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## The Theology of Similarity in the Teaching of the Synod of Ancyra (358)

**Abstract:** Recent research has addressed the problem of the orthodoxy of the teaching of the Synod of Ancyra, but has not dealt directly with the theology of similarity, which is not identical to the theology of the image, although it is close to it. The Synod focused on the similarity of the Son in God's inner Trinitarian life, claiming that the Son is similar to the Father *κατ' οὐσίαν*. It also mentioned the Son's similarity to us. However, it did not take up the subject of the similarity between man and God or between man and man. The article shows the biblical basis of the synodal theology of similarity and its basic propositions. The difficult expression *κατ' οὐσίαν*, defining the similarity of the Son to the Father, is the key to the understanding of the synodal theology. It means the similarity of a person to a person and the unity of persons on the level of substance.

**Keywords:** Synod of Ancyra, Son, Father, similarity, substance, *κατ' οὐσίαν*

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Since Adolf von Harnack stated in his book *History of Dogma* that the church's official doctrine of the Trinity owed more to Basil of Ancyra than to either Athanasius or Basil of Caesarea,<sup>1</sup> the teaching of Synod of Ancyra (358) still attracts the interest of theologians. In the late 350s and early 360s, when the "Arianism" seemed to be ascendant with the promulgation of the so-called "Blasphemy of Sirmium" in 357, which banned the use of 'substance' (*οὐσία*) in theological discourse,<sup>2</sup> the Synod of Ancyra played a significant role in the theological disputes,<sup>3</sup> retaining the notion of substance in the Trinitarian Theology.

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<sup>1</sup> See A. von Harnack, *History of Dogma*, 80–107.

<sup>2</sup> See M. DelCogliano, "Review of: *Athanase d'Alexandrie*," 738–746.

<sup>3</sup> See J. Gliściński, *Współczesny Ojcu*, 87; H.J. Sieben, "Ankyra," 689.

Latest research focused on the theological correctness of the synodal teaching in relation with the opinion of Epiphanius of Salamis (c. 315–403) who believed that the bishops in Ancyra were affirming the Son to be a creature and branded them as “Semi-Arians”. Such an opinion on the Synod of Ancyra can be found in contemporary elaborations of some scholars.<sup>4</sup> However, recent research indicates that this Synod, under the leadership of Basil of Ancyra, assumed an attitude which was in contrast to the Arian teaching on the Son being dissimilar (ἀνόμοιος) to the Father, spread by so-called “Anomoeans” or “Eunomeans”.<sup>5</sup> Today the last group is most frequently called “Heteroousians” because it held the Son was not only dissimilar to the Father, but also He was “different” (ἕτερος) from the Father “in substance”.<sup>6</sup> Having definitely rejected this teaching, the Synod of Ancyra asserted that the Son is similar (ὅμοιος) to the Father in substance (κατ’ οὐσίαν). That is why, the synodal fathers gathered at Ancyra in 358 are today called “Homoiousians” in contrast to another group, so-called “Homoians”, who claimed that the Son was “like” (ὅμοιος) the Father without further specification.<sup>7</sup>

A change of opinions on the theology of Homoiousians was sparked by 1) further research into the writings of Athanasius and Hilary of Poitiers and 2) an in-depth analysis of the teaching of the Synod of Ancyra. With regard to the first aspect Mark DelCogliano

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<sup>4</sup> It is the opinion of a famous British theologian J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 181 and R.D. Williams, “Arius. Arianismus,” 985; they are called the “moderate Arians” by B. Sesboüé, J. Wolinski, *Le Dieu du salut*, 226.

<sup>5</sup> From the name of Eunomius, the representative of the teaching: see R.J. De-Simone, *Introduzione*, 22. The mistakes of Eunomius were rejected by St. Basil the Great in his work *Adversus Eunomium* (ibid.). It is also Aetius who teaches on the total dissimilarity of the Son to the Father; see B. Sesboüé, J. Wolinski, *Le Dieu du salut*, 226; M. Simonetti, *La crisi ariana*, 237–238, 253–259. In addition to the extreme teaching on the total dissimilarity of the Son to the Father, there also existed a more moderate attitude, which regarded Christ–Logos as “similar to the Father but not in His substance” in: J. Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition*, 219.

<sup>6</sup> See M. DelCogliano, “Review of: *Athanase d’Alexandrie*,” 738–746.

<sup>7</sup> See L. Ayres, *Nicaea and its Legacy*, 150. According to DelCogliano “in the late 350s the old Eusebian alliance began to splinter into three groups whose distinctions only became pronounced over time (namely the Homoians, the Homoiousians, and the Heteroousians)”; see M. DelCogliano, “The Influence of Athanasius,” 198.

in his study on the term *Unbegotten* by Athanasius, Homoiousians and Basil of Caesarea proved that Athanasian thought was adopted by Basil of Caesarea through the intermediary of the Homoiousians and consequently the statement of the Synod of Ancyra that the Son is similar in substance (ὅμοιος κατ' οὐσίαν) to the Father cannot be construed in the Arian sense. As DelCogliano noticed, Basil of Ancyra and after him Basil of Caesarea specified that this similarity is found on the level of divine substance (οὐσία) or nature<sup>8</sup> and therefore the Son cannot be a creature of God. On the problem of correctness of the teaching of the Synod of Ancyra the writings of Hilary of Poitiers shed some additional light. Jannel Abogado in her doctoral thesis entitled “Hilary of Poitiers on conciliating the homouseans and the homoeouseans: a historico-theological inquiry on fourth-century Trinitarian controversy”<sup>9</sup> stated that the theology of Homoiousian is not a form of Arianism, because it reveals the Divinity of the Son and the relation between the Son and the Father on the level of divine substance<sup>10</sup>. According to a theologian from the Philippines, Hilary wanted to conciliate the western Homoousians and the eastern Homoiousians, proving that the theology of the homoiousian Synod of Ancyra in 358 was different from the Arian perspective of God and it was similar to the homoousian doctrine of the Nicene.<sup>11</sup> The Homoiousians defended the unity of the Trinity on the level of substance, the divinity of the Son and His substantial equality with the Father who begat Him.<sup>12</sup>

Concerning the second aspect, a new perspective of the theology of Homoiousians through a detailed study of the teaching of the Synod of Ancyra is proposed by Polish theologians (Henryk Pietras, Józef Grzywaczewski, Arkadiusz Baron, Alicja Żyłka, Leon Nieścior) in

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 221.

<sup>9</sup> The thesis was presented at the Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum in Rome on 18th March 2013.

<sup>10</sup> See J. Abogado, *San Ilario di Poitiers*, 2–3.

<sup>11</sup> See idem, “Hilary of Poitiers,” 440.

<sup>12</sup> See idem, *San Ilario di Poitiers*, 6. M. Simonetti noticed that Homoiousians, though rejecting the term *homoousios*, still recognised the Son as the true and real Son of the Father: see M. Simonetti, *La crisi ariana*, 261.

the Patristic quarterly “E-Patrolagos”,<sup>13</sup> as well as by Donald Fairbairn in his article “The Synod of Ancyra (358) and the question of the Son’s creaturehood”. His analysis of two-word pairs in the description of the relation between the Father and the Son in the document of Ancyra: “father/son and creator/creature” shows that the bishops assembled at Ancyra did not intend the creator/creature word pair to refer to the Father/Son relationship.<sup>14</sup> The final conclusion of the article is clear: the Synod of Ancyra did not believe the Son was a creature and therefore the Homoiousians were not Arian subordinationists.<sup>15</sup>

The presentation of the research on the Synod in Ancyra shows that it lacks systematic reflection on the theology of similarity. A Polish theologian, Bogusław Górka, rightly observes that the theology of similarity has today been reduced to the theology of image, especially in the field of theological anthropology, and the Hebrew word *demut* has been considered a synonym to the Hebrew word *selem* (image).<sup>16</sup> In my opinion, the theology of similarity, based on the biblical idea of similarity (*demut*), should be reinstated.<sup>17</sup> To this end, I decided to examine the documents of the Synod of Ancyra (358) again. Since this Synod primarily mentioned a Son ὁμοιος κατ’ οὐσίαν to the Father, I have attempted to understand anew the meaning of this standard Homoiousian phrase. I also note that the Synod discussed not only the Son’s similarity to the Father, but also the similarity of the Son to

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<sup>13</sup> Issue 1/1/2015 is titled “Bazyli z Ancyry i spór o homojużę”.

