

= Council of Reims (1148) =

In 1148 , a Council of Reims was called by Pope Eugene III to consider a number of regulations , or canons , for the Church , as well as to debate some other issues . Originally the summons for the council went out in October 1147 and it was supposed to be held in Trier , which is now in Germany , but conditions in Trier were such that it was moved to Reims , in France , for February 1148 . A number of the summoned bishops and other church officials did not attend and Eugene suspended many of the non @-@ attendees , excepting the Italian ecclesiastics , who were excused . The council lasted 11 days , and convened on 21 March 1148 . From 400 to 1100 ecclesiastics are considered to have attended , although this number does not include the various servants and officials of the attendees , who would have swelled the numbers .

After the conclusion of the council , Eugene held a consistory trial of Gilbert of Poitiers , the Bishop of Poitiers , who was accused of heretical teachings . In the end , Gilbert was allowed to return to his bishopric .

= = Preliminaries and attendees = =

The council was first called on 11 October 1147 by Eugene , who ordered the bishops and others summoned to the council to assemble at Trier on 21 March 1148 . This is from a letter sent to Henry Zdík , the Bishop of Olmuetz by the pope . However , a letter sent by the pope on the next day , 12 October 1147 , to Eberhard , the Archbishop of Salzburg , named Troyes as the location for the council . It is likely that Troyes , however , was a scribal error , as a further letter of Eugene 's , to Suger , Abbot of St Denis , dated 6 October 1147 , named Trier as the location also , thus confirming the location given in the letter of 11 October .

The papal entourage arrived in Trier on 30 November 1147 , but shortly after arrival the pope decided to move the proceedings because of complaints from the residents of Trier , and announced in February 1148 that the council would move to Reims , but still on the date given before . A feature of the council was that the pope ordered the attendance of the various bishops and other officials . Although some requested attendees were excused , it was mostly due to ill health , not to the need to see to the business of their offices . Those who did not attend were suspended from office . The Italian bishops , however , were mostly excused from attendance , as Eugene held a council at Cremona in July 1148 where the Reims decrees were announced .

Although the number of Spanish bishops who attended is unknown , the Archbishop of Toledo , Raymund , did attend . King Alfonso VII of León and Castile interceded with the pope to lift the sentences against those bishops who did not attend . King Stephen of England refused permission for any of the English bishops to attend , except for the bishops of Hereford , Norwich and Chichester . It was the papal summons which caused the Archbishop of Canterbury , Theobald of Bec , to quarrel with his king , after Stephen refused the archbishop permission to go to the council . Theobald instead managed to evade the guards placed on him and hired a fishing boat to take him across the English Channel to attend the council .

The precise number of bishops , archbishops , and abbots who attended is unknown . Estimates range from 1 @,@ 100 to 400 , with the lower number being much more likely . The attendees were from what were later the countries of France , Germany , England , and Spain , and in keeping with the times , would have included not just the prelates who were summoned , but also their servants and officials , making the true number of people in Reims impossible to know .

= = Council = =

The opening of the council took place on 21 March 1148 at Reims Cathedral on a Sunday . Eugene and his attendants had arrived in Reims by 9 March . The main business of the council was the debate on a number of canons , or rules , for the church that would be announced . Most of these were not new decrees , having been promulgated by Eugene 's predecessor at the councils of Reims in 1131 and at the Lateran council of 1139 . All of the proposed canons were approved ,

except for one on clerical attire which was opposed by Rainald of Dassel and other German ecclesiastics . This canon had prohibited cloaks made of fur . Another canon condemning clerical marriage was greeted with amusement , as the council members felt that all clergy should already know that marriage was forbidden to them .

The Reims council also condemned and ordered the arrest of Éon de l'Étoile , a Breton heretic . He was eventually tortured into confession and imprisoned until his death in 1150 . Further decrees condemned the Anacletans , supporters of an earlier antipope , who had previously been condemned in 1136 . Further side business was the settling of a dispute between two Norman abbots ? Eustachius of Jumieges Abbey and Robert of the Abbey of St. Vincent , Le Mans , which was handed to two cardinals to decide . The two prelates reached a decision on 5 April . Other disputes , including ones between abbots , were also handled at the council , although not necessarily during the council deliberations . Also included in the council 's business was the confirmation of the excommunication of the Bishop of Dol and the Bishop of Brieux . Although it was reported that the Bishop of Orleans and the Bishop of Troyes were deposed by the council , this is erroneous , and probably stemmed from the number of ecclesiastics who were suspended for non @-@ attendance .

A number of ecclesiastics died at or shortly after the council , including Robert de Bethune , the Bishop of Hereford , who fell ill on the third day of the council and died on either 14 or 16 April 1148 . The Bishop of Angouleme died in June , after attending the council . The Archbishop of Trier , Albero de Montreuil , was so ill he was carried to the council on a horse litter .

The council is said to have lasted 11 days in total , but it is likely that it was shorter , given the large increase in the population of Reims , which would have strained the resources of the town . This gives an end date of the council of 1 April 1148 .

= = Consistory = =

Although the council probably ended on 1 April , Eugene asked a number of attendees to stay after the formal close of the council to consider the case of Gilbert of Poitiers , who was under investigation for heresy , connected with his teachings . The main concern against Gilbert seems to have been his convoluted vocabulary and style of writing , which led to his writings being easily misunderstood . The specific problem came when Gilbert 's writings attempted to explicate the relationship between God and his " divinity " , which led to his opponents claiming that Gilbert was attempting to create two Gods , rather than just one . His opponents claimed that this occurred in Gilbert 's treatise on Boethius ' theological work De Trinitate .

Gilbert had previously been investigated by Eugene at Paris in April 1147 , but this hearing came to nothing for two reasons . One was that Gilbert 's opponents were not unified in what they opposed in Gilbert 's teachings . The second reason was that no one had a copy of the treatise on Boethius by Gilbert that was in dispute . Prior to the second hearing at Reims , Bernard of Clairvaux , who was opposed to Gilbert 's teachings , held a private meeting with a number of the attendees , where Bernard attempted to pressure them to condemn Gilbert . This offended the various cardinals in attendance , who then proceeded to insist that they were the only persons who could judge the case .

Although connected with the council , Gilbert was tried after the council closed , at a consistory held in the Archbishop of Reims ' chambers . A consistory was a specialized form of trial held to investigate questionable theological teachings , and was beginning to be used for this purpose in this period . The consistory lasted two days , and included John of Salisbury , who had previously been a student of Gilbert 's , but was now in Eugene 's service . The trial likely took place on 2 ? 3 April 1148 , as it lasted two days , and most accounts state that it took place during the week before Palm Sunday , which was 4 April that year . As the consistory took place after the closing of the council on 1 April , that only allows 2 and 3 April for the trial . However , if the council closed earlier than 1 April , then the trial could have taken place on 29 ? 30 March 1148 . In the end , no verdict of heresy was placed against Gilbert , who remained Bishop of Poitiers until his death in 1154 .

Besides Bernard , other ecclesiastics in opposition to Gilbert were Robert of Melun and Peter the Lombard . Robert was a teacher at both Paris and Melun , and later became Bishop of Hereford . Another opponent was Otto of Freising , who was unable to attend the trial .

No official records of the trial were kept , which led to considerable confusion in the future .