sources.

²⁹ Athanasius, *HA* xli.1–2 (Opitz edn), *Athanasius Werke*, II: *Die Apologien*, 5. Lieferung, 205–6. Here the name of the presbyter accompanying Hilary is not Pancratius but Eutropius.

Cappadocia, and eventually in the Thebaid.³⁰ We know Hilary of Rome had died by 382,³¹ but are not informed about the date of his return or death.³² The sources are also silent about his place of exile. It is most likely that he followed Lucifer, with whom he had travelled to Milan, to Palestine, Syria and eventually Egypt.

Was Theodoret simply speculating about the presence of Hilary of Rome in the Thebaid on the basis of the exile that he shared with Lucifer at the Council of Milan? More plausibly, the historian received this bit of information from a particular source that included a narrative of the events immediately preceding Lucifer's – and, most likely, Hilary's – travel to Antioch. From the same source Theodoret might have received his knowledge of the gathering of a small synod proper in the Thebaid.

The nature of the synod can be further investigated. Scholarship tends to merge Socrates and Sozomen's account with Theodoret's by accepting the historicity of a council in the Thebaid while painting it as of a piece with the rigorist platform that Socrates and Sozomen attribute to Eusebius and Lucifer's private confabulations.³³ But the terms through which Theodoret characterises the events in the Thebaid, if read closely, are instructive with regard to the true nature of the council. Theodoret names some 'others of the same mind' ('ἄλλοι ὁμόφρονες') with whom Eusebius and Hilary met, resolving to return harmony to a divided Church. If Socrates and Sozomen's narrative is overlaid on Theodoret's, these subjects will be understood as fellow unfaltering old-Nicenes. However, Theodoret's phrasing suggests that these need not have been exclusively bishops of an old-Nicene ilk. As much is indicated by the contrastive use, in the following sentence, of the expression 'those of an opposite mind' ('οἱ τὰναντία φρονοῦντες'), both antonymous and cognate to

³⁰ On the exiles of Eusebius of Vercellae see Simonetti, 'Eusebio nella controversia ariana', 159–62, esp. p. 159 n. 62; B. Studer, 'Eusebio e i rapporti con la Chiesa di Roma', in Dal Covolo, Uglione and Vian, *Eusebio di Vercelli*, 181–9, 185–7; and P. Meloni, 'Eusebio di Vercelli "natione sardus"', in Mastino, Sotgiu and Spaccapelo, *La Sardegna paleocristiana*, 345–51.

³¹ See ALO 21.

³² The mention of one Hilary in Jerome, *Chronicon, ad annum Romanorum xxii* (Helm edn), *Die Chronik*, 241 ('Hilary returned to Gaul after he had offered his book on his own behalf to Constantius at Constantinople': trans. Donalson, *A translation*, 49), just like that contained in Jerome, *Chronicon, ad annum Romanorum xxiii*, ed. Helm, *Die Chronik*, 242 ('Gaul – through the agency of Hilary – condemned the treacheries of the falsehood of Ariminium': trans. Donalson, *A translation*, 50), is mistakenly referred to as Hilary the deacon in Helm, *Die Chronik*, 266. For correct identifications of this Hilary as Hilary of Poitiers see Donalson, *A translation*, 81 n. 241g and 82 n. 242a, and B. Jeanjean and B. Lançon, *Saint Jérôme, Chronique: continuation de la chronique d'Eusèbe, années 326–378: suivie de quatre études sur les chroniques et chronographies dans l'antiquité tardive (IVe–VIe siècles)*, Rennes 2004, 92 n. i and 96 n. a (as well as, seemingly, Helm's own apparatus *ad locos*).

³³ See, for example, Armstrong, 'The synod of Alexandria', 208–9.

ὁμόφρονες. This phrase is clearly used in reference to the anti-Nicene opponents of the aggregate of old-Nicene and non-old-Nicene pro-Nicene Churches.³⁴ The designation ὁμόφρονες may well have included fellow Nicenes of a different kind, i.e. homoiousians.