<sup>14</sup> See D. Fairbairn, “The Synod of Ancyra,” 120.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 134–135.

<sup>16</sup> See B. Górka, *Reinterpretacja*, 80–81. 83. Górka proposed that the word *demut* should be translated as “form,” not as “similarity” (*ibid.*).

<sup>17</sup> Contemporary Trinitology and Christology do not elaborate on the question of similarity of the Son but merely mention it. For example, W. Breuning thinks that the notion of the image of the Father in the Son is inconclusive and causes difficulties, stemming from Hellenistic way of thinking on the image. See his *Glaubenszugänge*, 283. The Polish theologian C.S. Bartnik merely mentions “the iconic model” of the Trinity in his *Dogmatyka*, 218. Similarly, G. Greshake only mentions the image of the Father in the Son, yet he writes extensively about the creation as the image of the Trinity: G. Greshake, *Der Dreieine Gott*, 244–326. The subject of similarity is undertaken by G.L. Müller in reference to a human being, noticing at the same time that separation of the image (*imago*) and similarity (*similitudo*) fails to reflect the biblical sense, Genesis 1:26f, in: G.L. Müller, *Katholische Dogmatik*, 111–114.

humans. The studies of the Synod of Ancyra to date ignore the issue of the similarity of the Son to humans. In my research I pay special attention to the biblical texts, on which the Synod based its theology along with their synodal interpretation. The theology of similarity of the Son can be found in the two documents. The first document features quite extensive and difficult to comprehend *Epistle of the Synod*, which was passed on by Epiphanius in Greek (*Panarion* 73,2–9). While working on the analysis of his text and its interpretation, I resorted to Polish translation by Arkadiusz Baron presented in an excellent, critical study *Acta synodalia ab anno 50 ad annum 381* (Synodi et Collectiones Legum, 1).<sup>18</sup> The second synodal document constitutes *Anathemas* in Greek, also handed down by Epiphanius (*Panarion* 73,10–11) – and Latin version conveyed by Hilary (*De synodis* 12–26). Here again, I took advantage of the above-mentioned work *Acta synodalia*.<sup>19</sup>

### 1. Similarity κατ' οὐσίαν

The statement that the Son is similar to the Father constitutes the core of the synodal theology of similarity. This is the kind of exceptional and unique similarity (ὁμοιότης, *similitudo*), which denotes such a similarity with which the Synod always associates the Greek expression κατ' οὐσίαν. Therefore, the Son is similar (ὅμοιος) to the Father κατ' οὐσίαν. Arkadiusz Baron noticed that the term ὅμοιος κατ' οὐσίαν was recorded for the first time during the Synod of Alexandria (323), and its sense was anti-Arian.<sup>20</sup> The Synod of Ancyra claims that the similarity described as κατ' οὐσίαν best renders the relation between the Father and the Son<sup>21</sup> and constitutes an orthodox teaching which expresses the Christian denomination in the right way. In one of the Anathemas the Synod even states that the similarity described as κατ' οὐσίαν is “the most fundamental and elementary truth of

<sup>18</sup> *Acta Synodalia ab anno 50 ad annum 381*, 210–19 (hereafter cited as *AS* 1).

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 220–224.

<sup>20</sup> A. Baron, “Krytyka homojużji,” 35–36.

<sup>21</sup> See M. Simonetti, *La crisi ariana*, 263.

the Christian faith.<sup>22</sup> The question is how to understand similarity κατ' οὐσίαν in the synodal documents? The answer to the question is not easy, because the term ὁμοίως κατ' οὐσίαν is far from being precise.<sup>23</sup> The basic problem concerns the understanding of the term οὐσία and consequently, the translation of the synodal expression κατ' οὐσίαν. Some scholars, like Mark DelCogliano or Mark Weedman,<sup>24</sup> translate κατ' οὐσίαν as “in substance,” while others (J. Abogado, D. Fairbairn) support the translation “in essence.”<sup>25</sup> Dragos A. Giulea, on the basis of his research on the term οὐσία in the pro-Nicene context of the Fourth Century, states that the theology of that time was influenced by the Stoic and Aristotelian doctrines of substance.<sup>26</sup> In Stoic philosophy, the term οὐσία is essentially identified with the term ὑπόστασις<sup>27</sup> with the Stoa insists that there is only *one* substance that develops into plurality of determined things (ὄντα, or σώματα) and expresses itself in individual bodies.<sup>28</sup> In turn, in the philosophy of Aristotle οὐσία is understood in the first sense as individual reality and it was so called first substance (πρώτη οὐσία), whereas in the second meaning, οὐσία meant something that was common for members of the same species, so it meant the same as nature (φύσις) and it was so called second substance (δευτέρα οὐσία).<sup>29</sup> However,

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<sup>22</sup> μόνην τὴν κατ' ἐνέργειαν ὁμοιότητα διδοὺς τῆς κατ' οὐσίαν, ἣ ἐστὶ τὸ κεφαλαιωδέστατον ἡμῶν τῆς πίστεως, ἀποστεροῖ τὸν υἱὸν (Epiphanius, *Panarion* 73, Anathemas 11 [11]); “solam secundum efficaciam similitudinem concedens, iuxta essentiam vero, quod est principalissimum fidei nostrae, Filium fraudet” (Hilarius, *De synodis* 12–26, 6.11), *AS* 1, 222. In the Latin version the word οὐσία is expressed by means of the term *essentia* (therein).

<sup>23</sup> J. Grzywaczewski, “Poglądy Bazylego z Ancyry,” 148.

<sup>24</sup> M. Weedman suggests a translation *like according to substance* in his article “Hilary and the Homoiousians,” 491–510. However, this kind of translation does not solve the problem hidden behind the meaning of similarity the Synod talks about.

<sup>25</sup> Contemporary Polish researchers of ancient texts translate this Greek term as “in essence”: see M. Gilski, M. Cholewa, *Język soborów*, 32.

<sup>26</sup> See D. A. Giulea, “Divine Being’s Modulations,” 327.

<sup>27</sup> See P. Hünermann, “Hypostase. Hypostatische Union,” 371.

<sup>28</sup> See M. Forscher, *Die stoische Ethik*, 67–84; M. Pokorny, “Language and ontology,” 12.

<sup>29</sup> See J.Y. Lacoste, “Sostanza,” 1276. In today’s meaning, substance denotes, in a metaphysical sense, something that is most important in a being, something that constitutes the basis for the being and action, and something that decides

Constantinos Athanasopoulos, objected to Aristotle's insistence that οὐσία is neither asserted of nor found in the subject, claiming that the identification of all οὐσία with essence or substance is improper and misleading interpretation of the Aristotelian theory.<sup>30</sup> In what sense then the Synod of Ancyra used the term οὐσία, when it insisted that the Son is similar to the Father κατ' οὐσίαν? Certainly, Dragos A. Giulea was right in claiming that the Homoiousian leaders (Basil of Ancyra and Georg of Laodicea) understood οὐσία as an individual substance rather than with the meaning of common essence used by the Nicene and pro-Nicene writers.<sup>31</sup>

What stems from my research done into the texts of the synodal documents is the fact that in the documents of the Synod of Ancyra the term concerning similarity of the Son κατ' οὐσίαν has a double meaning.

