THE STUDENT'S COMPANION TO THE

THEOLOGIANS

EDITED BY

Ian S. Markham

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The Student's Companion to the Theologians

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Preface

From the outside, theology looks difficult. How exactly do we reflect on ultimate questions? How can we have any confidence that our claims are true? These are obvious and legitimate questions. The temptation is to decide that these questions are impossible to answer and dismiss the entire subject area.

This is a temptation that is important to resist. From the outside the talk of space being curved sounds bizarre, but in Einstein's world the sun's gravity really does create a geometry of spheres. Naturally, it takes some time to understand the discourse. To start with it will sound odd and, in the case of Einstein, there is some complicated mathematics that one will need to grasp. However, if one does this work and gets inside a world, then it becomes intelligible.

This *Companion* is an introduction to the remarkable world of theology and theologians. You are being invited to 'understand'—to step inside—and thereby start to appreciate a discourse that those within certainly appreciate is difficult. These articles are intended to provide a way in to the connections, links, and influences that create a distinctive approach to the Christian faith. This is a book dedicated to Christian theology, although there are entries describing theologians who have been influenced by other faith traditions. It explores a world where the disclosure of God in Jesus is in some way (and as you will discover the ways are very various) a revelation to humanity about the nature of God.

Theology is not just about doctrine. Theology emerges out of life and story. So in every case, we touch on the factors in a person's life that shapes that theology. For some forms of theology (black and feminist), the experience shapes the theology in very distinctive ways.

Welcome to this world. Please step inside and learn to appreciate the challenging world of theology.

I. Purpose of This Book

The primary purpose of this reference work is to introduce the remarkable world of theology to a thoughtful interested reader. However, the approach and selection have been shaped by a particular audience in mind. This audience is the student who is taking introductory classes in theology.

As every professor knows, one never moves beyond the basics unless one can assume the basics. Depth in any discipline requires one to assume that students have learned certain key concepts and heard of certain key people. However, in a world where countless practical considerations make it difficult to insist that certain courses need to be taken in a particular order, professors find themselves constantly revisiting the basics.

The purpose of this substantial reference work is to free up the professor from this task. The professor can invite the student to read the substantial introductory articles on this or that theologian, and then assume a basic map of positions and views in the mind of the student. So the goal of this book is to provide students with accurate, informed, accessible articles on all the key people in our discipline. Articles are structured in a similar way: after a brief survey of the life, a description of the theology follows, culminating in a brief discussion of the significance of that theologian.

To help the students there is a glossary, which includes the terms that most often appear in the various articles. In addition, there is a timeline, thereby ensuring that students locate the theologian in the appropriate context of world events.

II. Selection

It is inevitable that selection is difficult. Who precisely one includes and excludes will be hotly contested. The criterion for inclusion is the introductory theology course—theologians that are included are the ones that are likely to be mentioned in such a course. Now, given the introductory theology course comes from a variety of different perspectives, this *Companion* has attempted to make sure that key people in the main approaches are included. So, for example, Martin Luther, James Packer, and C. S. Lewis are important for the evangelicals; Julian of Norwich, Rosemary Radford Ruether, and Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza are important for the feminists; Thomas Aquinas, Serge Laugier de Beaurecueil, and Richard John Neuhaus are important for the Roman Catholics; and Martin Luther King Jr. and James Cone are important for those approaching the discipline from the perspective of black theology.

Naturally, all these approaches are in conversation with the broad center of the Christian tradition. So, naturally, there are some theologians who are included simply because they have shaped the tradition in a major way—Aquinas, Augustine, Luther, and Calvin. The key theologians of the New Testament are there: Paul, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and the author of the Apocalypse of John. Some are included because they were a particular influence at a particular time—thus John Nelson Darby and the Left Behind theology or Reinhold Niebuhr and Christian Realism. Others are included because they represent a particular approach—Richard Swinburne takes an analytical philosophical approach and Keith Ward has produced a systematic theology which takes comparative theology seriously. Others are there because they represent a school—James Cone is the main representative of black theology and Rosemary Radford Reuther was the first to provide a feminist systematic theology.

