

Basil of Ancyra's Treatise on Faith: Confirming the Authorship

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Abstract

In the 2011 issue of *Vigiliae Christianae*, Mark DelCogliano challenged my attribution of the Homoiousian response to the Dated Creed of summer 359 to Basil of Ancyra. In this article, I confirm Basil's authorship with new philological and stylistic evidence and compare Basil's role with that of George of Laodicea, the other main figure of the Homoiousian party, which MD considered as the primary author of the document.

Keywords

Basil of Ancyra – George of Laodicea – Homoiousians – Epiphanius of Salamis – synod of Ancyra – Arian controversy

In 2006, following J.N. Steenson and W.A. Löhr, I proposed to attribute to Basil, bishop of Ancyra in Galatia, the second of two Homoiousian documents transmitted by Epiphanius of Salamis in his *Panarion*.¹ When Annick Martin and I edited the two documents as contextual documents for Athanasius of Alexandria's *Letter on the Synods of Ariminum in Italy and Seleucia in Isauria* (359),² we were not aware that Mark DelCogliano had refuted this attribution. In his refutation, MD aimed at a double reassessment. First, says DelCogliano (hereinafter "MD"), the mentioned document should not be

1 X. Morales, *La théologie trinitaire d'Athanase d'Alexandrie (Études augustinienes; série Antiquité – 180)*, Paris 2006, pp. 31-34.

2 Athanasius of Alexandria, *Lettre sur les synodes*, introduction, texte, traduction, notes et index par A. Martin et X. Morales (SC 563), Paris 2013. I will be quoting from this edition.

attributed to Basil of Ancyra. Instead, George of Laodicea should be considered as the primary author of the document, which could be consequently included in "The Literary Corpus of George of Laodicea."³ Secondly, whereas ecclesiastical historians tend to present Basil as the prominent figure of the Homoiousian party, MD opines that George of Laodicea's leading role should not be overlooked.⁴

In this article, I would like to answer MD's refutation, confirm Basil's authorship and restate the importance of Basil of Ancyra, in comparison to George of Laodicea, as the leader of the so-called Homoiousian party.

In the first part of the article, I will provide a renewed demonstration of Basil of Ancyra's authorship, with a threefold converging argumentation: 1. A description of Epiphanius' edition of the document at stake; 2. Athanasius' testimony on the document; 3. Stylistic comparisons between the document and the only other preserved work by Basil of Ancyra, his treatise *On Virginity*.

MD's attribution of the document at stake to George of Laodicea instead of Basil of Ancyra is one of his main arguments for reassessing George's role in Church history, and giving him a leading status.

The last part of my article will sum up the evidence about George's role, contrasted to Basil of Ancyra, and confirm the presentation usually given by the ecclesiastical historians. In other terms, George was an important figure among the Oriental prelates in the 330s to 350s, but not a prominent one, whereas Basil, endowed with imperial favour, was the leader of the Homoiousian party.

The aim of the present article is a literary and a historical one. Nevertheless, restating Basil's leadership in the Homoiousian party and his authorship of what I will provisionally call "Document 2" has important implications for the history of Trinitarian theology. Actually, as I will recall in my conclusion, MD and I agree in thinking that this document did influence Basil of Caesarea's Trinitarian theology. Considering Basil of Ancyra as its author makes him one of the pivotal characters in the development of Trinitarian theology in the second half of the fourth century.⁵

3 M. DelCogliano, "The Literary Corpus of George of Laodicea," *VChr* 65 (2011), pp. 150-169.

4 M. DelCogliano, "George of Laodicea: A Historical Reassessment," *JEH* 62 (2011), pp. 667-692.

5 The draft of this article was discussed with M. DelCogliano himself, to whom I am very grateful. Neither was convinced by the other, but the debate compelled me to sharpen my arguments. *Vigiliae Christianae's* reviewers and editors further helped me to improve its presentation. Writing in English and for English speaking readers was not only a linguistic problem but also a cultural one. May this article contribute to bridging the gap between us.

A Description of Epiphanius' Edition of the Homoiousian Documents

Epiphanius dedicates a long section of his *Panarion* or “basket” of heresies, to a group he dubs “Semi-Arians”, a name he coined himself. He begins by a description of their theological position. This description is in fact an anticipatory summary of the synodal letter of Ancyra (358) he is about to transcribe. In this description, Epiphanius identifies the group through two “major figures”:

οἱ περὶ Βασίλειον φημί καὶ Γεώργιον οἱ τῆς ἡμιαρείων ταύτης τῆς αἵρέσεως προστάται, φασίν...⁶

they say, I mean Basil and George, the major figures of this heresy of Semi-Arians ...

Epiphanius immediately connects these “major figures” (προστάται) to the historic event of the synod of Ancyra of 358:

Ἦσαν δὲ οὗτοι οἱ ἀπὸ τῆς συνόδου διαιρεθέντες αὐτῆς τῆς Ἀρειομανιτιδος αἵρέσεως ὁ αὐτὸς Βασίλειος Ἀγκυρι<α>νὸς τούτων ἀρχηγὸς καὶ Γεώργιος ὁ Λαοδικεῖας τῆς πρὸς Ἀντιόχειαν Δάφνης ἡγουν Κοίλης Συρίας.⁷

These <Semi-Arians> were those who, starting from the synod <of Ancyra>, separated from the crazy heresy of Arius, namely, Basil of Ancyra, their leader, and George of Laodicea of Daphne near Antioch, that is to say, of Coele-Syria.

One should note that Epiphanius considers Basil as *the* leader (ἀρχηγός) of the party. George comes in second. One should note also that Epiphanius apparently thinks George was at the synod of Ancyra. Fr. Williams understood

6 Epiphanius of Salamis, *Panarion haereseon*, III, 65-80, K. Holl and J. Dummer (ed.) (GCS 59), Berlin 1985, here 73, 1, 5, p. 268, l. 14-15. I acknowledge MD's demonstration, in “The Literary Corpus ...”, p. 164 n. 63, that, here and elsewhere, the formula οἱ περὶ Βασίλειον φημί καὶ Γεώργιον means “Basil and George”, and not, as in classical Greek, “B., G., and their followers” (actually, in classical Greek, the correct meaning of the formula οἱ περὶ τινα is not the literal translation “those around what's his name”, but “those around what's his name and what's his name himself”). See H.G. Liddell—R. Scott—H.S. Jones, *Greek-English Lexicon*, Oxford 1966, s. v. περὶ, C, 2 : “Later, periphrasis for the person himself.”

7 Epiphanius, *Panarion*, 73, 1, 6, GCS 59, p. 268, l. 16-18.

Epiphanius in this way, in his very equivocal translation: “These were the members of the Council <at Ancyra> who separated from the sect of the Arian Nuts itself—their leader, Basil of Ancyra, and George ...”⁸ But George was *not* at the synod, inasmuch as he sent a letter to the bishops gathered at Ancyra,⁹ a letter which Epiphanius never mentions. So, Epiphanius *may* have thought George was at the synod, even if George is actually not mentioned among the signers of the synodal letter which Epiphanius transcribed for us.¹⁰ Actually, in Epiphanius’ text, “Basil” and “George” almost always go together. The phrase “Basil and George” works as a whole, to refer to the whole group. For this reason, one cannot necessarily infer that the sentence means that Epiphanius thought George was present.

