

MANUSCRIPT 150

Bekanttnus oder Symbolum S. Athanasij, von der heyligen  
dryfelttigkeit, wider die Arrianer.

BT 995 .B4 MS 150

Germany

Late 16th century

The longest and most "theological" of the three main Christian creeds is the so-called "Athanasian Creed," often named after its opening word the Quicumque. In forty theses it presents a compendium of orthodox Christian doctrine regarding the Trinity and the Incarnation. The creed sets down the two articles of faith which are necessary for man's salvation: belief in one God in three equal persons, and belief that Christ was at the same time true God and true Man.

Opinions concerning the date of the creed's origin differ widely; dates ranging from A.D. 350 to 700 have been proposed, with most authorities ascribing the work to the late fourth or the fifth centuries. The one point of agreement seems to be that it cannot have been formulated by St. Athanasius (c. 295-373), martyred bishop of Alexandria who defended the Church against the Arian heresy - even though it has borne his name since the early Middle Ages. The creed was first set down in Latin, and may have originated in northern Italy or southern France; some scholars have plausibly linked it with the school of Lerins,

others with the Ambrosian chancery at Milan. In any case, it represents orthodox trinitarian doctrine of the post-Nicene period.

This manuscript consists of a German translation of the creed, here referred to as the "testimony of St. Athanasius, concerning the Holy Trinity, against the Arians." There are no additional comments or names in the manuscript beyond the text of the creed itself. The author may have made his own translation directly from the Latin, for his text differs often in phrasing and choice of words from the standard German version of the creed. To give an example of the differences we might compare a few lines of the MS text with another German translation (from H. Mulert, Konfessionskunde, p. 58) and with the Latin original:

- (Latin:) Fides autem catholica haec est  
 ut unum deum in trinitate  
 et trinitatem in unitate veneremur,  
 neque confundentes personas  
 neque substantiam separantes.
- (Mulert:) Der katholische Glaube aber ist dieser,  
 dass wir einen Gott in der Dreiheit  
 und die Dreiheit in der Einheit verehren,  
 weder die Personen vermengend,  
 noch das Wesen zertrennend.
- (MS:) Dass ist aber der rechte Cristliche glaub,  
 das wir ein eynigen Gott in drey personen,  
 vnnd drey personen in eyniger gottheitt verehren  
 vnnd nicht die personen Ineinander menngen,  
 Noch das gottlich wesen Zerdrennen.

Judged on the basis of handwriting and orthography the manuscript appears to date from the 16th or 17th centuries. Further information concerning the age of the manuscript may be obtained by examining the watermark in the paper: an ox's head surmounted by a crown and a star. In his book on watermarks, Briquet says of this motif: "Most of these come from Ravensburg (Wurtemberg), north of Lake Constance." This particular watermark is identical with one used by a paper-maker in Hallstadt (Wurtemberg) in 1556; thus this would lend support to the hypothesis that the manuscript dates from the late 16th century. The place of origin is more difficult to determine; Briquet points out that paper from this district was in widespread use throughout Germany, Austria-Hungary and Switzerland in the 16th century.

4<sup>o</sup> - 19 cm. x 15 cm.

4 leaves.

Bound in (19th c.?) boards. Legible German script.

Catalogued by U. of C. Library in 1929.

Bibliographical note:

Regarding the Athanasian creed, see:  
 Mulert, Hermann. Konfessionskunde. Die christlichen Kirchen und Sekten heute. 2nd ed., Berlin, 1937.

Information concerning the watermark is from:  
 Briquet, C. M. Les Filigranes. Paris, 1907. (See Vol. IV, No. 15,225.)

7 October 1967  
 JoAnn L. Strateman