The length of articles varies. Those in the "Early Centuries" and "Middle Ages" are longer than those in the "Enlightenment and Modern Period"; this is partly because modernity has had such a dramatic impact on the sheer variety of approaches that one needed more (and therefore shorter) articles for this period. Given that we are living in the modern period, it is especially important that students have a sense of trajectories that are currently emerging.

Inevitably there will be those who feel that this *Companion* needed to include this or that person—and a project of this nature could easily be twice the size. There are many important voices that are not included. Therefore, in certain key areas, there is a general description of a theological approach, which ensures that a range of theologians in that area are identified and described (e.g., black theology, liberal theology, and Vatican II).

III. Invitation to Participation

Theology is not a discipline that one observes from afar. Instead, it is one that every reader is invited to join. This is the hard work of making sense of what we learn in Christ about God and God's relations to the world. Each Christian is invited to engage with these writers and join the conversation. These theologians are very diverse—from evangelical to liberal and from Catholic to Protestant. As one agrees and disagrees, one arrives at a greater sense of what one believes. This process is the act of participation in the conversation.

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It was Rebecca Harkin—the commissioning editor of Wiley-Blackwell—who had the original vision. It is one of the delights of my life to work with Rebecca: she understands the worlds of the academy, church, and publishing perfectly. I am deeply grateful to her and her team at Wiley-Blackwell.

Naturally a project of this scope is very dependent on the contributors who worked hard on their articles to capture the heart of their subject accurately and thoughtfully. I am humbled by the willingness of some of the most interesting scholars in the academy today to find time to write for the *Companion*. I am confident their willingness will enhance the value of this reference work. An edited volume of this scope—with so many contributors with different styles—requires exceptional expertise at the copy-editing stage. I wish to thank Caroline Richards and Ben Shelton for their efforts in this area.

The project evolved over several years, so various colleagues were intimately involved. It started at Hartford Seminary, with Yvonne Bowen as the assistant; then Christy Lohr took it on. As I moved to Virginia Theological Seminary, it was Katie Glover who helped keep all the various projects in my office progressing. Finally, Leslie Steffensen agreed to make sure that the manuscript was delivered to the publisher on time. For her exceptional hard work and careful attention to detail, I am extremely grateful.

For this paperback edition, I am grateful to Elizabeth Locher for helping to make appropriate adjustments and changes to the text.

When it comes to theology, my 16-year-old son Luke remains my favorite conversation partner. He has a good aptitude for the technicalities of the subject. I appreciate his endless capacity to help me see the world differently.

Finally, my delightful wife Lesley helped out with the project in countless ways. I appreciate her interest in my work very much. She is, as ever, the best.

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Timeline

	Dates	Theologian	Event
ROMAN EMPIRE	*c.*35–*c.*110	Ignatius of Antioch	life of Jesus, 0–33
	*c.*85–*c.*160	Marcion	
	2nd century	Irenaeus of Lyons	
	*c.*155–*c.*225	Tertullian	Roman Empire begins to decline, 180
	*c.*185–254	Origen	
	*c.*256–336	Arius	
	*c.*295–373	Athanasius	Emp. Diocletian divides Rom. Emp. into two, 285
	*c.*306–73)	Ephrem the Syrian	Constantine grants toleration of Christians, 313
	*c.*329–*c.*524	Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nyssa & Gregory of Nazianzus	Council of Nicaea, 325
	*c.*354–430	Augustine of Hippo	barbarian invasions of Europe, 360 to 600
	*c.*378–444	Cyril of Alexandria	
	*c.*381–*c.*451	Nestorius of Constantinople	Council of Constantinople, 381 sack of Rome, 410 St Patrick in Ireland, 430 fall of the Western Roman Empire, 480
	*c.*475–*c.*524	Boethius	Buddhism in Japan, 540