In any case, after presenting the group, Epiphanius announces that he will transcribe two “letters” of the group:

ἐνθαῦτα παραθήσομαι ὡς ἔγραψεν ἕκαστος αὐτῶν ἐπιστολὴν, Βασίλειος μὲν μίαν, Γεώργιος δὲ ὁ Λαοδικείας ἅμα Βασιλείῳ καὶ τοῖς σὺν αὐτῷ ἄλλην. Καὶ εἰσὶν αἶδε.¹¹

I will present how each one wrote a letter: Basil <wrote> one; George of Laodicea, together with Basil and those who are with him, <wrote> another. There they are.

The reader expects to find two “letters”:

Announcement 1. One letter by Basil of Ancyra *only*.

Announcement 2. One letter by George, co-authored by Basil and the whole Homoiousian group.

What the reader finds is:

Document 1 (73, 1, 1-11, 11): a letter, addressed by “the holy synod gathered in Ancyra” (73, 2, 1), and subscribed by “Basil, Eustathius, Hyperechius, Letoeus, Heorticus, Gymnasius, Memnonius, Euthyches, Severinus,

8 Fr. Williams, *The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis, Books II and III (Sects 47-80). De Fide* (NHMS 79), Leiden-Boston 2012, p. 443.

9 Transmitted by Sozomen, *Ecclesiastical History* [EH], IV, XIII, 2-3, SC 418, p. 245.

10 Epiphanius, *Panarion* 73, 11, 11.

11 Epiphanius, *Panarion* 73, 1, 8, GCS 59, p. 268, l. 27-29.

Eutychius, Alcimides and Alexander" (73, 11, 11). Therefore: Basil of Ancyra and "those who are with him". But not George of Laodicea.

Then, a rubric:

Ἐπληρώθη τῶν περὶ Βασίλειον καὶ Γεώργιον ὁ ὑπομνηματισμός.¹²

So ends the memorial of Basil and George.

There have been doubts about the interpretation of this rubric. As transcribed by Holl, it refers to the preceding document, that is, the synodal letter. But it could also be interpreted:

Ἐπληρώθη. Τῶν περὶ Βασίλειον καὶ Γεώργιον ὁ ὑπομνηματισμός.

End. The memorial of Basil and George.

In that case, the "memorial" would refer to the document that follows. Nevertheless, MD and I agree with Holl on the first interpretation. The rubric refers to Document 1, conspicuously a letter issued by the bishops gathered at Ancyra, and identifies it as a collective writing of the whole Homoiousian group—either falsely including George among its authors or, more probably, using "Basil and George" as a standard phrase not to be examined too closely. MD himself proposed the second hypothesis. The rubric is merely saying that the memorandum was written by the party of Basil and George assembled at Ancyra, i.e. the Homoiousians, not the specific individuals Basil and George.¹³

So far, MD agrees and considers Document 1 as the synodal letter of the Ancyran Council of 358 (in his article, there is a superficial error when stating that the council took place "shortly after Easter"¹⁴ 358, as Document 1 itself says the council was held shortly *before* Easter).

Then, without any title,¹⁵ Epiphanius transcribes Document 2 (73, 12, 1-22, 4). MD and I agree when identifying this Document 2 as "the Homoiousian response to the Dated Creed that was promulgated earlier that year in late May"

12 Epiphanius, *Panarion* 73, 11, 11, GCS 59, p. 284, l. 10, according to MD's demonstration on the meaning of the formula οἱ περὶ τινὰ καὶ τινὰ. The translation in SC 563, p. 47 and p. 105, should be amended.

13 MD, "The Literary Corpus ...," p. 168.

14 MD, "The Literary Corpus ...," p. 161.

15 Holl's conjectured insertion, "George's letter", must be discarded, as DelCogliano agrees.

359, dating “from the summer of 359.”¹⁶ This connection between Document 2 and the Dated Creed explains why a third Document was appended to it by Epiphanius or his source, without any rubric. This Document consists in editorial comments presenting subscriptions to the Dated Creed (22, 5-8), including an assessment by Basil of Ancyra himself on the interpretation to be given to this creed.

Thus, the problem is the way the two Announcements correspond to the two Documents.

My opinion was and still is:

Announcement 2 (a letter by George, co-authored by Basil and the whole Homoiousian group) refers to Document 1 (the synodal letter of 358), because of evident similarities between Announcement 2 and the rubric at the end of Document 1 (“memorial of Basil and George”).

MD’s opinion is exactly contrary to mine:

Document 1 (the synodal letter of 358) is referred to in Announcement 1 (a letter by Basil of Ancyra *only*). This means that Epiphanius announces the synodal letter as “Basil’s letter”, not because it would be a personal document, as it is evidently not, but because Basil would be the leader of the group and the main author of the document. As a matter of fact, I also consider that Basil is the principal author of the synodal letter, as will be proved below.

Consequently, for MD, Announcement 2 (a letter by George, co-authored by Basil and the whole Homoiousian group) refers to Document 2 (the Homoiousian response to the Dated Creed), a collective document, whose primary author is George.¹⁷ As such, Document 2 should be included in George’s “Literary Corpus”.

Regarding my opinion, MD has objected that there was no exact similarity between Announcement 2 and the rubric. Announcement 2 speaks of “George, Basil, followers” as source of the announced Document, whereas the rubric after Document 1 omits “followers” and reverses the order between George and Basil. I consider this last discrepancy as quite minor. In Announcement 2, the order is “George, Basil”, for a simple stylistic reason. Epiphanius has just introduced the two prominent figures, in the order “Basil, George”, then tries

16 MD, “The Literary Corpus ...,” p. 161.

17 MD, “The Literary Corpus ...,” p. 152: “George played the primary role in its composition.”

to assign a "letter" to each of them, in this same order. For Basil, he has one: Document 2. For George, he actually does not possess any letter by George alone, but only a collective document by the Homoiousians (Document 1) whose leading figures are "Basil and George" (rubric). Reversing the order "Basil, George" into "George (Nominative), Basil (Dative)", is a stylistic trick to highlight George among the group and respect the announced parallelism between the two main figures of the party. Ironically, the phrase seems to identify George as the main author of the synodal letter of Ancyra, whereas we know that George was not at Ancyra and, consequently, did not share in the writing of the synodal letter.