### 1.1. Similarity of person to person (οὐσία as ὑπόστασις)

The Synod derives the teaching on the κατ' οὐσίαν similarity of the Son to the Father included in the Revelation from the reflection on Divine names and Divine begetting connected with them. In the understanding of the Synod the Divine names are the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, the Synod concentrates attention only on the Son and the Father. The starting point for the teaching on similarity of the Son in the *Epistle of the Synod* are the words of Lord Jesus who said: "Go therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt 28:19, here and hereafter cited after USCCB). Commenting on the words, the Synod states: "From the names of the Father and the Son (as we were taught to believe particularly in the Father and the Son), we should capture the notion so characteristic

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on the identity of a being: J.H.J. Schneider, "Substanz," 1077–1080; G. Szumera, "Substancja," 1143–1145.

<sup>30</sup> See C. Athanasopoulos, "Ousia in Aristotle's Categories," 29.

<sup>31</sup> See D.A. Giulea, "Divine Being's Modulations," 327. J. Grzywaczewski pointed out the unclear terms used by the Synod theologians in "Postawa św. Atanazego," 173.

of the faith.”<sup>32</sup> The expression: “the notion so characteristic of the faith” determines similarity described as κατ’ οὐσίαν, stemming from the understanding of the meaning of the name of the Father and of the Son. The Synod explains: “Hearing the name of the Father one should become aware of the fact that the Father is the cause of the substance (οὐσία) similar to Himself, while hearing the name of the Son we should think of the Son similar to the Father, whose Son He is.”<sup>33</sup> Hence, the truth of the birth of the Son is hidden in the name of the Father, and in the name of the Son the truth of His origin from the Father, and His similarity to the Father. The most important aspect of this fragment is the statement that the Son is similar to the Father, because He is born of Him. If in the expression of the Synod, the Father is the cause of a substance similar to Him, then it should be understood that He is the cause (*principium*) of the Son. DelCogliano appropriately noted that the notion of “Father” signifies a likeness in substance between the Father and the Son: when God is called “Father”, it communicates that He is the cause of the Son who is like Him.<sup>34</sup> As a result, the metaphysical substance would denote the Son, particularly – it would be identical with the idea of hypostasis (ὑπόστασις) that is the person. Therefore, the Synod aims at stating that the Son is the substance–person coming from the Father, and as such He is similar to the Father. This kind of thinking could be supported by another fragment of the *Epistle of the Synod*: “Just as on earth, we call those who have sons similar to their substance – fathers, so is called the Heavenly Father, from whom earthly fathers take their names according to substance, appropriately, because He gave birth indeed of Himself to the Son, in the image of His own substance.”<sup>35</sup> We can understand the fragment in this way that the Father, who is

<sup>32</sup> ἀκόλουθόν ἐστιν ἀπὸ τῶν τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ ὀνομάτων (ἐπειδὴ μάλιστα εἰς πατέρα καὶ υἱὸν πιστεῦν ἐδιδάχθημεν), μίαν οὖν τινα εὐσεβῶς λαμβάνειν ἡμᾶς ἔννοιαν δεῖ, *AS* 1, 212 (Eriphanius, *Panarion* 73, 3).

<sup>33</sup> τὸν πατέρα αἴτιον ὁμοίας αὐτοῦ οὐσίας ἐννοῶμεν, καὶ τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ υἱοῦ ἀκούοντες ὅμοιον νοήσωμεν τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ πατρὸς, οὗ ἐστὶν ὁ υἱός, *AS* 1, 212 (Eriphanius, *Panarion* 73, 3).

<sup>34</sup> See M. DelCogliano, “The Influence of Athanasius,” 217.

<sup>35</sup> ὡσπερ γὰρ ἐπὶ γῆς πατέρες ὀνομάζονται, καθ’ ὁμοίότητα τῶν οἰκείων οὐσιῶν τοὺς υἱοὺς ἔχοντες, οὕτω καὶ πατὴρ ἐν οὐρανοῖς ὀνομάζεται, ἀφ’ οὗ οἱ πατέρες



“the substance”, gives birth to “the substance” similar to Himself that is the Son. There is a relationship of similarity κατ’ οὐσίαν between the Father–substance and the Son–substance. It means that the Son is similar to the Father in the sense of ὑπόστασις (person), and the term “substance” is tantamount to the term ὑπόστασις. The correctness of such a statement is justified by yet another statement of the Synod: “It seems obvious from natural reasoning that the Father is not called the father of action but of substance similar to His own, hypostasis suitable to the action.”<sup>36</sup> Equating substance (οὐσία) with person (ὑπόστασις) is mostly discernible in here. It is probable that the Synodal Fathers followed Eusebius of Caesarea (c. 264–340), who understands οὐσία as individual substance and identifies οὐσία and ὑπόστασις.<sup>37</sup> The identification of substance and hypostasis prevailed in the Eastern theology and it is noticeable even in the writings of John of Damascus<sup>38</sup>. However, it is not the only interpretation of the difficult expression of κατ’ οὐσίαν because the notion of substance has yet another meaning in the opinion of the Synod.

## 1.2. Similarity on the level of substance (οὐσία as essence/nature)

Making comments on the words of Lord Jesus on life: “Just as the Father has life in Himself so did he let the Son have life in Himself” (John 5:26), the Synod states in one of the Anathemas that the notion of “life” (ζωή), which Lord Jesus mentions (Father has life in Himself; he let the Son have life in Himself), determines substance (οὐσία): “It is obvious, though, that life in the Father is understood and manifested

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οἱ ἐπὶ γῆς κατ’ οὐσίαν ὠνομάσθησαν, καθ’ ὁμοιότητα τῆς ἑαυτοῦ οὐσίας πάντως τὸν ἐξ αὐτοῦ ἔχων γεγεννημένον υἱόν, *AS 1*, 214 (Eriphanius, *Panarion 73*, 5).

<sup>36</sup> ὅτι γὰρ οὐκ ἐνεργείας λέγεται πατήρ ὁ πατήρ, ἀλλ’ ὁμοίως ἑαυτῶ οὐσίας, τῆς κατὰ τὴν τοιάνδε ἐνέργειαν ὑποστάσεως, δῆλον ἐκ τῶν φυσικῶν καθέστηκε λογισμῶν, *AS 1*, 213 (Eriphanius, *Panarion 73*, 4).

<sup>37</sup> See D.A. Giulea, “Divine Being’s Modulations,” 317–318.

<sup>38</sup> Anna Zhyrkova wrote that John Damascene denotes the term of *hypostasis* simples existence and as such is interchangeable with the term “substance” and “nature”. In a second and more proper meaning, though, *hypostasis* refers to existence in itself, which is applied to the individual, in: A. Zhyrkova, “Hypostasis,” 103.

as substance, and life of the only-begotten, born of the Father, is understood as substance.”<sup>39</sup> What stems from the statement is that “the life” of the Father (literally in the Father) is “substance”, and that “the life” of the Son (literally in the Son) is also “substance”. Hence, if the Father gives His life to the Son, then according to the Synod – He gives Him His (own?) “substance”. The notion of substance changes its meaning in this statement: it no longer denotes a person/hypostasis but divine essence/nature or deity. It is even better expressed by another fragment from the *Synod Epistle*, in which the Synod Fathers comment on the words from the Epistle to the Philippians: “Who, though He was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped” (2:6). According to the Synod: “The Son, who was the Son of God and existed in the divine form, and who was equal to God, possessed the features of deity, being incorporeal as for substance and similar to the Father as for deity, incorporeality and action.”<sup>40</sup> On the basis of these words the Synod declares equality between the Son and the Father, but simultaneously excludes the identity of the Father and the Son.<sup>41</sup> Jannel Abogado emphasised that this proposition is decisive for understanding the teaching of the Synod of Ancyra, as asserted by Hilary of Poitiers: The Son, who was Son of God, in the form of God, and is “equal” (ἴσα) to God, possesses the attributes of the Godhead in being by nature incorporeal, and like the Father in divinity, incorporeality and activities.<sup>42</sup> Therefore, the notion of substance in this case denotes: deity (θεότης), incorporeality (ἀσωματότης) and the energy of action (ἐνέργεια). It means that the

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<sup>39</sup> φανερόν γάρ ὅτι τῆς ζωῆς τῆς ἐν τῷ πατρὶ νοουμένης οὐσίας σημαιομένης καὶ τῆς ζωῆς τῆς τοῦ μονογενοῦς τῆς ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς γεγεννημένης οὐσίας νοουμένης, *AS* 1, 222 (Eriphanus, *Panarion* 73, Anathemas 10 [9]).

