Soon after the death of the Emperor Maximin, a council was held at Ancyra, the capital of Galatia. Only about a dozen bishops were present, and the lists of subscriptions which are found appended to the canons are not to be depended on, being evidently in their present form of later authorship; as has been shown by the Ballerini. If we may at all trust the lists, it would seem that nearly every part of Syria and Asia Minor was represented, and that therefore the council while small in numbers was of considerable weight. It is not certain whether Vitalis, (bishop of Antioch,) presided or Marcellus, who was at the time bishop of Ancyra. The honour is by the Libellus Synodicus assigned to the latter.

The disciplinary decrees of this council possess a singular interest as being the first enacted after the ceasing of the persecution of the Christians and as providing for the proper treatment of the lapsed. Recently two papyri have been recovered, containing the official certificates granted by the Roman government to those who had lapsed and offered sacrifice. These apostates were obliged to acknowledge in public their adhesion to the national religion of the empire, and then were provided with a document certifying to this fact to keep them from further trouble. Dr. Harnack (Preussische Jahrbücher) writing of the yielding of the lapsed says:

The Church condemned this as lying and denial of the faith, and after the termination of the persecution, these unhappy people were partly excommunicated, partly obliged to submit to severe discipline. Who would ever suppose that the records of their shame would come doom to our time— and yet it has actually happened. Two of these papers have been preserved, contrary to all likelihood, by the sands of Egypt which so carefully keep what has been entrusted to them. The first was found by Krebs in a heap of papyrus, that had come to Berlin; the other was found by Wessely in the papyrus collection of Archduke Rainer. 'I,Diogenes, have constantly sacrificed and made offerings, and have eaten in your presence the sacrificial meat, and I petition you to give me a certificate.' Who today, without deep emotion, can read this paper and measure the trouble and terror of heart under which the Christians of that day collapsed?

Canons

**Canon 1**
With regard to those presbyters who have offered sacrifices and afterwards returned to the conflict, not with hypocrisy, but in sincerity, it has seemed good that they may retain the honour of their chair; provided they had not used management, arrangement, or persuasion, so as to appear to be subjected to the torture, when it was applied only in seeming and pretence. Nevertheless it is not lawful for them to make the oblation, nor to preach, nor in short to perform any act of sacerdotal function.

John Zonaras writes: Of those that yielded to the tyrants in the persecution, and offered sacrifice, some, after having been subjected to torture, being unable to withstand to the end its force and intensity, were conquered, and denied the faith; some, through effeminacy, before they experienced any suffering, gave way, and lest they should seem to sacrifice voluntarily they persuaded the executioners, either by bribes or entreaties, to manifest perhaps a greater degree of severity against them, and seemingly to apply the torture to them, in order that sacrificing under these circumstances they might seem to have denied Christ, conquered by force, and not through effeminacy.

**Canon 2**

It is likewise decreed that deacons who have sacrificed and afterwards resumed the conflict, shall enjoy their other honours, but shall abstain from every sacred ministry, neither bringing forth the bread and the cup, nor making proclamations. Nevertheless, if any of the bishops shall observe in them distress of mind and meek humiliation, it shall be lawful to the bishops to grant more indulgence, or to take away [what has been granted].

**Canon 3**

Those who have fled and been apprehended, or have been betrayed by their servants; or those who have been otherwise despoiled of their goods, or have endured tortures, or have been imprisoned and abused, declaring themselves to be Christians; or who have been forced to receive something which their persecutors violently thrust into their hands, or meat [offered to idols], continually professing that they were Christians; and who, by their whole apparel, and demeanour, and humility of life, always give evidence of grief at what has happened; these persons, inasmuch as they are free from sin, are not to be repelled from the communion; and if, through an extreme strictness or ignorance of some things, they have been repelled, let them immediately be re-admitted. This shall hold good alike of clergy and laity. It has also been considered whether laymen who have fallen under the same compulsion may be admitted to orders, and we have decreed that, since they have in no respect been guilty, they may be ordained; provided their past course of life be found to have been upright.
In the translation the word abused is given as the equivalent of περισχεθέντας, which Zonaras translated, if their clothes have been torn from their bodies, and this is quite accurate if the reading is correct, but Routh has found in the Bodleian several mss. which had περισχεθέντας. Hefele adopts this reading and translates declaring themselves to be Christians but who have subsequently been vanquished, whether their oppressors have by force put incense into their hands or have compelled them, etc. Hammond translates and have been harassed by their persecutors forcibly putting something into their hands or who have been compelled, etc. The phrase is obscure at best with either reading.