I also consider the omission of "followers" as a minor discrepancy. As seen at the beginning of the section, for Epiphanius, as major figures of the group, Basil and George stand for all of them. So "Basil and George"—"Basil, George, followers". We could compare this with another passage where, using the formula οἱ περὶ τινὰ καὶ τινὰ κτλ., Epiphanius gives a list of seven members of the Homoiousian group during the synod of Seleucia,¹⁸ and opposes it to a list of four members of the Homoian ("Acacian") group, presented with the alternative and synonymous formula τις ἄμα τινὶ καὶ τινὶ καὶ τινι. Now, Epiphanius' point is the opposition of two groups, of which he does not pretend to give us exhaustive lists of members. He merely mentions the major figures in order to refer to the whole group, so that οἱ περὶ Βασίλειον κτλ. probably means "Basil, George, etc., and their allies at the synod." Once more, Epiphanius considers single persons as representative of a *group*, and it is this group he wants to refer to when he speaks of "Basil and George". The rubric Τῶν περὶ Βασίλειον καὶ Γεώργιον ὁ ὑπομνηματισμός *means* "Memorial of the Homoiousians, whose leading figures are Basil and George."

There is a confirmation of that fact later in Epiphanius' section, which leads me to another of MD's objections.

Later in this same section dedicated to the so called Semi-Arians, Epiphanius transcribes two other documents:

- The Homoian document presented by Acacius of Caesarea at the synod of Seleucia in September 359 (73, 25, 1-26, 8), as contrasting with the Homoiousian position;
- Meletius of Antioch's inaugural (?) Sermon on Pr 8, 22 (73, 29, 1-33, 5), proving his conversion from the Homoian (or Acacian) to the Homoiousian position.

¹⁸ Epiphanius, *Panarion* 73, 23, 4.

Finally, Epiphanius alludes to the two documents he just inserted:

Acacius and the others who exposed a <confession of> faith in Seleucia of Isauria, different from the truthful <confession of faith>, <a confession of faith> [...] that we transcribed above in its entirety, after the <confession> written by Basil of Ancyra and George of Laodicea as representing them all (ἐκ προσώπου ὅλων).¹⁹

MD considers this sentence as a confirmation of his opinion. The document immediately preceding the Homoian confession of faith is Document 2. Here, Epiphanius calls it a confession “written by Basil of Ancyra and George of Laodicea as representing them all”, which evidently corresponds to Announcement 2 (a letter by George, co-authored by Basil and the whole Homoiousian group) but *not* (in MD’s opinion) to the rubric for Document 1 (“memorial of Basil and George”). In my opinion, MD is wrong. Here, Epiphanius compares two <confessions> of faith, that is, two official documents issued by groups, and omits speaking of personal works, such as Meletius’ sermon, *and* Document 2, because this Document 2 is a personal document, not a confession of faith. The confession of “faith written by Basil of Ancyra and George of Laodicea as representing them all” refers to Document 1, corresponding to Announcement 2 (a letter by George, co-authored by Basil and the whole Homoiousian group) *and* the rubric after Document 1 (“memorial of Basil and George”). Epiphanius consistently refers to the synodal letter of Ancyra as a document by “Basil and George” as leaders of the Semi-Arians, as he already did at the beginning of the section, when giving an anticipatory summary of the content of the synodal letter, and ascribing the statement to Basil and George, “they say, I mean Basil and George.”

This means that Announcement 1 (a letter by Basil of Ancyra *only*) corresponds to Document 2, and identifies it as Basil’s personal letter, and not as a document whose “primary author”²⁰ should be George of Laodicea.

Incidentally, if Epiphanius refers to Document 2 in *Panarion* 73, 37, 2, MD should acknowledge that the bishop of Salamis did not think of George as being its “primary author”, as he mentions him in the second place, after Basil. It may be noted that here, MD allows for a small discrepancy in the order between what he considers an announcement to Document 2 (Announcement 2: “George, Basil, followers”) and Epiphanius’ final allusion to the same Document (“Basil, George”). This invalidates MD’s objection of a discrepancy in the order

19 Epiphanius, *Panarion* 73, 37, 2, GCS 59, p. 311, l. 25-29.

20 MD, “The Literary Corpus ...,” p. 162.

between Announcement 2 ("George, Basil, followers") and the ending rubric to Document 1 ("Basil, George").

In fact, Epiphanius does not allude anywhere to a document whose primary or only author is George. On the contrary, Epiphanius announces a letter by Basil alone. He correctly transcribed chronologically the Ancyran collective synodal letter (though authored mainly by Basil) and Basil's letter, but reverses the Announcements, producing a chiasmic structure. This chiasmic structure is not a matter of stylistic elegance. Elegance is not a characteristic of Epiphanius' style, as everyone acknowledges. The chiasm is the result of the insertion of Announcement 1 between the anticipatory summary of the synodal letter, and the introduction of the letter with Announcement 2, as its title. Epiphanius now mentions a second document, "a letter by Basil" (Announcement 1), which he will transcribe only secondly (Document 2).

Athanasius' Testimony

There is further evidence for Basil's authorship of the Homoiousian response to the Dated Creed (Document 2). Athanasius of Alexandria himself speaks of Basil having written "on faith".

Athanasius of Alexandria began writing his *Letter on the Synods of Ariminum in Italy and Seleucia in Isauria* just after the synod of Seleucia, at the end of 359. In this letter, he surprisingly offers a theological alliance to the Homoiousians in order to counter Aetius and Eunomius, the so-called "Anomoians". He presents the Homoiousian group as "those who accept all that was written in Nicaea, expressing some hesitation about the term 'homoousion'."²¹

Note the euphemism "hesitation" (δισταζοντας)—in fact, in the lost *epistula de homousii et de homoeusii expositione*²² (so called *Epistula Sirmiensis*) presented by Basil of Ancyra at Sirmium in the summer of 358, the Homoiousians explained their position by strictly rejecting the *homoousion*.

To identify this group of potential allies, Athanasius gives only one name, "Basil of Ancyra, who wrote on faith."²³ This not only proves that, for

21 Athanasius of Alexandria, *On the Synods*, 41, 1, l. 3-5, SC 563, p. 318.

22 See Hilary of Poitiers, *On Synods*, 81, PL 10, col. 534 A-B.

23 Athanasius of Alexandria, *On the Synods*, 41, 2, l. 15-16, SC 563, p. 318. I will be using Athanasius's phrase as a title for Basil's writing, but this title is not from Basil himself. It is a phrase commonly used by Athanasius to refer to theological topics (*On the Synods*, 1, 3, l. 16, p. 182 etc. on the motive of the synods of 359, not a disciplinary one but a theological one; *On the Synods*, 14, 3, l. 25, p. 220 etc. to refer to synodal creeds).

Athanasius, as, later, for Epiphanius, Basil is *the* leader of the group, but that Athanasius knew of a writing by Basil, apparently as its only author, as did Epiphanius, according to Announcement 1. Of course, this “writing on faith” could be any Homoiousian document. For example, it could be the *Epistula Sirmiensis*, brought by Basil to the synod of Sirmium (summer 358). However, Athanasius refers to this letter elsewhere, presenting it correctly as a collective document.²⁴ Moreover, for Athanasius, the *Epistula Sirmiensis* is the document the objections of which he must answer. For the same reason, Basil’s “writing on faith” cannot be Document 1, the synodal letter of Ancyra, as this document clearly rejects the *homoousion* in its last anathema (11, 9, XIX). Anyway, Athanasius nowhere speaks of the synod of Ancyra, and would have consistently spoken of its synodal letter as a collective statement, not as a document written by Basil. In contrast, Athanasius apparently considers Basil’s writing as a document he can agree with—and actually, Epiphanius’ Document 2 does not reject or even mention the *homoousion*. So, Document 2, “Basil’s letter” (Epiphanius), “Basil’s writing on faith” (Athanasius), exclusively centred on Anomoianism, is just what Athanasius wants as a shared platform.