It stands to reason that, preparing for the launching of a global pro-Nicene campaign, Eusebius and his allies may have wished to sit down also with local homoiousian bishops and with homoiousian exiles. The homoian Council of Constantinople of 360 had deposed a dozen bishops.³⁵ While some of them had not been removed until a later council, a good number of them had been exiled. Philostorgius also informs us that the deposed bishops withdrew their signatures from the Ariminum creed, reverting to their original homoousian or homoiousian stance.³⁶ Some of those restored pro-Nicenes may well have been exiled to the Thebaid, an area whose imperviousness made it apt for the relegation of recalcitrant clergy.³⁷

It is known that Theodoret constructed in *Church history* an ideological version of the ecclesiastical events of the fourth century. His narrative obscures Meletius' early years in Eusebian circles and his homoian career, grafting instead his belatedly-found Nicene faith onto the unwavering Nicenism of the Eustathians.³⁸ However, Theodoret's attitude toward the historical problem represented by the Meletians' homoiousianism was not to gloss over the split between the two communities, but rather to downplay its doctrinal significance, depicting it as a petty disagreement over personalities. In the passage referenced above – wherein the homoiousians are qualified as ὁμόφρονες – the schism between Eustathians and Meletians is brought to the fore. The Council of the Thebaid is presented as a first attempt at solving a schism perceived as a disgraceful quarrel among siblings.

The irenic agenda of the council promoted by Eusebius of Vercellae found Lucifer of Calaris and his men unwilling to cooperate. Rufinus attributed to Eusebius a more conciliatory approach toward the non-old-Nicene

³⁴ The transition καὶ γὰρ ('and in fact') indicates that the Antiochene schism is an example of the discord described in the previous sentence, which is therefore nothing but the rift between old-Nicene and non-old-Nicene pro-Nicene.

³⁵ Macedonius of Constantinople, Eustathius of Sebaste, Eleusius of Cyzicus, Basil of Ancyra, Heortasius of Sardis, Dracontius of Pergamus, Silvanus of Tarsus, Sophronius of Pompeiopolis in Paphlagonia, Elpidius of Satala, Neonas of Seleucia, Cyril of Jerusalem and the newly-elected bishop of Antioch Anianus: Sozomen, *HE* iv.24–5; Socrates, *HE* ii.42; Theodoret, *HE* ii.27–8; *Chronicon Paschale*, ed. L. Dindorf, in *Easter Chronicle*, Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae xi–xii, Bonn 1832, 1, 542; Epiphanius *Panarion* ii.73.23.4. On the actions of the Council of Constantinople see also Athanasius, *De synodis* 30, and Basil, *Adversus Eunomium* i.2.

³⁶ Philostorgius, *HE* v.1.

³⁷ On later exiles to the Thebaid see E. Fiano, 'The Trinitarian controversies in fourth-century Edessa', *Le Muséon* cxxviii (2015), 85–125 at pp. 104–7.

³⁸ See Martin, 'L'Église d'Antioche', *passim*.

pro-Nicenes than Lucifer's. Theodoret's account similarly seems to allude to a disagreement between Lucifer and Eusebius, and conveys the unviability of a *rapprochement*:

The Eusebians and Luciferians [οἱ περὶ τὸν Εὐσέβιον καὶ Λουκίφερα] strove [ἐπεζήτουν] to find the means of just this union [between Eustathians and Meletians]. Eusebius requested Lucifer to go to Alexandria and consult about this with the great Athanasius, whereas he himself wanted to take up the labour concerning the reconciliation. But Lucifer did not go to Alexandria, and arrived instead at the city of Antioch. Having adduced many arguments for the reconciliation with the ones and the others, and yet seeing that those of Eustathius' party expressed opposition – Paulinus, being a priest, led it – he, acting incorrectly, elected for them Paulinus as bishop.³⁹

The departure for Antioch of Lucifer and his men – Hilary of Rome and whoever else might have been with him – was the product of disagreement with Eusebius' policies. But what was the exact nature of the opposition of 'the Luciferians' ('οἱ περὶ τὸν Λουκίφερα') to the plan of reconciliation proposed by 'the Eusebians' ('οἱ περὶ τὸν Εὐσέβιον')? While a doctrinally-motivated opposition toward the restoration of relations of communion with the homoioisian coalition must have been part of the issue, the events ought also to be considered from the oft-neglected angle of disciplinary policies. The two reservations – doctrinal and disciplinary – could of course at times also apply to the same subject (a lapsed homoioisian).

