

Letter of Arius to Eusebius of Nicomedia (*Dok.* 15)

Reference	<i>Dok.</i> 15; <i>Urk.</i> 1; CPG 2025
Incipit	Τοῦ πατρός μου Ἀμμωνίου
Date	c. 321-323
Ancient sources	Theodoret, <i>H.E.</i> 1.5 Epiphanius, <i>Panarion</i> 69.6
Modern editions	Parmentier and Scheidweiler, Theodoret. Kirchengeschichte, 2nd edition. GCS 44: 25-26. Epiphanius, Oehler (1856) 2.2: 594-596 Opitz, <i>AW</i> 3.1:1-3

This letter from Arius to his supporter Eusebius of Nicomedia was dated by Opitz to the very beginning of the controversy in Alexandria c. 318, since it was about then that Eusebius left the bishopric of Berytus to become the bishop of Nicomedia. However, the more recent study of this material by Stead and others has pointed out that the letter clearly shows that not only Arius but several Syro-Palestinian bishops had already been condemned, and further claims that nearly “all those of the East” agree that the Father pre-exists the Son (§2). This all points to a period when the controversy was already in full swing throughout the eastern Mediterranean, but a more precise dating is impossible. To compare this document with other lists of sympathizers with Arius, see the [Arian map](#).

Note that at the end of section 3 the texts of both Theodoret and Epiphanius have Arius as confessing that the Son is *πρὸ αἰώνων πλήρης θεός, μονογενής, ἀναλλοίωτος* – “before the ages, full God, the only-begotten, unchangeable.” Since this would seem to contradict Arius’s understanding, we have followed Opitz (*AW* 3.1.1:3), Heil (*AW* 3.1.3:91), Stevenson (*New Eusebius*, no. 283) and Hanson (*Search*, 6) in filling this out to be a reference to John 1:14, thus reading *πλήρης χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας*, “full of grace and truth”.

The Greek text below is that of Parmentier and Scheidweiler, *Theodoret. Kirchengeschichte*, 2nd edition (GCS 44; Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1954), 25-26. The English translation is by Glen Thompson. See also that of B. Jackson in NPNF2 3:41.