Actually, Athanasius alludes precisely to a passage in Document 2 in a conciliatory gesture. His usual Trinitarian formula, “One divinity in a Trinity,”²⁵ would certainly sound too unitarian to the ears of Oriental prelates. Athanasius modifies it to “one divinity *of the Father*,” more respectful of the *monarchia* of the Father. This modification apparently refers to, and correctly interprets a passage we can read in Document 2, itself possibly referring to Athanasius’ formula.

Here is Athanasius’ text:

... μίαν οἶδαμεν καὶ μόνην θεότητα τὴν τοῦ πατρὸς τούτου τε λόγον καὶ σοφίαν εἶναι τὸν υἱόν.²⁶

We know that there is only one divinity, that of the Father, and that the Son is his Word and Wisdom.

24 “They say” (*ibidem*, 43 1 and 47, 3). The plural refers to a collective writing.

25 See for example Athanasius of Alexandria, *Against the Arians*, III, 15, 5, *Athanasius Werke*, Bd. 1, 1, Lief. 3, p. 324, l. 21 and my *Théologie trinitaire d’Athanasie d’Alexandrie*, pp. 484-494.

26 Athanasius of Alexandria, *On the Synods*, 52, 1, l. 8-9, SC 563, p. 354.

And here is Basil's text:

[Οἱ ἀνατολικοί] ὁμολογοῦσι γάρ μίαν εἶναι θεότητα, ἐμπεριέχουσιν δι' υἱοῦ ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ τὰ πάντα.²⁷

[Those from the Orient] confess that there is one divinity, holding everything by a Son in a Holy Spirit.

Consequently, Document 2 could be "Basil's writing on faith". In fact, A. Martin and I propose to identify Document 2, not exactly as a "letter" by Basil, *pace* Epiphanius,²⁸ but, following Athanasius, as a "little treatise" (συνταγματίον²⁹), a theological statement distributed by Basil to the bishops gathering for the general synod of Seleucia of Isauria. Athanasius would have received it altogether with the other documents that the Egyptian bishops coming back from Seleucia would have handed over to him.³⁰

Stylistic Confirmations

In spite of MD's interesting developments on "the Literary Corpus" of George of Laodicea, we can read only *two* documents by George of Laodicea: theological fragments transmitted by Athanasius, excerpted from letters sent during the 320s; and the letter addressed by him to the bishops assembled at Ancyra in April 358, transmitted by Sozomen.³¹

The two fragments transmitted by Athanasius offer too little evidence for any stylistic analysis. The letter addressed by George to the bishops at Ancyra shows a skilled writer, able to respect the standards of the epistolary genre (brevity, familiarity, directness), and display rhetorical devices typical of the Second Sophistic. The letter starts with the stock metaphor of the shipwreck: Aetius' teaching is a shipwreck, and the city of Antioch is threatened to share in this shipwreck. Describing the ecclesiastical situation in Antioch as a shipwreck is also a hyperbole, another typical rhetorical device, which leads George

27 Document 2, 16, 3, l. 17-18, SC 563, p. 128.

28 The document is not in the form of a letter, which leads MD to suppose an editorial cut: "The beginning of this letter is probably missing since it starts *in medias res*" ("The literary Corpus ...", p. 154).

29 This is how Athanasius calls Asterius' work in *On the Synods*, 18, 2, l. 12, p. 236.

30 See the development on Athanasius' documentation in SC 563, p. 171-172.

31 Sozomen, EH, IV, XIII, 2-3, SC 418, p. 245.

to affirm that not only Antioch but “the whole universe” (καὶ ἡ οἰκουμένη) is concerned by Aetius’ integration among Antioch’s clergy.

That George was an able rhetorician is confirmed by the presence, among his “Literary Corpus”, of the classical genre of the *encomium*, where an orator could display his full rhetorical skills.³² Moreover, Theodoret, as quoted by MD, explicitly says, on speaking of George’s treatise *Against the Manichees*, his other main literary work, that George had a literary training:

George of Laodicea <also> composed <a treatise against the Manichees>. He was a leader of Arius’ heresy, but had followed a training in philosophy (τοῖς δὲ φιλοσόφοις ἐντεθραμμένος μαθήμασι).³³

In contrast, Document 2 (“Basil’s letter”) is clearly not a literary document but a sober theological statement with no rhetorical devices except subtle logical reasoning. Of course, the difference of genre could explain a difference in style in two works by the same writer, but I doubt this.

Now, what do we know about Basil’s own literary corpus and training? Jerome, who does not mention George in his *De Viris illustribus*, dedicates a short notice to Basil:

*Basilus, Ancyranus episcopus, arte medicus, scripsit Contra Marcellum, et De virginitate librum et nonnulla alia et sub rege Constantio Macedonianae partis cum Eustathio Sebasteno princeps fuit.*³⁴

Basil, bishop of Ancyra, was a physician by profession. He wrote *Against Marcellus*, and a book *On Virginity*, and some other works. He was, with Eustathius of Sebaste, the leader of the Macedonian party, during Constantius’ reign.

So, Basil was not a sophist but a physician.

The only comparison we can make is between Basil’s “writing on faith” and his imposing treatise “on the true incorruptibility in virginity, to Letoios of

32 George of Laodicea’s (funeral) *Encomium* of Eusebius of Emesa is lost. See Socrates, *Ecclesiastical History* [EH], I, XXIV, and MD, “The Literary Corpus ...,” p. 153, point 3.

33 Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Compendium of Heretical Accounts*, I, XXVI, PG 83, col. 381 B 13-15. Philostorgius, in his *Ecclesiastical History*, VIII, 17, SC 564, p. 456, also speaks of philosophical studies in Alexandria.

34 Jerome, *On Illustrious Men*, 89, in Gerolamo, *Gli uomini illustri*, A. Ceresa-Gastaldo ed., Firenze 1988, p. 196.

Melitene.”³⁵ Once again, the comparison is difficult, due to the difference of literary genre. Nonetheless, even a superficial glance reveals in the treatise the same prosaic style as in the document “on faith”.

It would perhaps sound naive to consider the very crude description of sexuality in the treatise as worthy of a physician. The fact is that, between the description of sexual intercourse in *On Virginity*³⁶ and the negative definition of the generation of the Logos by the Father in both the synodal of Ancyra and Basil's writing on faith, we can find verbal similarities.