BYZANTINE EMPIRE	FRANKISH EMPIRE		580–662	Maximos the Confessor	spread of Islam to Africa and Asia, 660 birth of Islam, 622 Hinduism dominates over Islam in India, 700 Charlemagne helps to spread Christianity, 780 Charlemagne crowned Holy Roman Emperor, 800 Monks write Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, 890 Fatimid University founded in Cairo, 975 Orthodox Christianity in Kiev, 990
		HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE	1033–1109	St Anselm of Canterbury	Crusaders take Jerusalem, 1099
			1079–1142	Peter Abelard	
			1090–1153	Bernard of Clairvaux	
			*c.*1217–74	Bonaventure	Genghis Khan, Mogul ruler, 1210
			*c.*1224–74	Thomas Aquinas	
			*c.*1266–1308	Duns Scotus	
	OTTOMAN EMPIRE		*c.*1280–*c.*1349	William Ockham	the Black Death, 1320–60
			1342–*c.*1416	Julian of Norwich	Joan of Arc, 1430 Gutenberg Bible printed, 1455 Ottomans take Constantinople, 1455
			1483–1546	Martin Luther	
			1497–1560	Philip Melanchthon	
			1509–64	John Calvin	Reformation begins, 1505
			1515–82	Teresa of Ávila	Tyndale translates NT into English, 1526 Calvin starts church reform, 1535

OTTOMAN EMPIRE	HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE			Henry VIII breaks from Rome, 1534
		1554–1600	Richard Hooker	Sikhs build temple at Amritsar, 1605 Europe's 30 y. war betw. Catholics & Protestants, 1620–50
				North America settled by Europeans, 1610
		1724–1804	Immanuel Kant	
		1768–1834	Friedrich Schleiermacher	American Revolution, 1775–83 French Revolution, 1789–99
		1770–1831	Georg Hegel	
		1800–82	John Nelson Darby	Napoleonic Wars, 1799–1815 Francis II gives up title of Holy Roman Emp., 1800
		1801–90	John Henry Newman	Industrial Revolution begins, 1810
		1802–75	Gottfried Thomasius	
		1813–55	Søren Kierkegaard	Crimean War, 1853–56
		1851–1921	B. B. Warfield	
		1886–1968	Karl Barth	
		1886–1965	Paul Tillich	
		1886–1960	John Baillie	
		1887–1954	Donald Baillie	
		1889–1966	Emil Brunner	
		1892–1971	Reinhold Niebuhr	
		1893–1979	Georges Florovsky	

OTTOMAN EMPIRE

1898–1963	C. S. Lewis	
1904–68	A. M. Farrer	
1904–84	Karl Rahner	
1905–88	Hans Urs von Balthasar	
1906–45	Dietrich Bonhoeffer	
1913–94	Donald MacKinnon	First World War, 1914–18
1917–2005	Serge Laugier de Beaurecueil	Russian Revolution, 1917
1920–99	Charles Philip Price	Gandhi marches against British rule in India, 1920s
1922–88	Hans Frei	
1922–2012	John Hick	
1923–	George Lindbeck	
1926–	Jürgen Moltmann	
1926–	James Packer	
1928–	Gustavo Gutiérrez	
1928–	Wolfhart Pannenberg	
1929–2003	Dorothee Sölle	
1929–68	Martin Luther King, Jr.	
1934–	Richard Swinburne	
1936–	Rosemary Radford Ruether	
1936–	Richard John Neuhaus	
1938–	James Cone	
1938–	Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza	
1938–	Keith Ward	
1940–	Stanley Hauerwas	Second World War, 1939–45

1941–2003	Colin Gunton	
1941–	Elizabeth Johnson	State of Israel formed, 1948
1952–	John Milbank	USA civil rights protests, 1960s Vatican II, 1962–65 Chinese Cultural Revolution, 1966 to mid-1970s

