

## Parts of five letters of Dionysius of Alexandria on the Persecutions under the Emperors Decius (249-51) and Valerian (253-60)

### Dionysius of Alexandria to Germanus on the Persecution under Decius

**Eusebius HE VI, chapter 40. The Events which happened to Dionysius.**

1. I shall quote from the epistle of Dionysius<sup>1</sup> to Germanus<sup>2</sup> an account of what befell the former. Speaking of himself, he writes as follows: I speak before God, and he knows that I do not lie. I did not flee on my own impulse nor without divine direction.

2. But even before this, at the very hour when the Decian persecution was commanded, Sabinus<sup>3</sup> sent a frumentarius<sup>4</sup> to search for me, and I remained at home four days awaiting his arrival.

3. But he went about examining all places — roads, rivers, and fields — where he thought I might be concealed or on the way. But he was smitten with blindness, and did not find the house, for he did not suppose, that being pursued, I would remain at home. And after the fourth day God commanded me to depart, and made a way for me in a wonderful manner; and I and my attendants and many of the brethren went away together. And that this occurred through the providence of God was made manifest by what followed, in which perhaps we were useful to some.

4. Farther on he relates in this manner what happened to him after his flight:

For about sunset, having been seized with those that were with me, I was taken by the soldiers to Taposiris,<sup>5</sup> but in the providence of God, Timothy was not present and was not captured. But coming later, he found the house deserted and guarded by soldiers, and ourselves reduced to slavery.

5. After a little he says:

And what was the manner of his admirable management? For the truth shall be told. One of the country people met Timothy fleeing and disturbed, and inquired the cause of his haste. And he told him the truth.

6. And when the man heard it (he was on his way to a marriage feast, for it was customary to spend the entire night in such gatherings), he entered and announced it to those at the table. And they, as if on a preconcerted signal, arose with one impulse, and rushed out quickly and came and burst in upon us with a shout. Immediately the soldiers who were guarding us fled, and they came to us lying as we were upon the bare couches.

7. But I, God knows, thought at first that they were robbers who had come for spoil and plunder. So I remained upon the bed on which I was, clothed only in a linen garment, and offered them the rest of my clothing which was lying beside me. But they directed me to rise and come away quickly.

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<sup>1</sup> Nearly everything we know about Dionysius bishop of Alexandria (247 - ca. 265) comes from the *Church History* of Eusebius of Caesarea (ca. 260 - ca.339)

<sup>2</sup> An Egyptian bishop who appears to have accused Dionysius of cowardice in fleeing and in suspending divine worship.

<sup>3</sup> Prefect of Egypt.

<sup>4</sup> A military courier.

<sup>5</sup> 37 miles west of Alexandria on the Mediterranean coast.

8. Then I understood why they had come, and I cried out, beseeching and entreating them to depart and leave us alone. And I requested them, if they desired to benefit me in any way, to anticipate those who were carrying me off, and cut off my head themselves. And when I had cried out in this manner, as my companions and partners in everything know, they raised me by force. But I threw myself on my back on the ground; and they seized me by the hands and feet and dragged me away.

9. And the witnesses of all these occurrences followed: Gaius, Faustus, Peter, and Paul. But they who had seized me carried me out of the village hastily, and placing me on an ass without a saddle, bore me away.

*Dionysius relates these things respecting himself.*

### **Dionysius of Alexandria to Fabius of Antioch on the Persecution under Decius HE VI, chapter 41. The Martyrs in Alexandria.**

*1. The same writer, in an epistle to Fabius, bishop of Antioch, relates as follows the sufferings of the martyrs in Alexandria under Decius:*

The persecution among us did not begin with the government decree, but preceded it an entire year.<sup>6</sup> The prophet and author of evils to this city, whoever he was, previously moved and aroused against us the masses of the heathen, rekindling among them the superstition of their country.

2. And being thus excited by him and finding full opportunity for any wickedness, they considered this the only pious service of their demons, that they should slay us.

3. They seized first an old man named Metras,<sup>7</sup> and commanded him to utter impious words. But as he would not obey, they beat him with clubs, and tore his face and eyes with sharp sticks, and dragged him out of the city and stoned him.

4. Then they carried to their idol temple a faithful woman, named Quinta, that they might force her to worship. And as she turned away in detestation, they bound her feet and dragged her through the entire city over the stone-paved streets, and dashed her against the millstones, and at the same time scourged her; then, taking her to the same place, they stoned her to death.