When Document 2 (“Basil's letter”) speaks of the Son's eternal generation οὐκ ἐκ σπέρματος καὶ ἡδονῆς (18, 1, l. 7-8, SC 563, p. 134), we could compare it with the synodal, μὴ σπερματικῶς (4, 1, l. 3, SC 563, p. 72) and ἄνευ σποράς καὶ ἡδονῆς (9, 2 l. 9-10, p. 92).

When Document 2 speaks of ἄνευ σποράς (18, 5 l. 25-26, p. 134), we could compare it with the synodal, οὐ γὰρ ἐκ σποράς καὶ συνδυασμοῦ (9, 1, l. 5, p. 90).

And when Document 2 speaks of ἄνευ ἀπορροῖας καὶ πάθους (18, 5, l. 26-27 p. 134), we could compare it with the synodal, ἐκβαλλομένου τοῦ κατὰ τὸ πάθος ἢ ἀπορροήν (4, 1, l. 1-2, p. 72) and ἄνευ ἀπορροίας καὶ πάθους (6, 6, l. 31, p. 82 and 9, 2, l. 9, p. 92).

This means that, either, Basil's “writing on faith” borrowed much from the synodal, or, that Basil was the primary author of the synodal. The alternative is not exclusive. In my opinion, Basil was the primary author of the synodal, and borrowed from it for his own theological treatise.³⁷

One could object that the lexical similarities between the synodal and the “writing on faith” are merely a coincidence. As a matter of fact, negating any intervention of πάθος in the generation of the divine Son is quite trivial.

35 PG 30, col. 669-809, wrongly edited among Basil of Caesarea's works, ascribed to Basil by F. Cavallera, “Le *De Virginitate* de Basile d'Ancyre”, *RHE* 6 (1905), pp. 5-14. See A. Burgsmüller, *Die Askeseschrift des Pseudo-Basilios. Untersuchungen zum Brief “Über die wahre Reinheit in der Jungfräulichkeit”* (STAC 28), Tübingen 2005, summing up Cavallera and Steenson's comparisons between the treatise and the synodal letter of Ancyra, but discarding the attribution to Basil of Ancyra. I cannot engage here in a discussion on the authorship of *On Virginity*.

36 At the beginning of the treatise *On Virginity*, § 3, and once more in § 54, as an analogy for spiritual marriage.

37 MD repeatedly recognizes “parallels of Basil's synodal letter and subscription” to the Dated Creed (Document 1) in the letter of summer 359 (Document 2): “It echoes Basil's earlier writings (the Ancyran synodal letter and his subscription to the Dated Creed) because George incorporates Basil's phraseology and ideas” (MD, “The Literary Corpus ...”, p. 163). My hypothesis that Basil is the author of the 359 document provides a simpler reason for the similarities between the two documents.

The Dated Creed itself specifies that the Son was generated “without passion” (ἀπαθῶς³⁸). However, the words σπορά, σπέρμα and ἡδονή are unusual in this context. For example, the words are not used neither in Eusebius of Caesarea’s *Against Marcellus, Ecclesiastical Theology* and unfinished *Theophany*, nor in the symbols of faith transmitted by Athanasius in his *On the Synods*, nor by Athanasius himself, who confronts the problem of the impassibility of the generating Father in *On the Synods*, 41, 7 and 51, 7.

Now, in Basil’s treatise *On Virginity*, we can read the same words σπορά, σπέρματα and ἡδονή to describe human generation:

... εἰς τὴν τοῦ παρόντος βίου σπορὰν διὰ τῆς τῶν γάμων ἡδονῆς τὰ σπέρματα τῆς ἀνθρωπότητος κατεβάλετο.³⁹

For the spreading of the present life, humanity’s seeds are thrown by way of conjugal pleasure.

Curiously, a phrase from Document 2, ἡ πρὸς ἄλληλα σχέσις (20, 1, l. 1, SC 563 p. 140) also appears in the treatise *On Virginity*, referring to sexual intercourse.⁴⁰ In Document 2, it has nothing to do with sexual intercourse but refers to the classic “argument on the correlatives”, proving that the Father and the Son are co-eternal, inasmuch as “Father” implies the existence of a son. This phrase is of crucial importance for the posterity of Trinitarian theology.⁴¹

Last but not least, I will propose stylistic evidence that the author of the treatise *On Virginity* is also the author of Document 2 and the primary author of Document 1. A careful reader may notice a stylistic tic present in all three documents, the habit of frequently inserting an “I say” (φημί) in the middle of excessively long sentences.

38 In *On Synods*, 8, 4, l. 26, SC 563, p. 198. See also, for example, Eusebius of Caesarea, *Against Marcellus*, 1, 4, 10 and 1, 4, 21; *Ecclesiastical Theology*, 1, 12, 8. Eusebius also uses the word ἀπόρροια (in *Ecclesiastical Theology*, 1, 12, 9).

39 Basil of Ancyra, *On Virginity*, 54, PG 30, 776 D 6-777 A 2.

40 See for example, § 4, 677, B 1-2: ἡ τῶν ἀρρένων τε καὶ θηλειῶν σωμάτων πρὸς ἄλληλα σχέσις, or § 45, 760 A 4: [τὸ θῆλυ σῶμα καὶ τὸ τοῦ ἀρρενος] τὴν φυσικὴν ἔχοντα πρὸς ἄλληλα σχέσιν.

41 On the phrase ἡ πρὸς ἄλληλα σχέσις, see G. Maspero, “Unità e relazione: la *schesis* nella doctrina trinitaria di Gregorio di Nissa,” *Path* 11 (2012), pp. 301-326, with occurrences in Euclid, Galen, Alexander of Aphrodisia and Clement of Alexandria. See also my forthcoming article on “Basile de Césarée est-il l’introducteur du concept de relation en théologie trinitaire?,” *Revue d’études augustinienes et patristiques* 63 (2017).

The stylistic tic is present in the treatise *On Virginity*. A quick investigation with an electronic search engine through the whole volume 30 of *Patrologia graeca*, including texts by Basil of Caesarea, our text by Basil of Ancyra and *spuria*, reveals 14 occurrences of the word $\varphi\eta\mu\acute{\iota}$, all in Basil of Ancyra's treatise.⁴²

The same inserted $\varphi\eta\mu\acute{\iota}$ is present both in Document 1 (synodal) (3, 5; 3, 7; 6, 6) and in Document 2 (12, 2; 12, 6; 14, 6)—quite a high frequency for two rather short documents. In comparison, it is absolutely absent in Eusebius of Caesarea's theological treatises (*Evangelical Demonstration*, *Against Marcellus*, *Ecclesiastical Theology*, *Theophany*) or in Athanasius' *On the Synods*, similar in genre and style with our Documents.⁴³ Therefore, it seems to be a stylistic signature of the author of *On Virginity*, and identifies him as the author of both the synodal of Ancyra and the Homoiousian response to the Dated Creed.

We could add a variant of the inserted $\varphi\eta\mu\acute{\iota}$: $\pi\acute{\alpha}\lambda\iota\nu\ \dot{\epsilon}\rho\omega$ is present once in the synodal (20, 4), once in Document 2 (9, 7), and thrice in *On Virginity*, to the exclusion of the rest of PG 30.

