

Arius: The Trinity is Separate Gods

The concept of the Trinity has remained problematic for Christian theology. This debate was especially strong in the decades leading up to Constantine's reign. Arius took the position that the three gods of the Trinity are separate gods. Arius would read John's Gospel this way "In the beginning was the Logos. And the Logos was with God [the Father]. And the Logos was a God. This same God was in the beginning with God [the Father]." Such a view sees three Heavenly hierarchies with three ranks in each for a total of nine. Each member of the Trinity is reflected in the hierarchy so that the highest, composed of Seraphim, Cherubim, and Thrones reflect the Father, while Kyriotetes, Dynamis, and Exusiai (aka Elohim) reflect the Son (Logos), and Archai, Archangeloi, and Angeloi reflect the Holy Spirit. This would then have been in harmony with St. Paul's School of Athens originally run by [Dionysius](#) the Aeropagite. Each successive leader retained his title leading to the [pseudo-Dionysian](#) confusion today.

Below are three internet sources with short biographies of Arius.

I. <http://arian-catholic.org/arian/arius.html>: "Arius (256 - 336 AD) was a Libyan theologian and of Berber descent. His father's name is given as Ammonius. He was educated in the theological school of Antioch (now Antakya) under the distinguished Greek scholar, Presbyter and non-trinitarian Lucian of Antioch. He was regarded as the founder of Arianism, although its concept was by no means new, which some Christian sects regard as a heresy and was a key issue in the early Church, leading to the formation of the heretical Nicene Creed.

At the turn of the fourth century Arius was already known to hold strong views on theology and was a close associate of Lucian and Meletius (an Egyptian schismatic against Peter I), however following reconciliation in AD 306 Arius was ordained as a Deacon by Peter I (Patriarch of Alexandria: AD 300 - 311). Further disputes led the Bishop (Peter I) to excommunicate Arius, who, however, gained the friendship of Achillas, Peter's successor. Arius was re-instated and then ordained by Achillas (Patriarch of Alexandria 312 - 313) as the Presbyter of the district of Baucalis in Alexandria in AD 313, but when Achillas died that same year Arius was denied the Patriarchate of Alexandria (to which he aspired) by Alexander I of Alexandria (a Sebellianist heretic).

Arius's most important work was "Thalia" (The Banquet, 323), a work comprising both prose and poetry, in which he defended his beliefs. The document was destroyed by the Trinitarians and is no longer extant, and knowledge of most of Arius's writings comes only from the works of his critics, who, in condemning him, revealed much information.

Arius continued to campaign against Trinitarianism. He was excommunicated locally in 321 AD. He was declared orthodox in Asia Minor, where he had fled (323), but he was anathematized by the Council of Nicaea (324) and banished by the Roman Emperor Constantine I (325). But in the reaction after Nicaea, where Arius gained support from Clergy across all Europe especially in the east and at one point Arians outnumbered the Trinitarians, he came into imperial favor. The emperor had ordered the Athanasians at Alexandria to receive him at communion when he suddenly died under suspicious circumstances

immediately after having an audience with the Emperor at the imperial palace. Arians believed that Arius had been poisoned.

Arius's legacy however has lived on in spite of its condemnation by the Council of Constantinople (381). Arianism was reinstated by Constantine I who was Baptized as an Arian Christian on his deathbed, and was supported by his son Constantius II who even raised St Felix II as the Arian bishop of Rome. The Arian controversy itself lasted for over 250 years until it was driven underground. Throughout the dark and middle ages Trinitarians have brutally attempted to stamp-out Arianism, even the Spanish Inquisition could not quell Arius's beliefs. As Roman Catholicism began to decline in central Europe, Arianism rose again, even in the Church of England! Today Arianism has returned to the fore with the Arian-Catholic Church lead by the Primus Inter Pares (First Among Equals): Rev Dr Brian B. Michael-John Mackenzie-Hanson.

Arius was recognized as a Saint and Martyr by the Arian Catholic Church on 16th June 2006, which has become his memorial day.

Arius officially is not a Heretic! An interesting point to note is that because Arius was officially re-instated into the Full Communion of the church before he died in 336 AD, by the Emperor of Rome, Constantine I, he officially is NOT excommunicated and therefore NOT a heretic according to the Roman Catholic church!

Arianism remained strong in Europe in spite of Roman aggression for a further 250 years and has continued to survive in the sidelines waiting for the time when Arianism can become strong again."

II. From www.tecmalta.org/tft340.htm in the article entitled **Arius and the Deity of Christ we read**

"Arius was a cultured and ascetic presbyter (256-336 AD), a popular preacher from Libya. He was tall, handsome, earnestly religious, and eloquent in his arguments. He gave the impression of being arrogant.