A testimony from Sulpicius Severus instructs us in terms comparable to Rufinus' about Lucifer's disposition toward the disciplinary aspects of the Antiochene schism:

It is admitted by all that thanks to the intercession of Hilary alone our Gauls have been freed from the sin of heresy. On the other hand Lucifer, then in Antioch, was of a very different opinion. For he condemned to such an extent those who had been at Ariminum that he even dissociated himself from the communion of those who had received them under the condition of satisfaction or penance. I will not dare to say whether he acted rightly or wrongly.⁴⁰

³⁹ 'Τῆσδε τῆς συναφείας οἱ περὶ τὸν Εὐσέβιον καὶ Λουκίφερα πόρον ἐπεζήτουν εὐρεῖν· καὶ Λουκίφερα μὲν ὁ Εὐσέβιος τὴν Ἀλεξάνδρειαν ἤξιον καταλαβεῖν καὶ Ἀθανασίῳ τῷ μεγάλῳ περὶ τούτου κοινώσασθαι, αὐτὸς δὲ γε τὸν περὶ τῆς συμβάσεως ἤθελεν ἀναδέξασθαι πόνον. Ἀλλ' ὁ Λουκίφερ εἰς μὲν τὴν Ἀλεξάνδρειαν οὐκ ἀφίκετο, τὴν Ἀντιόχου δὲ πόλιν κατέλαβε. Πολλοὺς δὲ περὶ συμβάσεως λόγους καὶ τούτοις κάκεινοις προσενεγκών, εἶτα ἰδὼν ἀντιλέγοντας τοὺς τῆς Εὐσταθίου συμμορίας (ἠγεῖτο δὲ ταύτης Παυλῖνος πρεσβύτερος ὢν), ἐχειροτόνησεν αὐτοῖς, οὐκ εὖ γε ποιῶν, τὸν Παυλῖνον ἐπίσκοπον. Τοῦτο τὴν διάστασιν ἐκείνην μακροτέραν εἰργάσατο· πέντε γὰρ καὶ ὀγδοήκοντα διέμεινεν ἔτη μέχρι τῆς Ἀλεξάνδρου τοῦ πάσης εὐφημίας ἀξίου προεδρίας': Theodoret, *HE* iii.4.6–5.2.

⁴⁰ 'Illud apud omnes constitit unius Hilarii beneficio Gallias nostras piaculo haeresis liberatas. Ceterum Lucifer tum Antiochiae longe diversa sententia fuit. Nam in tantum eos, qui Arimini fuerant, condemnavit, ut se etiam ab eorum communione secreverit,

By the reception granted to the lapsed Sulpicius means here not simply reacceptance into the community, but reintegration into the priesthood. Admittedly, Sulpicius might be projecting the schismatic positions of the rigorist communities known as Luciferians (possibly holding no historical connection to Lucifer)⁴¹ onto Lucifer's activity during his short Antiochene stint. Against this possibility, however, stands Sulpicius' *epoché* with regard to Lucifer's posture, to which the ancient historian would have otherwise given a harsher judgement. Lucifer is known to have polemicalised against Hilary of Poitiers after the latter's publication of *On the synods*, forcing Hilary to write his *Apologetic responses*.⁴² It is likelier that Sulpicius intended to record Lucifer and Hilary's actual disagreement on Church discipline by highlighting the effects of their respective policies in two different ecclesiastical contexts.

A series of councils summoned in the West shortly before the Council of the Thebaid had taken tolerant measures with regard to the readmission of those who had compromised with homoianism. Seeing the prevalence of rigorist postures, Sulpicius recounts, Hilary of Poitiers 'thought that the best thing to be done was to call all back into correction and penance'. As a result, 'there multiplied the councils in Gaul, and almost all the bishops confessed about their error'.⁴³ Under Hilary's inspiration, a Gallican council, traditionally referred to as the Council of Paris, took place in 360 or 361.⁴⁴ Athanasius, in his *Letter to Rufinian* (possibly a rigorist

qui eos vel sub satisfactione vel paenitentia recepissent. Id recte an perperam constituerit dicere non ausim': Sulpicius Severus, *Chronica* ii.45.3–4 (Parroni edn), *Sulpicii Severi Chronica*, 102–3; *Sulpice Sévère. Chroniques* (de Senneville-Grave edn), 330. On the section of Sulpicius' *Chronica* devoted to the Trinitarian controversies and on its sources see F. Ghizzoni, *Sulpicio Severo*, Parma 1983, 222–9, and G. Zecchini, 'Latin historiography: Jerome, Orosius and the western chronicles', in Marasco, *Greek & Roman historiography*, 317–42.