The following are the relevant dates for each empire:

Roman Empire	(pre-)zero to 480
Frankish Empire	480 to 825
Byzantine Empire	525 to 1455
Holy Roman Empire	825 to 1815
Ottoman Empire	1305 to 1910

Early Centuries

The Apocalypse of John

Kenneth G. C. Newport

Among the books of the Bible there can be few that have been so widely utilized as the Apocalypse of John. From early times this book has been a favorite for those believers and communities who wait expectantly for "the end" (however that is conceived), for it has long been assumed that this is what the Apocalypse, or "Revelation," is really all about. Down through the Christian centuries, therefore, careful attention has been paid to this book and much energy expended upon trying to understand more precisely what it is about the end that the book of "Revelation" actually reveals. The most widely accepted interpretation is that it reveals the events that will occur as the end of the world approaches; it is, in short, and to use the title of this book that has now become synonymous with its presumed contents, a timetable of the Apocalypse (Froom, 1946–54).

While it is true that interest in the book has a long and distinguished history (Sir Isaac Newton, for example, was fascinated by it, as his posthumously published *Observations upon the Prophecies* [1733] clearly shows), in recent times there has been no let-up in interpretative endeavor. And there are some extreme examples of the same: infamously, it was this book above all others that led David Koresh and his Branch Davidian community to self-destruct in Waco in 1993 (Newport, 2006). It is this book, too, which inspires much of the thinking in the now massively successful, and, one suspects, influential, *Left Behind* series. Contemporary evidence shows also how the Apocalypse of John has left its mark on many aspects of popular culture and in the genres of music, literature, and art (Kovacs and Rowland, 2003; Newport and Walliss, forthcoming).

There has been a great deal of discussion regarding the authorship of this book. "John" is named as the author in four places (1.1, 4, 9; 22.8), with no further identifying information. Assuming that the work is not consciously pseudepigraphical, the traditional view is that the "John" in question is the author of the gospel of John (not that that book names "John" as its author), himself taken to be the brother of James, one of Jesus' disciples (see Matt. 4:21). There are problems with this view, however, not the least of which is that the Greek of the Apocalypse is a very strange Greek indeed and not at all like that found in the Gospel. In fact, it would seem that whoever the author of the Apocalypse was, he (or just perhaps she) was much more at home linguistically in a Semitic rather than Hellenistic context, thinking in Aramaic perhaps, and with a thorough acquaintance of Hebrew, but writing in Greek (Thompson, 1985). And there are other indications that a thoroughly Semitic mind is at work here. For example, although the Hebrew Scriptures are never directly quoted, more verses than not in Revelation show the influence of the Hebrew texts (Moyise, 1996). Indeed, so soaked through with Jewish thought, literature, and language is the book of

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Revelation that some have even suggested that it originated as Jewish text that has been edited by a later Christian writer (Massyngberde Ford, 1975).

There is in fact little question that the author of the Apocalypse was a Jew. However, like Paul and most of the other early Christians, this Jew had come to the conclusion that Jesus was the Messiah and indicates that it was as a result of this belief that he had been exiled to the Isle of Patmos, a Greek Island in the Aegean Sea (Rev. 1:9). The fact that the author was an exile is important for an understanding of the text, as is the commonly held view that his exile coincided with a period of persecution of the Christian church at the hands of the Roman state. Again there is some dispute here: was this, as is most commonly thought, a period of persecution toward the end of the first century ce or an earlier one, perhaps in the 60s? In either case the experience has left its mark on the author whose theology is understandably reflective of it. This is a text born of suffering – both communal and individual. It is one also which comes from a period during which there is great external pressure to conform to society's norms. The message that comes loud and clear in response is "I [Jesus] am coming soon; hold fast to what you have, so that no one may seize your crown" (Rev. 3:11).

