

## **Anonymous Church History (CPG 6034)** [often falsely attributed to Gelasius of Cyzicus]

Translated by Nathanael Jensen<sup>1</sup> from the text of G. C. Hansen<sup>2</sup>

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### **An Account of the Holy Synod at Nicaea** About the things which the heretics argued against the holy fathers, and the proclamation of the victorious orthodox teaching

## **Book 1**

### **Introduction:**

On the events which took place at the Holy Synod at Nicaea.<sup>3</sup>

- 1.0.1 Here follow the events surrounding the holy and great and ecumenical synod at Nicaea, where bishops from nearly all the districts of the Roman world and Persia were assembled both by the grace of God and by an imperial decree of our God-loving<sup>4</sup> and pious Emperor Constantine. They were gathered to defend the apostolic and orthodox faith against the erroneous and impious teachings of Arius, that fighter-against-God.
- 1.0.2 I read about all the things which were spoken and done and approved during that virtuous and holy Synod a very long time ago. For while I was still living in my father's house, I found them all written consecutively on parchments in an old book. The parchments had belonged to the divinely-appointed and famous Dalmatius, who was the metropolitan bishop of the holy and catholic church of the splendid capital city of

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<sup>2</sup> Hansen, G.C. ed. *Anonyme Kirchengeschichte: (Gelasius Cyzicenus, CPG 6034)*. GCS, N.F. 9. Berlin: DeGruyter, 2002.

<sup>3</sup> The three-part numbering system in the left margin is made up of book number, chapter number, and section number. This numbering system is consistent with the other modern editions of this work, including that of Hansen. The only difference is that Hansen labels the introduction as the prooemium or "preface" and does not give it a chapter number. However, we have designated this preface as chapter 0. This introduction to the work briefly summarizes the proceedings of the Council of Nicaea and explains the author's sources of information about it.

<sup>4</sup> The Greek word used here and the many other instances where the translation "God-loving" appears is θεοφιλής. Depending on the context, this adjective can have either the active sense of "one who loves God" or the passive sense of "one who is loved by God." However, in this work, forms of θεοφιλής are used primarily as a title of high respect for Constantine, so the context is generally unclear. But since there are a few instances where the context indicates the active meaning (1.3.3 and 1.4.5), and since the term is contrasted by the term μῖσοθεός (translated "God-hater"), the active translation of "God-loving" has been used throughout.

Cyzicus, but they then came into the possession of the master of our house. I am referring to my biological father, who has been considered worthy of the privilege of serving as a priest of this most holy church.

- 1.0.3 I happened upon that sacred book and spent a lot of time with it, but I was unable to commit everything to memory—for no human is capable of memorizing such an immense sea of information as is contained in it—but I did take note of as much as I could of the following:
- 1.0.4 the doctrines of our holy fathers and bishops’ teaching about the sound word; their rebuttals against the Ariomaniacs [Ἀρειομανίται];<sup>5</sup> the written refutations against their blasphemy, in which the abominable Ariomaniacs blasphemed the Son of God, and not only him, but also the Holy Spirit;
- 1.0.5 the counterarguments to the bishops by the philosophers hired by Arius; and our bishops’ clear explanations to them through written proofs in refutation of their sophistries.
- 1.0.6 These written proofs give clear explanations about the one, eternal, deity of the Son and the Holy Spirit, coexisting before time and forever with God the Father; as well as about the indescribable incarnation of the Son of God, the Word of God, for our salvation, through the mother of God, the virgin Mary, in the last days. I also investigated in the aforementioned godly book every event of the apostolic proceedings of the church, which happened publicly there—
- 1.0.7 first and foremost, the godly and truly apostolic attitudes of our most faithful Emperor Constantine who also attended the synod. I delighted so much in the things contained in that godly book that I said to the Lord, “How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth.” [Psalm 119:103; LXX Ps. 118]
- 1.0.8 I was thus exceedingly pleased with what was recorded there concerning the faultless and blameless, orthodox and apostolic faith.
- 1.0.9 But after some time, I came here (I mean, to the province of Bithynia). Then, by God’s good will, in the time of the insurrection of the unholy Basiliscus<sup>6</sup> against the apostolic and catholic church of God and the apostolic faith governed by it, there was an uproar and an extremely contentious dispute.

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<sup>5</sup> This was a derogatory term popularized (if not invented) by Athanasius and later used by many others to refer to Arius and his followers.

<sup>6</sup> The insurrection of Basiliscus took place in 475-476. This historical reference is what helps to date this document to the end of the fifth century. For more information on Basiliscus and his insurrection, see Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, volume 2, part 1, p. 236-247.

- 1.0.10 It greatly stirred up and disturbed the headquarters of the faction of those in agreement with the heretic Eutyches. They hypocritically challenged *us* to retain the faith, which, they say, “came from the fathers at Nicaea.”<sup>7</sup>
- 1.0.11 But they, who were the real enemies of that faith, were refuted by us. “For they did not know what they were saying or what things they were arguing for.” [1 Timothy 1:7] For when I cited the things pronounced by the Holy Spirit, from the Lord, through those in that sacred chorus of the orthodox priests of God, those wretched people turned their backs on us. They continued to publicly promote things worse than the blasphemies of Arius in opposition to the things determined at Nicaea and to cast a curse upon anyone understanding these teachings in the proper way.
- 1.0.12 These and many other things were stirred up against our holy and orthodox faith which is ruled from above by the holy apostles and by our aforementioned holy fathers who assembled at the city of Nicaea, at the church of God, which is our mother.
- 1.0.13 On account of these things, I was making as thorough a search as possible everywhere and into everything, or as the saying goes, ‘I let out every reef’<sup>8</sup> in investigating the things which took place at that sacred synod regarding the standard [ῥοσ] of its holy and apostolic faith, which the church of God received, “not from men nor through men,” [Galatians 1:1] but from him, who is the Savior and God of us all, Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God.
- 1.0.14 He, according to the divine plan [οικονομία]<sup>9</sup> of his coming in the flesh, the truly “great mystery of godliness,” “appeared in the flesh” and “was seen by angels,” just as it is written. [1 Timothy 3:16]
- 1.0.15 (For the only-begotten would not have been seen by angels according to his divine nature unless he took on flesh.) He then fulfilled everything according to the divine plan [οικονομία] and handed that holy and perfect flesh of his over to voluntary suffering, burial, and resurrection on our behalf, through which he brought immortality to our race. And ascending into heaven, he, by himself, established the divine and praiseworthy standard [ῥοσ] of this holy and blameless faith and thundered loudly, in accordance with what is written, “The LORD ascended into the heavens and thundered.” [1 Samuel 2:10]

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<sup>7</sup> M. Heinemann and G. Loeschke, ed. *Gelasius Kirchengeschichte [Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte]* 28. Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1918: 2-200. Both the editions of Heinemann and Hansen indicate that something may be missing from the text at this point.

<sup>8</sup> This idiom derives from the realm of sailing. The reefs are used to reduce the area of the sail, so to ‘let out every reef’ is to unfold or unroll the entire sail. This or a similar phrase came to be a common idiom meaning ‘to make every effort.’