<sup>40</sup> καὶ ὁ υἱός, υἱὸς ὦν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἐν μορφῇ ὑπάρχων θεοῦ καὶ ἴσα ὦν θεῷ, τὰ μὲν ἰδιώματα εἶχε τῆς θεότητος, κατ’ οὐσίαν ἀσώματος ὦν καὶ ὁμοίος τῷ πατρὶ κατὰ τὴν θεότητα καὶ ἀσωματότητα καὶ τὰς ἐνεργείας, *AS* 1, 219 (Eriphanus, *Panarion* 73, 9).

<sup>41</sup> See M. Simonetti, *La crisi ariana*, 264. J. Grzywaczewski points out that the difference between the Father and the Son according to the Synod lies in the fact that the Father is God in Himself (αὐτόθεος), whereas the Son participates in the Father’s Divinity; see J. Grzywaczewski, “Poglądy Bazylego z Ancyry,” 150–151.

<sup>42</sup> See J. Abogado, “Hilary of Poitiers,” 462.

Son is similar to the Father at the level of divine substance (essence/nature) that is in deity, incorporeality and in action.

While developing the statement on similarity, the Synod emphasizes that the Son is not similar to the Father only in action, which was indicated by the statement of Lord Jesus who said that: “And whatever the Father does the Son does too” (John 5:19). One of the Anathemas says that: “Anyone who was taught to believe in the Father and the Son, and who does not call the Father of substance similar to Him but only of action similar to Him [...], must be anathematized.”<sup>43</sup> Similarity expressed as κατ’ οὐσίαν is not similarity of κατ’ ἐνέργειαν (in action), because the actions mentioned by the Synod ἐνεργεῖαι are the outcome and consequences of similarity in divine essence. Furthermore, the Synod states that similarity in divine essence (substance) does not solely consist in the similarity of power: “Anyone who would say that the Father is the Father of the only-begotten Son only due to power [...], and who would not say that He is truly the Son of the Father must be anathematized.”<sup>44</sup> Attention drawn to power (ἐξουσία) seems to be the synodal answer to the gnostic claim which regarded the Son as merely created God’s power.<sup>45</sup>

A question can be posed if in the understanding of the Synod the substance of the Son is identical with the substance of the Father, whether it is the same substance. In the light of the above quoted utterance of the Synod it may seem so because the divine life of the Father, understood as divine substance/essence/nature, is also the divine life of the Son. However, the synodal answer is not clear. According to the synodal *Epistle*, the substance of the Son is similar to the substance of the Father. The justification for the thesis the Synod finds in the previously quoted utterance of Lord Jesus: “Just as the Father has life in Himself [...] so did he let the Son have life

<sup>43</sup> Καὶ εἴ τις εἰς πατέρα καὶ υἱὸν πιστεύειν ἐπαγγελλόμενος, τὸν πατέρα μὴ οὐσίας ὁμοίας αὐτοῦ λέγοι πατέρα, ἀλλὰ ἐνεργείας... ἀνάθεμα ἔστω, *AS I*, 223 (Epiphanius, *Panarion* 73, Anathemas 11 [12]).

<sup>44</sup> Καὶ εἴ τις ἐξουσία μόνῃ τὸν πατέρα πατέρα λέγοι τοῦ μονογενοῦς υἱοῦ καὶ μὴ ἐξουσία ὁμοῦ [...] καὶ οὐ λέγων ἀληθῶς ἐκ πατρὸς γνήσιον υἱόν, ἀνάθεμα ἔστω (only Greek version), *AS I*, 224 (Epiphanius, *Panarion* 73, Anathemas 11 [18]).

<sup>45</sup> Asterius the Sophist proclaimed this understanding of the Son; see J. Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition*, 210.

in Himself” (John 5:26)”. The Synod explains: “The word *as* reveals similarity of substance to substance.”<sup>46</sup> Thus, the words: “just” – “as” decide on the similarity of substance. The research carried out by Jannel Abogado demonstrates that the Homoiousians recognise the substantial unity of the Son and the Father, and their proposition about the Son similar κατ’ οὐσίαν means an identity of the nature (φύσις) of the Father and the Son, because this interpretation of the Synodal teaching was handed over by Hilary of Poitiers<sup>47</sup>. But in my opinion the Synodal teaching on the similarity of substance can be explained in another way. The Synod seems to have regarded substance (essence/nature) of the Son from the perspective of Incarnation of the Son, because in the synodal *Epistle* reads: “*Logos* the Son of God allows us just as He allowed Thomas to touch the reality of similarity of substance with a hand when He says: “Just as the Father has life in Himself so did he let the Son have life in Himself” (John 5:26)<sup>48</sup>. And later on: “It goes without saying that a similar one can never be identical with the one he is similar to, for example, the Son of God made in the image of man became a man.”<sup>49</sup> From the explanation of the Synod it might be understood that the substance (essence/nature) of the Son is not identical with the substance (essence/nature) of the Father because it is the substance (essence/nature) of the incarnated Son: visible and touchable reality. The human substance (essence/nature) of the incarnated Son, that is united with the divine substance, in human body is “touchable” (as it happened to Thomas), whereas the substance of the Father cannot be touched. As a consequence, the Synod states in the last *Anathema* that, talking about one and the same substance (essence/nature) of the Father and the Son, and precisely

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<sup>46</sup> τὸ «οὕτως» τὴν ὁμοιότητα τῆς οὐσίας πρὸς οὐσίαν σημαίνει, *AS* 1, 222 (Ephraim, *Panarion* 73, Anathemas 10 [9]).

<sup>47</sup> See J. Abogado, *San Ilario di Poitiers*, 6.

<sup>48</sup> ἔτι δὲ μᾶλλον ὡς τὸν Θωμᾶν ἡμᾶς τῇ ψηλαφίᾳ τῆς ἐνεργείας τῆς κατ’ οὐσίαν ὁμοιότητος ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ λόγος προσάγει λέγων «ὡς ὁ πατὴρ ἔχει ζωὴν ἐν ἑαυτῷ, οὕτω καὶ τῷ υἱῷ δέδωκε ζωὴν ἔχειν ἐν ἑαυτῷ», *AS* 1, 218 (Ephraim, *Panarion* 73, 8).