Certainly the "end of the world" and the return of Jesus is a theme of significant importance to the author of the Apocalypse. However, some, most famously Rowland (1972), have raised a fundamental challenge to the notion that "apocalyptic" literature really has "the end" as its principal concern. The Greek word *apocalypsis* (the word used in Rev. 1:1), it is argued, is rather about "drawing back the veil," so as to "un-cover—*apo-kaluptein*" something. This act of "uncovering" might of course include aspects of revealing what is to come (see Rev. 1:1 and 4:1), but more central to the genre's concern is the act of taking the seer "behind the scenes" of this world so as to put on show the heavenly reality behind the earthly façade. In the Apocalypse, John is hence taken through a door into heaven (Rev. 4:1, 2) and given in effect a tour of God's dwelling place, the purpose of which is to reassure him, as the one who is to speak to God's persecuted and distressed community, that whatever the outward appearance, God is in control and that all things will, in the end, work to God's glory and achieve God's purpose. The great beasts of Revelation as depicted so graphically in chapter 13 and via the Whore of Babylon motif of Rev. 17–18, then, may appear to be in control to the untrained eye as they (in the form of the Roman state) persecute the saints; but in fact God guards every soul that is slain. They rest under the altar (Rev. 6:9) dressed in white robes awaiting vindication. Satan does his work now (Rev. 12), but he will be bound (Rev. 20); the wicked prosper in the present, but their final end is certain. The righteous suffer now, but will inherit eternal life.

It would appear, then, that the author of the Apocalypse calls for endurance in the face of two major challenges: persecution and assimilation. The people of God will suffer physically; they will be slain and trodden upon by the unrighteous who individually and collectively are instruments in the hands of Satan (for as Rev. 12 and 13 reveal, it is none other than this "old serpent" who is at work behind the scenes) and in this context the promise of reward is held out to those that endure to the end. As important as this theme is, however, perhaps an equal concern to the author is the pressure to conform to practices that, while widespread and accepted in the larger society, are not to be engaged in by the people of God. In the "letters to the seven churches" found in Rev. 2–3, there are dire warnings to those who do assimilate and compromise their distinctiveness—to those who are in danger of losing their "first love" and have become "lukewarm" (Rev. 2:4; 3:16). It is this uncompromising call to purity of faith and endurance under stress that is perhaps the most fundamental concern to the author. The "end of the world" is of course a key part of this, for by showing that God in the end will win out, that wrongs will eventually be righted, that the wicked will be slain, that Satan will be destroyed and that the righteous will be granted access to the new Jerusalem and the right to eat of the tree of life (Rev. 21), John shores up the community and gives hope and confidence for the future. But the theology of the future, with its rewards and paradisal bliss, is very much invoked to serve present needs and determine behavior in the here and now.

The author of the Apocalypse does of course have other important theological concerns which are

worked out in this text. It is a contentious but nevertheless arguable view that outside of the Gospel of John, the Apocalypse contains the "highest" christology in the New Testament (though Col. 1:15ff. and perhaps Phil. 2:6–11 may be contenders here). Certainly the portrait of Jesus which the author presents is a powerful one. He is "King of Kings and Lord of Lords" (Rev. 17:14; 19:16); he is "the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth" (Rev. 1:5); and the description of him in the latter part of chapter 1 is truly a description of a being the likeness of which (at the very least) borders on the divine. What is more, while the instruction from the angel to whom John offers worship is "You must not do that! … Worship God!," when worship is offered to Christ, it is apparently appropriate and accepted (Rev. 5). And yet this is also the lamb who was slain (Rev. 5), whose blood cleanses sinners from their sins (Rev. 1:5). The Christ here is, then, recognizable as the Christ of the church: a divine Christ whose blood was spilt to bring redemption; and one ought not to underestimate the extent to which within the New Testament, 2000 years of Christian tradition notwithstanding, this reasonably clear dual testimony is distinctive.