<sup>9</sup> McGuckin correctly summarizes the early use of the Greek term *οικονομία* as follows: 1) in the literature of Paul and the early church fathers, “a panoramic sense of the divine plan for the redemption of the cosmos;” 2) by the 5<sup>th</sup> century, it at times took on the “specific ecclesiastical meaning in terms of the administration of the sacraments.” Here, the word is clearly being used in the first sense to denote the “system of salvation that God has put into effect.” See McGuckin, “Economy” in *Patristic Theology*, p.112.

- 1.0.16 And in another passage, “The LORD thundered from heaven; the Most High gave his voice.” [Psalm 18:13; LXX Ps. 17] And what did he thunder? What kind of voice did the Most High give? “Go,” he said, speaking to the apostles, “Make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” [Matthew 28:19]
- 1.0.17 ‘For even though, because of my love for mankind, I have even taken on your living and reasoning flesh from the highly revered and holy virgin Mary – nevertheless, the acquisition of the flesh did not make an addition to the Trinity of the Father and myself and the Holy Spirit. No, the Trinity remains a Trinity. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.’<sup>10</sup>
- 1.0.18 When the sacred apostles received this holy and praiseworthy standard [ὁρος] of the correct and blameless faith from the Lord, they proclaimed it to the whole church of God under heaven, so that by this the prophetic word was fulfilled, which says, “Their voice went out into all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world.” [Psalm 19:4; LXX Ps. 18]
- 1.0.19 A very long time after such a standard [ὁρος], that praiseworthy gift, had been given to us from the Son of God through the divinely-inspired apostles, the persecution against the church of God came to an end. But through Arius, the enemy of our salvation once again set out to destroy and armed himself against its holy and blameless faith – bringing in strange blasphemous words against the Savior, through which he troubled the Lord’s church in all the world.
- 1.0.20 It was also for this reason that the most faithful emperor Constantine gathered together a synod at that populous city of Nicaea. Since I had already learned about all that synod’s happenings, as I said above, I was able, with some difficult searching, to find clear accounts of what was at that time both carefully considered and written down by several ardent scholars.
- 1.0.21 One was incomplete, having only eight very old leaves, written by a certain presbyter John, an old man and an excellent writer. Several were written by other historians—
- 1.0.22 Eusebius Pamphili, the bishop of Caesarea, and Rufinus, the presbyter of Rome, both of whom even took part in that Holy Synod,<sup>11</sup> and many, many others.

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<sup>10</sup> The majority of the paragraph, except for the end which is a repetition of Jesus’s words found in Matthew 28, is a fictitious quotation put into the mouth of Jesus. This paragraph is one example of the *Anonymous Church History*’s strong Trinitarian views.

<sup>11</sup> This line has often been used as part of the argument to discredit the value and historicity of this church history. The anonymous author asserts that both Eusebius Pamphili and Rufinus were present at the synod, but the historian Rufinus was not even born until years after the Council of Nicaea. This historical error shows that the anonymous author’s information is unreliable. The idea that the author was referring to a different “Rufinus, the presbyter of Rome” is not impossible, but it is extremely unlikely. More likely, but also highly unlikely because of the lack of manuscript evidence, is that the text has been corrupted. If instead of reading τῶν καὶ τῇ ἁγίᾳ ἐκείνῃ κοινωνησάντων συνόδῳ one emends the text to καὶ τῶν τῇ ἁγίᾳ ἐκείνῃ κοινωνησάντων συνόδῳ, this phrase would not be a

- 1.0.23 Truly, I did not find the sequence of events to be in full harmony with that sacred book, which I first came into contact with, as I said above—for only the amazing Eusebius Pamphili perfectly traveled the highway of truth from the arrival of our Lord until the time of Constantine the Great—but I was not able to find a complete copy.
- 1.0.24 Besides all the things I was already familiar with, I also found things in accord with the truth as told in the book I had read beforehand. And so, having gathered materials from other books, I decided that I had to write this book to provide general assistance and support for those who will happen upon this writing.
- 1.0.25 With the Word of the ever-living God preparing my way and guiding me, I will begin my account then, at the time of the reign of the most pious and Christ-bearing Emperor Constantine, who also commanded the synod of the bishops to be gathered in the city of Nicaea.
- 1.0.26 For, if God pleases, I will include the events of his birth and the life and reign of his father, the most God-loving Constantius, in another writing.
- 1.1.1 After the tyrants Diocletian and Maximian resigned the royal purple robe and retired to their own private lives, just as Eusebius says, “when not much time had passed, Emperor Constantius died.<sup>12</sup> His entire life he was very gently and most kindly disposed towards his subjects and most dearly disposed to the divine Word. He left his biological son Constantine as absolute ruler and Augustus in his place, as is the natural and common custom. After Constantius’s death, Constantine was worthy of all the honor one owes to an emperor.
- 1.1.2 Constantius was the best and kindest emperor, and indeed, he also was the only one of the emperors of our time who continued to be worthy of that authority throughout his entire reign. And since, in respect to all else, he showed himself to be most courteous and most generous to all, he received an honored and thrice-blest end to his life. He alone died both ruling with favor and glory over his empire and having as his successor his own biological son, a man of prudence and the highest piety in everything.
- 1.1.3 His son Constantine began ruling immediately, having been publicly proclaimed as the all-powerful emperor and Augustus by the legions and, much earlier than that, by God

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description of Eusebius and Rufinus, but it would refer to another group of people who were present at the Council of Nicaea whose writings the anonymous author had read. The logical rationale for emending the text in this way is twofold: 1. In book 2, the anonymous author does not include Rufinus in the list of people who were present at the synod. 2. The anonymous author seems to be aware that Rufinus was not a primary source but was instead dependent on Gelasius of Caesarea for much of his information (see footnote 24 on p. 10). However, neither of these arguments is unopposed. First, if the anonymous author was copying a list of people who attended the synod, he would not have included Rufinus since he was not on the list, even if he himself thought that Rufinus had attended. In addition, the relationship between Rufinus’s church history and Gelasius of Caesarea’s church history, as well as this anonymous author’s understanding of it, is both complicated and uncertain. Therefore, this line is most likely either a careless error or a demonstration of the author’s lack of a thorough knowledge of history and chronology.