5. Then all with one impulse rushed to the homes of the pious, and they dragged forth whomsoever any one knew as a neighbour, and despoiled and plundered them. They took for themselves the more valuable property; but the poorer articles and those made of wood they scattered about and burned in the streets, so that the city appeared as if taken by an enemy.

6. But the brethren withdrew and went away, and 'took joyfully the spoiling of their goods,' like those to whom Paul bore witness. I know of no one unless possibly some one who fell into their hands, who, up to this time, denied the Lord.

7. Then they seized also that most admirable virgin, Apollonia,<sup>8</sup> an old woman, and, smiting her on the jaws, broke out all her teeth. And they made a fire outside the city and

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<sup>6</sup> The first Christian martyred as a result of the Decian law (Fabian, bishop of Rome) died on 20 January 250, so the persecution in Alexandria presumably started in 248.

<sup>7</sup> Commemorated in the West on January 31.

<sup>8</sup> Commemorated in western martyrologies on February 9.

threatened to burn her alive if she would not join with them in their impious cries. And she, supplicating a little, was released, when she leaped eagerly into the fire and was consumed.

8. Then they seized Serapion in his own house, and tortured him with harsh cruelties, and having broken all his limbs, they threw him headlong from an upper storey. And there was no street, nor public road, nor lane open to us, by night or day; for always and everywhere, all of them cried out that if any one would not repeat their impious words, he should immediately be dragged away and burned.

9. And matters continued thus for a considerable time. But a sedition and civil war came upon the wretched people and turned their cruelty toward us against one another. So we breathed for a little while as they ceased from their rage against us. But presently the change from that milder state of affairs was announced to us, and great fear of what was threatened seized us.

10. For the decree arrived,<sup>9</sup> almost like that most terrible time foretold by our Lord, which if it were possible would offend even the elect.

11. All truly were frightened. And many of the more forward in their fear came forward [to sacrifice] immediately; others who were in the public service were drawn on by their official duties; others were urged on by their acquaintances.<sup>10</sup> And as their names were called they approached the impure and impious sacrifices. Some of them were pale and trembled as if they were not about to sacrifice, but to be themselves sacrifices and offerings to the idols; so that they were jeered at by the multitude who stood around, as it was plain to every one that they were afraid either to die or to sacrifice.

12. But some advanced to the altars more readily, declaring boldly that they had never been Christians. Of these the prediction of our Lord is most true that they shall 'hardly' be saved. Of the rest some followed the one, others the other of these classes, some fled and some were seized.

13. And of the latter some continued faithful until bonds and imprisonment, and some who had even been imprisoned for many days yet abjured the faith before they were brought to trial. Others having for a time endured great tortures finally retracted.

14. But the firm and blessed pillars of the Lord being strengthened by him, and having received vigour and might suitable and appropriate to the strong faith which they possessed, became admirable witnesses of his kingdom.

15. The first of these was Julian, a man who suffered so much with the gout that he was unable to stand or walk. They brought him forward with two others who carried him. One of these immediately denied. But the other, whose name was Cronion, and whose surname was Eunus, and the old man Julian himself, both of them having confessed the Lord, were carried on camels through the entire city, which, as you know, is a very large one, and in this elevated position were beaten and finally burned in a fierce fire, surrounded by all the populace.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> The Emperor Decius (249-51) required all inhabitants of the Empire to sacrifice and obtain a certificate, a *libellus*. His motives are unclear.

<sup>10</sup> Similar scenes are described at Carthage by Cyprian the bishop (*On the Lapsed* 8) and Smyrna (*Passion of S. Pionius* 12, 2)

<sup>11</sup> Julian and Eunus are commemorated in the West on February 27.

16. But a soldier, named Besas, who stood by them as they were led away rebuked those who insulted them. And they cried out against him, and this most manly warrior of God was arraigned, and having done nobly in the great contest for piety, was beheaded.

17. A certain other one, a Libyan by birth, Macar by name and by blessedness,<sup>12</sup> was strongly urged by the judge to recant; but as he would not yield he was burned alive. After them Epimachus and Alexander,<sup>13</sup> having remained in bonds for a long time, and endured countless agonies from scrapers and scourges, were also consumed in a fierce fire.

18. And with them there were four women.<sup>14</sup> Ammonarium, a holy virgin, the judge tortured relentlessly and excessively, because she declared from the first that she would utter none of those things which he commanded; and having kept her promise truly, she was dragged away. The others were Mercuria, a very remarkable old woman, and Dionysia, the mother of many children, who did not love her own children above the Lord. As the governor was ashamed of torturing thus ineffectually, and being always defeated by women, they were put to death by the sword, without the trial of tortures. For the champion, Ammonarium, endured these in behalf of all.