**Canon 4**

Concerning those who have been forced to sacrifice, and who, in addition, have partaken of feasts in honour of the idols; as many as were haled away, but afterwards went up with a cheerful countenance, and wore their costliest apparel, and partook with indifference of the feast provided; it is decreed that all such be hearers for one year, and prostrators for three years, and that they communicate in prayers only for two years, and then return to full communion.

In the Greek the word for full communion is τὸ τέλειον (the perfection), an expression frequently used by early writers to denote the Holy Communion. Vide Suicer, Thesaurus ad h. v.

**Canon 5**

As many, however, as went up in mourning attire and sat down and ate, weeping throughout the whole entertainment, if they have fulfilled the three years as prostrators, let them be received without oblation; and if they did not eat, let them be prostrators two years, and in the third year let them communicate without oblation, so that in the fourth year they may be received into full communion. But the bishops have the right, after considering the character of their conversion, either to deal with them more leniently, or to extend the time. But, first of all, let their life before and since be thoroughly examined, and let the indulgence be determined accordingly.

**Canon 6**

Concerning those who have yielded merely upon threat of penalties and of the confiscation of their goods, or of banishment, and have sacrificed, and who till this present time have not repented nor been converted, but who now, at the time of this synod, have approached with a purpose of conversion, it is decreed that they be received as hearers till the Great Day, and that after the Great Day they be prostrators for three years, and for two years more communicate without oblation, and then come to full communion, so as to complete the period of six full years. And if any
have been admitted to penance before this synod, let the beginning of the six years be reckoned to them from that time. Nevertheless, if there should be any danger or prospect of death whether from disease or any other cause, let them be received, but under limitation.

John Zonaras: But should any of those debarred from communion as penitents be seized with illness or in any other way be brought near to death, they may be received to communion; but in accordance with this law or distinction, that if they escape death and recover their health, they shall be altogether deprived again of communion until they have finished their six years penance.

**Canon 7**

Concerning those who have partaken at a heathen feast in a place appointed for heathens, but who have brought and eaten their own meats, it is decreed that they be received after they have been prostrators two years; but whether with oblation, every bishop must determine after he has made examination into the rest of their life.

Hefele: Several Christians tried with worldly prudence, to take a middle course. On the one hand, hoping to escape persecution, they were present at the feasts of the heathen sacrifices, which were held in the buildings adjoining the temples; and on the other, in order to appease their consciences, they took their own food, and touched nothing that had been offered to the gods. These Christians forgot that St. Paul had ordered that meats sacrificed to the gods should be avoided, not because they were tainted in themselves, as the idols were nothing, but from another, and in fact a twofold reason: first, Because, in partaking of them, some had still the idols in their hearts, that is to say, were still attached to the worship of idols, and thereby sinned; and secondly, Because others scandalized their brethren, and sinned in that way. To these two reasons a third may be added, namely, the hypocrisy and the duplicity of those Christians who wished to appear heathens, and nevertheless to remain Christians. The Synod punished them with two years of penance in the third degree, and gave to each bishop the right, at the expiration of this time, either to admit them to communion, or to make them remain some time longer in the fourth degree.

**Canon 8**

Let those who have twice or thrice sacrificed under compulsion, be prostrators four years, and communicate without oblation two years, and the seventh year they shall be received to full communion.

**Canon 9**

As many as have not merely apostatized, but have risen against their brethren and forced them [to apostatize], and have been guilty of their being forced, let these for three years take the place of hearers, and for another term of six years that of prostrators, and for another year let them communicate without oblation, in order that, when they have fulfilled the
space of ten years, they may partake of the communion; but during this time the rest of their life must also be enquired into.

**Canon 10**

They who have been made deacons, declaring when they were ordained that they must marry, because they were not able to abide so, and who afterwards have married, shall continue in their ministry, because it was conceded to them by the bishop. But if any were silent on this matter, undertaking at their ordination to abide as they were, and afterwards proceeded to marriage, these shall cease from the diaconate.