Compared Prosopography: Who is the Leader?

Thus far, I think I have confirmed that Basil is the author of what A. Martin and I, inspired by Athanasius, decided to call "Treatise on Faith". This authorship is an obstacle to MD's inclusion of the document in "the Literary Corpus of George of Laodicea" and his correlative attempt to credit George with an important role in the months preceding the synod of Seleucia and in the first days of the synod, before Basil's arrival.

In his various articles,⁴⁴ MD characterizes George as a leading Oriental bishop, who, at the beginning of his career, was among the so-called Eusebians. As an Alexandrian priest ordained by Alexander, he may have personally known Arius; he supported Arius, along with Eusebius of Nicomedia and

42 In sections 18 to 23, taken at random, we have four occurrences (§ 18, col. 708 B 1.7; § 21, 713 A 1; 713 B 9).

43 Epiphanius is also keen on using $\varphi\eta\mu\acute{\iota}$, but for a different, and more conventional, purpose: not as a pause in a too long sentence, but as introducing an elucidation: "that is to say ..." See the very first sentence of the section on Semi-Arians: $\tau\acute{\omega}\nu\ \mu\epsilon\tau'\alpha\upsilon\tau\acute{\omicron}\nu$, $\Phi\omicron\tau\epsilon\iota\nu\acute{\omicron}\nu$ $\tau\epsilon$, $\varphi\eta\mu\acute{\iota}$, $\acute{\alpha}\lambda\lambda\acute{\alpha}\ \kappa\alpha\iota\ \text{Μαρκέλλου}$ (*Panarion*, 73, 1, 1, l. 2, GCS, p. 267, where I respect the manuscript's reading as opposed to Holl's undue correction: $\Phi\omicron\tau\epsilon\iota\nu\acute{\omicron}\nu\ \delta\acute{\epsilon}\ \varphi\eta\mu\iota$, $\acute{\alpha}\lambda\lambda\acute{\alpha}\ \kappa\alpha\iota\ \dots$): "those who followed him, that is to say, both Photinus and Marcellus".

44 Namely, "The Death of George of Laodicea," *JTS* NS 60 (2009), pp. 181-190, and "George of Laodicea: A Historical Reassessment," *JEH* 62 (2011), pp. 667-692. See also A. Martin and X. Morales, note 4, in Athanase d'Alexandrie, *Lettre sur les synodes* (SC 563), pp. 232-233.

the other leading Oriental bishops, because he saw Arius as representative of the mainstream Oriental theology insisting on a strict distinction between the three “hypostases” of the Father, the Son and the Spirit, against all threat of Sabellianism.

This theological concern is clear in the two fragments transmitted by Athanasius, where George tries to reconcile Arius and his bishop Alexander, while evidently preferring Arius’ version of the sonship of the Logos.

Of course, it is dangerous to comment on so little material, moreover as it was polemically selected by Athanasius. Notwithstanding, it shows a theologian subscribing to Arius’ slogans, presenting the Son as a creature, but without the qualifications by which Arius concedes a certain singularity to the Logos. Where Arius had written that the Logos was “a creature but not as one of the creatures,”⁴⁵ George writes “the Son is from God as also everything is from God.”⁴⁶ Moreover, in his supposedly conciliatory letter to Alexander,⁴⁷ George parallels without any qualification the genetic relationship between God (the Father) and the Son of God, with the genetic relationship between two men (Amos and his son Isaiah), an argument that must have scandalized Alexander, insistent on the fact that divine generation is *not* to be compared with human generation.

Therefore, in the 320s, George seems to have been a rather unqualified supporter of Arius. However, as the other Eusebians, he must have evolved towards a more qualified position, rejecting at the same time Arius’ radicalism and the Creed of the synod of Nicaea, and sharing the general concern for having

45 Arius and his followers, *Letter to Alexander of Alexandria*, in Athanasius, *On the Synods*, 16, 2, l. 16, SC 563, p. 228.

46 George of Laodicea, *Letter to Alexander of Alexandria*, in Athanasius, *On the Synods*, 17, 6, l. 44-45, p. 234.

47 Athanasius of Alexandria, *On the Synods*, 17, 5-6. Because of my theological analysis of George’s position, I cannot agree with MD’s presentation of a conciliatory George, “neither a vehement partisan of Arius nor an implacable enemy of Alexander,” in “George of Laodicea: A Historical Reassessment,” *JEH* 62 (2011), pp. 667-692, here p. 672. As MD himself concludes, Alexander deposed George because George would maintain communion with Arius’ followers (p. 673, according to Athanasius, *On the Synods*, 17, 7, SC 563, p. 234, l. 49 and *Apology on his Flight*, 26, 5, *Athanasius Werke*, Bd. 11, Lief. 3, p. 86, l. 4-6; Cf. Encyclical letter of the Egyptian bishops in favour of Athanasius (338), in Athanasius, *Second Apology or Apology Against the Arians*, 8, 3, *Athanasius Werke*, Bd. 11, Lief. 3, p. 94, l. 9-10 and synodal letter of Serdica, *ibidem*, 47, 3, p. 123, l. 10), and Eustathius of Antioch, a leader among the bishops in favour of the creed of Nicaea, expelled him from his city.

Marcellus of Ancyra, his disciple Photinus of Sirmium and others, condemned for Sabellianism in the controversies during the 330s and the 340s.

"A leading figure among the Eusebians"⁴⁸ during the 330s, indeed, if "leading figure" means one of whose names stand out in the documentation, against the rest of the anonymous οἱ περὶ Εὐσέβιον, but not one of the Top Ten—not an influential and powerful figure.

In spite of no concrete evidence for George's presence at the synod of Tyre (335) or at the following synod of Jerusalem (335),⁴⁹ one can infer from a mention of George in the encyclical letter of the Egyptian bishops in favour of Athanasius (338), that he was among the "Eusebians" who condemned Athanasius at Tyre.⁵⁰ However, he was not a prominent figure, as he was not chosen to be a member of the commission of bishops sent by the synod of Tyre to the Mareotis.⁵¹

George was present at the synod of Antioch (winter 338-339),⁵² but he was not a prominent figure either, as Pope Julius did not mention his name among the main addressees of his letter to the synod.⁵³

George did take part in the synod of Antioch in 341, although Sozomen mentions him last of his list of bishops who attended the meeting.⁵⁴ The fact that he did not "emerge as one of their leaders at the Council of Antioch in 341," as MD thinks,⁵⁵ is confirmed by the fact that he was not at the meeting in

48 MD, "The Literary Corpus ...," p. 151.

49 As MD acknowledges in "George of Laodicea: A Reassessment", pp. 675-679.

50 In Athanasius, *Second Apology* or *Apology Against the Arians*, 8, 3, *Athanasius Werke*, Bd. 11, Lief. 3, p. 94, l. 9-10. This is George's first documented mention as bishop of Laodicea. The letter mentions Eusebius of Caesarea and George of Laodicea as examples of bishops condemning Athanasius although they themselves were under accusation, as it had mentioned Eusebius of Nicomedia and Theognis of Nicea, as examples of bishops deposing Athanasius when they themselves had been deposed (at the synod of Nicaea).