19. The Egyptians,<sup>15</sup> Heron and Ater and Isidorus, and with them Dioscorus, a boy about fifteen years old, were delivered up. At first the judge attempted to deceive the lad by fair words, as if he could be brought over easily, and then to force him by tortures, as one who would readily yield. But Dioscorus was neither persuaded nor constrained.

20. As the others remained firm, he scourged them cruelly and then delivered them to the fire. But admiring the manner in which Dioscorus had distinguished himself publicly, and his wise answers to his persuasions, he dismissed him, saying that on account of his youth he would give him time for repentance. And this most godly Dioscorus is among us now, awaiting a longer conflict and more severe contest.

21. But a certain Nemesion, who also was an Egyptian, was accused as an associate of robbers; but when he had cleared himself before the centurion of this charge most foreign to the truth, he was informed against as a Christian, and taken in bonds before the governor. And the most unrighteous magistrate inflicted on him tortures and scourgings double those which he executed on the robbers, and then burned him between the robbers, thus honoring the blessed man by the likeness to Christ.

22. A band of soldiers, Ammon and Zeno and Ptolemy and Ingenes, and with them an old man, Theophilus, were standing close together before the tribunal. And as a certain person who was being tried as a Christian, seemed inclined to deny, they standing by gnashed their teeth, and made signs with their faces and stretched out their hands, and gestured with their bodies. And when the attention of all was turned to them, before any one else could seize them, they rushed up to the tribunal saying that they were Christians, so that the governor and his council were affrighted. And those who were on trial appeared most courageous in prospect of their sufferings, while their judges trembled. And they went

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<sup>12</sup> Makarios is the Greek for 'happy' or 'blessed'.

<sup>13</sup> Commemorated on December 12.

<sup>14</sup> Also commemorated on December 12.

<sup>15</sup> Those not from the cosmopolitan city of Alexandria were described as Egyptians. These martyrs are commemorated on December 14.

exultingly from the tribunal rejoicing in their testimony; God himself having caused them to triumph gloriously.<sup>16</sup>

#### **HE VI chapter 42. Others of whom Dionysius gives an Account.**

1. Many others, in cities and villages, were torn asunder by the heathen, of whom I will mention one as an illustration. Ischyriion was employed as a steward by one of the rulers. His employer commanded him to sacrifice, and on his refusal insulted him, and as he remained firm, abused him. And as he still held out he seized a long staff and thrust it through his bowels and slew him.<sup>17</sup>

2. Why need I speak of the multitude that wandered in the deserts and mountains, and perished by hunger, and thirst, and cold, and sickness, and robbers, and wild beasts? Those of them who survived are witnesses of their election and victory.

3. But I will relate one occurrence as an example. Chæremon, who was very old, was bishop of the city called Nilus. He fled with his wife to the Arabian mountain and did not return. And though the brethren searched diligently they could not find either them or their bodies.

4. And many who fled to the same Arabian mountain were carried into slavery by the barbarian Saracens. Some of them were ransomed with difficulty and at a large price; others have not been to the present time. I have related these things, my brother, not without an object, but that you may understand how many and great distresses came upon us. Those indeed will understand them the best who have had the largest experience of them.

5. *A little further on he adds:* These divine martyrs among us, who now are seated with Christ, and are sharers in his kingdom, partakers of his judgment and judges with him, received some of the brethren who had fallen away and become chargeable with the guilt of sacrificing. When they perceived that their conversion and repentance were sufficient to be acceptable with him who by no means desires the death of the sinner, but his repentance, having proved them they received them back and brought them together, and met with them and had fellowship with them in prayers and feasts.

6. What counsel then, brethren, do you give us concerning such persons? What should we do? Shall we have the same judgment and rule as theirs, and observe their decision and charity, and show mercy to those whom they pitied? Or, shall we declare their decision unrighteous, and set ourselves as judges of their opinion, and grieve mercy and overturn order? These words Dionysius very properly added when making mention of those who had been weak in the time of persecution....

#### **Dionysius of Alexandria to Fabius of Antioch on the Persecution under Decius**

##### **HE VI chapter 44. Dionysius' Account of Serapion.**

1. *To this same Fabius... Dionysius of Alexandria also wrote an epistle. He writes in this many other things concerning repentance, and relates the conflicts of those who had lately*

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<sup>16</sup> Nemesion and the soldiers are commemorated on December 19 and 20 respectively.