He lived at a time when the Eastern Church was divided because of the Christological dispute which he was instrumental in starting. He taught that Christ is not divine, but created.

Arius was strongly opposed by his bishop Alexander, who was bishop of Alexandria from 313 AD. Alexander insisted that the Son was fully and truly God, in as absolute a sense as the Father was. The problem for Alexander was to show that this (orthodox) truth did not lead to a belief in two Gods, as Arius maintained that it did.

Alexander assembled a council of Egyptian bishops in 320 which deposed Arius for heresy. Arius, however, was not ready to give up without a fight, and went to Palestine, canvassing support from other Eastern bishops.

Arius wrote letters to Lucian's ex-students who were now presbyters or bishops, addressing them as "Dear fellow-pupils of Lucian." Lucian's views of Christ seem to have been similar to Arius's.

All came to a head and the Emperor, to safeguard the unity of the empire and the church, convened a general council at Nicea, which declared the Son to be equal with the Father and issued the Creed saying that Christ is "God from God, true God from true God, begotten not created, of the same essence as the Father...."

All but two of Arius's supporters - Secundus of Ptolemais and Theonas of Marmarica - gave in and signed the Creed. Arius still refused. These three were sent into exile by Constantine the emperor. They were anathemized and condemned. To enforce the decisions of the Council, Constantine demanded, with the death penalty for disobedience, the burning of all books composed by Arius and deposed Eusebius of Nicomedia and another bishop who had been active in their support of Arius.

The dispute, though, continued throughout the fourth and fifth century.

Defining the heresy named after him.

His teaching was that the Father alone is God. The Logos or Son, Arius maintained, was a created being - formed out of nothing by the Father before the universe was made. He therefore said that there was a time when the Son had not existed.

According to Arius, the Son was the first and greatest of all that God had created; He was closer to God than all others, and the rest of creation related to God through the Son (for instance, God had created everything else through Christ).

By developing this arch-heresy, Arius thought he was defending the fundamental truth that there is only one God - monotheism. A belief in the full deity of Christ, he supposed, would mean the Father and Son were two separate Gods, which contradicted the many statements of the Bible about God's oneness.

Arius was also unhappy with Origen's idea that there could be 'degrees' or 'grades' of divinity, with the Son being slightly less divine than the Father (this became known after the Nicene Council as semi-Arianism).

Arius argued that since the Father is clearly God, it follows that the Son could not be God - so He must be a created being."

III. From Wikipedia we read, "Arius (AD 250 or 256 – 336) was a Christian presbyter in Alexandria, Egypt. His teachings about the nature of the Godhead, which emphasized the Father's Divinity over the Son, and his opposition to the Athanasian or Trinitarian Christology, made him a controversial figure in the First Council of Nicea, convened by Roman Emperor Constantine in AD 325. After Emperor Constantine legalized and formalized the Christianity of the time in the Roman Empire, the newly recognized Catholic Church sought to unify and clarify its theology. Trinitarian partisans, including Athanasius, used Arius and Arianism as epithets to describe those who disagreed with their doctrine of co-equal Trinitarianism, a Christology representing God the Father and Son (Jesus of Nazareth) as "of one essence" (consubstantial) and coeternal.

Although virtually all positive writings on Arius' theology have been suppressed or destroyed, negative writings describe Arius' theology as one in which there was a time before the Son of God, where only God the Father existed. Despite concerted opposition, 'Arian', or nontrinitarian Christian churches persisted throughout Europe and North Africa, in various Gothic and Germanic kingdoms, until suppressed by military conquest or voluntary royal conversion between the fifth and seventh centuries.

Although "Arianism" suggests that Arius was the originator of the teaching that bears his name, the debate over the Son's precise relationship to the Father did not begin with him. This subject had been discussed for decades before his advent; Arius merely intensified the controversy and carried it to a Church-wide audience, where other "Arians" such as Eusebius of Nicomedia would prove much more influential in the long run. Eusebius of Nicomedia should not be confused with Eusebius of Caesarea (Bishop of Caesarea of Palestine), a renowned church father, a church historian and eulogistic biographer of Roman Emperor Constantine. Eusebius of Caesarea is possibly one of the drafters of the Nicean creed. In fact, some later "Arians" disavowed that moniker, claiming not to have been familiar with the man or his specific teachings.[3] However, because the conflict between Arius and his foes brought the issue to the theological forefront, the doctrine he proclaimed—though not originated by him—is generally labeled as "his".." <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arius>

It is interesting to note that Arian Germanics, under Visigoth King Alaric finally conquered Rome in 410 AD but did nothing to unseat the Pope. Later, another Arian Germanic tribe, the Vandals, who had migrated all the way to Carthage, took Rome in 455 AD under King Gaiseric. In this time, all military parties acted with a brutality that lacked in Christian charity and compassion.