The author of the Apocalypse is hence a figure in Christian history who should not be ignored. His influence has been significant, and not only in theological backwaters inhabited by the eschatologically obsessed, the millennially extreme, and/or the religiously volatile. The author speaks not just from the landscape of first-century Christianity in general, but from the specific context of a persecuted community and a social setting where a blurring of the boundaries between those who are "called out," "the *ekklesia*—the Church," and the society from which they are called to stand in righteous relief is a real danger, and probably an actual fact. The author's voice is a clear one, a clarion call to distinctiveness and perseverance in difficult times. It is perhaps not a voice the full impact of which is acceptable today, as Christians seek to maintain a rather more moderate balance between distinctiveness and inclusivity. But it is a voice that is worth hearing, for the questions it addresses continue to echo in contexts entirely distant from, but similar to, John's own.

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Arius (*c.*256–336)

Alastair H. B. Logan

I. Life

Arius (*Areios* meaning "warlike," after the Greek god Ares) is a figure about whom we know very little for certain. What survives is preserved by his bitter opponents such as Athanasius of Alexandria (*c.*296–373 CE) and Epiphanius of Salamis (*c.*315–403 CE) or by church historians of varying degrees of objectivity writing a century or more later, such as the lawyers Socrates (380–450 CE) and Sozomen (early fifth century CE), the "Arian" Philostorgius (*c.*368–*c.*439 CE), also a layman, and the Catholic bishop Theodoret of Cyrrhus (393–466 CE). We do not know when he was born: the traditional dating of 256 seems too early even though Epiphanius calls him an "old man" at the outbreak of the controversy, a remark echoed perhaps by Emperor Constantine's abusive description of him in a letter of 333 as wasted and lifeless. We can be fairly certain that he was a Libyan, from the evidence of Epiphanius and his own testimony in a letter to Constantine. Certainly Libyan bishops were among his staunchest supporters and we find in Arius an unequivocal condemnation of the modalist heresy of the Libyan Sabellius, very widespread there in the latter part of the third century and vigorously refuted by Dionysius of Alexandria (247–64 CE).

As regards his education, both Socrates and Sozomen remark on his dialectical skill, while contemporary opponents such as Athanasius and Marcellus of Ancyra (*c.*284–*c.*374 CE) claim he got his ideas from the devil and Greek philosophy. From his description in his letter to Eusebius of Nicomedia (d. 341 CE) of the latter as a "fellow Lucianist," it has been deduced that he was a pupil of Lucian of Antioch, a shadowy figure who was most probably the presbyter, teacher, and biblical critic martyred in Nicomedia in 312. However, we know very little about Lucian. Strikingly, Philostorgius in his lists of his pupils, which include Eusebius of Nicomedia and the Cappadocian sophist Asterius and seem to center on Asia Minor, makes no mention of Arius. The idea of a Lucianic school in Antioch devoted to a literal exegesis of scripture is discounted nowadays, as is the claim that Arius learnt from it to practice such a form of exegesis. He *may* have attended lectures by Lucian but seems not to have been a devoted pupil. As we shall see, there are clear differences between his ideas and those of the Lucianists under Eusebius of Nicomedia, and his term "fellow Lucianist" may well have been intended to secure Eusebius's support for his rather different theology.

Recent scholarship has tended to focus on an Alexandrian theological and philosophical background for Arius's views. Arius sees himself in his confession to his bishop Alexander (313–28 CE) as a theological traditionalist, while the opening of his poem *Thalia* ("Banquet") presents him as standing in a line of wise sages, taught by God and inspired by the

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Holy Spirit. This is very likely an allusion to the scholarly tradition of learned presbyters in Alexandria going back to Clement (*c.*150–*c.*215 CE) and Origen (185–254 CE), over against and sometimes at odds with the bishop. One is particularly reminded of Origen's role as teacher and his speculative theology and the strained relations between him and bishop Demetrius. However, there seems to have been a reaction in Alexandria both against Origen's more speculative views (such as the eternity of rational creatures) and against his allegorical interpretation. His influence on Arius seems limited.

