

<Text 11>

An Exposition on Belief

(*Cat*, 64)

I believe the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit to be one God:<sup>1</sup> the Father, who begot the Son and sent him into the world; the Son, who was begotten and assumed true flesh from the ever-virgin Mary and redeemed the world through the blood of his passion; the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from the Father and the Son and sanctifies and directs all things; the Father, *from whom are all things*; the Son, *through whom are all things* (I Cor. 8, 6); the Holy Spirit, from whom are all things<sup>2</sup> *which in heaven and on earth are named* (Eph. 3, 15). I believe that there is a true resurrection of the flesh; that we will rise again in that same flesh in which we now live; and that there is future life after death. This is my faith, which I hold with all my mind and heart, and confess with my mouth (cfr Rm. 10, 9; Mt. 22, 37; Mk. 12, 30).<sup>3</sup>

Tell me, in what manner do you believe God exists? Response: As three and one. How three? In persons. And how one? By nature. In what manner do you believe the person of the Father exists? As unbegotten. How unbegotten? Because he was born from no one nor made, because God is from himself. In what manner do you believe the person of the Son exists? As begotten, because from the Father alone he is born. In what manner do you believe the person of the Holy Spirit exists? That it is proceeding from the Father and the Son. The Father has eternity

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<sup>1</sup> From "I believe": cfr GENNAD., *Dogm.* 1 (p. 89, 1); see also Text 16, 2/3. Although Text 16 and Text 27 have the exact same words as Text 11, the original source with a slightly different word order is probably Gennadius.

<sup>2</sup> From "the Father from whom": EVCHER., *Instr.* 1 (p. 67, 14/16) perhaps according to MANSVET., *Fid.* (col. 1265B)

<sup>3</sup> From "I believe the Father": see also Text 27, 2/16

without nativity; the Son has nativity with eternity; the Holy Spirit has procession without nativity with eternity.<sup>4</sup> I believe that the Father is unbegotten, the Son begotten, the Holy Spirit neither created nor begotten, but proceeding from the Father and the Son.<sup>5</sup> <God> is one in nature and three in persons, in divinity without a mother, in humanity without a father.<sup>6</sup> I believe that the Father made all things, that is, visible and invisible, through the Son and the Holy Spirit.

God sent his Son so that he might put on flesh and appear to humans and heal sinners. He came in a man, because through his very self he was not able to be known by humans. But so that he might be seen, *the Word was made flesh* (Jn.1, 14) by assuming flesh, not by changing into flesh. For he assumed human nature, he did not lose his divine nature. Thus, the same one is God and the same one is human, in the nature of God equal to the Father, in the nature of humans made mortal for us, because of us; remaining what he was, receiving what he was not, so that he might set free what he had made.<sup>7</sup>

God sent the Son so that he might put on flesh and appear to humans and heal sinners. *In the beginning God created heaven and earth* (Gn. 1, 1), that is, in the Son, because God the Father made <them> through the Son. And elsewhere he said, *Let us make man to our image and likeness* (Gn. 1, 26).

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<sup>4</sup> From “it is proceeding”: ] cfr ISID., *Diff.* II, III, 7 (col. 71B, 24/27); although Theodulf, *Spir. sanct.* (col. 271C-D) repeats these words of Isidore, in small differences Text 11 follows Isidore more exactly than Theodulf. From “the Father has eternity”: see also Text 16, 22/24; the passage is derived from Isidore, *Diff.* II, III, 7 (col. 71B), but the exact same wording of Text 11 is found in Text 16, not in Isidore.

<sup>5</sup> From “the Father is unbegotten”: cfr ISID., *Diff.* II, III, 9 (col. 71C, 35/38)

<sup>6</sup> From “in divinity”: cfr AVG., *Serm.* 214 (p. 17, 120/122); see also ISID., *Sent.* I, XIV, 5 (col. 566A, 1/2)

<sup>7</sup> From “God sent”: ISID., *Eccl. off.* I, XXVI, 2 (p. 29-30, 14/22); the original source is Augustine, *C. Fel.* 2, 9 (p. 838), but there are small differences between Augustine and Isidore, and Text 11 follows Isidore exactly.

If perchance it should be mentioned by us why *he dwelt among us* (Jn. 1, 14), he was able to be teachable where he wished to be visible. Therefore, he came in a man, because through himself he was not able to be known by humans, just as Saint Augustine says: When the world, wrapped up in errors even unwished, was grieving, the most merciful Father, almighty God, held council with his piety, so that he might redeem the notorious world.<sup>8</sup> And elsewhere he said to Moses: *You will not be able to see my face* (Ex. 33, 20). But so that he might be seen, *the Word became flesh* by assuming flesh. John says: *In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God* (Jn. 1, 1).