<sup>12</sup> Diocletian and Maximian resigned on May 1, 305. Constantius died just over a year later on July 25, 306.

himself, the Absolute Emperor. Constantine became a zealous follower of his father's piety in regard to our teaching."<sup>13</sup>

- 1.1.4 Eusebius later writes, "Constantine, as we have said, was a pious emperor and the son of an emperor who was most pious and prudent in all things. Thus, since he was honored with intelligence and piety, he was stirred up by God, the Absolute Emperor and Savior of all, against the most impious tyrants. And with God most wondrously fighting alongside him, he waged a just war. Maxentius fell at the hands of Constantine at Rome, and Emperor Maximinus in the east did not survive much longer than he did. He ended his life in a most shameful death at the hands of Licinius, who had not yet gone mad at the time." (Licinius had been sent against him by the most God-loving Emperor Constantine.)
- 1.1.5 "Constantine, now foremost of the empire in honor and rank, was also the first to take pity on the ones tyrannized at Rome. After he called in prayer upon the one who was fighting with him, the God of heaven and his Word, that is, Jesus Christ the Savior of all, he advanced with his whole army, trying to obtain for the Romans the freedom which came from their ancestors."<sup>14</sup>
- 1.2.1 Thus far Eusebius. But even if Rufinus did not put the sequence and the harmony of the truth according to the order in the excellent Eusebius of Pamphili's history, nevertheless, having read through the works of Rufinus himself and other authors, I will put into this little book as much as I found which is similar to Eusebius's treatise, just as I said above. Rufinus says the following:
- 1.2.2 "After the resignation of Diocletian and Maximian and the death of Constantius, the following contemporaneous emperors of the Roman Empire remained: Constantine received his father's portion—which began from the place called Europe and extended to the Danube and to both the Scythias and to all the lands of the Celts, Illyrians, and Sarmatians, and as far as the land of the barbarians toward the Rhine river, to Macedonia and its sea, and to Thessaly and Achaia and as far as the Ionian Sea divides that which is turned toward the sinking sun;
- 1.2.3 Maximinus the son of Diocletian received the provinces in the east, just as Eusebius says; Maxentius received Rome and the region which goes down from Italy to the very sea."<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> The quotation from 1.1.1-3 is taken from Eusebius, H.E., 8.13.12-14.

<sup>14</sup> The quotation from 1.1.4-5 is taken from Eusebius, H.E., 9.9.1-2.

<sup>15</sup> Hansen asserts that the quotation from 1.2.2-3 is taken from Gelasius of Caesarea, H.E., fragment 5. Gelasius of Caesarea's *Church History* is no longer extant, but Theodorus Anagnostes's epitome of Gelasius of Caesarea's *Church History* is. The comparisons of this document to the anonymous author's work show a very strong correlation between the two. For more on Hansen's assertion that the anonymous author frequently quotes from or bases his text on Gelasius of Caesarea's *Church History* and why Hansen concludes that certain sections have been quoted from certain fragments, see especially Hansen, *Anonymus von Cyzicus Historia Ecclesiastica Kirchengeschichte* p. 21-27, and Winkelmann, "Die Quellen der Historia Ecclesiastica des Gelasius von Cyzicus (nach 475). Ein Beitrag zur Rekonstruktion der Kirchengeschichte des Gelasius von Caesarea" in *Byslav* 27, p. 104-130.

- 1.3.1 “Then, after the lawful funeral of his father and the customary honors, Constantine took note of the misfortune of the Romans and their loss of peace.
- 1.3.2 For he was hearing that the city of Rome was growing weary because of the evils of Maxentius. For the direction of the empire was quickly being turned by him into a savage tyranny. For example, he handed many officials over to death without trial. He also imposed fines and banishments and redistributions of land and further penalties without inquiry or investigation. Furthermore, when he passionately desired other men’s wives, he either seduced them by flattery or forced them with his commands, and so it remained unsafe to have a beautiful wife. And in an attempt to guard chastity, there was a great deal of bloodshed throughout the city.
- 1.3.3 When the most God-loving Constantine heard about these and so many other similar things which are not catalogued here, he was enraged. For the unjust deeds of others brings personal grief to God-loving men.
- 1.4.1 So then, he resolved to take up his arms and come to the aid of the Romans who were suffering these sorts of things. For, by delivering them from these evils, it is fair to say, he also rescued all mankind.”<sup>16</sup>
- 1.4.2 “The plan he settled on was to first call together the cities which had previously been under Roman rule—some with words, others with arms, and still others with a charitable act of benevolence. For he proclaimed lighter tributes for them and promised impartial hearings<sup>17</sup> and showed wisdom in putting an end to both their revolutionary spirit and rebellion. He did this by ignoring them rather than by trying to instill fear because he knew that the nations of the Sarmatians,<sup>18</sup> Franks, and Germans were novelty-loving, had an impulse toward insurrections against emperors which was easily fanned into flame, and often felt compelled to carry out their inclinations.
- 1.4.3 And then he conquered the Spaniards and the Britons and the other islanders there and the rest of the races and all those who bear witness to the setting sun (who say they know whether it truly sinks into the ocean or whether it bends around the water coming back to us through a different route). And by strength of arms, he overpowered the barbarian tribes there, taking advantage of the secondary opportunity of the battle in addition to his primary task.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Hansen asserts that the quotation from 1.3.1-4.1 is taken from Gelasius of Caesarea, H.E., fragment 5.

<sup>17</sup> The translation here reflects the edition of Heinemann, which has the Greek word ἀκροάσεως. Hansen suggests the Greek word ἀγοράσεως instead, which would be translated as “impartiality in commerce,” rather than “impartial hearings.”

<sup>18</sup> Exactly what nation the Greek word Σάρρων here refers to is uncertain. Linguistically, it appears that it may refer to the Sarmatians, but Hansen asserts that geographically and historically it would make more sense if it refers to the Saxons. See Hansen, *Anonymus von Cyzicus Historia Ecclesiastica Kirchengeschichte*, p. 75.

<sup>19</sup> The historian claims that Constantine’s primary task was to gain firm control over Spain and Britain in order that he might bring deliverance to those suffering under Maxentius. However, as he did so, he also took advantage of the secondary opportunity to conquer other barbarian tribes in his path and thus increase his power and extend his reign.

- 1.4.4 For by subjecting some, paying wages to others, establishing some as friends instead of enemies, and establishing others as kin rather than old enemies, he brought them all in as allies. While neither harming nor besieging anyone, he pressed on to bring deliverance to others.
- 1.4.5 For wherever God is fighting alongside, everything prospers and exceeds human expectation. With such a God-loving disposition, Constantine, most faithful in all things, crossed to the right bank of the Rhine and passed over many mountains and many unnamed rivers with a small army. He then conquered many barbarian nations, bringing the ten tribes of the Gauls, the Franks and the Spaniards<sup>20</sup> over to himself, and leading the rest of the army to the mountains of Italy.”<sup>21</sup>
- 1.4.6 “When Maxentius heard about these things, he experienced some unexpected turmoil. For he was not expecting that Constantine would ever cross such a land blocked off by mountains, rivers, a diverse assortment of barbarians, and the natural difficulty of its isolated location. For desolate regions are often an empire’s greatest fortification.
- 1.4.7 And so he decided to withdraw his army from Rome very quickly and to lead it out to preemptively strike somewhere in Italy. And when the battle lines had been prepared and they saw each other’s military standards, it seemed that the upcoming battle would be lop-sided. For the troops rushing out from Rome spread themselves out as phalanxes. And since they were fresh and very well-rested, they appeared to be a worthy match for anyone in battle and to carry themselves with a pride equally worthy of the city.
- 1.4.8 The ones standing side by side in battle with Constantine, however, had already seized much land as well as considerable plunder and many spoils of war. But they were weighed down with longing, having experienced the race of victory rather than the enjoyment of the things they had seized. And now they were growing weary of the toil and were giving in to the constant grind.
- 1.5.1 When the battle had not yet been decided and the lines of battle were still evenly-matched, God armed Constantine from heaven by showing him the saving symbol of the cross shining brilliantly in the sky. The words revealed the power of the appearance, saying, “In this, conquer!”