<sup>49</sup> δῆλου ὄντος ὅτι τὸ ὅμοιον οὐδέποτε ταῦτόν εἶναι δύναται οὐ ἔστιν ὅμοιον, ἀπόδειξιν τὸ «ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενον» τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ ἀνθρώπον μὲν γενέσθαι, *AS* 1, 218 (Ephraim, *Panarion* 73, 8).

about the Son as being „consubstantial” is not in accordance with the doctrine of the faith: “Anyone who [...] would say that the Son is consubstantial to the Father, or that He has the same substance, let him be anathematized.”<sup>50</sup> If in this *Anathema* the Synod actually compared the divine essence/nature of the Father and human essence/nature of the incarnated Son, the rejection of the term ὁμοούσιος by the Synod might be understandable. Without this assumption, the statement that the Son is not of the same substance/ essence/nature as the Father is erroneous and contradictory to other statements of the Synod on the equality of the Son and the Father at the level of Divine substance/essence/nature.<sup>51</sup>

In any case, the Synod of Ancyra definitely rejects thinking that the Father and the Son would be one and the same person and defends separateness of the Divine Persons. One of the *Anathemas* says: “Anyone who refers timelessness of the hypostasis of the only-begotten Christ from the Father to non-born substance of God, because he talks about Son-Father, let him be anathematized.”<sup>52</sup> These words testify that the Synod does not accept the possibility of existence of some other divine hypostasis being in the form of “Son-Father” (υἱοπάτωρ).<sup>53</sup> However, if the notion of substance determined divinity, incorporeality, action-energy (divine) – that is what can be called divine essence/nature (φύσις),<sup>54</sup> then the term “consubstantial” expresses Christian faith in the right way, while

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<sup>50</sup> Καὶ εἰ [...] ὁμοούσιον δὲ ἢ ταυτούσιον λέγοι τὸν υἱὸν τῷ πατρὶ, ἀνάθεμα ἔστω, *AS* 1, 224 (Epiphanius, *Panarion* 73, 10–11, *Anathemas* 10 [19]).

<sup>51</sup> M. Simonetti claims that the rejection of the term “consubstantial” resulted from an incorrect interpretation by Sabellius who equated ὁμοούσιος with ταυτούσιος (identical substance): see M. Simonetti, *La crisi ariana*, 240.

<sup>52</sup> Καὶ εἰ τις τὸ ἄχρονον τῆς τοῦ μονογενοῦς Χριστοῦ ἐκ πατρὸς ὑποστάσεως ἐπὶ τὴν ἀγέννητον τοῦ θεοῦ οὐσίαν ἀναφέρει, ὡς υἱοπάτωρα λέγον, ἀνάθεμα ἔστω; Et si quis intemporealem unigeniti Filii de Patre substantiam ad innascibilem Dei essentiam referat, quasi Filium Patrem discens: anathema sit, *AS* 1, 224, 12.=17. (Epiphanius, *Panarion* 73, 10–11, *Anathemas* 11 [17]; Hilarius, *De synodis* 12–26.

<sup>53</sup> Sabellius referred to one ὑπόστασις of Father and Son: see J. Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition*, 186.

<sup>54</sup> The notion οὐσία is an equivalent of φύσις for Cappadocian Fathers, although in the New Testament the term φύσις refers to created beings: see: O. Boulnois, “Natura,” 906–907.

preserving separateness of the Persons. Despite that, the Synod supports the statement of the Son being similar κατ' οὐσίαν as it derives similarity from divine birth.

### 1.3. Divine begetting

Having taken into consideration Arian errors, the Synod emphasizes that the Father is not the Creator of the Son, and the Son is not a creation, though He is born out of the Father. The *Epistle of the Synod* talks about divine birth giving in the following way: “If everything that is fleshly and physical is removed with regard to the Father and the Son then what is left is birth giving to a living one similar to κατ' οὐσίαν [...]. If we also remove the notion of the father as the cause of somebody living similar to κατ' οὐσίαν, we will no longer believe in the Father and the Son but in the Creator and the creation, and the extraordinary names of the Father and the Son will not mean anything.”<sup>55</sup> Christian faith in the Father denotes faith in that the Father really gives birth to the Son but does not create Him, whereas the faith in the Son denotes that the born Son is similar to the Father κατ' οὐσίαν. It means that the Son is not a creation<sup>56</sup>. Therefore, already in the first anathema in Greek version, the Synod excludes from the Church those who do not profess faith in the similarity of the Son κατ' οὐσίαν, “stating that it is really not about the Father or the Son but the Creator and the creation.”<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ υἱοῦ, ἐκβεβλημένων τῶν σωματικῶν πάντων, παραλειφθήσεται μόνη ἡ ὁμοίου καὶ κατ' οὐσίαν ζῶου γενεσιουργία [...] εἰ δὲ μετὰ τῶν λοιπῶν ἀπάντων ἐκ τῶν τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ υἱοῦ ὀνομάτων σωματικῶν ἐκβαλλομένων ἐννοιῶν συνεκβάλλοιτο καὶ ἡ ὁμοίου κατ' οὐσίαν ζῶου αἴτιον τὸν πατέρα παρέχουσα ἡμῖν νοεῖν, οὐκέτι ἔσται πατὴρ καὶ υἱὸς πιστευόμενος, ἀλλὰ κτίστης καὶ κτίσμα, καὶ περιττὰ τὰ πατρὸς καὶ υἱοῦ ὀνόματα, μηδὲν παρ' ἐαυτῶν εἰσφερόμενα, *AS 1*, 212–213 (Eriphanius, *Panarion* 73, 4).

<sup>56</sup> See D. Fairbairn, “The Synod of Ancyra,” 120–121.

<sup>57</sup> Καὶ εἴ τις [...] μὴ προσέχοι τῷ ἐν σοφίᾳ θεοῦ κηρύγματι καὶ μετὰ πίστεως τὴν ὁμοιότητα [καὶ] κατ' οὐσίαν τοῦ υἱοῦ πρὸς πατέρα ὁμολογοίῃ, ὡς ψευδονύμως λέγων τὸν πατέρα καὶ τὸν υἱόν, καὶ μήτε πατέρα λέγων ἀληθῶς μήτε υἱόν, ἀλλὰ κτίστην καὶ κτίσμα [...] ἀνάθεμα ἔστω, *AS 1*, 220 (Eriphanius, *Panarion* 73, 10–11, Anathemas 10 [1]).

The similarity of the Son κατ' οὐσίαν, which stems from divine birth giving is totally different from the similarity which stems from God's creative action. The Synod quotes biblical texts in *the Synod Epistle*, which talk about "sons of God": "Sons I have reared and brought up, but they have revolted against Me" (Isa 1:2), "Is there not one Father of us all?" (Mal 2:10), "But to those who did accept Him [that is *Logos*], He gave power to become children of God to those who believe in His name, who were born not by natural generation, nor by human choice, nor by a man's decision but of God" (John 1:12–13), "Oh who has begotten the drops of dew" (Job 38:28). The Synod explains that sons (children) of God, the texts talk about, are similar to God in a different way than His Begotten Son. If God is called the Father in them then only due to the creative power, thanks to which He calls everything into being. In reference to the creation He is the Father as the Creator, and the sons of God the texts refer to are similar to Him as creation. However, it all looks different in relation to the only–begotten Son because in God's birth giving, it is not the creative action of God that is revealed but the paternal action.<sup>58</sup> Because the only–begotten is the Son of the Father in the strict sense and for this reason He is similar to Him κατ' οὐσίαν. According to the Synod, there is a total and complete similarity between Them, because the Father does not create the Son but gives birth to Him: "The Father of the only–begotten is not considered a Creator but the Father who gave birth."<sup>59</sup>

The Synod is of the opinion that the teaching on the Son similar κατ' οὐσίαν to the Father stems from God's Revelation and has solid biblical foundations.

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<sup>58</sup> ἐπὶ γὰρ πλέον διὰ τούτων κατασκευασθήσεται ἀπὸ τῆς κοινῆς ἐννοίας τὸ μὴ εἶναι μὲν αὐτὸν υἱόν, ὡς οὐδὲ ταῦτα, ποίημα δὲ ὄντα ὡς ταῦτα κλήσεως υἱοῦ μόνης μετέχειν. ἡ δὲ ἐκκλησία πεπίστευκεν ὅτι θεὸς οὐ μόνον ἐστὶ κτίστης κτισμάτων [...], ἀλλ' ὅτι καὶ πατὴρ ἐστὶ μονογενοῦς, οὐ μόνον τὴν κτιστικὴν ἔχων ἐνέργειαν, ἀφ' ἧς κτίστης νοεῖται, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἰδίως καὶ μονογενῶς γεννητικὴν, καθ' ἣν πατὴρ μονογενοῦς ἡμῖν νοεῖται, *AS 1*, 213–214 (Eriphanius, *Panarion* 73, 5).