Question: Tell me, are the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit one God? Response: One, because *beside him there is no other* (Dt. 4, 35). Question: Therefore, who says that the Father is himself who the Son is, and is himself the Holy Spirit, is this said correctly or not? Response: Who says this does not speak correctly. This is the Sabellian heresy, the very worst. Question: For what reason? Response: The Father is entirely God<sup>9</sup> by himself, and the Son is entirely God by himself, and the Holy Spirit is entirely God by itself, although each one is not separated from the other. But nevertheless, who the Father is, is not the Son; who the Son is, is not the Father; who the Holy Spirit is, is neither the Father nor the Son. And so that you might understand this clearly, in the very beginning of the world the Father said: *Let us make man to our image and likeness* (Gn. 1, 26). He said this to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; neither the Son nor the Holy Spirit said this to the Father. The Father sent his Son to redeem the world; the Son did not send the Father. And the Son

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<sup>8</sup> From "When the world": cfr ISID., *Eccl. off.* I, xxvi, 2 (p. 29, 11/14); the parallel is not very exact, only reminiscent.

<sup>9</sup> *integer Deus*; for this term see AVG., *Anim.* II, 5 (p. 343, 10/15, 23) perhaps according to RADBERT., *Fid.* I, 1 (col. 1391A); this expression I found only in Augustine before the Carolingian period.

redeemed the world through the passion of his body, which he took from the virgin; not the Father nor the Holy Spirit, because the Son of God descended, incarnated in the womb of the virgin; not the Father nor the Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit descended in the form of a dove upon Jesus in the Jordan and over the apostles in tongues of fire; not the Father nor the Son. Thus, who is called the Holy Spirit is neither the Father nor the Son.

How, therefore, are there not three gods, but one God,<sup>10</sup> when the Father in his own nature is entirely God by himself, and the Son is entirely God by himself, and the Holy Spirit is entirely God by itself, although each one is not able to be separated from the other? Response: Because the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit are equal in all things, therefore there are not three gods, but one God. But because each person has its own name and its own nature, therefore each one is by itself in person. And at the same time they are in one substance of divinity, when there is with them one will and one eternity and one power, one deity, one lordship, and one operation. Question: How one operation? The Father said: *Let us make man to our image and likeness*, and not the Son. And the Son assumed the flesh, and the Holy Spirit descended, and the Son is entirely God by himself, and the Holy Spirit is entirely God by itself in the form of a dove in the Jordan.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> From "are there not": AVG., *In euang. loh.* 91, 4 (p. 555, 20); see also AVG., *In Psalm.* Ps. 135, 6 (p. 68, 16) perhaps according to ALCVIN., *Fid.* I, 2 (col. 14D, 42/43)

<sup>11</sup> From "Tell me, are the Father": cfr *Interr. de fid.* (p. 175-176); for most of the passage, Text 11 is identical to *Interr. de fid.*

## Commentary on Text 11

The entire tone of Text 11 is “schoolroom”, if there is a word best to describe the repetition, the selection of what are almost aphorisms in creed commentaries, like “he assumed human nature, he did not lose his divine nature”; “remaining what he was, receiving what he was not”; “in divinity without a mother, in humanity without a father”; the image of God taking council with his piety, all together in rather jumbled question/response format, without any sense of progression to the work, or following the phrases of the creed. (In fact, it is possible that the opening confession, from “I believe” up to “Tell me,” when the questions begin, could be a separate work, but since I know of no other ms with just the confession or just the questions, I have treated both parts as one Text. It is true that the “Dic mihi” begins on a new line, with the first letter of the line capitalized, and a similar method is all that distinguishes Text 11 from the following work on time from Isidore. It is almost as if these were a student’s notes of things he thought were important or useful to remember. (The filioque doctrine is repeated three times within the first 20 lines.) The end seems almost unfinished. Could it be? The text in its one known ms is all in one very neat, legible hand. It ends five lines down on f. 103v (with no “finit” or “explicit”), and the next line begins immediately, without title, in the same hand, questions on time from Isidore’s *Origines*. The only distinction is that the first letter of “Cronica” is enlarged (Cronica quare dicitur?) at the beginning of line six. Thus, Text 11 was deliberately ended where it does; it is not a case of a loss of a folio or more. The nature of Text

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11 agrees with the nature of its entire ms, which is a schoolbook. Madame Jean Rambaud-Buhot, in an article “Note sur la collection canonique de Bigot: Ms. Lat. De la Bibliothèque nationale 2796” in *Revue du Moyen Âge*, 2, 1946, p. 176, said folios 1–107 of this ms, “based on the information given by the computus which it contains, dates very probably to 813–815.” She says that Delisle, who studied the ms carefully, “underlines that it consists of note-books of a student of the Carolingian schools, containing notes on subjects very diverse, transcribed without order.” (Another of our Texts, Text 28 (Cat, 212) is in this ms on f. 67v, consisting of the Apostles’ Creed with each verse attributed to an apostle, but it is incomplete, due to the loss of one or more folios after f. 67v.) Immediately preceding Text 11 is Text 19 (Cat, 141), which is a brief profession of faith declaring the Father as Creator, the Son as Redeemer, and the Holy Spirit as Illuminator and Confirmer of the world (also without title).