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<sup>20</sup> The Greek word Σπάνων is used here, which seems to indicate Spaniards. However, Hansen asserts that it would make more sense for this word to be referring to the Saxons for multiple reasons. As in 1.4.2, such a translation would make more sense geographically and historically. In addition, the Spaniards have already been mentioned separately along with the Britons in 1.4.3. And finally, if the word is understood to refer to the Saxons, the groupings of 1.4.2 and 1.4.5 refer to the same three peoples, with the “Germans” and “Gauls” being synonymous terms. See Hansen, *Anonymus von Cyzicus Historia Ecclesiastica Kirchengeschichte*, p. 76-77.

<sup>21</sup> Hansen asserts that the text from 1.4.2-5 may be a quotation from Philip of Side’s *Christian History*, which is no longer extant. Philip of Side was a church historian who wrote during the first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century. Only fragments of his works, including his 24 book-long *Christian History*, survive as quotations in the works of others. For more on Philip of Side and why Hansen attributes these sections of the *Anonymous Church History* to him, see Hansen, “Eine fingierte Ansprache Konstantins auf dem Konzil von Nikaia” in *Zeitschrift antechristentum*, p. 195ff, as well as Hansen, *Anonymus von Cyzicus Historia Ecclesiastica Kirchengeschichte*, p. 27-39.



- 1.5.2 By the unbelievers, this story is considered to be a myth and a fiction invented to go along with our beliefs.<sup>22</sup> But to those who are accustomed to believing the truth, the proof of what happened is clear. For after these things, God, the artist who painted this symbol, exhibited by his acts the grace which was rightly foretold by what was written.
- 1.5.3 But even if we have not yet fully persuaded you of the things which we write—for we are copying the histories of our predecessors from a short time back, who gathered what was useful from the ones living at that time—nevertheless, one need not continuously disbelieve these things. For even in our own generation, those who fought along with Constantius, the son of Constantine, were eye-witnesses to new visions, and thus cured the old unbelief.<sup>23</sup>
- 1.5.4 For if it is Hebrews who are denying these things, their own books contain many things much more unbelievable than these—a sea walked upon as dry land, water walled up, and a sea walked over; God spoke in a bush, and a fire gave laws, and a war-trumpet rang out in the wilderness without an instrument; and angels fought alongside and served as commanders of the Lord’s army, fighting in his phalanx, and throwing hailstones and missiles of fire instead of the usual spears. Nevertheless, without further inquiry or investigation, all those of sound mind agree on them. For when God wills, nothing is impossible.<sup>24</sup>
- 1.5.5 Or if it is Greeks who are not accepting the wondrous event, we have much to say, which we would prefer not to say. How many things did the diviners prophesy to Alexander when he was about to enter into the war at Granicus and draw up his line of battle against Darius? (And what’s more, these fictions of theirs had no visual confirmation!) And how could a divine spirit (δαίμωνιος)<sup>25</sup> predict things to the philosopher Socrates, telling him through a voice the outcomes of things which were not to be done? And what about the events surrounding Pythagoras of Samos which were compiled by his disciples?
- 1.5.6 I will also say nothing about the fictions of the poets and how some of the famous ones among them even proposed that some of their supposed gods fight alongside them,<sup>26</sup> lest anyone should think that I am comparing legends with truths and things which never took place with things that did.

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<sup>22</sup> A variant reading which includes another δὲ would somewhat alter the translation: “This story is considered to be a myth by the unbelievers and an acceptable fiction by our beliefs.” If this variant is correct, it would appear that the anonymous author is criticizing the official view of the Christian church which appreciated the story but did not consider it to be a historical event. However, the word translated as ‘beliefs’ could also refer to a ‘public decree,’ which could indicate that this was the opinion of the state and not necessarily the view of those in the church.

<sup>23</sup> This line may, in part, refer to a second vision of a cross appearing in the sky at Jerusalem in 351. See Sozomen, H.E. 4.5 and Philostorgius, H.E. 3.26. However, even the accounts of Sozomen and Philostorgius are not in complete agreement.

<sup>24</sup> This paragraph alludes to many Bible passages. For a complete list of references, see Hansen’s GCS edition.

<sup>25</sup> Socrates spoke of this divine voice which often guided him in his actions.

<sup>26</sup> The translation of this clause has followed the edition of Heinemann which contains the word ἐξιστόρησαν. Hansen’s edition does not include this word, but Hansen does note that the text appears to be corrupted and missing something in this clause. Yet based on Hansen’s German translation, it is clear that both editors suggest the same general meaning of the phrase in spite of their different handlings of the text at this point.

- 1.5.7 For those who have experienced the abundantly powerful grace of Christ know that since the time it bloomed for men, it has revealed itself<sup>27</sup> in heaven and on earth and in the sea and in plants and in trees and in clothing and in sickness and in health and in food and in drink as that which was, is, and will be a healing cure. And we will expound on it at the proper time as our narrative continues.
- 1.6.1 So, after Constantine formed the wondrous image into the shape of a trophy—inlaying it with gold and precious stones and fitting it onto a spear shaft—he gave the image from the Most High to those riding in front to carry. In this way, through his deeds, he sought to see the promise of those words fulfilled.
- 1.6.2 And he did not fail to obtain what he hoped for. The more quickly that he put his trust in the things which he had seen, the swifter he received victory from the faith.
- 1.7.1 Then Constantine, being preserved by his faith against the great exhaustion of war, and not fearing the army from Rome, nobly established his line of battle. But because Maxentius feared the might of Constantine, and, in addition, since he also suspected the hatred of the Romans (for he had put himself at odds with the majority of them on account of his promiscuity), he planned to carry out his strategy through trickery. And the trick was a bridge equipped with some kind of mechanical device of the following sort.<sup>28</sup>
- 1.7.2 What was visible from above was a place which invited Constantine to cross. But what could not be seen was a trap deceitfully laid for his advance. For when a person was a short way across, since the machine had been loosened, the combatant would come to an unexpected grave, experiencing destruction at that place.
- 1.7.3 But although he prepared the traps for Constantine’s approach in this way, divine favor entangled the craftsman of evils in his own clever tricks. For before he could catch Constantine, the tyrant himself came first and fell into his own handiwork. And there, he himself became a tyrant-slayer. And so, having prepared an effective plot against himself on the edge of Rome at the Milvian Bridge, the previously mentioned Maxentius himself sank into the river and drowned.”<sup>29</sup>
- 1.7.4 And so the entire Roman populace cried out, saying, “Let us sing to the Lord, for he has been gloriously extolled,” just as Eusebius Pamphili says. “He has cast the horse and horseman into the sea. He has become my assistant and protector for salvation.’ [Exodus

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<sup>27</sup> Hansen indicates that there may be a corruption or something missing in the text in this section. This translation has followed his suggestion in his German translation. There, he suggests that perhaps the idea which is missing is “sich offenbarte” or “has revealed itself.”