<sup>59</sup> πατὴρ δὲ μονογενοῦς ὢν οὐχ ὡς κτίστης, ἀλλ' ὡς πατὴρ γεννήσας νοεῖται, *AS 1*, 213 (Eriphanius, *Panarion* 73, 4).

## 2. Biblical evidence

The Synod states that the teaching on similarity κατ' οὐσίαν is based on three fragments from the Holy Scripture, which are called “the three witnesses.”<sup>60</sup> The first one is the text from the Book of Proverbs (8:12–31), the second one – the Christological Anthem from the Epistle to the Colossians (1:15–20), and the third one – Prologue and other texts from the Gospel of St. John (1:1–14). The Synod Fathers interpret those texts as a whole, and state that: “One says that the Son is the Wisdom of the Wise, another that God’s Logos is the only–begotten God, and the third one that the Son of God is the image. Thus, God’s Logos, Wisdom and Image is announced to everybody [...] as the Son of God the Father is similar in everything also in κατ' οὐσίαν.”<sup>61</sup> Therefore, He is similar to the Father because He is the Wisdom of the Wise Father, Image of the Father and *Logos* of the Father.

### 2.1. Wisdom of the Wise (Prov 8:12–31)

The basic biblical text from which the Synod derives the teaching on similarity κατ' οὐσίαν, is the text from Proverbs on wisdom in the eighth chapter (particularly in verses 12–31). In the interpretation of the text by the Synod, the Father is “the Wise,” and the Son is “Wisdom.”<sup>62</sup> On account of that, the only–begotten Son is “the Wisdom of the Wise,” which leads to the conclusion that the Son is totally similar to the Father, because Wisdom is totally similar to the Wise. Hence, deriving the teaching on similarity from Prov 8:12–31 confirms one of the anathemas: “Anyone who having heard that the

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<sup>60</sup> In the *Epistle of the Synod* we read: “on the lips of two or three witnesses (see Matt 18:16; Deut 19:15) similarity of the Son to the Father κατ' οὐσίαν is confirmed,” *AS* 1, 218 (Epiphanius, *Panarion* 73, 8).

<sup>61</sup> ὁ μὲν γὰρ τοῦ σοφοῦ τὴν σοφίαν υἷόν, ὁ δὲ τοῦ θεοῦ τὸν λόγον μονογενῆ θεόν, ὁ δὲ τοῦ θεοῦ τὸν υἷον εἰκόνα φησὶν, ὡς τὸν θεοῦ λόγον καὶ τὴν σοφίαν καὶ τὴν εἰκόνα ὁμοιον ἐκ πάντων [...] καὶ κατ' οὐσίαν υἷον τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ πατὴρὸς τοῖς πᾶσι κηρύττεσθαι, *AS* 1, 218 (Epiphanius, *Panarion* 73, 8).

<sup>62</sup> In the Anathema the Synod states: “Anyone who having heard that only the Father is Wise, and Wisdom is His only–begotten Son, would say that Wisdom is the same as the Only Wise, rejecting the fact that Wisdom is the Son, let him be anathematized,” *AS* 1, 220 (Epiphanius, *Panarion* 73, Anathemas 10[2]).



Wise is the Father, and Wisdom is His Son would say that Wisdom is not similar to the Wise God, because he would not call the Wise the real Father of Wisdom, should be anathematized.”<sup>63</sup>

The term Wisdom of the Wise from Prov 8:12–31 becomes completed by the New Testament expressions of the *Logos* of the Father and Image of the Father.

## 2.2. *Logos* of the Father (John 1:1–14)

In the opinion of the synodal Fathers, St. John in his Gospel refers to the Old Testament text on Wisdom from Prov 8:12–31.<sup>64</sup> That is why the expressions from Proverbs are an equivalent of the Prologue.<sup>65</sup> As a result *Logos*, who is Wisdom, is similar to the Father, because He is of the Father, not by “expression of [the word], but in an impassable way in permanent hypostasis.”<sup>66</sup> In order to demonstrate that it is the similarity of *κατ’ οὐσίαν* the Synod also refers to the text John 5:19: “the Son cannot do anything on His own but only what He sees his Father doing; for what He does, his Son will do.” According to the Synod, these words constitute completion of the words about wisdom in Prov 8:30: “Then was I beside Him as artisan,” which means that just as wisdom is similar to the wise *κατ’ οὐσίαν* as a “master,” so is the only-begotten Son who “sees His Father doing” similar to Him *κατ’ οὐσίαν*, because He is the *Logos* of His Father.<sup>67</sup>

<sup>63</sup> Καὶ εἴ τις τὸν σοφὸν ἀκούων πατέρα καὶ σοφίαν τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ, ἀνόμιον λέγοι [καὶ] κατ’ οὐσίαν τὴν σοφίαν τοῦ σοφοῦ θεοῦ, ὡς μὴ λέγων τὸν σοφὸν τῆς σοφίας ἀληθῶς πατέρα, ἀνάθεμα ἔστω, *AS* 1, 220 (Epiphanius, *Panarion* 73, Anathemas 10[3]).

<sup>64</sup> “Mind you, it was Him who passed onto us what Wisdom taught us about in the preached Gospel,” *AS* 1, 217 (Epiphanius, *Panarion* 73, 8).

<sup>65</sup> “Words of wisdom: ‘The Lord possessed me at the beginning of His way’ (Prov 8:22) pointed out through words: ‘At the beginning when he says: ‘In the beginning was the Word’ (John 1:1), instead: ‘he possessed me’ (Prov 8:22), he wrote: ‘and the Word was God’ (John 1:1),” *AS* 1, 217 (Epiphanius, *Panarion* 73, 8).

<sup>66</sup> ἵνα μὴ τὸν ἐν προφορᾷ, ἀλλὰ τὸν ἐν ὑποστάσει παγία ἀπαθῶς ἐκ πατρὸς γεγεννημένον θεὸν λόγον νοήσωμεν, *AS* 1, 217 (Epiphanius, *Panarion* 73, 8).

<sup>67</sup> ἀντι δὲ τοῦ «ἤμην παρ’ αὐτῷ ἀρμόζουσα» τὸ «οὐ δύναται ὁ υἱὸς ποιεῖν ἄφ’ ἑαυτοῦ οὐδέν, ἐὰν μὴ τι βλέπῃ τὸν πατέρα ποιῶντα· ἃ γὰρ ἂν ἐκεῖνος ποιῇ, ταῦτα καὶ ὁ υἱὸς ὁμοίως ποιεῖ», *AS* 1, 217–218 (Epiphanius, *Panarion* 73, 8).