<sup>17</sup> Ischyriion is commemorated on December 22. If these dates can be trusted it may be that the Decian decree ceased to be enforced by the beginning of 251. It may be noted that the church of Rome was able to elect a bishop to succeed in March 251. Decius was killed in battle in the Balkans in June 251.

*suffered martyrdom at Alexandria. After the other account he mentions a certain wonderful fact, which deserves a place in this work. It is as follows:*

2. I will give you this one example which occurred among us. There was with us a certain Serapion, an aged believer who had lived for a long time blamelessly, but had fallen in the trial. He besought often, but no one gave heed to him, because he had sacrificed. But he became sick, and for three successive days continued speechless and senseless.

3. Having recovered somewhat on the fourth day he sent for his daughter's son, and said, How long do you detain me, my child? I beseech you, make haste, and absolve me speedily. Call one of the presbyters to me. And when he had said this, he became again speechless. And the boy ran to the presbyter. But it was night and he was sick, and therefore unable to come.

4. But as I had given an order<sup>18</sup> that persons at the point of death, if they requested it, and especially if they had asked for it previously, should receive remission, that they might depart with a good hope, he gave the boy a small portion of the eucharist, telling him to soak it and let the drops fall into the old man's mouth.

5. The boy returned with it, and as he drew near, before he entered, Serapion again arousing, said, 'You have come, my child, and the presbyter could not come; but do quickly what he directed, and let me depart.' Then the boy soaked it and dropped it into his mouth. And when he had swallowed a little, immediately he gave up the ghost.

6. Is it not evident that he was preserved and his life continued till he was absolved, and, his sin having been blotted out, he could be acknowledged for the many good deeds which he had done?

### **Dionysius of Alexandria to Germanus on the Persecution under Valerian**

#### ***HE VII, chapter 11. Events which happened at this Time to Dionysius and those in Egypt.***

*1. But as regards the persecution which prevailed so fiercely in his reign, and the sufferings which Dionysius with others endured on account of piety toward the God of the universe, his own words shall show, which he wrote in answer to Germanus, a contemporary bishop who was endeavouring to slander him. His statement is as follows:*

2. Truly I am in danger of falling into great folly and stupidity through being forced to relate the wonderful providence of God toward us. But since it is said that 'it is good to keep close the secret of a king, but it is honourable to reveal the works of God,' [*Tobit 12:7*] I will join issue with the violence of Germanus.

3. I did not go to Æmilianus alone;<sup>19</sup> but my fellow presbyter Maximus,<sup>20</sup> and the deacons Faustus, Eusebius, and Chæremon, and a brother who was present from Rome, went with me.

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<sup>18</sup> Similar instructions to give the viaticum to those who had lapsed but were at the point of death were in force at Rome and Carthage.

<sup>19</sup> L. Mussius Aemilianus was Deputy Prefect of Egypt under the Emperor Valerian in 258 and tried to become emperor in 260 after Valerian had been captured by the Shah of Persia.

<sup>20</sup> Maximus was eventually the successor of Dionysius as Bishop of Alexandria.

4. But Æmilianus did not start off by saying to me: 'Hold no assemblies;' for that would have been beside the point for him, and the last thing to say for one who was seeking to accomplish the first. For he was not concerned about our assembling, but that we ourselves should not be Christians. And he commanded me to give this up; supposing if I turned from it, the others also would follow me.<sup>21</sup>

5. But I answered him, neither unsuitably nor in many words: 'We must obey God rather than men.' [Acts 5:29] And I testified openly that I worshipped the one only God, and no other; and that I would not turn from this nor would I ever cease to be a Christian. Thereupon he commanded us to go to a village near the desert, called Cephro.<sup>22</sup>

6. But listen to the very words which were spoken on both sides, as they were recorded:<sup>23</sup> Dionysius, Faustus, Maximus, Marcellus, and Chæremon being arraigned, Æmilianus the prefect said:

7. 'I have reasoned verbally with you concerning the clemency which our rulers have shown to you; for they have given you the opportunity to save yourselves, if you will turn to that which is according to nature, and worship the gods that preserve their empire, and forget those that are contrary to nature. What then do you say to this? For I do not think that you will be ungrateful for their kindness, since they would turn you to a better course.'