<sup>28</sup> Hansen and Heinemann both indicate that the last phrase, which is translated as, “of the following sort,” may not be a part of the original text.

<sup>29</sup> Hansen asserts that the text from 1.4.6–7.3 is a quotation from Gelasius of Caesarea, H.E., fragment 5. This battle, often called the Battle of the Milvian Bridge, took place on October 28, 312.

15:1,2] and ‘Who among the gods is like you, LORD? Who is like you—extolled in holiness, wonderful in glory, doer of wonders?’”<sup>30</sup> [Exodus 15:11]

- 1.7.5 Eusebius also says the following things: “With these things and many other related and similar to them, Constantine sang praises to God, the ruler of all and cause of victory, and to his only begotten Son Jesus Christ for their deeds. Thus he marched into Rome with triumphal songs. Meanwhile everyone from the assembled council and the other eminent people crowded together with the women and children and all the Roman people—all with beaming faces and happy hearts—to welcome him with acclamations and boundless joy as their redeemer, savior, and benefactor.
- 1.7.6 But since Constantine possessed a deeply rooted reverence towards God, he was totally unmoved by the shouts and not at all flattered by the praises. But rightly perceiving God’s help, he immediately commanded that the trophy of the Savior’s passion be placed in the hand of the statue of himself. Then his servants set up the statue of Constantine, holding the sign of the cross in his right hand, in the most public place in all of Rome.<sup>31</sup> He then commanded that a public notice with this precise wording be written down in the Roman language:
- 1.7.7 ‘By this saving sign—which is the true proof of manliness—I have set your city free and saved it from the yoke of the tyrant. And furthermore, by freeing them, I have restored The Senate and People of Rome to their ancient fame and splendor.’”<sup>32</sup>
- 1.8.1 So far, Eusebius. However, Rufinus, or rather, Gelasius<sup>33</sup> records these things as follows: “After these events, the Roman Senate asked Licinius (who became the God-loving Constantine’s brother-in law by marrying his sister Constantia)<sup>34</sup> to rule together with Constantine. Soon after, Constantine sent Licinius to the east against the tyrant there, in order to see to the safety of the Christians there. For since he enjoyed such great favors from God, the pious Constantine was eager to offer thank-offerings to his benefactor.
- 1.8.2 These things brought an end to the persecution of Christians, and those who were in exile were recalled, and those who had been imprisoned were released, and those whose property had been confiscated had it returned, and churches were rebuilt. And Constantine, having in mind the things of Christ, did all these things with great zeal.

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<sup>30</sup> The quotations from Exodus 15 in 1.7.4 are taken from Eusebius, H.E., 9.9.8.

<sup>31</sup> The giant marble statue of Constantine, estimated to have been around 40 feet tall, was most likely located in the northwest apse of the Basilica of Maxentius. The head, as well as a few other body parts—including two right hands—remain and are housed at the Capitoline Museums in Rome. For more information on the statue’s appearance, location, construction, and reconstructions, see Bardill, *Constantine, Divine Emperor of the Golden Age*, 203-217.

<sup>32</sup> The quotation from 1.7.5-7 is taken from Eusebius, H.E., 9.9.9-11.

<sup>33</sup> Gelasius, bishop of Caesarea Maritima from c. 367-373 and 379-395, wrote a continuation of Eusebius’s Church History, part of which was incorporated into Rufinus’s translation of Eusebius. This is the same Gelasius of Caesarea previously mentioned whom Hansen asserts the anonymous author frequently quotes. For more on the relationship between the church histories of Gelasius of Caesarea and Rufinus, see the introduction to Amidon’s translation of *The Church History of Rufinus of Aquileia: Books 10 and 11*, p. XIII-XIX.

<sup>34</sup> Licinius married Constantine’s half-sister Constantia in 313.

Since he was just like a Christian, he always acted like a Christian.<sup>35</sup> He built churches of God and adorned them with extravagant thank-offerings and even ordered that the temples of the Greeks be torn down and utterly destroyed by fire.

- 1.9.1 The tyrant Maximinus in the east, however, kept seeking to destroy the churches of God.”<sup>36</sup> “And the following sort of circumstances enveloped him: He was not able to bear the magnitude of authority which had been undeservingly entrusted to him. Nevertheless, on account of his lack of self-control and his inability to reason like an emperor, he committed many foolish acts. He irrationally exalted himself above everyone with his arrogant boasting. And furthermore, Maximinus became so over-confident that he dared to put himself forward as first in rank above the others who shared rule over the empire, even over Constantine, who was far better than he was in every respect—in direct descent, in nurture, in learning, in honor, and in intelligence, and who also stood out as first and foremost of all in self-control and piety towards the true God.
- 1.9.2 Then Maximinus’s madness grew into complete insanity as he broke the treaties which he had made with Licinius, thus beginning an implacable war. In a short time he had stirred up everything and had thrown every city and every camp into confusion. He gathered together a mass of 10,000 men and marched out for battle against both Licinius and against Constantine, who had dispatched him. Positioning his platoons of soldiers, he stood without God watching over him, and right away, the only God who rules over all gave the victory to the prevailing Constantine.
- 1.9.3 That guilty Maximinus first lost the majority of his heavily-armed troops in which he had trusted. He was left unprotected by the bodyguards around him and by all those who left him deserted and were fleeing for refuge to the one who was prevailing. So, that scoundrel slipped off his imperial decorations (which had been unfitting for him to ever wear) as quickly as possible. After he had cowardly, pathetically, and spinelessly stripped, he slipped into the crowd and ran away. And by hiding amid fields and villages, he barely slipped through the hands of the warriors as he tried to obtain safety for himself.
- 1.9.4 By these things, it is thus possible to provide proof that the divine oracles are extremely trustworthy and true when they say, ‘A king is not saved because of his great power, and a mighty man will not be saved by his massive strength. It is incorrect to trust in a horse for safety; in the greatness of its power, it will not save you. Behold, the eyes of the LORD are upon those who fear him, the ones who hope in his mercy; he delivers their lives from death.’”<sup>37</sup> [Psalm 33:16-19; LXX Ps. 32] And so that ungodly Maximinus, “having been struck by a sudden plague from God in the second battle of the war, passed away.

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<sup>35</sup> Since Constantine was not baptized until his final illness in 337, he is said to have lived and acted “like a Christian” before then.

<sup>36</sup> Hansen asserts that this quotation from 1.8.1–9.1 was taken from Gelasius of Caesarea, H.E., fragment 6.

<sup>37</sup> The quotation from 1.9.1-4 is taken from Eusebius, H.E., 9.10.1-5.

