

## Constantine to Alexandria (CPG 2123.16)

<i>Reference:</i>	Mel. 11, CPG 2123.16, FNS 55
<i>Incipit:</i>	Ἀγαπητοὶ ἀδελφοί, προσαγορεύω
<i>Date:</i>	332
<i>Greek Text:</i>	Athanasius, Apol. Sec. 61-62
<i>Ancient Descriptions:</i>	Socrates, HE 1.27.9-10; Sozomen, HE 2.22.8-9; portion in Theodoret HE 1.27
<i>English Translation:</i>	NPNF <sup>2</sup> vol. 4, p. 132-3, adapted for FCC by SMT

This letter was written by Constantine and sent with Athanasius to defend him from the Melitians in Alexandria. Constantine decries both the spirit of the schism and the general attitude of constant accusations against Athanasius. Athanasius reports that this letter quited the Melitians for a short time.

The Greek text below is that of Opitz as found in AW 2.4:61-62. The English translation has been adapted from NPNF<sup>2</sup> vol. 4, p. 137 by SMT for FCC.

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Κωνσταντῖνος Μέγιστος Σεραστὸς τῷ λαῷ τῷ κατὰ Ἀλεξάνδρειαν καθολικῆς ἐκκλησίας.	Constantine the Great Augustus to the people of the universal church in Alexandria.
Ἀγαπητοὶ ἀδελφοί, προσαγορεύω ὑμᾶς ἐπικαλούμενος τὸν θεὸν τὸν τῆς ἐμῆς βουλήσεως μέγιστον μάρτυρα καὶ τὸν τοῦ ἡμετέρου νόμου μονογενῆ δημιουργόν, ὃς καὶ τῆς ζωῆς προκαθέζεται τῶν ἀπάντων καὶ τὰς διχονοίας μισεῖ. πλὴν τί ἂν εἶποιμι; ὅτι καλῶς ὑγιαίνομεν; ἀλλ' ἐξῆν καλλίονος ἀπολαῦσαι τῆς εὐρωστίας, εἰ ὑμᾶς αὐτοὺς ἀμοιβαδὶς ἠγαπάτε ἀποσεισάμενοι τὰ μίση, δι' ὧν ταῖς τῶν ἐρεσχηλούντων τρικυμίας τὸν λιμένα τῆς ἀγάπης ἐγκατελίπομεν.	Beloved brethren, I greet you well, calling upon God, who is the chief witness of my intention, and on the Only-begotten, the author of our Law, who is sovereign over the lives of all men, and who hates dissensions. But what shall I say to you? That I am in good health? No, but I should be able to enjoy better health and strength, if you were possessed with mutual love towards one another, and had rid yourselves of your enmities, through which, in consequence of the storms excited by contentious men, we have left the haven of brotherly love.
φεῦ τῆς ἀτοπίας ταύτης· ὅσα καθ' ἐκάστην ἡμέραν συμπτώματα τοῦ συγκεχυμένου φθόνου κινεῖται, οὕτω πρὸς τὸν λαὸν τοῦ θεοῦ μετακίσθησάν αἱ δυσφημίας. ποῦ τοίνυν τῆς δικαιοσύνης ἡ πίστις ἀνακεχώρηκεν; ὅπου γε εἰς τοσοῦτον τῇ τοῦ σκότους ἀγλῦ περιβεβλήμεθα οὐ μόνον διὰ τὴν πολύπλοκον πλάνην, ἀλλὰ καὶ διὰ τὰ τῶν ἀχαρίστων ἐλαττώματα. τῶν μὲν τὴν ἄνοιαν βραβευόντων ἀνεχόμεθα, τῶν δὲ τὴν ἐπιείκειαν καὶ τὴν ἀλήθειαν διακρουομένων αἰσθανόμενοι παρενθυμούμεθα.	Alas, what perverseness is this! What evil consequences are produced every day by the tumult of envy which has been stirred up among you! Hence it is that evil reports have settled upon the people of God. Whither has the faith of righteousness departed? For we are so involved in the mists of darkness, not only through manifold errors, but through the faults of ungrateful men, that we bear with those who favor folly, and though we are aware of them, take no heed of those who set aside goodness and truth.
τί τὸ δεινὸν τοῦτο τῆς ἡμετέρας κακίας; τοὺς ἐχθροὺς οὐκ ἐλέγχομεν, ἀλλ' ἐπόμεθα τῷ ληστηρίῳ, δι' οὗ ὁδὸν τινὰ ἑαυτῆ, ἴν' οὕτως εἶπω,	What strange inconsistency is this! We do not convict our enemies, but we follow the example of robbery which they set us, whereby the most