Some scholars have sought to explain distinctive, radical features of Arius's views, particularly the absolute transcendence of God and the Son's ignorance of him and of his own being, in terms of Arius's acquaintance with contemporary philosophy, Platonic or Aristotelian. Thus Williams (2001, 209–13) and Kannengiesser (1991, I, 35–40) note the remarkable similarities between Arius and Plotinus, also an Alexandrian, if developing his Neoplatonism in Rome in the 260s. Arius would thus be one of the first Christian theologians to assimilate Neoplatonic ideas, long before the Cappadocians, Marius Victorinus, and Augustine. However, how exactly Arius might have come across such ideas is not at all clear, and some scholars still prefer to situate Arius in the milieu of late Middle Platonism as represented in Alexandria (Stead 1997, 39–52; 1999, 101–8). This would take in figures like Philo. Aspects of Arius's views also recall Jewish–Hellenistic wisdom speculation.

Most scholars discount the association of Arius with the schismatic Egyptian bishop Melitius and his ordination as deacon by him, which rests on scanty evidence. It seems most likely that Arius was ordained deacon by Peter (300–12 CE) and presbyter by Peter's successor, Achillas (312–13 CE). It was Achillas's successor, Alexander, who in all probability appointed Arius as priest of the Baucalis church with authority to expound the Scriptures. Alexandrian presbyters, as Williams points out (2001, 42–4), had particular autonomy, and we are told that they preached in their churches on Wednesdays and Fridays. Epiphanius suggests that individual presbyters by their exposition of scripture attracted rival followings. Thus he notes that Arius, tall and gaunt, with his charming speech and garb resembling that of a philosopher and ascetic, succeeded in attracting 700 women vowed to virginity as well as seven presbyters and 12 deacons to his church and group. It was thus as a scholarly but persuasive preacher and scriptural expositor, a senior presbyter in the Alexandrian church, that Arius provoked the doctrinal controversy that was to rock and split the church, in both East and West.

Modern scholars are divided on when the controversy broke out. Besides the classic treatment of the sources by the German scholar Hans-Georg Opitz (1934), who traces the outbreak to 318 and whose ordering and dating of the material many scholars still tend to accept, Rowan Williams in his classic monograph of 1987, rearranging and redating Opitz's documents (2001, 48–58), suggests 321 for the outbreak. More recently Sara Parvis (2006, 68–9) has argued for the shortest possible time scale, suggesting the spring of 322. The evidence seems too fragmentary to decide the matter. As to how the controversy arose, the ancient church historians, Socrates and Sozomen, are divided: Socrates attributes it to a too ambitious discourse by Alexander to his clergy on Unity in Trinity, which Arius vehemently countered, thinking it smacked too much of Sabellianism, while Sozomen derives it from Arius's preaching in church, sparking protests and leading to an inquiry chaired by Alexander as judge between the two opposing groups. Both accounts have anachronistic features, though Sozomen's seems closer to Epiphanius's version which has the schismatic Melitius inform Alexander of Arius's heterodoxy, leading to Alexander's examination of him before the presbytery and some other bishops. Conversely Arius in his letter to Eusebius of Nicomedia seems to bear out Socrates' version in that he talks of Alexander as having driven him and his supporters out for not agreeing with Alexander's public preaching about the coeternity of Father and Son.

However we reconstruct the origins of the controversy, it seems that Arius was condemned, deposed, and excommunicated by an Alexandrian council and that he instigated a campaign of support from sympathizers, including Palestinian bishops such as Eusebius of Caesarea (*c.*260–339 CE). He seems to have moved to Palestine and been recognized by a council there which allowed him to function as a presbyter with his own congregation. To counter

Alexander's hostile encyclicals to eastern bishops and to widen his support he was urged to write to Eusebius of Nicomedia, who had recently got himself translated there, the seat of the eastern emperor Licinius, from Berytus. Eusebius instigated a vigorous campaign enlisting support from bishops in Bithynia, Cilicia, Syria, and Palestine, the heartlands, with Libya, of support for Arius. This probably provoked Alexander to propose a synod to deal with the issues that had arisen, theological and canonical. This was originally to have met at Ancyra, probably at the behest of its bishop, Marcellus (*c.*314–36 CE), who had been a target of the Arian propaganda campaign.

