



GESELLSCHAFT FÜR KONZILIENGESCHICHTE

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Call for Papers

NICEA (325) – COUNCIL OF THE OIKUMENE? THE RECEPTION OF THE "GREAT SYNOD" PAST AND PRESENT

Symposium, Bamberg, 25.–27. September 2023

The First Ecumenical Council of Nicea (325) stands out in the history of the Church. While synods and symbols prior to the 4th century were mostly regional phenomena, the Council of Nicea was a universal synod, summoned by emperor Constantine, who invited bishops from the whole empire to his palace near the capital. Starting with Nicea, it became a custom for bishops to meet in solemn conclave in order to issue texts and formulae that pronounced the episcopal consensus regarding faith and discipline. These new creeds and canons claimed a greater authority than those issued at local or provincial meetings. They had an a priori universal, i.e. ecumenical, character. While earlier symbols served mostly as baptismal texts for catechumens, the Nicene creed was conceived as an avowal for bishops. The "Great Synod of the 318 Fathers" was actually the first and only ecumenical council that has been received and acknowledged—if only after long and tenacious controversies—by all Christian churches and communities. Together with the interpretative amplification of Constantinople (381) the Nicene symbol represented the dogmatic basis of an undivided Christianity. Thus it was and still is an ecumenical document of first importance.

As we approach the 1700 years jubilee of Nicea in 2025, the symposium wants to shed new light at this council by looking particularly at the reception and Wirkungsgeschichte of Nicea, its remembrance, reputation, authority and significance in Antiquity, Middle Ages and Modern period. Nicea received binding force and became a model in terms of both faith and ecclesiology. While the christological formula of Nicea (*homoousios*) has obliged theology in explaining the core tenets of the Christian faith, Nicea became also an authoritative model in the development of a new type of synods: the ecumenical council, as an institution in which the universality and the collegiality of the Church found appropriate expression.

In order to recall the significance of the council and to highlight other aspects related to it, the Gesellschaft für Konziliengeschichtsforschung, together with the Institute of Church History and Patrology at the Otto-Friedrich-Universität of Bamberg and the Institute for the Study of the Christian Orient at the Catholic University of Eichstätt, invite to an international conference to take place in Bamberg on Sept. 25–27, 2023.

Since the focus of this conference will be at the reception of the *Fides Nicaena* and the Nicene synod in the history of the Church, we welcome contributions from both historical and theological perspectives and disciplines. The conference acts will be published in due time for the Council of Nicea's 1700 years jubilee in 2025 in our journal *Annales Historiae Conciliorum. Journal for the History of Councils* (AHC).

Interested colleagues are kindly invited to submit **paper topics by October 15, 2022**. Papers will be scheduled for 30 min., followed by 15 min. of discussion. Of course, the written version can be much more elaborate. Please send your topics to this e-mail address in Bamberg: guntram.foerster@uni-bamberg.de

For further information you may also contact the organizers, whose names and addresses are listed below. We are looking forward to numerous responses and we are hoping to welcome many of you in Bamberg.

With best wishes,

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