

Emperor Constantine's letter summoning the Council of Nicaea (*Dok. 22*)

Reference	<i>Dok. 22; Urk. 20; CPG 8511</i>
Incipit	[Τὸ μηδὲν ἐμὲ ἔχειν]
Date	Spring 325
Ancient source	Brit. Mus. Add. 14, 528, fol. 14v-15r (early 6 <sup>th</sup> c.) Brit. Libr., Add. 14. 526, fol. 13v-14r Paris Bibl. Nat., syr. 62, fol. 122r
Modern edition	Friedrich Schulthess, “Die syrischen Kanones der Synoden von Nicaea bis Chalcedon.” <i>Abhandlungen der Königlichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, Philologisch-Historische Klasse</i> N.F. 10, no. 2 (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1908) p. 1.

Sometime at the end of 324 or very early in 325, Emperor Constantine sent a letter throughout the empire, summoning church leaders everywhere to a council at Ancyra. Whether this was before or after the council began meeting at Antioch is unclear. A few weeks later in 325, however, he sent a second letter changing the location of the gathering to Nicaea. While the first letter has been lost, the second survives in a Syriac translation. The heading referencing the “Council of the 318 Fathers” is obviously a later addition.

Greek text below is the 1905 retroversion from the Syriac by Eduard Schwartz. The English translation has been adapted from the one found in J. Stevenson and W. Frend's *New Eusebius*, no. 289, p. 388. The history of this letter and its authenticity are discussed in Hanson, *Search*, 146-151.

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[Ἐπιστολὴ Κωνσταντίνου βασιλέως πρὸς τὴν σύνοδον τῶν ΤΙΗ πατέρων·]	[Letter of Emperor Constantine to the council of 318 fathers.]
1. Τὸ μηδὲν ἐμὲ ἔχειν ὃ ἂν τιμιώτερον ἢ ἐν τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς μου τῆς εὐσεβείας, παντὶ δῆλον εἶναι νομίζω·	1. I believe it is obvious to everyone that there is nothing more honorable in my sight than the fear of God.
2. ἐπεὶ δὲ τὴν τῶν ἐπισκόπων σύνοδον ἐν Ἀγκύραι τῆς Γαλατίας γενέσθαι πρότερον συμφωνήθη, νῦν πολλῶν ἕνεκα καλὸν εἶναι ἔδοξεν ἵνα ἐν Νικαίᾳ τῆ τῆς Βιθυνίας πόλει συναχθῆ, διότι τε οἱ ἐκ τῆς Ἰταλίας καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν τῆς Εὐρώπης μερῶν ἔρχονται ἐπίσκοποι καὶ διὰ τὴν καλὴν τοῦ ἀέρος κρᾶσιν, ἔτι δὲ καὶ ἵν' ἐγὼ ἐγγύθεν θεατῆς ᾧ καὶ κοινωνὸς τῶν γενησομένων.	2. Though it was formerly agreed that a council of bishops should meet at Ancyra in Galatia, it seemed to us for many reasons that it would be better for the council to assemble at Nicaea, a city of Bithynia, because the bishops from Italy and the rest of the countries of Europe are coming, because of the excellent temperature of the air, and in order that I may be present as a spectator and participant in what will be done.

3. διὰ τοῦτο γνωρίζω ὑμῖν, ἀδελφοὶ ἀγαπητοί, πάντας ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν εἰρημένην πόλιν, τουτέστι δ' εἰς Νίκαιαν, διὰ σπουδῆς ἐθέλειν ἐμὲ συναχθῆναι.	3. Therefore I affirm for you, my beloved brothers, that you should all promptly assemble at the said city, that is at Nicaea.
4. Ἐχαστος οὖν ὑμῶν ὁρῶν εἰς τὸ χρήσιμον, ὡς προείρηκα, σπευδέτω ἄνευ τινὸς μελλήσεως ταχέως ἐλθεῖν, ἵνα θεατῆς τῶν γενησομένων αὐτὸς ἐγγύθεν γένηται.	4. Let every one of you therefore, as I said before, keep the greater good in mind and hurry to gather without any delay, so that each may be physically present as a spectator of those things which will be done.
ὁ θεὸς ὑμᾶς διαφυλάξει, ἀδελφοὶ ἀγαπητοί.	May our God keep you, beloved brothers.

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