⁴¹ See Simonetti, 'Appunti', and 'Lucifero di Cagliari', and Pérez Mas, *La crisis luciferiana*, passim.

⁴² See P. Smulders, 'Two passages of Hilary's *Apologetica Responsa* rediscovered', *Bijdragen: Tijdschrift voor Philosophie en Theologie* xxxix (1978), 234–43 [= in J. Dummer (ed.), *Texte und Textkritik: eine Aufsatzsammlung*, Berlin 1987, 539–47].

⁴³ 'optimum factu arbitratus revocare cunctos ad emendationem et paenitentiam. Frequentibus intra Gallias conciliis, atque omnibus fere episcopis de errore profitentibus': Sulpicius Severus, *Chronica* ii.45.2–3 (de Senneville-Grave edn), *Sulpice Sévère. Chroniques*, 330, lines 23–6.

⁴⁴ On the Council of Paris see H. C. Brennecke, *Studien*, 87; A. Feder, *Studien zu Hilarius von Poitiers, I: Die Sogenannten 'Fragmenta historica' und der sogenannte 'Liber I ad Constantium imperatorem' nach ihrer Überlieferung, inhaltlichen Bedeutung und Entstehung*, Wien 1910, 62–4; and M. Meslin, *Les Ariens d'occident*, 335–430, Paris 1967, 292, 328. For the possibility that the council was not held in Paris see H. C. Brennecke, U. Heil, C. Müller and A. von Stockhausen (eds), *Athanasius Werke*, III/1: *Urkunden zur Geschichte des arianischen Streites 318–328*. 4. Lieferung, Berlin 2014, 584. The council is dated to the summer of 360 by Feder, *Studien*, 63. On various proposals about the

pro-Nicene), cites a council held by the Greek bishops and one held by the bishops of Spain and Gaul.⁴⁵ Basil of Caesarea mentions a letter of Athanasius' in which the Alexandrian justified the conciliatory measures taken with regard to the lapsed by 'offering to [him] all the bishops of both Macedonia and Achaëa as partakers in this belief'.⁴⁶

Liberius of Rome, possibly after consulting with Hilary of Poitiers, was to take a similar initiative in Italy.⁴⁷ In his *Letter to Rufinian* Athanasius

dating of the council see C. F. A. Borchardt, *Hilary of Poitiers' role in the Arian struggle*, 2nd edn, Dordrecht 1966, 178–9 nn. 1, 2, 5, 6, 7. The soundest reasoning on the dating is that of Duval, who refrains from establishing a definite date: 'Vrais et Faux Problèmes', 265–6 n. 63. According to Brennecke, Julian might have been present at the council: *Studien*, 87 n. 1. Duval ponders this question: 'Vrais et Faux Problèmes', 264. T. D. Barnes rejects the hypothesis: *Athanasius and Constantius: theology and politics in the Constantinian empire*, Cambridge, MA 1993, 288 n. 12 (with reference to pp. 226–8).

⁴⁵ See Athanasius, *Epistula ad Rufinianum*, ed. P. P. Joannou, *Discipline générale antique (II^e–IV^e s.)*, II: *Les Canons des Pères grecs*, Grottaferrata 1963, 76–80 at p. 78. Given what Athanasius writes (Joannou, *Discipline générale antique*, 79, lines 17–21), it seems probable that Rufinian was a pro-Nicene who had hesitations about establishing communion with lapsed clergy. On the difficult identification of Rufinian see A. von Stockhausen, 'Epistula ad Rufinianum', in P. Gemeinhardt (ed.), *Athanasius Handbuch*, Tübingen 2011, 235–8 at p. 236. On the dating of *To Rufinian* see Joannou, *Discipline générale antique*, 61; Martin, *Athanasie d'Alexandrie*, 547; and Camplani, 'Atanasio e Eusebio', 199.