With reference to the text John 1:1, the Synod states in one of the anathemas that: “If anyone who having heard that the only-begotten God-*Logos* is the Son of God, at whom there was *Logos* and God, would say that God-*Logos* is not similar κατ’ οὐσίαν to the Father, God of God and Father [...], let him be anathematized.”<sup>68</sup>

### 2.3. The Image of the Father (Col 1:15–20)

The Synod Fathers are certain that it was also St. Paul who wrote the Christological hymn of Col 1:15–20 in the light of Prov 8:12–31, giving new and complete Christological sense to the Old Testament expressions: “All Apostolic expressions are equivalents to those from the Book of Proverbs.”<sup>69</sup> They draw the following conclusion from the comparison of the texts from Prov 8:12–31 and Col 1:15–20: “just as the Son is the Wisdom of the Wise, the substance of the substance, so is the image of the substance similar.”<sup>70</sup> The logic of the Synod Fathers seems to be the following: if no image identifies itself with what it presents but is similar to it, and “the image of the invisible God” (Col 1:15) is Wisdom, that is the Son, so the Son must be similar to the Father. The term “substance of substance” (οὐσία οὐσίας) in reference to the Son and the Father indicates the person of the Son and the person of the Father, whereas the biblical notion of the image (εἰκών) confirms similarity of the Son to the Father. The Son as the image of the Father-substance is similar to Him and does not identify Himself with Him. According to Dragos A. Giulea, the idea of a Son who is “the exact image of the Father” the Homoiousians taken from

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<sup>68</sup> Καὶ εἴ τις τὸν μονογενῆ θεὸν λόγον υἷον ἀκούων τοῦ θεοῦ πρὸς ὃν ὁ λόγος τε καὶ θεός, ἀνόμοιον λέγοι [καὶ] κατ’ οὐσίαν τὸν θεὸν λόγον τοῦ πατρὸς, τὸν θεὸν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ πατρός [...] ἀνάθεμα ἔστω, *AS* 1, 221 (Eriphanius, *Panarion* 73, Anathemas 10[5]).

<sup>69</sup> πάντων οὖν πρὸς λέξιν ἐξισαζόντων τῶν ἀποστολικῶν πρὸς τὰ παρὰ τῆς σοφίας, *AS* 1, 216 (Eriphanius, *Panarion* 73, 7). Further on, the Synod Fathers compare individual expressions contained in Prov 8:22 with expressions contained in Col 1:15 and Col 1:16.

<sup>70</sup> In the *Synod Epistle*: καὶ ὡς ἡ σοφία τοῦ σοφοῦ υἱός, οὐσία οὐσίας, οὕτως ἡ εἰκὼν οὐσίας ὁμοία ἐστί, *AS* 1, 216 (Eriphanius, *Panarion* 73, 7).

Alexander of Alexandria.<sup>71</sup> Being the image of the Father guarantees separateness of persons. The Son is not the Father. It is confirmed by one of the anathemas: “If anyone who having heard that the Son is ‘the image of the invisible God’ (Col 1:15), would say that the image of God is the same as the invisible God because he does not profess the real Son, should be anathematized.”<sup>72</sup> After Jannel Abogado one can claim that in the theology of the Homoiousians the notion of “image” sustains two important characteristics: indistinguishable essence and equality of essence with the being whose image it is.<sup>73</sup>

In terms of similarity of the Son to the Father, the Synod also touches the problem of similarity of the Son of God to humans.

### 3. Similarity of the Son to Humans

In order to prove that the Son is similar to humans, the Synod Fathers resort to two biblical texts in the *Epistle of the Synod*. The first one is a fragment from the Christological Anthem from the Epistle to the Philippians on Christ who became similar to humans: “Who, though He was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped. Rather, He emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness; and found human in appearance” (Phil 2:6–7). Commenting on the words, the Synod states: “It is obvious that ‘similar’ can never mean identical with the one he is similar to, for example, the Son of God ‘made to the likeness of humans’ became human but not in all did He identify Himself with humans.”<sup>74</sup> What stems clearly from the expression of the Synod is that similarity guarantees separateness. Just as the

<sup>71</sup> See D.A. Giulea, “Divine Being’s Modulations,” 311.

<sup>72</sup> Καὶ εἴ τις «εἰκόνα» ἀκούων τὸν υἱὸν «τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἀοράτου» ταῦτόν λέγοι τὴν εἰκόνα τῷ θεῷ τῷ ἀοράτῳ, ὡς μὴ ὁμολογῶν ἀληθῶς υἱόν, ἀνάθεμα ἔστω, *AS 1*, 221 (Eriphanius, *Panarion* 73, Anathemas 10[6]); “Si quis audiens imaginem esse Filium Dei invisibilis, idem dicat esse imaginem Dei, quod et Deum invisibilem: quasi non confitens vere filium, anathema sit,” *AS 1*, Anathemas, 221 (Hilarius, *De synodis* 12–26, [1.6]).

<sup>73</sup> See J. Abogado, “Hilary of Poitiers,” 445.

<sup>74</sup> δῆλου ὄντος ὅτι τὸ ὅμοιον οὐδέποτε ταῦτόν εἶναι δύναται οὗ ἔστιν ὅμοιον, \* ἀπόδειξιν τὸ «ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενον» τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ ἀνθρώπων

Son does not identify Himself with the Father, He does not identify Himself with a human being, either. Further on, the Synod explains: “Indeed, ‘made to the likeness of a human being’ He was a man, but not a man throughout. He was a man because He adopted human body, hence: ‘and the Word became flesh’ (John 1:14). He was not a human being because he was not born like human beings (without semen and intercourse).”<sup>75</sup> From the point of view of the Synod, the humanity of Christ is mysterious: He is a man but not “throughout.” He is a human being as He took on real human flesh, but He is not a man just like other humans are, due to the virgin conception, which is not congruent with human nature.

The second biblical text the Synod refers to while talking about similarity of the Son to humans is a fragment from the Epistle to the Romans: “For what the law, weakened by the flesh, was powerless to do, this God has done: by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for the sake of sin, he condemned sin in the flesh” (Rom 8:3). The Synod comments on the words in the following way: “‘Made similar to the sinful flesh’ he was subjected to desires which are the cause of sin in the flesh – I mean hunger, thirst and the remaining things, but He did not identify Himself with the sinful flesh.”<sup>76</sup> What arises from the expression of the Synod is that the incarnated Son is similar to humans in that He possesses human flesh, which is sinful, but He does not identify Himself with humans, because He committed

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μὲν γενέσθαι, μὴ κατὰ πάντα δὲ ταῦτόν γενέσθαι ἀνθρώπῳ, *AS 1, 218* (Eriphanius, *Panarion 73, 8*).

<sup>75</sup> Ὡς γὰρ ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος καὶ ἄνθρωπος ἦν καὶ οὐ κατὰ πάντα ἄνθρωπος, ἄνθρωπος μὲν τῷ καὶ σάρκα ἀναλαβεῖν ἀνθρωπίνην, ἐπειδὴ «ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο,» οὐκ ἄνθρωπος δὲ ὢν, ἐπεὶ οὐχ ὁμοίως ἀνθρώποις ἐγεννήθη (οὐ γὰρ ἐκ σπορᾶς καὶ συνδυσασμοῦ), *AS 1, 218* (Eriphanius, *Panarion 73, 9*).

<sup>76</sup> καὶ ἐν «ὁμοιώματι σαρκὸς ἁμαρτίας» γενόμενον γενέσθαι μὲν ἐν τοῖς πάθεσι τοῖς αἰτίοις τῆς ἐν σαρκὶ ἁμαρτίας, πείνης φαμέν καὶ δίψης καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν, μὴ γενέσθαι δὲ ἐν ταυτότητι τῆς σαρκὸς ἁμαρτίας, *AS 1, 218* (Eriphanius, *Panarion 73, 8*). And further on: “He became ‘similar to the sinful flesh’, in conformity with hunger, thirst and sleepiness, that is desires sinfully governing the flesh. Yet, having been subjected to the desires He was not led to the sin” (*ibid.*).

no sin, while every human being is sinful.<sup>77</sup> Jesus then is a true man, but He is one in a different way than other humans.<sup>78</sup>

However, one should draw attention to the fact that in the expressions of the Synod which refer to similarity of the Son to humans, there appears no term *κατ' οὐσίαν*, which characterized His similarity to the Father. Hence, one can claim that the Synod understands the similarity of the Son to the Father in a different way than the similarity of the Son to humans. The first one would refer to the person and essence, that is why it is the kind of similarity known as *κατ' οὐσίαν* – as divine person and on the level of divine essence/nature, the other one would refer only to human essence/nature, which was adopted by the Son of God. One could claim that while talking about similarity of the Son to humans, the Synod points out to new humaneness of Christ (sinless one). At the end of the *Epistle of the Synod* the Synod sums up its teaching on similarity in the following way: “Let me repeat once again: “The Son made ‘to the likeness of humans’ and ‘to the likeness of sinful flesh’ does not identify Himself with man, but is to the likeness of the substance of flesh as it was said, nor does the Son made to the likeness of the Father *κατ' οὐσίαν* who gave birth to Him refer to identity of the same substance with the Father, but similarity.”<sup>79</sup> The Synod states, then that the incarnated Son Jesus Christ is a real man but not the same as other humans.