<p>ἡ τῆς ἀπωλείας ἀπάτη μηδενὸς ἀντικειμένου  ράδιως εἰργάσατο. ἄρα οὐδεμία ἐστὶν αἰσθησις  οὐδὲ κατὰ χάριν τῆς κοινῆς ἀπάντων φύσεως, εἴ  γε τῶν τοῦ νόμου προσταγμάτων ἡμελήσαμεν;  ἀλλ' ἐρεῖ τις· κατὰ φύσιν ἡ ἀγάπη ἐξευρίσκεται.</p>	<p>pernicious errors, finding no one to oppose them,  easily, if I may so speak, make a way for  themselves. Is there no understanding among us,  for the credit of our common nature, since we are  thus neglectful of the commands of the law? But  someone will say, that love is a thing brought out  by nature.</p>
<p>τί οὖν ὅτι ἡμεῖς καὶ τὸν τοῦ θεοῦ νόμον πρὸς τῆ  εὐφροσύνην σχόντες ἀνεχόμεθα τῆς ὀχλήσεως καὶ τοῦ  θορύβου τῶν ἐχθρῶν πυρσοῖς τισιν, ὡς ἔοικεν,  ἐξαιτούμενων; καὶ οὐχ ὀρώμεν ὀφθαλμοὺς ἔχοντες  οὐδὲ αἰσθανόμεθα, καίτοι ταῖς τοῦ νόμου  αἰσθήσεσιν ὄντες πεφραγμένοι.</p>	<p>But, I ask, how is it that we who have got the law  of God for our guide in addition to our natural  advantages, thus tolerate the disturbances and  disorders raised by our enemies, who seem  inflamed, as it were, with firebrands? How is it,  that having eyes, we neither see nor understand,  though we are surrounded by the intelligence of  the law?</p>
<p>ὀπόση ἄρα πτόησις τὴν ἡμετέραν ζωὴν  κατεῖληφεν, ὅπου γε ἡμῶν ἐαυτῶν οὕτως  ἀμελοῦμεν καὶ ταῦτα ὑπομιμνήσκοντος τοῦ θεοῦ;  εἶτα οὐκ ἔστιν ἀφόρητον τὸ κακόν; οὐ πολέμιους  ἠγεῖσθαι προσήκει τούτους, οὐ τὸν οἶκον καὶ τὸν  λαὸν τοῦ θεοῦ; ἐμπαροινούσιν ἡμῖν καὶ ἐγκαλοῦσιν  γε οἱ πανώλεις ἐκεῖνοι καὶ ἐπιπλήσσουσιν ἐκ τῶν  ἐναντίων ἡμῖν.</p>	<p>What a stupor has seized upon our life, that we are  thus neglectful of ourselves, and that although  God admonishes us! Is it not an intolerable evil?  And ought we not to esteem such men as our  enemies, and not the household and people of  God? For they are infuriated against us,  abandoned as they are; they lay grievous crimes to  our charge, and make attacks upon us as enemies.</p>
<p>μεθ' ὅσης δὲ ἀπονοίας τοῦτο πράττουσιν, ὑμᾶς  αὐτοὺς ἐννοεῖν ἀξιώ. οἱ γὰρ μωροὶ ἐπὶ τῆς  γλώττης κειμένην ἔχουσι τὴν κακίαν. οὗτοι γοῦν  μολιβδίνας τινὰς ὀργὰς ἐπιφέρονται, ὡς ἐαυτοὺς  μὲν κατ' ἀντίδοσιν πλήττειν, ἡμᾶς δὲ πρὸς κέρδος  τῆς οἰκειᾶς κολάσεως ἀπάγειν.</p>	<p>And I would have you yourselves to consider with  what exceeding madness they do this. The foolish  men carry their maliciousness at their tongues'  end. They carry about with them a sort of leaden  anger, so that they reciprocally smite one another,  and involve us by way of increasing their own  punishment.</p>
<p>καὶ ὁ μὲν καλῶς διδάξας πολέμιος κρίνεται, ὁ δὲ  τὴν τοῦ φθόνου κακίαν προβεβλημένος ἐκεῖνος  τὴν τοῦ λαοῦ ἡμερότητα οὐ δεόντως  καταλαμβάνει, πορθεῖ, καταναλίσκει, καὶ ἐαυτὸν  κακοθελεῖ ἐγκωμῖω κοσμεῖ καὶ συντίθησι, τὴν δὲ  ἀλήθειαν ἀνατρέπει καὶ τὴν πίστιν ἀπατᾷ, μέχρις  οὗ τῷ οἰκειῷ συνειδότι φωλεὸν καὶ κρυπτηρίαν  ἐπιζητήσας εὖρη.</p>	<p>The good teacher is accounted an enemy, while he  who clothes himself with the vice of envy,  contrary to all justice makes his gain of the gentle  temper of the people; he ravages, and consumes,  he decks himself out, and recommends himself  with false praises; he subverts the truth, and  corrupts the faith, until he finds out a hole and  hiding-place for his conscience.</p>
<p>αὕτη γοῦν αὐτοὺς ἡ σκαιότης ἀθλίου ποιεῖ, ὅταν  προπετῶς ἐαυτοὺς ἀναξίους ὄντας ἀποδέχονται  λέγοντες· φεῦ τῶν κακῶν· ἐκεῖνος πρεσβύτερός  ἐστὶ καὶ ἐκεῖνος παῖς, ἐμοῦ ἄπτεται ἡ τιμὴ, ἐμοὶ  ὀφείλεται, ἐκεῖνου περιαιρεθῆ, ἐπεὶ αὐτὸς ἐμαντῶ  ἀφαρπάσας ἅπαντας ἐπ' ἐξουσίας ἀπολέσαι  πειράσομαι', λαμπρά τις ἡ τῆς μανίας ἐκβόησις,  τάγματα καὶ συλλόγους ἢ, ἴν' οὕτως εἶπω,  ἀρχαιερεσίαν τῶν ἀτόπων τούτων συστημάτων  ἰδεῖν.</p>	<p>Thus their very perverseness makes them  wretched, while they impudently prefer  themselves to places of honor, however unworthy  they may be. Ah, what a mischief is this! They  say, "Such an one is too old; such an one is a mere  boy; the office belongs to me; it is due to me,  since it is taken away from him. I will gain over  all men to my side, and then I will endeavor with  my power to ruin him." Plain indeed is this  proclamation of their madness to all the world; the  sight of companies, and gatherings, and rowers  under command in their offensive cabals.</p>