51 See the list of members in Athanasius, *Second Apology* or *Apology Against the Arians*, 13, 2, *Athanasius Werke*, Bd. 11, Lief. 3, p. 97, l. 27-29.

52 Socrates, *EH*, 11, 19, 1, probably learnt from George's lost *Encomium* for Eusebius of Emesa that George was present at the synod where Eusebius was proposed for the see of Alexandria. However, Socrates wrongly places this event in the synod of 341.

53 Letter of Julius to the synod of Antioch, in Athanasius, *Second Apology* or *Apology Against the Arians*, 21, 1, *Athanasius Werke*, Bd. 11, Lief. 3, p. 102, l. 13-15.

54 Sozomen, *EH*, III, V, 10.

55 MD, "George of Laodicea: A Reassessment," p. 679. However, MD acknowledges that "George was not at this point [in 341] among the upper echelons of the Eusebian leadership" (p. 679).

Philippopolis in 343 and received the last place in Sozomen's list of Oriental bishops deposed by the Occidental synod of Serdica.⁵⁶

During the 350s, George is definitely not a prominent character. He did not attend the synods at Sirmium in 351 and in 357, nor the preparatory meetings of 358 and 359 held in the same place, and we finally find him with the (Homoiousian) majority at Seleucia, where the leading characters were apparently Silvanus of Tarsus and Eleusios of Cyzicus, who successively proposed to subscribe to the Second Formula of Antioch (341)—not to speak of Basil of Ancyra, who arrived late at the synod.⁵⁷

After all, George was now an old man, and, according to MD's hypothesis, which seems plausible, he met his death just after the synod of Seleucia.

In addition to a possible decline in his strength, George might have been aware of his minor weight in the ecclesiastical and theological sphere at the end of the 350s. Therefore, when the threat of Anomoianism emerged, and considering that the Homoian formula of the Sirmian synod of 357 was not able to stop it, he did not face the danger in person, either by writing a refutation against Aetius, or summoning a synod in his own city. In any case, a synod in Laodicea would have been very difficult to organize, because Laodicea was a suffragan see to Antioch (capital city of the Diocese of *Oriens*), where bishop Eudoxius, as we shall see, was the problem.

So George preferred to hand over the problem to others and wrote to Makedonios of Constantinople, Basil of Ancyra, Kekropios of Nicomedia and Eugenios of Nicaea,⁵⁸ probably because they were not linked to Eudoxius by any administrative dependency, and also because of their supposed influence on the Emperor. Constantinople was the capital city of the Empire, Nicomedia was a regular imperial residence, and Nicaea was so to say in the suburbs of Constantinople. Their bishops could have got the agreement of the Emperor. And Basil the Galatian, though more remote from the Capital, was known by the Emperor, as witnessed by his role in the synod of 351, where he was chosen for an official disputation against Photinus, organized by the Emperor himself.⁵⁹

56 Sozomen, *EH*, III, XII, 2 (George absent) and 3 (George condemned). Nevertheless, George is mentioned as one of the "present leaders" of the Eusebians in the synodal letter of Serdica (in Athanasius, *Second Apology*, 46, 1 and 47, 3).

57 Socrates, *EH*, II, XXXIX-LX.

58 Addressees of George's letter (in Sozomen, *EH*, IV, XIII, 2). I don't understand why Sozomen's transcription should be "presumably just a fragment" (MD, "The Literary Corpus ...," p. 153).

59 Socrates, *EH*, II, xxx, 44-45.

Nevertheless, the relationship between George's letter and the synod of Ancyra is difficult to understand. Sozomen is not clear at all,⁶⁰ and George's letter is ambiguous: εἰς ταὐτὸν γενόμενοι ὅσους καὶ γενέσθαι ἐγγωρεῖ⁶¹ can mean either that the addressees *should* "gather, as many as you can," or that the addressees are *already* "gathered, as many as possible." However, the letter does not appear to be addressed to an already gathered synod, but to urge its addressees to gather as many bishops as possible in such a synod, inasmuch as, according to the subscriptions at the end of the synodal letter of Ancyra, only one of George's addressees, Basil, took part in the gathering.

The four addressees did not call a synod. They decided to take advantage of an already scheduled local gathering of bishops for the dedication of a new church in Ancyra, making Basil the leader of this new theological alliance against Aetius and Eunomius, as he had had the opportunity to show his theological and political skills during the 350s.

George's letter is certainly evidence for "the pivotal role he played in the Homoiousian alliance in the late 350s."⁶² Indeed, George's letter was not the only warning received by Basil and his friends, as the synodal letter states: "having read George's letter [...] and having considered the testimonies of those witnessing before us."⁶³ However, it was considered by the bishops at Ancyra as an authoritative document worthy to be appended to their synodal letter. And although the synod did not gather "as many" bishops as George had wanted, it sent a synodal letter to the other Oriental bishops asking for subscriptions against Aetius' rehabilitation, as prompted by George—adding a thorough theological explanation.

However, was George's motivation only a theological one?

Of course, George's theological conscience may have been shaken by Aetius' doctrine. In fact, as mentioned by MD, Gregory of Nyssa tells us that Athanasius of Ancyra "showed a letter by George of Laodicea as witnessing most of what he reported" to Gregory concerning Aetius.⁶⁴ MD considers this letter as "a letter on the life and character of Aetius which no longer survives,"⁶⁵

60 Sozomen, *EH*, IV, xiii, 1.

61 Sozomen, *EH*, IV, XIII, 2, SC 418, p. 245.

62 MD, "The Literary Corpus ...," p. 151.

63 Synodal letter of Ancyra in *Panarion*, 73, 2, 8, l. 42-46, SC 563, pp. 66-68. The synodal is also ambiguous, and it is difficult to deduce from *Panarion*, 73, 2, 8-9, whether George's letter prompted the gathering or was addressed to the synod already gathered.

64 Gregory of Nyssa, *Against Eunomius*, I, vi, 37, SC 521, p. 140, l. 10-11 : εἰς μαρτυρίαν τῶν πολλῶν τοῦ λόγου Γεωργίου τοῦ ἐκ Λαοδικείας ἐπιστολὴν προδεικνύντος.

65 MD, "The Literary Corpus ...," p. 154.

and believes that Gregory drew his information on Aetius from that letter. Actually, Gregory says he draws his information from Athanasius himself, and that Athanasius would show George's letter to give authority to his own words. If we apply Occam's razor, the letter in question could be George's letter to the bishops in Ancyra, transmitted by Sozomen, and not a hypothetical lengthier lost document.