But Licinius's renewed campaign of persecution in 323–4, banning Christian councils from meeting, meant a postponement, and things changed radically with the arrival of Constantine in the East in 324, defeating Licinius and assuming sole rule. Faced at once with the Arian crisis, he sent Ossius of Cordoba, his advisor on church affairs, to Alexandria with an exasperated letter for both Alexander and Arius, seeking to resolve the dispute and restore peace and unity to the church. But it was too late, and, when advised by Ossius of his failure, and perhaps alerted by Eusebius of Nicomedia and others to the likely character of the council at Ancyra, he abruptly changed the venue to Nicaea, where he could himself attend and ensure an acceptable outcome. In the meantime Ossius, returning via Antioch, had held a council there in late 324 to resolve the dispute over a new bishop and deal with Arius. The council, representing largely the diocese of Antioch, and reflecting the theology of Alexander, condemned Arius and his views in a rather rambling fashion and provisionally excommunicated Eusebius of Caesarea and two other Palestinian bishops for supporting him. At the Council of Nicaea of May–June 325, attended by some 250 bishops as well as by Constantine, the views of supporters of Arius such as Eusebius of Nicomedia were shouted down although Eusebius of Caesarea was rehabilitated. The Council produced a short, biblically based creed which rejected Arius's views by positive statements (the Son is of the substance [*ousia*] of the Father, true God of true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial [*homoousios*] with the Father) and anathemas countering his supposed tenets. He was deposed and excommunicated, as were the two Libyan bishops who had staunchly supported him and who also refused to subscribe to the creed and the anathemas, Secundus and Theonas, and all three along with an Alexandrian fellow presbyter, Euzoius, were exiled by Constantine at the end of the council, probably to Illyricum.

However, a remarkable volte-face occurred at the end of 327, when Constantine wrote to Arius summoning him to court at Nicomedia, surprised that he had not come earlier. Parvis (2006, 101–7) attributes this to the disgrace and fall of Eustathius of Antioch, a key player at Nicaea, who seems to have committed a serious sexual offense which so horrified the emperor that it opened the way for him to recall Arius. This would have to have been sanctioned by a council, probably meeting in Antioch in the fall of 327. Arius and Euzoius returned and presented the emperor with a neutral creed, which avoided all the contentious terms and issues but which satisfied Constantine and his ecclesiastical advisors. Arius was probably readmitted to communion by a local Bithynian synod and Constantine wrote to Alexander urging him to do the same. However, in the interim Alexander had died and was replaced by Athanasius (328–73 CE). He soon embarked on what was in effect a civil war with Eusebius of Nicomedia and his supporters. Thus when a Bithynian synod of late 328 under Eusebius again appealed to Athanasius to readmit Arius, the latter refused, turning away Arius himself who had returned to Alexandria, and resisting all later attempts to have him readmitted.

Arius rather drops out of sight from 328, perhaps living in Libya, accepted by the church there, but he reappears in 332 or 333, writing a despairing letter to Constantine asking what he was supposed to do if no one in Egypt would receive him back, and supplying another, rather ambiguous, confession of faith claiming the support of all of Libya for his views regarding salvation. However, the effect was far from what he had intended. Constantine, alarmed by the suggestion of a schismatic church in Libya, wrote a very blustering, venomous open letter in 333 to Arius and his supporters, ridiculing his confession, threatening divine judgment on Libya and the Libyans, contemptuously describing him as half dead, feeble in look and pale in complexion, and threatening with punishment all clergy and laity who continued to support him. His letter was