⁴⁶ 'Τούτου τοῦ δόγματος κοινωνοὺς μοι παρεχομένου τοὺς τε τῆς Μακεδονίας καὶ τῆς Ἀχαΐας ἐπίσκοπους ἅπαντας': Basil, *ep. cciv.6*, in *Basil: Letters, 186–248*, ed. R. J. Deferrari, New Haven 2014, 170. This is also the text of PG xxxii.753B and *Saint Basile: Lettres*, ii, ed. Y. Courtonne, Paris 1961, 179, line 32 (where there is no mention of a variant in the apparatus); for this reason Schaff's translation (allegedly based on PG) of 'Asia' for Ἀχαΐα in *Nicene and post-Nicene Fathers* viii. 245 appears to be a typo. On the transmission of *ep. cciv* see P. J. Fedwick, *Bibliotheca basiliana universalis: a study of the manuscript tradition of the works of Basil of Caesarea*, I: *The letters*, Turnhout 1993, 514–15. In light of the details provided by Basil about the origin of the bishops who agreed with Athanasius, it seems (*contra* von Stockhausen, 'Epistula ad Rufinianum', 235) that Athanasius' letter in Basil's possession, whether or not it was directly addressed to Basil, should not be identified with the *Letter to Rufinian*, which also does not appear to contain the mention of a Roman or Italian council to which von Stockhausen (pp. 236–7) refers twice.

⁴⁷ See Liberius, *Epistula ad catholicos episcopos Italiae*, apud Hilary of Poitiers, *Fragmenta historica*, ser. B, IV, 1 (Feder edn), *S. Hilarii episcopi Pictaviensis opera*, 156–7. On Hilary's stay in Rome see Sulpicius Severus, *Vita sancti Martini Turonensis* 6.7 (Fontaine edn), *Sulpice Sévère*, i. 266, 606–7; Simonetti, *La crisi ariana*, 356 n. 7; and Duval, 'Vrais et Faux Problèmes', 263 n. 47, 274–5. From a letter of Pope Siricius we learn that Liberius sent out decrees forbidding the rebaptising of Arians: Siricius, *Epistula ad Himerium Tarraconensem* 2, ed. P. Coustant, in *Epistolae Romanorum pontificum et quae ad eos scriptae sunt a. S. Clemente I usque ad Innocentium III, quotquot reperiri poruerunt seu novae sue diversis in locis sparsim editae*, I: *Ab anno Christi 67 ad annum 440*, Paris 1721, 624–5; *PL* xiii.1133–4. The letter *Olim et ab initio*, in *Decretales pseudo-Isidorianae, et Capitula Angilramni*, ed. P. Hinschius, Leipzig 1863, in which Liberius sympathises with Athanasius and the Egyptian bishops assembled in a synod, may be a fake: personal communication from Dr Glen L. Thompson.

describes the agenda of the Council of Alexandria of 362 as fully in line with those western episcopal gatherings: ‘Those who had lapsed and were leaders of impiety’,⁴⁸ i.e. the active promoters of heresy, could be forgiven if they repented, but could not be reintegrated into the priesthood. On the other hand, ‘those who were not in charge over heresy’⁴⁹ – described in another passage of the letter as those who had been forced to accept heresy and acted in the interest of protecting the flock – after repenting could be reintegrated into the priesthood.

As Jerome explained in his *Dialogue between a Luciferian and an Orthodox*, the reason for the reinstatement of the lapsed bishops was not that those who had been heretics could be bishops, but rather that those who were being readmitted to the episcopacy were not considered heretics.⁵⁰ In short, the designation of heretic was being applied by Athanasius and like-minded pro-Nicenes, such as Jerome and Eusebius of Vercellae, only to the authors of heretical doctrines or the leaders of heretical groups.

In neither Sulpicius Severus’ nor Rufinus’ account does Lucifer’s rigorist approach draw anything comparable to the Athanasian distinction between ‘those who have lapsed and were leaders of impiety’ and ‘those who were not in charge over heresy’. In 362 the difference between the position of the moderate old-Nicenes (among them Athanasius and perhaps Eusebius as well as Asterius) and that of their radical fellow party-members (epitomised by Lucifer) lay in amenability to making that distinction. Lucifer coherently stuck to his position after journeying back from Antioch to Italy: in Naples he refused to enter into communion with Bishop Zosimus, a repentant signatory of the formula of Ariminum but hardly a significant heretical thinker or influential ecclesiastical player.⁵¹

Remarkably, the disciplinary disagreement between Athanasius and Lucifer revolved exclusively around the question of the readmission of the clergy. The readmission of lapsed laypeople was not an issue for either church leader.⁵² It was Hilary, the Roman deacon, who first raised this disciplinary concern, making himself into the posthumous target of

⁴⁸ ‘Οἱ καταπεπωκότες καὶ προϊσταμένοι τῆς ἀσεβείας’: Athanasius, *Epistula ad Rufinianum* (Joannou edn), *Discipline générale antique*, 78.