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Theodoret, H.E. 1.5		Eriphanus, <i>Panarion</i> 69.6
1 Κυρίῳ ποθεινοτάτῳ, ἀνθρώπῳ θεοῦ, πιστῷ, ὀρθοδόξῳ Εὐσεβίῳ Ἄρειος ὁ διωκόμενος ὑπὸ Ἀλεξάνδρου τοῦ πάπα ἀδίκως διὰ τὴν πάντα νικῶσαν ἀλήθειαν, ἧς καὶ σὺ ὑπερασπίζεις, ἐν κυρίῳ χαίρειν.	1. To that most beloved man of God, the faithful and orthodox Eusebius, from Arius, unjustly persecuted by father Alexander because of the all-conquering truth which you, Eusebius, also are defending!	1. Κυρίῳ ποθεινοτάτῳ, ἀνθρώπῳ θεοῦ, πιστῷ, ὀρθοδόξῳ Εὐσεβίῳ Ἄρειος ὁ διωκόμενος ὑπὸ Ἀλεξάνδρου τοῦ πάπα ἀδίκως διὰ τὴν πάντα νικῶσαν ἀλήθειαν, ἧς καὶ σὺ ὑπερασπίζεις, ἐν κυρίῳ χαίρειν.
Τοῦ πατρός μου Ἀμμωνίου ἐρχομένου εἰς τὴν Νικομήδειαν, εὐλογον ὀφειλόμενον ἐφάνη προσαγορεῦσαι σε δι' αὐτοῦ ὁμοῦ τε καὶ ὑπομῆσαι τὴν ἔμφυτον σου ἀγάπην καὶ διάθεσιν, ἣν ἔχεις εἰς τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς διὰ τὸν θεὸν καὶ τὸν Χριστὸν αὐτοῦ, ὅτι μεγάλως ἡμᾶς ἐκπορθεῖ καὶ ἐκδιώκει καὶ πάντα κάλων κινεῖ καθ' ἡμῶν ὁ ἐπίσκοπος, ὥστε καὶ ἐκδιῶξαι ἡμᾶς ἐκ τῆς πόλεως ὡς ἀνθρώπους ἀθέους, ἐπειδὴ οὐ συμφωνοῦμεν αὐτῷ δημοσίᾳ λέγοντι· “Ἄει θεός, ἀεὶ υἱός· ἅμα πατήρ, ἅμα υἱός· συνυπάρχει ἀγεννήτως ὁ υἱὸς τῷ θεῷ, ἀειγενής ἐστίν, ἀγεννητογενής ἐστίν· οὔτε ἐπινοία οὔτε ἀτόμῳ τινὶ προάγει ὁ θεὸς τοῦ υἱοῦ· ἀεὶ θεός, ἀεὶ υἱός· ἐξ αὐτοῦ ἐστὶ τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ υἱός.”	Since my father Ammonius is going to Nicomedia, it seemed reasonable and proper to greet you through him, remembering at the same time the innate love and affection which you have for the brothers on account of God and his Christ, because the bishop [Alexander] is severely ravaging and persecuting us and moving against us with every evil. Thus he drives us out of every city like godless men, since we will not agree with his public statements: that there was “always a God, always a Son;” “as soon as the Father, so soon the Son [existed];” “with the Father co-exists the Son unbegotten, ever-begotten, begotten without begetting;” “God neither precedes the Son in aspect or in a moment of time;” “always a God, always a Son, the Son being from God himself.”	Τοῦ πατρός μου Ἀμμωνίου εἰς τὴν Νικομήδειαν ἀφικομένου, εὐλογον καὶ ὀφειλόμενον ἐφάνη προσαγορεῦσαι σε δι' αὐτοῦ, ὁμοῦ τε καὶ ὑπομῆσαι τὴν ἔμφυτον σου ἀγάπην καὶ διάθεσιν, ἣν ἔχεις πρὸς τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς διὰ τὸν θεὸν καὶ τὸν Χριστὸν αὐτοῦ, ὅτι μεγάλως ἡμᾶς ἐκπορθεῖ καὶ διώκει καὶ πᾶν κακὸν κινεῖ καθ' ἡμῶν ὁ ἐπίσκοπος, ὥστε ἐκδιῶξαι ἡμᾶς ἐκ τῆς πόλεως ὡς ἀνθρώπους ἀθέους, ἐπειδὴ οὐ συμφωνοῦμεν αὐτῷ δημοσίᾳ λέγοντι· “Ἄει θεός, ἀεὶ υἱός· ἅμα πατήρ, ἅμα υἱός· συνυπάρχει ὁ υἱὸς ἀγεννήτως τῷ θεῷ, ἀειγενής, ἀγεννητογενής, οὔτ' ἐπινοία, οὔτ' ἀτόμῳ τινὶ προάγει ὁ θεὸς τοῦ υἱοῦ· ἀεὶ θεός, ἀεὶ υἱός, ἐξ αὐτοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ υἱός.”
2. καὶ ἐπειδὴ Εὐσέβιος ὁ ἀδελφός σου ὁ ἐν Καισαρείᾳ καὶ Θεόδοτος καὶ Παυλῖνος καὶ Ἀθανάσιος καὶ Γρηγόριος καὶ Ἀέτιος καὶ πάντες οἱ κατὰ τὴν Ἀνατολὴν λέγουσιν ὅτι προϋπάρχει ὁ θεὸς τοῦ υἱοῦ ἀνάρχως, ἀνάθεμα ἐγένοντο, δίχα μόνου Φιλογονίου καὶ Ἑλλανικοῦ καὶ Μακαρίου, ἀνθρώπων αἰρετικῶν ἀκατηγήτων, τὸν υἱὸν	2. Since Eusebius, your brother in Caesarea, and Theodotus, and Paulinus, and Athanasius, and Gregory, and Aetius and all those in the East say that God pre-exists the Son without a beginning, they have been condemned, except for Philogonius and Hellenicus and Macarius, unlearned heretics some of whom say that the Son	2. καὶ ἐπειδὴ Εὐσέβιος ὁ ἀδελφός σου ἐν Καισαρείᾳ, καὶ Θεοδόσιος, καὶ Παυλῖνος, καὶ Ἀθανάσιος, καὶ Γρηγόριος, καὶ Ἀέτιος, καὶ πάντες οἱ κατὰ τὴν ἀνατολὴν λέγουσιν ὅτι προϋπάρχει ὁ θεὸς τοῦ υἱοῦ ἀνάρχως, ἀνάθεμα ἐγένοντο, δίχα Φιλογονίου καὶ Ἑλλανικοῦ καὶ Μακαρίου, ἀνθρώπων

