

Letter to a council from Eusebius of Nicomedia and Theognis of Nicaea or from Secundus of Ptolemais and Theonas of Marmarica

Reference	<i>FNS 66, Dok. 36, Urk. 31, CPG 2048</i>
Incipit	Ἦδη μὲν οὖν καταψηφισθέντες
Date	Late 327/early 328 (or) late 335
Ancient source	Socrates, <i>H.E.</i> 1.14.2-6 Sozomen, <i>H. E.</i> 2.16.3-7 Anonymous Church History 3.13
Modern editions	Hanson, GCS N.F. 1 (1995): 52-53

The letter as preserved by Socrates gives Eusebius of Nicomedia and Theognis of Nicaea as its authors. At the council of Nicaea, these two bishops had subscribed to the creed, but not to the attached anathemas. After a three month grace period in which they continued to show support for the Arian party, they were both removed from office and exiled by imperial decree. Two years later, however, after seeing the anti-Nicene faction control the decisions at the Council of Antioch (327), the two deposed bishops wrote to a council, most likely a council at Nicomedia called at the very end of 327 or early 328 at Constantine's request to deal further with the Melitian schism (so Barnes, *Athanasius and Constantius*, 17-18;).

Annik Martin, however, argued that this letter was actually produced by Secundus of Ptolemais and Theonas of Marmarica and wrongly attributed by Socrates to the other two. Ptolemais and Theonas were the two bishops who actually did refuse to sign the creed at Nicaea and were thus defrocked and exiled immediately. In Martin's reconstruction, they wrote this letter after hearing of Arius's readmittance by the Council of Jerusalem in 335. Fernandez has followed this chronology in his FNS edition of the documents.

The Greek text of this account was preserved by Socrates, *H.E.* 1.14.1-7. The text below is that of Hansen. (GCS N.F. 1; Berlin, New York: De Gruyter, 1995), 52-53. The English translation was produced for FCC by Glen Thompson, adapted from the translation of A. Zenos (NPNF² 2:19-20).

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[1.Εὐσέβιος δὲ καὶ Θεόγνιος βιβλίον μετανοίας τοῖς κορυφαίοις τῶν ἐπισκόπων ἀποστείλαντες ἀνεκλήθησαν τότε τῆς ἐξορίας ἐκ βασιλικοῦ προστάγματος καὶ τὰς ἐκκλησίας ἐαυτῶν ἀπέλαβον, τοὺς εἰς τὸν τόπον ἐαυτῶν χειροτονηθέντας ἐξωθήσαντες, Ἀμφίωνα μὲν Εὐσέβιος, Χρῆστον δὲ Θεόγνιος. Οὗ βιβλίου τὸ ἀντίγραφόν ἐστι τόδε:]	[1. Eusebius and Theognis having sent a penitential confession to the principal bishops, were by an imperial edict recalled from exile and restored to their own churches, displacing those who had been ordained in their places. Eusebius replaced Amphion, and Theognis Chrestus. This is a copy of their written retraction:]
2. Ἦδη μὲν οὖν καταψηφισθέντες πρὸ κρίσεως παρὰ τῆς εὐλαβείας ὑμῶν ἐν ἡσυχίᾳ φέρειν τὰ κεκριμένα παρὰ τῆς ἀγίας ὑμῶν ἐπικρίσεως ὀφείλομεν. Ἀλλ' ἐπειδὴ ἄτοπον καθ' ἐαυτῶν δοῦναι τῶν συκοφαντῶν τὴν ἀπόδειξιν τῇ σιωπῇ, τούτου ἕνεκα ἀναφέρομεν, ὥς ἡμεῖς καὶ τῇ πίστει συνεδράμομεν καὶ τὴν ἔννοιαν ἐξετάσαντες ἐπὶ τῷ ὁμοουσίῳ ὅλοι ἐγενόμεθα τῆς εἰρήνης, μηδαμοῦ τῇ αἰρέσει ἐξακολουθήσαντες.	2. "Sometime ago we were condemned by your piety without a formal trial, and we ought to silently bear the decisions of your sacred verdict. But it is unreasonable that we by silence should tolerate those who slander us, and so for that reason we hereby declare that we entirely concur with you in the faith. Also, after closely considering the meaning of the term <i>consubstantial</i> , we have diligently worked for peace and have never followed heresy.