#### 4. Conclusions

The theology of similarity presented by the Synod of Ancyra (358) asserts the Trinitarian and Christological dogma. Deriving the statement of the Son being similar to the Father *κατ' οὐσίαν* from the texts of the Holy Scripture (Prov 8:12–31; John 1:1–3; Col 1:15–20)

<sup>77</sup> The Son took on flesh, which is not, however, identical with the flesh other humans have: see M. Simonetti, *La crisi ariana*, 265.

<sup>78</sup> See A. Baron, “Krytyka homojużji,” 38–39.

<sup>79</sup> ὡς γάρ, πάλιν ἐρῶ, ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων καὶ ἐν ὁμοιώματι σαρκὸς ἀμαρτίας γενόμενος οὐκ ἐπὶ τὴν ταυτότητα ἤγετο τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, ἀλλ' ἐπὶ τὴν τῆς σαρκὸς οὐσίας ὁμοιότητα διὰ τὰ εἰρημένα, οὕτως οὐδὲ ὁ υἱὸς ὅμοιος κατ' οὐσίαν γενόμενος τῷ γεννήσαντι πατρὶ εἰς ταυτότητα ἄξει τοῦ πατρὸς τὴν ἑαυτοῦ οὐσίαν, ἀλλ' ἐπὶ τὴν ὁμοιότητα, *AS* 1, 219 (Eriphanus, *Panarion* 73, 9).

the Synod preserves the equality of the Son to the Father in deity, incorporeal being, in action, and points out to the separateness of the Persons on the one hand and the unity of the Father and Son on the level of divine essence/nature on the other.<sup>80</sup>

The statements on “the Son’s substance similar to the Father’s substance” in the theology of the Synod lead to doctrinal problems. If the Son had substance (as essence/nature) similar (only!) to the substance of the Father, so He may be regarded as a Person unequal to the Father, or even subordinate to the Father. For the Son to be equal to the Father in everything, as the Synod Fathers wanted, the substance/essence/nature of the Son and the substance/essence/nature of the Father would have to be the same – Divine. However, the Synod Fathers did not want to talk about one and the same substance of the Father and the Son, because in their opinion it could lead to the identification of the Father with the Son and loss of distinctiveness of the Persons.

Divine begetting has a fundamental significance in the theology of the similarity. The similarity is directly related to and results from begetting. The Son is similar to the Father because He is begotten by him. The similarity therefore results from the divine begetting, which does not mean creation. The Son is similar to the Father *κατ’ οὐσίαν*, that is, He is begotten and united with the Father on the level of divine essence/nature. The synodal theology of similarity emphasizes the truth of divine begetting in the immanent trinitarian life, which constitutes the basis of the similarity of the Son to the Father. This theology also justifies the sense of the name of the Father and the Son. The Son is similar to the Father *κατ’ οὐσίαν* because between Them there is the derivative or generative relationship.<sup>81</sup>

The theology of similarity is problematic to apply in pneumatology. If the similarity *κατ’ οὐσίαν* results from the Divine begetting, then

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<sup>80</sup> The Synod claimed that the theology of similarity is better to render the relation between the Father and the Son, and the Nicene term *ὁμοούσιος* means the exceptional similarity of the Son the Father in everything, see H. Pietras, “Pojmowanie synostwa Bożego,” 17–18.

<sup>81</sup> D.A. Giulea noted that Apollinarius and Athanasius linked the divine substance (*οὐσία*) from derivative and generative relationship: See D.A. Giulea, “Divine Being’s Modulations,” 322.

it cannot be said that the Holy Spirit is similar to the Father and the Son, because the Holy Spirit has not been begotten.

The theology of similarity is different of the theology of the image. The Polish biblical scholar M. Majewski, in his most recent studies on old-eastern images in the literature of the Ancient East and research on the interpretation of the image and similarity in the Holy Scripture,<sup>82</sup> proves that in the culture of the Ancient East, images of deity were not treated purely metaphorically but were regarded as physical (fleshly) representation of deities. In this context the biblical notion of an “image” (*šelem*) and “similarity” (*demut*) take on a new meaning. The notion of an image refers more to the physical similarity (fleshly), whereas the notion of similarity indicates more real presence.<sup>83</sup> If the Fathers of the Synod in Ancyra were still characterized by ancient eastern mentality, so the similarity of the Son to the Father meant real presence of the Father to them. The Son similar to the Father is not only His real natural representation (physical one) but first of all, he makes the Father present. The theology of similarity claims then that the Son makes the Father present because of the similarity to Him. The Incarnation of the Son does not diminish this similarity, on the contrary, it expresses it even more. Therefore, the theology of similarity of the Son serves to deepen the mystery of the Incarnation of *Logos*.

The synodal theology of similarity has an influence on Christian anthropology, as well. Although the Synod states that the Son is similar in a different way to the Father than to humans, still the latter similarity means that the Son who accepted human nature represents a real human being in full. He is the prototype and presence of real man. Every man comes closer to his/her prototype by imitation and assimilation to the incarnated Son. If the Son is similar to humans,

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<sup>82</sup> See M. Majewski, *Pięcioksiąg odczytany na nowo*. The author collected the findings of the research and referred to such works, among others, as: Z. Bahrani, *The Graven Image. Representation in Babylonia and Assyria*, Philadelphia 2003; joint publication *Born in Heaven, Made on Earth. The Making of the Cult Image in the Ancient Near East*, ed. M. B. Dick, Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1999; S.L. Herring, *Divine Substitution: Humanity as Manifestation of Deity in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East* (FRLANT 247), Göttingen 2013.

<sup>83</sup> See M. Majewski, *Pięcioksiąg odczytany na nowo*, 129–132.

it means He was also born by a human. The theology of similarity confirms the genuine birth of the Son of God from the Virgin Mary.

Thus, well and truly, the theology of similarity requires further elaboration, especially in reference to the similarity of man to God (see Gen 1:26–27), and also in terms of the similarity of man to man (from Seth to Adam: see Gen 5:1–3).

### **Teologia podobieństwa w nauczaniu Synodu w Ancyrze (358)**

**Abstrakt:** Synod w Ancyrze (358) mówi o podobieństwie Syna κατ' οὐσίας do Ojca. Czy nauka synodalna jest herezją? Pierwsza część artykułu jest próbą teologicznej interpretacji podobieństwa, które okazuje się być podobieństwem osoby (Syna) do osoby (Ojca) i podobieństwem substancji (istoty). W drugiej części zostają przedstawione biblijne teksty, na których Synod opiera teologię podobieństwa, z ich synodalną interpretacją. Trzecia część dotyczy podobieństwa Syna do ludzi, które w ujęciu synodalnym jest analogiczne do podobieństwa Syna do Ojca, chociaż jest od niego różne. Końcowe wnioski ukazują znaczenie teologii podobieństwa, która może wnieść nowe impulsy dla współczesnej teologii.

**Słowa kluczowe:** synod w Ancyrze, Syn, Ojciec, podobieństwo, substancja, κατ' οὐσίας

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