Van Espen comments: "The case proposed to the synod and decided in this canon was as follows: When the bishop was willing to ordain two to the diaconate, one of them declared that he did not intend to bind himself to preserving perpetual continence, but intended to get married, because he had not the power to remain continent. The other said nothing. The bishop laid his hands on each and conferred the diaconate."

After the ordination it fell out that both got married, the question propounded is, What must be done in each case? The synod ruled that he who had made protestation at his ordination should remain in his ministry, because of the license of the bishop, that is that he might contract matrimony after the reception of the diaconate. With regard to him who kept silence the synod declares that he should cease from his ministry.

The resolution of the synod to the first question shows that there was a general law which bound the deacons to continence; but this synod judged it meet that the bishops for just cause might dispense with this law, and this license or dispensation was deemed to have been given by the bishop if he ordained him after his protestation at the time of his ordination that he intended to be married, because he could not remain as he was; giving by the act of ordination his tacit approbation. Moreover from this decision it is also evident that not only was the ordained deacon allowed to enter but also to use matrimony after his ordination. Moreover the deacon who after this protestation entered and used matrimony, not only remained a deacon, but continued in the exercise of his ministry.

**Canon 11**

It is decreed that virgins who have been betrothed, and who have afterwards been carried off by others, shall be restored to those to whom they had formerly been betrothed, even though they may have suffered violence from the ravisher.

Compare St. Basil’s twenty-second canon in his letter to Amphilochius, where it is so ruled.

**Canon 12**
It is decreed that they who have offered **sacrifice** before their **baptism**, and were afterwards **baptized**, may be promoted to orders, inasmuch as they have been cleansed.

**Canon 13**

It is not lawful for Chorepiscopi to ordain **presbyters** or **deacons**, and most assuredly not **presbyters** of a city, without the commission of the **bishop** given in writing, in another parish.

If the first part of the thirteenth canon is easy to understand, the second, on the contrary, presents a great difficulty; for a **priest** of a town could not in any case have the power of consecrating **priests** and **deacons**, least of all in a strange diocese. Many of the most learned men have, for this reason, supposed that the Greek text of the second half of the canon, as we have read it, is incorrect or defective. It wants, say they, ποιειν τι, or aliquid agere, i.e., to complete a religious function. To confirm this supposition, they have appealed to several ancient versions, especially to that of Isidore: sed nec presbyteris civitatis sine episcopipræcepto amplius aliquid imperare, vel sine auctoritate literarum ejus in unaquaque (some read ἐν ἐκάστῃ instead of ἐν ἐπίσκοπῳ) parochia aliquid agere. The ancient Roman ms. of the canons, Codex Canonum, has the same reading, only that it has provincia instead of parochia. Fulgentius Ferrandus, **deacon** of Carthage, who long ago made a collection of canons, translates in the same way in his Breviatio Canonum: *Ut presbyteri civitatis sine jussu episcopi nihil jubeant, nec in unaquaque parochia aliquid agant. Van Espen* has explained this canon in the same way.

Routh has given another interpretation. He maintained that there was not a word missing in this canon, but that at the commencement one ought to read, according to several mss. χωρεπισκόπως in the dative, and further down ἄλλα μὴν μηδὲ instead of ἄλλο μηδὲ then πρεσβυτεροὺς (in the accusative) πόλεως and finally ἐκάστῃ instead of ἐπίσκοπῳ, and that we must therefore translate, *Chorepiscopi* are not permitted to consecrate **priests** and **deacons** (for the country) still less (ἀλλὰ μὴν μηδὲ) can they consecrate **priests** for the town without the consent of the **bishop** of the place. The Greek text, thus modified according to some mss., especially those in the Bodleian Library, certainly gives a good meaning. Still ἄλλα μὴν μηδὲ does not mean, *but still less*: it means, *but certainly not*, which makes a considerable difference.

Besides this, it can very seldom have happened that the *chorepiscopi* ordained **presbyters** or **deacons** for a town; and if so, they were already forbidden, at least implicitly, in the first part of the canon.