8. Dionysius replied: 'Not all people worship all gods; but each one those whom he approves.<sup>24</sup> We therefore reverence and worship the one God, the Maker of all; who has given the empire to the divinely favoured and august Valerian and Gallienus; and we pray to him continually for their empire that it may remain unshaken.'<sup>25</sup>

9. Æmilianus, the prefect, said to them: 'But who forbids you to worship him, if he is a god, together with those who are the natural gods. For you have been commanded to reverence the gods, and the gods whom everyone knows.' Dionysius answered:

10. 'We worship no other'.<sup>26</sup> Æmilianus, the prefect, said to them: 'I see that you are at once ungrateful, and insensible to the kindness of our sovereigns. Wherefore you shall not remain in this city. But you shall be sent into the regions of Libya, to a place called Cephro. For I have chosen this place at the command of our sovereigns, and it shall by no means be

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<sup>21</sup> The persecution of Valerian began in the summer of 257 with the arraignment of bishops, priests and deacons who were brought before the governors and ordered to sacrifice or face internal exile. This is what happened to Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage. Christian meetings in church or in the cemeteries were then proscribed. It was not till August 258, a year later, that leading Christians were given the choice of sacrifice or death. Xystus, Bishop of Rome was martyred on 6 August, Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage on September 258.

<sup>22</sup> The name means village. It was obviously in the province of Libya, to the west of Egypt, but its precise location is not known. Cyprian was similarly sent into exile in the countryside.

<sup>23</sup> What follows is based on the *procès-verbal* of the dialogue. Such reports of proceedings did not aim to give a comprehensive of everything said during a judicial examination, but enough of the dialogue to support the decision arrived at by the presiding official.

<sup>24</sup> The Roman Empire allowed substantial variation in individual religious preference, but all were obliged to acknowledge the "natural Gods", as Æmilianus calls them, the Gods of the community to which they belonged.

<sup>25</sup> Christians frequently assert that though they will not pray to the Emperor, they pray assiduously for the Emperor (e.g. Athenagoras, *Legatio* 37, 2)

<sup>26</sup> Dionysius presumably implies that the Christian God is the Creator of all things and so, to speak rightly, the God of everyone.

permitted you or any others, either to hold assemblies, or to enter into the so-called cemeteries.

11. But if any one shall be seen without the place which I have commanded, or be found in any assembly, he will bring peril on himself. For suitable punishment shall not fail. Go, therefore where you have been ordered.'

And he hastened me away, though I was sick, not granting even a day's respite. What opportunity then did I have, either to hold assemblies, or not to hold them?<sup>27</sup>

12. *Farther on he says:* But through the help of the Lord we did not give up the open assembly. But I called together the more diligently those who were in the city, as if I were with them; being, so to speak, 'absent in body but present in spirit' [1 *Corinthians* 5:3]. But in Cephro a large church gathered with us of the brethren that followed us from the city, and those that joined us from Egypt; and there 'God opened unto us a door for the Word' [Colossians 4:3]

13. At first we were persecuted and stoned; but afterwards not a few of the pagans forsook the idols and turned to God. For until this time they had not heard the Word, since it was then first sown by us.

14. And as if God had brought us to them for this purpose, when we had performed this ministry he transferred us to another place. For Æmilianus, as it appeared, desired to transport us to rougher and more Libyan-like places; so he commanded them to assemble from all quarters in Mareotis<sup>28</sup>, and assigned to them different villages throughout the country. But he ordered us to be placed nearer the highway that we might be seized first. For evidently he arranged and prepared matters so that whenever he wished to seize us he could take all of us without difficulty.

15. When I was first ordered to go to Cephro I did not know where the place was, and had scarcely ever heard the name; yet I went readily and cheerfully. But when I was told that I was to remove to the district of Colluthion,<sup>29</sup> those who were present know how I was affected.

16. For here I will accuse myself. At first I was grieved and greatly disturbed; for though these places were better known and more familiar to us, yet the country was said to be destitute of brethren and of men of character, and to be exposed to the annoyances of travellers and incursions of robbers.

17. But I was comforted when the brethren reminded me that it was nearer the city, and that while Cephro afforded us much intercourse with the brethren from Egypt, so that we were able to extend the Church more widely, as this place was nearer the city we should enjoy more frequently the sight of those who were truly beloved and most closely related and dearest to us. For they would come and remain, and special meetings could be held, as in the more remote suburbs. And thus it turned out.

*After other matters he writes again as follows of the things which happened to him:*

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<sup>27</sup> Part of the criticism levelled by Bishop Germanus, to whom Dionysius is responding, is that he did not hold Christian assemblies.