3. Ὑπομνήσαντες δὲ ἐπὶ ἀσφαλείᾳ τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν ὅσα τὸν λογισμὸν ἡμῶν ὑπέτρεχεν, καὶ πληροφόρησαντες τοὺς δι' ἡμῶν πεισθῆναι ὀφείλοντας ὑπεσημνήμεθα τῇ πίστει· τῷ δὲ ἀναθεματισμῷ οὐχ ὑπεγράψαμεν, οὐχ ὡς τῆς πίστεως κατηγοροῦντες, ἀλλ' ὡς ἀπιστοῦντες τοιοῦτον εἶναι τὸν κατηγορηθέντα, ἐκ τῶν ἰδίᾳ πρὸς ἡμᾶς παρ' αὐτοῦ διὰ τε ἐπιστολῶν καὶ τῶν εἰς πρόσωπον διαλέξεων πεπληροφορημένοι μὴ τοιοῦτον εἶναι.	3. After we suggested what we thought would keep the churches safe, and fully assuring those under our influence, we subscribed the declaration of faith. But we did not subscribe to the anathemas; this was not because we objected to the creed, but because we thought the accused party was not fairly represented. We are now satisfied on this point, both from his own letters to us, and from personal conversations.
4. Εἰ δὲ ἐπέστη ἡ ἁγία ὑμῶν σύνοδος, οὐκ ἀντιτείνοντες, ἀλλὰ συντιθέμενοι τοῖς παρ' ὑμῖν κεκριμένοις καὶ διὰ τοῦ γράμματος πληροφοροῦμεν τὴν συγκατάθεσιν, οὐ τὴν ἐξορίαν βαρέως φέροντες, ἀλλὰ τὴν ὑπόνοιαν τῆς αἰρέσεως ἀποδύομενοι.	But if your holy council was convinced, we will not oppose it but will concur in your decisions; by this statement we give them our full assent and confirmation. We are not doing this because we are weary of our exile, but to shake off any suspicion of heresy.
5. Εἰ γὰρ καταξιώσητε νῦν γοῦν εἰς πρόσωπον ἐπαναλαβεῖν ἡμᾶς, ἔξετε ἐν πᾶσιν συμψύχους, ἀκολουθοῦντας τοῖς παρ' ὑμῖν κεκριμένοις, ὅποτε αὐτὸν τὸν ἐπὶ τούτοις ἐναγόμενον ἔδοξεν τῇ ὑμῶν εὐλαβείᾳ φιλανθρωπεύσασθαι καὶ ἀνακαλέσασθαι.	If you should now think fit to restore us to your presence, you will find that we agree with you on all points, and agree fully in your decrees, especially since it seemed good in your piety to treat tenderly and recall even him who was the primary suspect.
6. Ἄτοπον δέ, τοῦ δοκοῦντος εἶναι ὑπευθύνου ἀνακεκλημένου καὶ ἀπολογησαμένου ἐφ' οἷς διεβάλλετο, ἡμᾶς σιωπᾶν καθ' ἑαυτῶν διδόντας τὸν ἔλεγχον. Καταξιώσατε οὖν, ὡς ἀρμόζει τῇ φιλοχρίστῳ ὑμῶν εὐλαβείᾳ, καὶ τὸν θεοφιλέστατον βασιλέα ὑπομνήσαι καὶ τὰς δεήσεις ἡμῶν ἐγχειρίσαι καὶ θάττον βουλεύσασθαι τὰ ὑμῖν ἀρμόζοντα ἐφ' ἡμῖν.	It would be absurd for us to remain silent and have everyone take that as evidence against us when the one who seemed responsible was permitted to clear himself of the charges brought against him. Grant then, as is consistent with that Christ-loving piety of yours, to bring this to the attention of our most pious emperor, to present him with our petitions, and to decide quickly how to treat us in the way your reason finds fitting.”
[7. Καὶ τοῦτο μὲν τὸ τῆς παλινφθίας βιβλίου Εὐσεβίου καὶ Θεογνίου ἐστίν· ἀπὸ δὲ τῶν ῥημάτων αὐτῶν τεκμαίρομαι, ὅτι οὗτοι μὲν τῇ ὑπαγορευθείσῃ πίστει ὑπεσημνήναντο, τῇ δὲ καθαιρέσει Ἀρείου σύμψηφοι γενέσθαι οὐκ ἠβουλήθησαν.]	[In this language Eusebius and Theognis recanted. From it I infer that they subscribed to the articles of faith which had been set forth, but would not vote for the condemnation of Arius.]