

# Historia Acephala

## By Saint Athanasius (296 – 373)

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I. 1. The Emperor Constantius also wrote concerning the return of Athanasius, and among the Emperor's letters this one too is to be found.

2. And it came to pass after the death of Gregory that Athanasius returned from the city of [Rome](#) and the parts of [Italy](#), and entered Alexandria Paophi xxiv, Coss. Constantius IV, Constans III (October 21, 346); that is after [vii] years vi [months and iii days,] and remained quiet at Alexandria ix years iii months [and xix days].

II. Now after his return, Coss. Limenius and Catulinus (349), Theodore, Narcissus, and George, with others, came to Constantinople, wishing to persuade [Paul](#) to communicate with them, who received them not even with a word, and answered their greeting with an [anathema](#). So they took to themselves Eusebius of [Nicomedia](#), and laid snares for the most [blessed Paul](#), and lodging a [calumny](#) against him concerning Constans and Magnentius, expelled him from CP. that they might have room there, and sow the [Arian heresy](#). Now the people of CP., desiring the most [blessed Paul](#), raised continual riots to prevent his being taken from the city, for they loved his sound doctrine. The Emperor, however, was [angry](#), and sent Count Hermogenes to cast him out; but the people, hearing this, dragged forth Hermogenes through the midst of the town. From which matter they obtained a pretext against the Bishop, and exiled him to Armenia. Theodore and the rest wishing to place in the See of that Town Eudoxius, an ally and partisan of the [Arian heresy](#), ordained [Bishop] of Germanicia, while the people were stirred to riot, and would not allow any one to sit in the See of [blessed Paul](#),—they took Macedonius, a [presbyter](#) of [Paul](#), and ordained him [bishop](#) of the town of CP., whom the whole assembly of [bishops](#) condemned, since against his own father he had disloyally received [laying on of hands](#) from [heretics](#).

However, after Macedonius had communicated with them and signed, they brought in pretexts of no importance, and removing him from the [Church](#), they instal the aforesaid Eudoxius of [Antioch](#), whence [the partakers] in this secession are called Macedonians, making shipwreck concerning the [Holy Spirit](#).

III. 3. After this time Athanasius, hearing that there was to be disturbance against him, the Emperor Constantius being in residence at Milan (353), sent to court a vessel with v Bishops, Serapion of Thmuis, Triadelphus of Nicotas, Apollo of Upper Cynopolis, Ammonius of Pachemmon,...and iii Presbyters of Alexandria, Peter the Physician, Astericus, and Phileas. After their setting sail from [Alexandria](#), Coss. Constantius VI Augustus, and Constantius Cæsar II, Pachom xxiv (May 19, 353), presently four days after [Montanus](#) of the Palace entered Alexandria Pachom xxviii, and gave a letter of the

same Constantius Augustus to the [bishop](#) Athanasius, forbidding him to come to court, on which account the [bishop](#) was exceedingly desolate, and the whole people much troubled. So [Montanus](#), accomplishing nothing, set forth, leaving the [bishop](#) at Alexandria.

4. Now after a while Diogenes, Imperial Notary, came to [Alexandria](#) in the month of Mensor (August, 355) Coss. Arbetion and Lollianus: that is ii years and v months from when [Montanus](#) left Alexandria. And Diogenes pressed every one urgently to compel the [bishop](#) to leave the town, and afflicted all not a little. Now on the vi day of the month Thoth, he made a sharp attempt to besiege the church, and he spent iv months in his efforts, that is from the month Mensor, or from the [first] day of those intercalated until the xxvi day of Choiac (Dec. 23). But as the people and the judges strongly resisted Diogenes, Diogenes returned without success on the xxvi day of the said month Choiac, Coss. Arbetion and Lollianus, after iv months as aforesaid.