**Canon 14**

It is decreed that among the **clergy**, **presbyters** and **deacons** who abstain from flesh shall taste of it, and afterwards, if they shall so please, may abstain. But if they disdain it, and will not even eat herbs served with flesh, but disobey the canon, let them be removed from their order.
There is a serious dispute about the reading of the Greek text. I have followed Routh, who, relying on three mss. the Collectio of John of Antioch and the Latin versions, reads εἰ δὲ βδελύσσοντο instead of the εἰ δὲ βούλοντο of the ordinary text, which as Bp. Beveridge had pointed out before has no meaning unless a μή be introduced.

Zonaras points out that the canon chiefly refers to the Love feasts.

I cannot agree with Hefele in his translation of the last clause. He makes the reference to this present canon, I think it is clearly to the 53 (52) of the so-called Canons of the Apostles, τῷ κανόνι the well-known Canon.

**Canon 15**

Concerning things belonging to the church, which presbyters may have sold when there was no bishop, it is decreed that the Church property shall be reclaimed; and it shall be in the discretion of the bishop whether it is better to receive the purchase price, or not; for oftentimes the revenue of the things sold might yield them the greater value.

Hefele: "If the purchaser of ecclesiastical properties has realized more by the temporary revenue of such properties than the price of the purchase, the Synod thinks there is no occasion to restore him this price, as he has already received a sufficient indemnity from the revenue, and as, according to the rules then in force, interest drawn from the purchase money was not permitted. Besides, the purchaser had done wrong in buying ecclesiastical property during the vacancy of a see (sede vacante). Beveridge and Routh have shown that in the text ἀνακαλείσθαι and προσοδον must be read."

**Canon 16**

Let those who have been or who are guilty of bestial lusts, if they have sinned while under twenty years of age, be prostrators fifteen years, and afterwards communicate in prayers; then, having passed five years in this communion, let them have a share in the oblation. But let their life as prostrators be examined, and so let them receive indulgence; and if any have been insatiable in their crimes, then let their time of prostration be prolonged. And if any who have passed this age and had wives, have fallen into this sin, let them be prostrators twenty-five years, and then communicate in prayers; and, after they have been five years in the communion of prayers, let them share the oblation. And if any married men of more than fifty years of age have so sinned, let them be admitted to communion only at the point of death.

**Canon 17**
Defilers of themselves with beasts, being also leprous, who have infected others [with the leprosy of this crime], the holy Synodcommands to pray among the hiemantes.

**Canon 18**

If any who have been constituted bishops, but have not been received by the parish to which they were designated, shall invade otherparishes and wrong the constituted [bishops] there, stirring up seditions against them, let such persons be suspended from office andcommunion. But if they are willing to accept a seat among the presbyterate, where they formerly were presbyters, let them not be deprived of that honour. But if they shall act seditiously against the bishops established there, the honour of the presbyterate also shall be taken from them and themselves expelled.

**Canon 19**

If any persons who profess virginity shall disregard their profession, let them fulfil the term of digamists. And, moreover, we prohibit women who are virgins from living with men as sisters.

**Canon 20**

If the wife of anyone has committed adultery or if any man commit adultery it seems fit that he shall be restored to full communion after seven years passed in the prescribed degrees [of penance].

**Canon 21**

Concerning women who commit fornication, and destroy that which they have conceived, or who are employed in making drugs for abortion, a former decree excluded them until the hour of death, and to this some have assented. Nevertheless, being desirous to use somewhat greater lenity, we have ordained that they fulfil ten years [of penance], according to the prescribed degrees.

**Canon 22**

Concerning wilful murderers let them remain prostrators; but at the end of life let them be indulged with full communion.

**Canon 23**
Concerning involuntary homicides, a former decree directs that they be received to full communion after seven years [of penance], according to the prescribed degrees; but this second one, that they fulfil a term of five years.

**Canon 24**

They who practice divination, and follow the customs of the heathen, or who take men to their houses for the invention of sorceries, or for lustrations, fall under the canon of five years' [penance], according to the prescribed degrees; that is, three years as prostrators, and two of prayer without oblation.

I read ἑθνῶν for χρόνων and accordingly translate of the heathen.

**Canon 25**

One who had betrothed a maiden, corrupted her sister, so that she conceived. After that he married his betrothed, but she who had been corrupted hanged herself. The parties to this affair were ordered to be received among the co-standers after ten years [of penance] according to the prescribed degrees.