- 1.9.5 But the events surrounding Maximinus’s death were nothing like what happens to those military leaders who often act courageously for the sake of virtue and their loved ones and who boldly undergo a noble death in war. For he, once and for all, as an impious fighter-against-God, remained at home hiding when the battle-line was arranged on the plain. Yet, he suffered the proper retribution, being struck suddenly by God with a plague. As he was tormented with terrible sufferings and excessive pains, he fell down headlong and perished by hunger, and his entire body melted away due to an invisible and God-sent fire. As he wasted away, every trace of his old appearance was destroyed. And after a long time, only dry bones remained, making him look like a skeleton. Thus those who were there concluded that his body had become a tomb for his soul, which was buried in a dead and completely decaying form.
- 1.9.6 And as the heat from deep down inside kept burning Maximinus up more and more violently, his eyes sprang out and fell from their sockets, making him blind. But after this happened, while he was still breathing, he confessed freely and openly to the Lord and prayed for death. And thus having confessed that he had suffered these things justly on account of his drunken rage against Christ, he gave up his spirit for the very last time.
- 1.10.1 Thus, when Maximinus—who alone remained among all the enemies of religion and who had shone forth as the worst of all—was indeed removed, the plans for the restoration of the churches from their foundations were resumed by the grace of the Almighty God. And the Word of Christ, shining forth to glorify the God of all, gained even greater freedom than it previously had.”<sup>38</sup>
- 1.10.2 Eusebius Pamphili, the most noble of all writers, has compiled these events in the ninth book of his Church History. For by reproducing his works (as I mentioned earlier), and the works of others, I am composing this little book with few words, in order that with such very great haste I might proceed on this literary journey to the high, brilliant, holy and divine mountain of the apostolic and virtuous synod of the priests of God at Nicaea, recognizing especially that the prophet is seizing me by the hand and urging me forward.
- 1.10.3 “Come,” he says, “let us go up to the mountain of the LORD and to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us his way, and we will walk in it. For the law will go out from Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.” [Micah 4:2 and Isaiah 2:3]
- 1.10.4 For truly that divine throng of orthodox priests of God was Zion and Jerusalem and the lofty mountain of the Lord and the house of the God of Jacob. For they were watched over by the Holy Spirit, and they showed through the prophetic, evangelical, and apostolic writings “concerning the Word of life,” [1 John 1:1] that is, the Son of God, that he was truly uncreated according to his divine nature and that he was not a creature (as Arius, that most ungodly fighter-against-God, blasphemously said of him). They also proved that he has the same nature [οὐσία] as the Father who begot him before the ages has, and that he is of the same substance [χρημα]. Likewise, they showed most clearly

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<sup>38</sup> The quotation from 1.9.4–10.1 is taken from Eusebius, H.E., 9.10.13–11.1. The battle between Licinius and Maximinus and Maximinus’s subsequent death took place in 313.

that the Holy Spirit is also of the same deity and nature [οὐσία] as the Father and the Son.

- 1.10.5 And truly a lofty mountain [ὄρος] of God from above, as the word plainly showed, was given to us from the Lord himself through the apostles. And now, this worshipful and holy standard [ῥοζ]<sup>39</sup> of the blameless faith has been made clear in written testimonies through his priests at Nicaea. And the Word, proceeding through the working of the grace of God, will make it even more clearly known to us.
- 1.10.6 But let us return to our stated purpose for our history of the church and take up again the events describing our God, who acted like a good emperor by supporting his people and destroying the tyrants through his servant, the God-loving Emperor Constantine. And through Constantine, God alone obtained peace for his churches throughout the world.
- 1.10.7 “Great is the LORD, who alone does great and unsearchable wonders, of which there is no number—the one who changes seasons and times, who removes and establishes kings, who raises the beggar from the earth and who lifts up the poor man from the dunghill. He has taken down rulers from their thrones and lifted up lowly ones. He has fed the hungry with good things, and he has sent the rich away empty, and he has shattered the arms of the arrogant. He is the wonder-worker, the performer of great deeds, the master of all, the maker of all the world, the Almighty, the absolutely good, the one and only God. In response, we send up a new song to him, the only one who does great wonders, for his mercy endures forever—to him who smites great kings and slays strong kings, for his mercy endures forever. For our LORD remembered us in our humiliation.”<sup>40</sup>
- 1.10.8 For all these things, let us never cease singing praises to the God of all and his only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, whom with the Father is the cause of all good things for us, the author of our very knowledge of God, the teacher of godly reverence towards him, the destroyer of the ungodly, the tyrant-slayer, the corrector of life, and the Savior of those in despair. Let us all extol Jesus with one mouth and one heart.
- 1.10.9 Because, indeed, he alone, [being an absolutely good Son]<sup>41</sup> just like the only absolutely good Father, according to his Father’s and his own and the Holy Spirit’s compassionate plan, provided for our salvation, while we were lying somewhere beneath in destruction. In great kindness he took on our nature, took on our sicknesses, and bore our diseases like some noble physician and attained salvation and life for the human race—both at that time and forever.”<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> The author here uses a play on words as he compares the “mountain” and “standard,” ὄρος and ῥοζ. These two Greek words differ only slightly in pronunciation due to the different breathing marks, which indicate the absence or presence of the ‘h’ sound at the beginnings of the words, respectively.

<sup>40</sup> This paragraph, which is, for the most part, a quotation from Eusebius, puts many quotations of Bible passages together. For a complete list of references to the passages found in this paragraph, see Hansen’s GCS edition.

<sup>41</sup> The editions of Hansen and Heinemann both indicate that a portion of the text here is missing. The bracketed phrase seems to be the most likely possibility because it is the phrase contained in the text of Eusebius from which the author is quoting.

<sup>42</sup> The quotation from 1.10.7-9 is taken from Eusebius, H.E., 10.4.8-11.

- 1.10.10 And indeed, he who is the King of Kings and who always takes care of his own people armed his own beloved servant Constantine with godly reverence and faith as his weapons against the ungodly tyrants—Maxentius at Rome and Maximinus in the east. Through Constantine, he destroyed them both and thus restored cheerful and abundant prosperity to his own people.
- 1.11.1 Eusebius Pamphili says, “And the sight of those things happening was unbearable for the envy which hates good and for the demon who loves evil. So it was also for Licinius, for the consequences which came upon the aforementioned tyrants did not prove sufficient to turn him to sound reason. And so while he still enjoyed the sovereignty, having been deemed worthy both by marriage and kinship to be second in honor to the great Emperor Constantine, he not only failed to imitate what was good, but he even strived to emulate the wicked misconduct of those ungodly tyrants. And although he saw their deaths with his own eyes, he preferred to follow their judgment rather than the friendship and disposition of the better emperor.
- 1.11.2 Therefore, because Licinius was envious of Constantine who was a benefactor to all, he began an impious and most terrible war against him, paying no heed to natural laws, nor keeping in mind solemn oaths, or blood relationship, or treaties.
- 1.11.3 For Constantine, being a good emperor in every respect, was presenting to him true tokens of goodwill: He did not resist making family ties with him, nor did he refuse to give him his sister as a partner in a magnificent marriage.”<sup>43</sup>
- 1.11.4 Eusebius later writes, “But the God-hater Licinius was doing the exact opposite, daily inventing all sorts of contrivances against his better co-emperor and thinking of all means of treachery, so that he might repay the one doing good with evil.”<sup>44</sup>
- 1.11.5 Eusebius adds later, “But God was then a loving protector and guardian to him,” (to Constantine I mean), “and he brought to light and exposed the plans which the tyrant had contrived in secret and darkness. For virtue—the mighty weapon of the fear of God—has such great power both to ward off enemies and to guard one’s salvation. So then, our most God-loving Emperor Constantine, being strengthened by the help from God, escaped from the crafty schemes of the man whose name became evil.
- 1.11.6 But when the tyrant saw that his secret plot was not at all going according to plan because God was revealing every treachery and villainy to his beloved, and since Licinius was no longer able to conceal his purpose, he entered into open war.
- 1.11.7 And of course, at the same time as Licinius was determined to make war with Constantine, he was also drawing up his battle-line against the God of all, Constantine’s guardian, whom he knew Constantine worshiped. He then began to persecute those under his rule who feared God.”<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> The quotation from 1.11.1-3 is taken from Eusebius, H.E., 10.8.2-4.