⁴⁹ ‘Οἱ μὴ ἀύθεντοῦντες τῆς ἀσεβείας’: *ibid.*

⁵⁰ *ALO* 20 (Canellis edn), *Débat*, 168.

⁵¹ See Faustinus and Marcellinus, *Libellus precum* 63, ed. O. Günther in *Epistulae imperatorum pontificum aliorum inde ab A. CCCLVII usque ad a. DLIII datae avellane quae dicitur collectio*, CSEL xxxv, Vienna 1895, 5–44 at pp. 23–5; ed. M. Simonetti in *Faustini opera*, CCSL lxxix, Turnhout 1967, 285–392, 375; ed. A. Canellis in *Supplique aux empereurs: Libellus precum et Lex Augusta; Précédé de Faustin; Confession de foi*, ed. A. Canellis, SC div, Paris 2006, 166.

⁵² This seems to be the reality referenced by Jerome’s statement about Lucifer in *ALO* 20: ‘Unum, quod etiam in praesenti constat, eloquar: uerbis eum a nobis dissentire, non rebus, si quidem et eos recipiat qui ab Arianis baptismum consecuti sunt’ (‘Let me only say one thing, which is established also in the present: that he differs from us in

Jerome's lampooning.⁵³ In his *Dialogue between a Luciferian and an orthodox* Jerome called Hilary a latter-day Deucalion,⁵⁴ criticising in particular his alleged incoherence: though having been baptised in a Church that received heretics such as Manicheans or Ebionites, and having himself received believers who had been baptised by non-'Arian' heretics, Hilary now considered invalid the baptism of the 'Arians'.⁵⁵

Lucifer's disciplinary policies were not as radical as Hilary's. Still, at the council in the Thebaid, or in the discussions that preceded it, his views clashed with those of Eusebius of Vercellae, who promoted an initiative of reconciliation with the homoiousians (whether with or without a delegation of the latter present). Javier Pérez Mas identified in the 384 *Book of supplications* – a list of grievances sent by the Roman Luciferian priests Faustinus and Marcellinus to Theodosius and Arcadius – a reference to the council in the Thebaid, and suggests that this gathering, at Eusebius' urging, promulgated rigorist regulations about the readmission of the lapsed clergy:⁵⁶

words, not in actions, since he receives also those who have received baptism from the Arians': *Supplique aux empereurs* (Canellis edn), 170.

⁵³ *Deucalion orbis* (literally 'Deucalion of the world'): *ALO* 26 (Canellis edn), *Débat*, 192, 2. Jerome used against the Luciferians the argument used by Cyprian – whose writings he read – against his adversaries. See P. Battifol, 'Les Sources de l'*Altercatio Luciferiani et orthodoxi* de St Jérôme', in V. Vannutelli (ed.), *Miscellanea geronimiana: scritti varii pubblicati nel XV centenario della morte di San Girolamo*, Rome 1920, 97–113; Y.-M. Duval, 'Saint Jérôme devant le baptême des hérétiques: d'autres sources de l'*Altercatio Luciferiani et Orthodoxi*', *REA* xiv (1968), 145–80. Jerome, in the *Dialogue between a Luciferian and an Orthodox*, notes that Hilary acknowledged in his *libelli* that Popes Julius (337–52), Mark (336) and Silvester (314–35) as well as all older bishops had admitted heretics to penance. The mention of all three immediate predecessors of Liberius, but not of Liberius himself, suggests that the *libelli* were written against the latter after his composition of the *Letter to the Catholic bishops of Italy*: Battifol, 'Les Sources', 99.