Now, George's letter to Makedonios and others does not include any theological statement. A more personal question might have been at stake. Aetius was becoming dangerous because Eudoxius was receiving him, the same Eudoxius that Constantius had appointed to the Antiochene see in 357. Now, George had a long history with Antioch. Athanasius tells us that, during the conflict between Arius and Alexander, George "resided in Antioch".⁶⁶ He was deposed by Eustathius of Antioch,⁶⁷ but after Eustathius' deposition,⁶⁸ and Eusebius of Caesarea's refusal to occupy the see,⁶⁹ Constantine had nominated him as a plausible candidate. However, the see had escaped him⁷⁰ and George was given the Laodicean see (Laodicea of Syria, not to be confused with Laodicea of Lydia); and now, Eudoxius was appointed to what George would have considered to be *his* see.⁷¹ George's repeated failure to be elected in Antioch confirms his minor status among the Oriental prelates and possibly hurt his sense of pride. In appealing to Makedonios, George was taking his revenge against Eudoxius and trying to gain at last a more prominent status.

Contrasting with MD's attempt to present George as the leader of the Homoiousians, we saw that, for Athanasius and Epiphanius, the leader of the Homoiousians was Basil, not only because he hosted the Ancyran synod of 358 but also because:

66 Athanasius, *On the Synods*, 17, 5, l. 31, SC 563, p. 232.

67 Athanasius, *History of the Arians*, 4, *Athanasius Werke*, Bd. 11, Lief. 5, p. 185.

68 The date of the synod of Antioch that deposed Eustathius is controversial, with propositions from 326 to 330. See S. Cartwright, "Eustathius of Antioch in Modern Research," *Vox Patrum* 33 (2013), pp. 465-485, particularly p. 466 note 5 and p. 478.

69 Constantine, *Letter to Eusebius*, in Eusebius of Caesarea, *Constantine's Life*, III, 61, 2, SC 559, p. 442.

70 Constantine, *Letter to the bishops*, in Eusebius of Caesarea, *Constantine's Life*, III, 62, 2, l. 27-28, SC 559, p. 446, proposed Euphronios of Caesarea of Cappadocia, priest, and "George of Arethusa, also priest, ordained by Alexander in Alexandria," usually identified with George of Laodicea. The bishops elected Paulinus of Tyrus.

71 Sozomen, *EH*, IV, xii, 4, SC 418, p. 240, states that Eudoxius took possession of Antioch "without the agreement of George of Laodicea nor of Marc of Arethusa, who were by that time the most prominent bishops of Syria".

After the deposition of Marcellus of Ancyra as Sabellian in 336, *he* was chosen for the Ancyran see,⁷² which means that he was considered as theologically (and probably politically) suitable to counter Marcellus' influence in Ancyra.

Basil gradually became a prominent figure during the 350s. Already in 351, he attended the synod of Sirmium against Photinus, Marcellus' epigone. Apparently, George did not.⁷³ Moreover, he was a protagonist in this condemnation of Photinus, as already mentioned. Eventually, the concern for Marcellus and Photinus' doctrine explicitly appears in the synodal letter of Ancyra (*Panarion*, 73, 5, 2) and moreover in Basil's treatise on faith of 359 (*Panarion*, 73, 12, 2-8).

Basil attended the synod of Sirmium in 357. George did not.⁷⁴

He was the host of the synod of Ancyra and as such the first to sign the synodal letter. He led the delegation of the Ancyran synod to the Emperor at Sirmium.⁷⁵

He represented the Homoiousian party during the meeting with Ursacius and Valens at Sirmium in summer 358⁷⁶ and again in May 359,⁷⁷ signing the "Dated Creed". And if he is the author of Epiphanius' Document 2, MD's hypothesis of Basil betraying the Homoiousian cause by accepting the Dated Creed, and of George trying to reverse the effects of this betrayal by restating the Homoiousian position in Document 2,⁷⁸ cannot stand.

He led the delegation of the synod of Seleucia to Constantinople in December 359, where he was finally defeated by Acacius.⁷⁹

72 Socrates, *EH*, I, xxxvi, 8, SC 477, p. 250, l. 31-32.

73 Socrates is a bit confused about this synod and that of 357, but see the list of bishops in *EH*, II, xxix, 2-3 with note 1, SC 493, p. 134.

74 List of bishops in Hilary of Poitiers, *Collectanea antiariana parisina, series B*, VII, 9, CSEL 65, p. 170.

75 Sozomen, *EH*, IV, XIII, 5.

76 Sozomen, *EH*, IV, xv, 1.

77 Sozomen, *EH*, IV, xvi, 19. Sozomen, in this chapter, gives Basil an important role in the convocation of the general synod that became the twin synods of Ariminum and Seleucia. He appears as Constantius' personal adviser on the matter.

78 MD, "George of Laodicea: A Reassessment," pp. 688-689 and "The Literary Corpus ...," pp. 163-164 where MD justifies "George's use of Basil [s theological formulations in the synodal letter] in the letter" by his desire to "emphasize that Basil had not abandoned Homoiousianism for some form of Heteroousian-leaning Homoianism by signing the Dated Creed."

79 Theodoret, *EH*, II, xxviii, 4.

He was among the deposed and exiled at the synod of January 360, with Makedonios of Constantinople, Eleusios of Cyzicus, and five others.⁸⁰ He was sent to Illyria.⁸¹

The actual death of George of Laodicea⁸² made him the only leader of the group, if he was not already.

He was the only named addressee of Athanasius' project of alliance in the third part of his *Letter on the Synods*.

He was the first to sign the request sent to the Emperor Jovianus at the end of September 363,⁸³ but did not attend the synod in November 363 at Antioch, where Meletius became the new leader of the so-called Neo-Nicaean party.

Last but not least, if Epiphanius' Document 2 is really Basil's treatise on faith, he was one of the main sources of the Trinitarian theology of Basil of Caesarea, as MD himself has argued⁸⁴ and I have tried to prove in a forthcoming article,⁸⁵ by using the philosophical category of relation to counter Aetius' and Eunomius' affirmation that "ungenerated" and "generate" refer to (different and differing) substances.

80 Socrates, *EH*, II, xlii, 5.

81 Philostorgius, *EH*, V, i, 1, SC 564, p. 340, l. 7.

82 As demonstrated by MD, "The Death of George of Laodicea," whose reasoning is convincing.

83 Socrates, *EH*, III, xxv, 3. This is the last trace we have of Basil of Ancyra.

84 MD, *Basil of Caesarea's Anti-Eunomian Theory of Names. Christian Theology and Late-Antique Philosophy in the Fourth Century Trinitarian Controversy* (vcs 103), Leiden 2010, for example, p. 219. Of course, MD does not speak of Basil of Ancyra but more prudently of "the homoiousian texts". See also "The Influence of Athanasius and the Homoiousians on Basil of Caesarea's Decentralization of 'Unbegotten,'" *J ECS* 19 (2011), pp. 197-223.

85 "Basile de Césarée est-il l'introducteur du concept de relation en théologie trinitaire?", *Revue d'études augustinienes et patristiques* 63 (2017). Where I point at the influence of Basil of Ancyra, *On Faith*, 19, 3-5, SC 563, p. 138 on Basil of Caesarea, *Against Eunomius*, I, 5, l. 67-71, SC 299, p. 176.