λεγόντων οί μὲν ἐρυγὴν, οί δὲ προβολήν, οί δὲ συναγέννητον.	was “spewed out,” others that he was an “emanation,” still others that he was “jointly unbegotten.”	αίρετικῶν ἀκατηγήτων, τὸν υἱὸν λεγόντων οί μὲν ἐρυγὴν, οί δὲ προβολήν ἀγέννητον.
3. καὶ τούτων τῶν ἀσεβειῶν οὐδὲ ἀκοῦσαι δυνάμεθα, εἰ μὴ μύριους θανάτους ἡμῖν ἐπαπειλώσιν οί αἵρετικοί. Ἡμεῖς δὲ τί λέγομεν καὶ φρονοῦμεν καὶ ἐδιδάξαμεν καὶ διδάσκομεν; ὅτι ὁ υἱὸς οὐκ ἔστιν ἀγέννητος οὐδὲ μέρος ἀγεννήτου κατ’ οὐδένα τρόπον, οὔτε ἐξ ὑποκειμένου τινός, ἀλλ’ ὅτι θελήματι καὶ βουλήν ὑπέστη πρὸ χρόνων καὶ πρὸ αἰώνων πλήρης <χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας>, θεός, μονογενής, ἀναλλοίωτος·	3. We are not able to listen to these kinds of impieties, even if the heretics threaten us with ten thousand deaths. But what do we say and think and what have we previously taught and do we presently teach? — that the Son is not unbegotten, nor a part of an unbegotten entity in any way, nor from anything in existence, but that he is subsisting in will and intention before time and before the ages, full <of grace and truth,> God, the only-begotten, unchangeable.	3. Καὶ τούτων τῶν ἀσεβειῶν οὐδὲ ἀκοῦσαι δυνάμεθα, εἰ μὴ μύριους θανάτους ἡμῖν ἐπαπειλώσιν οί αἵρετικοί. ἡμεῖς δὲ τί λέγομεν, καὶ φρονοῦμεν, καὶ ἐδιδάξαμεν, καὶ διδάσκομεν; ὅτι ὁ υἱὸς οὐκ ἔστιν ἀγέννητος, οὐδὲ μέρος ἀγεννήτου, κατ’ οὐδένα τρόπον, ἀλλ’ οὔτε ἐξ ὑποκειμένου τινός ἀλλ’ ὅτι θελήματι καὶ βουλήν ὑπέστη πρὸ χρόνον καὶ αἰώνων, πλήρης <χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας>, θεὸς μονογενής, ἀναλλοίωτος,
4 καὶ πρὶν γεννηθῆναι ἢ κτισθῆναι ἢ ὀρισθῆναι ἢ θεμελιωθῆναι, οὐκ ἦν· ἀγέννητος γὰρ οὐκ ἦν. διωκόμεθα ὅτι εἶπαμεν· “Ἀρχὴν ἔχει ὁ υἱός, ὁ δὲ θεὸς ἀναρχός ἐστιν.” διὰ τοῦτο διωκόμεθα, καὶ ὅτι εἶπαμεν ὅτι ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων ἐστίν· οὕτως δὲ εἶπαμεν, καθότι οὐδὲ μέρος θεοῦ ἐστίν οὐδὲ ἐξ ὑποκειμένου τινός, διὰ τοῦτο διωκόμεθα· λοιπὸν σὺ οἶδας.	4. Before he was begotten, or created, or defined, or established, he did not exist. For he was not unbegotten. But we are persecuted because we have said the Son has a beginning but God has no beginning. We are persecuted because of that and for saying he came from non-being. But we said this since he is not a portion of God nor of anything in existence. That is why we are persecuted; you know the rest.	4. καὶ πρὶν γεννηθῆναι, ἢ κτισθῆναι, ἢ ὀρισθῆναι, ἢ θεμελιωθῆναι, οὐκ ἦν· ἀγέννητος γὰρ οὐκ ἦν. διωκόμεθα δὲ ὅτι εἶπομεν· “Ἀρχὴν ἔχει ὁ υἱός, ὁ δὲ θεὸς ἀναρχός ἐστιν.” διὰ τοῦτο διωκόμεθα, καὶ ὅτι εἶπομεν, “ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων ἐστίν·” οὕτως δὲ εἶπομεν, “Καθότι οὐδὲ μέρος θεοῦ ἐστίν, οὐδὲ ἐξ ὑποκειμένου τινός.” διὰ τοῦτο διωκόμεθα, λοιπὸν σὺ οἶδας.
ἐρρωσθαί σε ἐν κυρίῳ εὖχομαι, μεμνημένον τῶν θλίψεων ἡμῶν, συλλουκιανιστὰ ἀληθῶς Εὐσέβιε.	I pray that you fare well in the Lord, remembering our tribulations, fellow-Lucianist, truly-called Eusebius [i.e. the pious one].	ἐρρωσθαί σε ἐν κυρίῳ εὖχομαι, μεμνημένον τῶν θλίψεων ἡμῶν, συλλουκιανιστὰ, ἀληθῶς Εὐσέβιε.