<sup>44</sup> The quotation in 1.11.4 is taken from Eusebius, H.E., 10.8.5.

<sup>45</sup> This quotation from 1.11.5-7 is taken from Eusebius, H.E., 10.8.6-8.

- 1.11.8 Eusebius continues later, “The way in which they were murdered was something new and completely unheard of. That is, he ordered that the cities around Amasia and the remainder of Pontus be oppressed with such evil ferocity, that he outdid every excess of cruelty. There, some of the churches of God were immediately torn down—from their roofs down to the ground. Others he ordered to be closed, so that none of those accustomed to do so might gather together or render their due prayers and worship to God.
- 1.11.9 For Licinius did not believe that these rites were being carried out for his benefit. (How could one who hates God think in such a way?) But since his reasoning came from a bad conscience, Licinius concluded that we did them and pleaded with God for the benefit of the God-loving Emperor Constantine. For this reason then, being urged on by this, he imposed his wrath against us.”<sup>46</sup>
- 1.11.10 Soon after, Eusebius continues, “And indeed, many of the bishops who had done nothing wrong were arrested and were punished in the same way as murderers, but for no reason. They experienced a rather newly-invented means of execution: Their bodies were cut with a sword into many pieces. And after this cruel and most awful sight, they were tossed into the depths of the sea to be food for the fish.
- 1.11.11 Right after these things, all those who feared God—men, women, and children alike—were forced to flee. And once again the fields and deserted places, both wooded valleys and mountains, took in the servants of Christ as the ungodly one stirred up war against them all.”<sup>47</sup>
- 1.11.12 A bit later Eusebius says, “Yet our God who is good beyond all others most quickly foresaw what was about to happen. As in the depths of darkness and the darkest night, he suddenly shone forth a great light and deliverer for all, his servant Constantine, whom he guided with his mighty arm and most excellent hand.
- 1.11.13 To Constantine, God then granted from the heavens above a well-deserved fruit of his piety—trophies of victory over his ungodly enemies.<sup>48</sup> But as for that sinful man, the God of Constantine and of us all threw him down headlong under the feet of Constantine, together with all his advisers and loved ones.
- 1.11.14 For when the situation surrounding Licinius drove him to the utmost extremes of madness, the God-loving Emperor Constantine decided that he had become intolerable. Having used his natural, sound-minded, and pious reasoning to temper the harshness of his justice with kind-heartedness, he decided to come to the aid of those who were distressed by the tyrant. And he set out to rescue a very large portion of the human race by removing a few scoundrels.

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<sup>46</sup> The quotation from 1.11.8-9 is taken from Eusebius, H.E., 10.8.14-16.

<sup>47</sup> The quotation from 1.11.10-11 is taken from Eusebius, H.E., 10.8.17-18.

<sup>48</sup> The “trophy” were monuments which commemorated victory in battle. The word “trophy” can also refer generally to the blessings of victory or, by metonymy, to the victory itself.



- 1.11.15 For when the most kind-hearted Emperor Constantine had previously employed only kind-heartedness in dealing with that ungodly man and showed mercy to him who was unworthy of sympathy, Licinius did not leave behind his wicked excesses. But rather, his rage against the people under his control increased. And for those who were mistreated and oppressed by the terrible beast, there was no hope of rescue.
- 1.11.16 Therefore, it was at that point in time that the patron of good, combining his hatred of evil with his kind-heartedness, advanced together with his son, the most kind-hearted Emperor Crispus.<sup>49</sup> They advanced from the western lands of the great Roman Empire toward the east against the tyrant, extending a right hand of deliverance to all who were perishing. With God as their all-ruling emperor and his Son, Christ the Savior, as their guide and ally, both the father, Emperor Constantine, and his son, Emperor Crispus, divided their battle-lines against the God-haters and encircled them. Thus they obtained an easy victory since everything in the battle was arranged for them according to the will of God, the all-ruling emperor,<sup>50</sup> just as the most truth-loving Eusebius, son<sup>51</sup> of the all-praiseworthy Pamphilus says.
- 1.11.17 As for Rufinus, even if he made no mention of the fate that befell Licinius, nevertheless, since I have read through the words of that aforementioned one, I will also insert what he said into my history: “Licinius, then, who was ruling together with him (that is to say, the God-loving Constantine), held Greek beliefs and hated Christians. But he refrained from setting into motion any open persecution against them from fear of Emperor Constantine. Secretly, however, he was contriving many schemes.
- 1.11.18 But as time went on, he openly incited persecutions against everyone in the eastern regions, so that many martyrs of Christ became well-known in various places. And indeed, by such actions, he stirred Emperor Constantine to a great hatred against him. And thus they went to war against each other.”<sup>52</sup>
- 1.11.19 These are the things Rufinus says. But Philip,<sup>53</sup> who is in agreement with the truth of Eusebius Pamphili, says the following: “Dividing their army, father and son—Emperor

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<sup>49</sup> Crispus was Constantine’s eldest son and was born to Minervina. He was tutored by the Christian author Lactantius, and Constantine made him a Caesar over Gaul in 317. Nevertheless, Constantine had Crispus executed in 326 for reasons not entirely known. The Greek text of this work uses the same word βασιλεύς in referring to both Constantine and his son Crispus. However, Crispus was never a true emperor, i.e. Augustus. He ruled only under Constantine as second-in-command, i.e. Caesar. For more information on ranks and rulers of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, see the [page containing the Tetrarchy Table on fourthcentury.com](#).

<sup>50</sup> The quotation from 1.11.12-16 is taken from Eusebius, H.E., 10.8.19–9.4.

<sup>51</sup> Pamphilus was most likely not Eusebius’s biological father. However, Eusebius, as his disciple, successor, and possible heir, took on his name.

<sup>52</sup> Hansen asserts that this quotation from 11.17-11.18 is from Gelasius of Caesarea, H.E., fragment 7. See note 32 for more on the relationship between Rufinus and Gelasius of Caesarea and their writings.

<sup>53</sup> The manuscripts actually read “Οἱ δὲ λοιποὶ, ὅσοι τῆς Εὐσεβίου τοῦ Παμφίλου ἀληθείας συνήγοροι,” which would be, “But the rest, as many as are in agreement with the truth of Eusebius Pamphili.” However, because he believes the collective work of multiple authors is unlikely, Hansen suggests that perhaps the text should be emended to read “ὁ δὲ Φίλιππος ὁ τῆς...συνήγορος.” Thus what follows would be a quotation from the

Constantine and Emperor Crispus—rushed out against the ungodly tyrant. The son Crispus made the journey through parts of Asia together with his part of the army, while his father Constantine completed his path through Europe with his bodyguards beside him.