⁵⁴ *ALO* 26. On this work, its dating and its sources see G. Grützmacher, 'Die Abfassungszeit der *Altercatio Luciferiani et Orthodoxi* des Hieronymus', *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* xxi (1901), 1–8; B. R. Voss, 'Vernachlässigte Zeugnisse klassischer Literatur bei Augustin und Hieronymus', *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* N.F. cxii (1969), 154–66 [= *Lemmata: donum natalicium W. Ehlers sexagenario a sodalibus Thesauri linguae Latinae oblatum*, München 1968, 300–11], 161; S. Rebenich, *Hieronymus und sein Kreis: prosopographische und sozialgeschichtliche Untersuchungen*, Stuttgart 1992, 99 n. 473, 138 n. 689; and A. Canellis 'La Composition du *Dialogue contre les Luciferiens* et du *Dialogue contre les Pélagiens* de saint Jérôme: à la recherche d'un canon de l'*altercatio*', *REA* xliii (1997), 247–88; B. Jeanjean, *Saint Jérôme et l'hérésie*, Paris 1999, 21–6; and A. Canellis, 'Saint Jérôme et les Ariens: nouveaux éléments en vue de la datation de l'«*Altercatio Luciferiani et Orthodoxi*»?', in J.-M. Poinssotte (ed.), *Les Chrétiens face à leurs adversaires dans l'Occident latin du IVe siècle: actes des journées d'études du GRAC, Rouen, 25 avril 1997 et 28 avril 2000*, Mont-Saint-Aignan 2001, 155–94.

⁵⁵ *ALO* 26–7 (Canellis edn), *Débat*, 192–7.

⁵⁶ Pérez Mas, *La Crisis luciferiana*, 126–7.

The bishops execrating these acts of ungodliness, who on account of their faith underwent the punishments of exile or who fled, though physically separated by the distances between the regions, made none the less into one in the spirit [*spiritu in unum positi*], through mutual correspondences [*per mutuas litteras*], decree with apostolic vigor [*apostolico vigore decernunt*] that it is in no way possible to communicate with such bishops, who have betrayed the faith in that way we have reported above, unless they requested the lay communion, bemoaning their acts of ungodliness. But, once Constantius, the protector of the heretics, died, Julian held power alone.⁵⁷

While the *Book of supplications* does indicate that some exiled pro-Nicenes had come to a rigorist resolution, the latter cannot be ascribed to the Council of the Thebaid. Whether the phrase ‘through mutual correspondences’ (‘per mutuas litteras’) is understood as expressing the means through which the confessors’ decree was issued (thus modifying the clause ‘apostolico vigore decernunt’) or the tool through which their unity was maintained (modifying the clause ‘spiritu in unum positi’), it is clear that the sentence emphasises geographic dispersal. It could in principle be argued that the physical distance between the pro-Nicene exiles is being evoked as the state out of which they emerged when they supposedly assembled to issue their rigorist decree. But even if this were the case, the timeline established in the *Book of supplications* would prohibit this gathering from being identified with the synod of the Thebaid. In Faustinus’ and Marcellinus’ narrative the death of Constantius clearly follows the decree of the confessors, while all church historians have the events in the Thebaid unfold as a product of the emperor’s demise.

Eusebius of Vercellae’s later subscription to the *Tome to the Antiochenes* and his influence over the 363 letter of the Italian bishops disavowing the views of Ariminum⁵⁸ suggest that he did not hold extremist views on the matter of the reintegration of the lapsed clergy. It is true that the *Letter to Gregory of Elvira*, attributed to Eusebius, voices sympathy for the refusal of this to-be Luciferian champion to communicate ‘with

⁵⁷ ‘Has eorum impietates execrantes episcopi, qui pro fide poenas exilii perpetiebantur vel qui se in fugam dederunt, licet essent corpore discreti per intervalla regionum, tamen spiritu in unum positi per mutuas litteras apostolico vigore decernunt nullo genere talibus episcopis posse communicari, qui fidem illo modo, quo supra retulimus, prodiderunt, nisi si laicam postulaverint communionem, dolentes suis impietatibus. Sed mortuo Constantio patrono haereticorum, Iulianus solus tenuit imperium’: Faustinus and Marcellinus, *Libellus precum* 50–1 (Günther edn), *Epistulae imperatorum*, 5–44 at p. 20; *Faustini opera* (Simonetti edn), 372; *Supplique* (Canellis edn), 156.