<p>ὡ τῆς ἀτοπίας ἡμῶν, ἴν' οὕτως εἶπω, ἐπὶ τῆς ἐκκλησίας τοῦ θεοῦ ἀνοίας ἐστὶν ἐπίδειξις. εἴτα οὐκ αἰδοῦνται; οὐκ αὐτοὶ ἑαυτοὺς ψέγουσιν οὐδὲ τὰς ψυχὰς δάκνονται, ἵνα νῦν γοῦν κατανατικρὸν τῆς ἀπάτης καὶ τῆς ἐρεσχηλίας ἄξιόν τι φρονεῖν δόξωσι; βία μόνη ἐστὶ τοῦ φθόνου τοῖς ἰδίους ἐπερειδομένη φαρμάκοις.</p>	<p>Alas, what preposterous conduct is ours, if I may say it! Do they make an exhibition of their folly in the Church of God? And are they not yet ashamed of themselves? Are they not smitten in their consciences, so that they now at length show that they entertain a proper sense of their deceit and contentiousness? Theirs is the mere force of envy, supported by those baneful influences which naturally belong to it.</p>
<p>οὐδὲν ἴσχυσαν οἱ πονηροὶ κατὰ τοῦ ἐπισκόπου ὑμῶν, ἐμοὶ πιστεύσατε, ἀδελφοί. οὐδὲν ἕτερον ἐσπουδάκασιν, ἢ ἵνα κατατρίψαντες τοὺς ἡμετέρους χρόνους μηδεμίαν χώραν ἐν τῇ ζοῇ ταύτῃ μεταμελείας ἔχωσιν.</p>	<p>But those wretches have no power against your bishop. Believe me, brethren, their endeavors will have no other effect than this, after they have worn down our days, to leave to themselves no place of repentance in this life.</p>
<p>ἐπικουρήσατε τοίνυν ὑμῖν αὐτοῖς, παρακαλῶ, τὸ φίλτρον τὸ ἡμέτερον ἀγαπήσατε καὶ παντὶ σθένει διώξατε τοὺς τὴν τῆς ἡμέτερας ὁμοιοῦσας χάριν ἀφανίζουσιν ἐπιθυμοῦντας καὶ πρὸς τὸν θεὸν ἀπιδόντες ὑμᾶς αὐτοὺς ἀγαπᾶτε. ἐγὼ γὰρ τὸν ὑμέτερον ἐπίσκοπον Ἀθανάσιον ἀσμένως προσηκάμην οὕτως τε προσεφθεγξάμην ὡς ἄνθρωπον αὐτὸν θεοῦ ὄντα πεπεισμένος.</p>	<p>Therefore I beseech you, lend help to yourselves; receive kindly our love, and with all your strength drive away those who desire to obliterate from among us the grace of unanimity; and looking unto God, love one another. I received gladly your Bishop Athanasius, and addressed him in such a manner, as being persuaded that he was a man of God.</p>
<p>ὑμέτερόν ἐστι ταῦτα συνιέναι, οὐκ ἐμὸν κρίνειν. τὴν γὰρ πάρ' ἐμοῦ πρόσρησιν αὐτὸν Ἀθανάσιον ὑμῖν διακονῆσαι τὸν αἰδεσιμώτατον ἀναγκαῖον ἡγησάμην ἐννοῶν τὴν ἐπιμέλειαν τῆς ἐπιεικειᾶς αὐτοῦ, ἥτις οὐκ ἀναξίως τῆς εἰρηνικῆς μου πίστεως εἰς τὸ ἀγαθὸν τῆς σωτηριώδους γνώμης κατέχεται διαπαντὸς καὶ ἔξει τὸν προτρέποντα λογισμὸν. ὁ θεὸς ὑμᾶς διαφυλάξει, ἀδελφοὶ ἀγαπητοί.</p>	<p>It is for you to understand these things, not for me to judge of them. I thought it becoming that the most reverend Athanasius himself should convey my salutation to you, knowing his kind care of you, which, in a manner worthy of that peaceable faith which I myself profess, is continually engaged in the good work of declaring saving knowledge, and will be able to exhort you as is suitable. May God preserve you, beloved brethren.</p>

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Last updated 02/25/2025 JTS