- 1.11.20 Meanwhile, the God-hater, full of all ungodliness and bloodthirstiness, came from the east with a very great army, preparing his battle-line against them and boasting. When he arrived at Nicomedia, he came to realize and understand the God-loving Constantine’s soul, which revered the priests of God, and that Constantine would treat them with every honor. So Licinius bribed Eusebius, the bishop of Nicomedia, who long before had fled to him for refuge since he was against the godly Emperor Constantine. Through Eusebius and Eusebius’s associates, Licinius intended to do away with Constantine, who was fortified with God’s invincible weapons.
- 1.11.21 Therefore, after he was entreated with promises by Licinius—his equal in ungodliness—the “marvelous” Eusebius reached an agreement with him.”<sup>54</sup> And we are assured that this really was the case by the very letter of the Christ-loving Emperor Constantine, which he sent to the people of Nicomedia.<sup>55</sup> And here is some of what is stated at the end of the letter:
- 1.11.22 “Who is it who taught these things in such a way to innocent people? Eusebius, of course—the one initiated into the cruelty of tyrants! For one is able to see from many considerations that he has come under the protection of the tyrant everywhere. The slaughtering of bishops (that is, of those who were truly bishops) bears witness to this. The most severe persecution of Christians explicitly shouts this.
- 1.11.23 For I will say nothing at present about the things which he did against me, through which, especially when the assaults of the opposing factions were at work against us, he even sent spies to watch me and supplied the tyrant with every helpful favor except armed men.
- 1.11.24 And let no one think I am unprepared to prove these things. There is specific evidence, for it is well-known that the presbyters and deacons attending to Eusebius were publicly arrested by me. But we are not citing these things now out of irritation, but in order to shame them. Yet the one thing that I fear and that keeps troubling my mind is this: I must regard you as accomplices in this crime. For through the course of instruction and perversion you received from Eusebius, your consciences have become separated from the truth.

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aforementioned *Christian History* by Philip of Side. For more information, see Hansen, “Eine fingierte Ansprache Konstantins auf dem Konzil von Nikaia” in *Zeitschrift antechristentum*, p. 195ff.

<sup>54</sup> This ends the section which Hansen considers to be a quotation from Philip of Side’s *Christian History*.

<sup>55</sup> This same portion of the letter is preserved in Theodoret H.E., 1.20.1-10 (according to the numbering system used in Parmentier’s 1954 edition). The complete letter can be found in appendix 1 of book 3 of Heinemann’s edition. The letter is not included in Hansen’s edition because Hansen asserts it has appeared in some manuscripts as a scribal addition. This letter of Constantine is also preserved in Athanasius, *De decretis Nicaenae synodi* 41.1-17.

- 1.11.25 But there is a rather quick cure, if now you just fix your eyes on God and take for yourselves a faithful and pure bishop. And indeed, you now have an opportunity to do this—a judgment you also could have made in the past. But those who gathered together at that time made a terrible decision and chose the aforementioned Eusebius, who came there and shamefully compromised the correct procedures.
- 1.11.26 But listen patiently, my beloved, for it is proper for me to tell you a few things about this Eusebius. In your tolerance, remember that there was a synod of bishops at the city of Nicaea, at which also I myself was present, in keeping with the service of my conscience. I desired only to bring about complete unanimity, and above all, to refute and renounce this matter which had begun through the madness of Arius of Alexandria. But instead, it immediately became stronger everywhere because of the deadly zeal of Eusebius.
- 1.11.27 What’s more, my most beloved and honorable subjects, consider how fervently (indeed, as if he was overcome by his conscience) and how shamefully this same Eusebius supported Arius’s false teaching, which had been completely refuted. He not only secretly sent several men to argue with me on his behalf, but he also sought some kind of alliance with me, lest being convicted for such a great sin, he might be deprived of the dignity of his present office.
- 1.11.28 God himself is my witness to these things, and may he continue to look with favor on me and you, because this Eusebius himself underhandedly deceived *even me* and led *me* astray. But divine providence led me back again to its most true path, something that you have already come to realize and will understand even more fully. For at that time he seemed to accomplish everything just as he wanted (I am speaking about the unholy Eusebius), while every kind of evil remained hidden in his mind.
- 1.11.29 But, so that I can skip the rest of his perverse actions, I ask you to especially listen to what he recently accomplished with Theognius, who participated in his unholy plan. I had ordered some of the Alexandrians who had left our faith to be sent away from there, since their ministries were igniting a firestorm of disagreement.
- 1.11.30 But these “good” and “noble” bishops, whom at one time the truth of the synod had protected and led to repent, not only received these other men and kept them safe among themselves, but they also joined them in their evil ways. Therefore, this was my judgment concerning those ungrateful men: I ordered them to be seized and banished as far away as possible.
- 1.11.31 It is now your duty to look to God in that faith, which, as is fitting, you always were and are doing, and to put it into practice in such a way that we can rejoice in having pure and orthodox and caring bishops. If anyone thoughtlessly dares to identify themselves with the memory of those corrupters or to praise them, as a consequence of his own boldness, he will immediately be removed from his duties through God’s servant, that is, me. May God watch over you, beloved brothers.”<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Here ends the quotation of the letter of Constantine, which was sent around November or December 325.

- 1.11.32 This letter of the God-loving Emperor Constantine brought to light most clearly these and other similar things about the impious Eusebius of Nicomedia. He had not only taken refuge with the God-hater Licinius, but was also initiated into and served his tyranny and ungodliness. I will now proceed to the stated purpose of this church history.
- 1.12.1 “Well then, Licinius and the army with him went from Nicomedia to Byzantium to wage war against the God-loving Emperor Constantine who was there at that time, and both of the military battle-lines were surrounding the emperor who was holding the imperial Christian symbol. When the sinful leader looked and saw that his own army was deserting him and fleeing to the shields of his better opponents, he first hurried to hide in Chrysopolis of Bythinia (that is, the sea-port of Chalcedon). But when he was unable to do so and instead found himself already lying face-down under the feet of Emperor Constantine, he then surrendered.”<sup>57</sup>
- 1.12.2 Then, the most fair and most godly emperor captured him alive, treated him with kindness, and did not put him to death. But he ordered him to live in retirement in Thessalonica.
- 1.12.3 Licinius appeared to live there peacefully for a short while, but later, he called together some barbarians. And after consulting with them, he hurriedly went to war to undo his defeat.
- 1.12.4 When the most faithful emperor found this out, he ordered that the God-hater be killed. And that tyrant against Christ and his servant was killed.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Hansen suggests that 1.12.1 may again be a quote from Philip of Side, perhaps the continuation of where he believes the last one left off in 1.11.21.

<sup>58</sup> The war against Licinius described in this work took place in 324, and Licinius was executed in 325.