<sup>28</sup> Large lake, fed in ancient times by the Nile which gave its name to an area west of Alexandria.

<sup>29</sup> Apparently the same as the district of Mareotis. The name is common in Egypt, but this Colluthion is not otherwise attested.



18. Germanus indeed boasts of many confessions.<sup>30</sup> He can speak forsooth of many adversities which he himself has endured. But is he able to reckon up as many as we can, of sentences, confiscations, proscriptions, plundering of goods, loss of dignities, contempt of worldly glory, disregard for the flatteries of governors and of councilors, and patient endurance of the threats of opponents, of outcries, of perils and persecutions, and wandering and distress, and all kinds of tribulation, such as came upon me under Decius and Sabinus, and such as continue even now under Æmilianus? But where has Germanus been seen? And what account is there of him?

19. But I turn from this great folly into which I am falling on account of Germanus. And for the same reason I desist from giving to the brethren who know it an account of everything which took place.

### **More from Dionysius of Alexandria on the Persecution under Decius (249-51)**

*HE VII, 11, 20. The same writer also in the epistle to Domitius and Didymus mentions some particulars of the persecution as follows:*<sup>31</sup>

As our people are many and unknown to you, it would be superfluous to give their names; but understand that men and women, young and old, maidens and matrons, soldiers and civilians, of every race and age, some by scourging and fire, others by the sword, have conquered in the strife and received their crowns.

21. But in the case of some a very long time was not sufficient to make them appear acceptable to the Lord; as, indeed, it seems also in my own case, that sufficient time has not yet elapsed. Wherefore he has retained me for the time which he knows to be fitting, saying, 'In an acceptable time have I heard you, and in a day of salvation have I helped you' [*Isaiah 49:8*].<sup>32</sup>

22. For as you have inquired of our affairs and desire us to tell you how we are situated, you have heard fully that when we — that is, myself and Gaius and Faustus and Peter and Paul — were led away as prisoners by a centurion and magistrates, with their soldiers and servants, certain persons from Mareotis came and dragged us away by force, as we were unwilling to follow them.

23. But now I and Gaius and Peter are alone, deprived of the other brethren, and shut up in a desert and dry place in Libya, three days' journey from Parætonium.<sup>33</sup>

24. *He says farther on:* The presbyters, Maximus, Dioscorus, Demetrius, and Lucius concealed themselves in the city, and visited the brethren secretly; for Faustinus and Aquila, who are more prominent in the world, are wandering in Egypt. But the deacons, Faustus, Eusebius, and Chæremon, have survived those who died in the pestilence. Eusebius is one whom God has strengthened and endowed from the first to fulfill energetically the ministrations for the imprisoned confessors, and to attend to the dangerous task of preparing for burial the bodies of the perfected and blessed martyrs.

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<sup>30</sup> *Scilicet* confessions of the Faith under duress.

<sup>31</sup> This letter, earlier than the one which precedes it, summarizes some of the same events of the year 250 given (in greater detail) in the first letter to Bishop Germanus copied by Eusebius in *HE VI*, 40.

<sup>32</sup> In the letters of Cyprian of Carthage (esp. *ep.* 81) and also in the *Life* by his deacon Pontius, there is a strong sense that there is a *kairos*, an acceptable time, for martyrdom set by God and not by the individual.

<sup>33</sup> Modern Mersa Matruh, on the Mediterranean coast, 150 miles west of Alexandria

25. For as I have said before, unto the present time the governor continues to put to death in a cruel manner those who are brought to trial. And he destroys some with tortures, and wastes others away with imprisonment and bonds; and he suffers no one to go near them, and investigates whether any one does so. Nevertheless God gives relief to the afflicted through the zeal and persistence of the brethren.

*26. Thus far Dionysius. But it should be known that Eusebius, whom he calls a deacon, shortly afterward became bishop of the church of Laodicea in Syria<sup>34</sup>; and Maximus, of whom he speaks as being then a presbyter, succeeded Dionysius himself as bishop of Alexandria. But the Faustus who was with him, and who at that time was distinguished for his confession, was preserved until the persecution in our day,<sup>35</sup> when being very old and full of days, he closed his life by martyrdom, being beheaded. But such are the things which happened at that time to Dionysius.*

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<sup>34</sup> Modern Lattakia in Syria

<sup>35</sup> I.e. the Great Persecution of 303-13. Faustus, by that time a presbyter, was killed alongside Peter, Bishop of Alexandria, who died on 25 November 311.