

Fragment of a letter of Alexander of Alexandria sent to all bishops (*Dok.* 14)

Reference	<i>Dok.</i> 14; <i>Urk.</i> 15; CPG 2003
Incipit	[Καὶ πρὸς τῇ ὀρθῇ περὶ πατρὸς]
Date	c. 323
Ancient source	Brit. Museum, Add. 12,156
Modern editions	Syriac: J. Pitra, <i>Analecta Sacra</i> 4:196-197 Greek (reconstruction): E. Schwartz, “Zur Geschichte des Athanasius,” 265-67 (= GS 3:127-129)

Sometime after the controversy had become inter-regional, affairs deteriorated further in Alexandria. Arius and his followers seem to have organized separate parishes; Alexander meanwhile sought to expel the Arian leaders from Alexandria, and solidify the opposition more widely. As part of that effort, Alexander composed an encyclical warning of Arius’s teaching and sent it out across the provinces, asking bishops everywhere to subscribe to the doctrinal analysis in the letter. R. Williams dates the letter to 323, after a preliminary “synod of 100 bishops” in Alexandria. Only a couple sections of the letter have been preserved, in Syriac, apparently belonging to the copy sent to Philogonius of Antioch-on-the-Orontes (§5). He may also be responsible for the introductory paragraph and for the notation of the signatories (§4b).

The Greek text below is that of E. Schwartz’s retroversion from the Syriac (first published by Pitra), found in his “Zur Geschichte des Athanasius,” *Nachrichten von der Königlichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, Philologisch-Historische Klasse* (Göttingen: Luder Horstmann, 1905) pp. 265-67 (reprinted in his *Gesammelte Schriften* 3:127-129). The English translation is by Aaron West.

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[Ἀλεξάνδρον Ἀλεξανδρείας ἐκ τοῦ ἐγκυκλίου τόμου τοῦ γεγραμμένου ὑπὸ τοῦ πάπα Ἀλεξάνδρου ἀρχιεπισκόπου Ἀλεξανδρείας περὶ τῆς ὀρθῆς πίστεως πρὸς τοὺς κατὰ πάντα τόπον θεοφιλεῖς ἐπισκόπους, ᾧ καὶ συνέθεντο οἱ θεοφιλεῖς ἐπίσκοποι τὸν ἀριθμὸν ὄντες πλέον ἑλαττον διακόσιοι οὕτως κατέχειν ὑπογράψαντες. ὁ δὲ αὐτὸς τόμος ἐν πρώτοις μὲν ἐγράφη κατὰ τῆς ἀσεβείας τῆς Ἀρείου καὶ τῶν μετ’ αὐτοῦ ἀποστατούντων, ἔπειτα δὲ περὶ τῆς καθολικῆς πίστεως καθὼς δεῖ πάντας κατέχειν καὶ ὅτι θεοτόκος ἐστὶν ἡ ἀγία παρθένος.]	[A letter of Alexander of Alexandria from the encyclical composed by Bishop Alexander, archbishop of Alexandria, concerning the correct faith, to God-loving bishops everywhere, to which about two hundred God-loving bishops subscribed, to confess these sentiments as their own. As for the letter itself, the first section was written against the impiety of Arius and those who revolted with him. The second part discusses the catholic faith: how it is necessary to hold fast to all the teachings, and that the holy Virgin is the Mother of God.]
1. Τῷ δεσπότῃ καὶ συλλειτουργῷ μου ὁμοψύχῳ Μελιτίῳ καὶ τοῖς λοιποῖς ἐπισκόποις τῆς	1. To my master and fellow-minister who is of the same mind, Melitius, and to the other bishops of the