⁵⁸ *Epistula episcoporum Italiae ad episcopos Inlyrici*, apud Hilary of Poitiers, *Fragmenta historica*, ser. B, IV, 2 (Feder edn), *S. Hilarii episcopi Pictaviensis opera*, 328.

the hypocrites'.⁵⁹ This text, however, has been proved with solid arguments to be a Luciferian fake, and has nothing to contribute to our knowledge of Eusebius' actual stance.⁶⁰

Scholars have affirmed that Eusebius was in agreement with the course of action that Lucifer was to take. These claims either attribute to Eusebius and Lucifer the intention to undermine, through a rigorist strategy, Athanasius' activities aimed at reconciliation,⁶¹ or make Athanasius himself into a proponent of a rigorist agenda, who was in on the plan to consecrate Paulinus.⁶² But, even leaving aside Rufinus' mention of Lucifer's disregard for Eusebius' request to travel to Alexandria, this reconstruction clashes with the reports in ancient sources about Eusebius' negative reaction to Lucifer's consecration of Paulinus upon arriving in Antioch, resulting in Lucifer's disgruntlement.⁶³ Surely Eusebius was acting in Antioch as an emissary of the Alexandrian council; rather than imagining that the synod changed his mind, it is more parsimonious to back-date his tolerant ecclesiastical politics to his time in the Thebaid.

Theodoret's narrative, if read closely, reveals the non-rigorist nature of the small upper-Egyptian synod organised by Eusebius of Vercellae. Lucifer of Calaris left for Antioch in disagreement with the conciliatory spirit of this gathering, either before or after its celebration. The clergy that did assemble in a synod in the Thebaid laid the groundwork for the Council of Alexandria. Their meeting may have also included lapsed pro-Nicenes who had reverted to their original views after being deposed at Constantinople in 360, and may have even seen the participation of members of the homoiousian alliance. As such, the Council in the

⁵⁹ *Cum ypocritis*: Pseudo-Eusebius of Vercellae, *Epistula ad Gergorium Illiberitanum*, apud Hilary of Poitiers *Fragmenta historica*, ser. A, II (Feder edn), *S. Hilarii episcopi Pictaviensis opera*, 46–7, 46.

⁶⁰ See L. Saltet, 'La Formation de la légende des papes Libère et Félix', *BLE* vi (1905), 223–36 at pp. 228–30, and 'Fraudes littéraires des schismatiques Lucifériens aux ive et ve siècles', *BLE* vii (1906), 300–26 at p. 326; Wilmart, 'L'Ad Constantium', 297; J. Chapman, 'The contested letters of Pope Liberius, 13: the forger and his work', *RB* xxvii (1910), 325–52 at pp. 326–8; Simonetti, *La crisi ariana*, 234 n. 50; Hanson, *The search*, 508 n. 2; Simonetti, 'Eusebio nella controversia ariana', and 'Scritti di e attribuiti a Eusebio di Vercelli', in Mastino, Sotgiu and Spaccapelo, *La Sardegna paleocristiana*, 449–61 [= *Cassiodorus* iii (1997), 37–48] at pp. 453–6; and 'Lucifero di Cagliari', 293. The authenticity of the letter is retained by Feder, *Studien*, i. 64–6; G. Bardy, 'Faux et Frauds littéraires dans l'antiquité chrétienne', *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* xxxii (1936), 5–23, 275–302 at p. 16; Duval, 'Vrais et Faux Problèmes', 267 n. 65; and D. H. William, *Ambrose of Milan and the end of the Arian-Nicene conflicts*, Oxford 1995, 50–2.

⁶¹ Armstrong, 'The Synod of Alexandria'.
⁶² T. Elliott, 'Was the "Tomus ad Antiochenos" a pacific document?', this *JOURNAL* lviii (2007), 1–8.

⁶³ Elliott understandably has to reduce Lucifer's anger enigmatically to his being 'upset by something after Eusebius' arrival' (italics mine): *ibid.* 3.

Thebaid precipitated the emergence of a consequential rift between hard-liners ('οἱ περὶ τὸν Λουκίφερα') and moderates ('οἱ περὶ τὸν Εὐσέβιον') within the old-Nicene front, a rift that was to manifest itself at the Council of Alexandria of 362, and also to live on in the Antiochene old-Nicene community.