Why did the composer single out Sabellianism for mention, and call it the worst heresy? One answer could be that it is a complete contradiction of the Trinity, three distinct persons in one God, that is the overall theme of Text 11. Still, theoretically a Sabellian could say there are three persons and one God, only the Sabellian would say the one God was now one of the three persons, now another, instead of always all three at the same time. The composer makes rather clever use of Scripture to show how the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are all present and active at the same time: first he uses Gn. 1, 26, when the Father is saying to the Son and Holy Spirit, “Let us make man in our image and likeness”; second he uses the incarnation, when the Father was sending his Son, who was being incarnated; and third he uses the Holy Spirit coming upon Jesus in the Jordan (other Texts use this scene to testify to the Trinity, with the Father’s voice coming from the clouds, the Spirit in the form of a dove descending, and Jesus in the water).

Text 11 may have been composed in the aftermath of Charlemagne's baptismal questionnaire of 812. One of the questions he posed to his archbishops in his circulatory letter was: "Concerning belief (credulitate), how (quomodo) must one believe in the Lord the Father almighty and in Jesus Christ his Son and in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, and the rest which follows in the same creed." Henry Percival in an excursus on the filioque in his *Seven Ecumenical Councils* (LNPNF, vol. 14), p. 166, seems to suggest that Fleury, in *Hist. Eccl.*, Bk. XIV, c. 48 thinks Charlemagne asked this question to see if his bishops were using the filioque clause. (After a council in Aachen in 809 Charlemagne sent three emissaries to Pope Leo to talk about its use, and Pope Leo opposed its insertion in the creed because the general councils had said there should be no additions to the creed.) In our ms, Paris 2796, on f. 56v-58r, there is an anonymous response to Charlemagne's questionnaire (it contains *Cat*, 107), so that the compiler of the ms was certainly familiar with Charlemagne's interest, whether or not his question on credulitas was meant to test their adherence to the filioque. It is interesting in light of Charlemagne's questionnaire that Text 11 is titled in the ms: "Incipit expositio de credulitate," the very word Charlemagne uses, and also Text 11 uses "Quomodo" ("In what manner") repeatedly, just as Charlemagne asks "quomodo," even though it is a little awkward to say "How do you believe God?" (Quomodo credis Deum?) (I translated it "In what manner do you believe God exists?") Of the 12 responses to Charlemagne's questionnaire that are preserved (whether direct responses or indirect responses), six refer to the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Father and the Son (ex patre et filio procedentem; procedentem a patre et filio; ex patre filioque procedentem; they seem to be drawing on the Athanasian Creed, which has: "a patre et filio non factus nec creatus nec genitus, sed procedens"). The fuss seems to have been over whether to change the

Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed or not, that is, whether to use the form of the N-C Creed with the filioque in the liturgy. I had not thought about the Athanasian Creed: this creed is not a conciliar creed, nor was it even used in the east. It was "liturgical" in the sense that the West used it in the Divine Office. So the Franks would be familiar with the filioque not from the NC creed anyway, but from the Athanasian Creed. If they thought it was by Athanasius, they couldn't have thought the East objected to the filioque on doctrinal grounds, but only on "tradition" grounds.

Text 11 is known in only one ms, Paris, BnF, lat. 2796, f. 1-153 = an. 813-815, France (Mordek, by letter, and *Kirchenrecht*, p. 148, note 242); f. 154-162 = nine folios in paper, s. XVII, XVIII (Lauer, *Catalogue*, 3, p. 95). Loss of one or more folios after f. 67v.  
162 f.; 190 x 115 mm. (7 ½" x 4 ½")(Add. Descrip. = Lauer, p. 90-95.)

Schoolbook.

f. 1r-44r = Ps.-Jerome, *Expositio quattuor Euangeliorum*;

f. 44r-55v = computus and computistical explanation;

f. 55v-56v = grammatical frag., inc.: "Quid est littera?"; *dicta* of Isidore on the six ages of life (cfr *Origines*, XI, II); diverse frag., "Vidi filium inter IIIor fontes...quis primum finxit litteram?...uoces uarie animantium: bos mugit, equos hinnit...";

f. 56v-58r = exposition on baptism >> n. **107** (f. 57r-v);

f. 58r-65v = exposition on the mass;

f. 66r-67v = Greek and Hebrew alphabets; diverse sentences and questions, inc.: "Quattuor rote ecclesie, id est lectio, operatio, oratio – tres abrenunciationis (*sic*) monachorum – VII grados sapientie – IIIor sunt uirtutes – quid sint psalmi – quid significat quod noe sexcentorum erat";

f. 67v = n. **212**;

f. 68r-101v = computus and computistical matter;

f. 102r-103v = n. **141, 64**;

f. 103v-105r = Isidore, *Origines* V, xxviii-xxix, in the form of questions (on time);

f. 105v-107r = medicinal remedy, "Contra ficum"; on the *saltus lunae*; computistical matter;

f. 108r-153v = *Collectio Bigotiana* >> n. **39** (f. 145r-153v) (the *Collectio Bigotiana* contains the *Statuta ecclesiae antiqua*, but without the preface, so that it lacks n. **173a**);