καθολικῆς ἐκκλησίας Ἀλέξανδρος ἐν θεῷ χαίρειν.	catholic church. Alexander greets you in God's name.
[Καὶ μετὰ τὴν ἀρχὴν·]	[And after the opening...]
2. καὶ πρὸς τῇ ὀρθῇ περὶ πατρὸς καὶ υἱοῦ πίστει, καθὼς ἡμᾶς αἱ γραφαὶ διδάσκουσιν, ἔν πνεῦμα ἅγιον ὁμολογοῦμεν καὶ μίαν ἐκκλησίαν καθολικὴν καὶ τὴν ἀνάστασιν νεκρῶν, ἧς ἀπαρχὴ γέγονεν ὁ κύριος καὶ σωτὴρ ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς Χριστός, σῶμα ἐνδυσάμενος ἐκ τῆς θεοτόκου Μαρίας, ἵν' ἐπιδημήσῃ τῷ γένει τῶν ἀνθρώπων, ἀποθανὼν, ἀναστὰς ἐκ νεκρῶν καὶ ἀναληφθεὶς ἐν οὐρανοῖς, καθήμενος ἐν δεξιᾷ τῆς μεγαλοσύνης.	2. With respect to the orthodox teaching on the Father and the Son: Just as the writings teach us, we confess one Holy Spirit and one Catholic Church and the resurrection of the dead, of which our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ has become the first-fruits. He was clothed in a body from Mary the Mother of God in order to dwell among the human race, he died, he rose from the dead, and was taken up into the heavens, where he is sitting at the right hand of the Majesty.
3. ταῦτα ἐκ μέρους ἐνεχάραξα τῇ ἐπιστολῇ τὸ καθ' ἕκαστον ἀκριβῶς γράφειν ἀφείδωκα διὰ τὸ μηδὲ τὴν θεῖαν ὑμῶν ταῦτα λεληθέναι σπουδῆν. ταῦτα διδάσκομεν, ταῦτα κηρύττομεν, ταῦτα τῆς ἐκκλησίας τὰ ἀποστολικὰ δόγματα ὧν ἐναντίοι γενόμενοι οἱ ἀμφὶ τὸν Ἀρειοῦ καὶ Ἀχιλλᾶν καὶ οἱ μετ' αὐτῶν ἀπεώσθησαν τῆς ἐκκλησίας, ἀλλότρια διδάσκοντες τῆς ὀρθῆς ἡμῶν διδασκαλίας, κατὰ τὸν μακάριον Παῦλον λέγοντα· “Εἴ τις ὑμᾶς εὐαγγελίζεται παρ' ὃ παρελάβετε, ἀνάθεμα ἔστω.”	3. I have described these only partially in this letter, deciding not to carefully write out each point, because your godly zeal is well aware of these things. This we teach, this we preach; these are the doctrines of the apostolic church. Both Arius and Achilles and those with them have become hostile to these teachings and have been driven out of the church for teaching things which are foreign to the orthodox teaching. As the blessed Paul says, “If anyone preaches a gospel besides the one you received, let him be accursed (ἀνάθεμα ἔστω)”.
[Καὶ μεθ' ἕτερα·]	[And after other things...]
4. Καὶ γὰρ κατὰ τὸν λόγον τοῦτον τό τε “ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος” ἀρνοῦνται καὶ τὸ “Χριστὸς θεοῦ δύναμις καὶ θεοῦ σοφία” ἢ λόγον εἶναι καὶ σοφίαν τοῦ πατρὸς μὴ διδάσκοντες ἢ τὸν θεὸν οὐποτε γεννήσαι σοφίαν καὶ λόγον πιστεύοντες· ἃ καὶ ἐννοῆσαι ἀπίστου ἂν εἴη ψυχῆς καὶ ἀλλοτρίας τῶν τοῦ Χριστοῦ μαθη<μά>των.	4. In fact, according to this saying they must deny both “in the beginning was the Word” [John 1:1] and “Christ is the Power of God and the Wisdom of God” [1 Cor. 1:24] or they must teach that he is not the Word and Wisdom of the Father, or they must believe that God has never begotten Wisdom or Word. Understand that these ideas could only come from an unbelieving soul; they are completely foreign to a disciple of Christ.
[Καὶ μετὰ τὰς ὑπογραφὰς τὰς τῶν ἐκ πάσης τῆς Αἰγύπτου καὶ Θηβαΐδος καὶ Λιβύης καὶ Πενταπόλεως καὶ τῶν ἄνω τόπων, ἔτι δὲ τῶν ἐκ Παλαιστίνης καὶ Ἀραβίας καὶ Ἀχαΐας καὶ	[And after the signatures of the bishops in all of Egypt, Thebes, Libya, the Pentapolis, and the regions throughout that area, those also of Palestine, Arabia, Achaea, Thrace, the Hellespont, Asia, Caria,

<p>Θράκης καὶ Ἑλλησπόντου καὶ Ἀσίας καὶ Καρίας καὶ Λυκίας καὶ Λυδίας καὶ Φρυγίας καὶ Παμφυλίας καὶ Γαλατίας καὶ Πισιδίας καὶ Πόντου καὶ Πολεμωνιακοῦ καὶ Καππαδοκίας καὶ Ἀρμενίας ὑπέγραψεν καὶ Φιλογόνιος ἐπίσκοπος Ἀντιοχείας τῆς Συρίας [καὶ πάντες οἱ τῆς Ἀνατολῆς θεοφιλεῖς ἐπίσκοποι τῆς Μεσοποταμίας καὶ Ἀγούστοευφρατησίας καὶ Κιλικίας καὶ Ἰσαυρίας καὶ Φοινίκης:]</p>	<p>Lycia, Lydia, Phrygia, Pamphylia, Galatia, Pisidia, Antioch, Pontus, Polemoniakos, Cappadocia, and Armenia all signed it, and also Philogonius, bishop of Syrian Antioch (and all the God-loving bishops of the East (Mesopotamia, the Euphrates, Cilicia, Isauria, and Phoenicia.)</p>
<p>Φιλογόνιος ἐπίσκοπος τῆς καθολικῆς ἐκκλησίας τῆς Ἀντιοχείας μεγάλα ἐπαινῶν τὴν πίστιν τὴν ἐν τῷ τόμῳ τοῦ δεσπότη καὶ ὁμοψύχου μου Ἀλεξάνδρου καὶ συντιθέμενος αὐτῇ καὶ τῇ ὁμολογίᾳ τοῦ ἁγίου τάγματος τῶν ὁμοψύχων, ὑπέγραψα καὶ πάντες οἱ ἐν τῇ Ἀνατολῇ τοῖς ἄνω γεγραμμένοις.</p>	<p>5. [Philogonios, bishop of the catholic church of Antioch, greatly praises the faith in this tome of my master and like-minded friend Alexander. I subscribe to it and to the confession of the ranks of the like-minded. I signed along with all of those in the East to the things written above.]</p>

Last edited 4/30/2024 by AGC