IV. 5. Now Duke Syrianus, and Hilary the Notary, came from [Egypt](#) to [Alexandria](#) on the tenth day of Tybi (Jan. 6, 356) after Coss. Arbetion and Lollianus. And sending in front all the legions of soldiers throughout [Egypt](#) and Libya, the Duke and the Notary entered the Church of Theonas with their whole force of soldiers by night, on the xiii day of Mechir, during the night preceding the xiv. And breaking the doors of the Church of Theonas, they entered with an [infinite](#) force of soldiers. But [bishop](#) Athanasius escaped their hands, and was saved, on the aforesaid xiv of Mechir. Now this happened ix years iii months and xix days from the Bishop's return from [Italy](#). But when the Bishop was delivered, his [presbyters](#) and people remained in possession of the [Churches](#), and holding communion iv months, until there entered Alexandria the prefect Cataphronius and Count Heraclius in the month Pahyni xvi day, Coss. Constantius VIII and Julianus Cæsar I (June 10, 356).

V. 6. And four days after they entered the Athanasians were ejected from the [Churches](#), and they were handed over to those who belonged to George, and were expecting him as Bishop. So they received the Churches on the xxi day of Pahyni. Moreover George arrived at Alexandria, Coss. Constantius IX, and Julianus Cæsar II, Mechir xxx (Feb. 24, 357), that is, eight months and xi days from when his party received the Churches. So George entered Alexandria, and kept the Churches xviii whole months: and then the common people attacked him in the Church of Dionysius, and he was hardly delivered with danger and a great struggle on the i day of the month Thoth, Coss. Tatianus and Cerealis (Aug. 29, 358). Now George was ejected from [Alexandria](#) on the x day after the riot, namely v of Paophi (Oct. 2). But they who belonged to Bishop Athanasius, ix days after the departure of George, that is on the xiv of Pa[ophi], cast out the men of George, and held the Churches two months and xiv days; until there came Duke Sebastian from [Egypt](#) and cast them out, and again assigned the Churches to the party of George on the xxviii day of the month Choiac (Dec. 24).

7. Now ix whole months after the departure of George from [Alexandria](#), Paulus the Notary arrived Pahyni xxix, Coss. Eusebius, Hypatius (June 23, 359), and published an Imperial Order on behalf of George, and coerced many in vengeance for him. And [ii years and] v months after, George came to [Alexandria](#) Athyr xxx (Coss. Taurus, and

Florentius) from court (Nov. 26, 361), that is iii years and two months after he had fled. And at [Antioch](#) they of the [Arian heresy](#), casting out the Paulinians from the [Church](#), appointed Meletius. When he would not consent to their [evil mind](#), they ordained Euzoius a [presbyter](#) of George of Alexandria in his stead.

VI. 8. Now George, having entered Alexandria as aforesaid on the xxx Athyr, remained safely in the town iii days, that is [till] iii Choiac. For, on the iv day of that same month, the prefect Gerontius announced the death of the Emperor Constantius, and that Julianus alone held the whole Empire. Upon which news, the citizens of Alexandria and all shouted against George, and with one accord placed him under custody. And he was in prison bound with iron from the aforesaid iv day of Choiac, up to the xxvii of the same month, xxiv days. For on the xxviii day of the same month early in the morning, nearly all the people of that town led forth George from prison, and also the Count who was with him, the Superintendent of the building of the Church which is called Cæsareum, and killed them both, and carried their bodies round through the midst of the town, that of George on a camel, but that of Dracontius, men dragging it by ropes; and so having insulted them, at about the vii hour of the day, they burnt the bodies of each.

VII. 9. Now in the next...day of Mechir the x day of the month, after Coss. Taurus and Florentius (Feb. 4, 362), an order of the Emperor Julian was published commanding those things to be restored to the [idols](#) and temple attendants and the public account, which in former times had been taken away from them.

10. But after iii days, Mechir xiv, an order was given of the same Emperor Julian, also of the Vicar Modestus, to Gerontius prefect, ordering all Bishops hitherto defeated by factions and exiled to return to their towns and provinces. Now this letter was published on the following day Mechir xv, while subsequently an edict also of the prefect Gerontius was published, by which the Bishop Athanasius was ordered to return to his Church. And xii days after the publication of this Edict Athanasius was seen at Alexandria, and entered the Church in the same month Mechir, xxvii day, so that there is from his flight which took place in the times of Syrianus and Hilary till his return, when Julianus...Mechir xxvii. He remained in the Church until Paophi xxvi, Coss. Mamertinus and Nevitta (Oct. 23, 362), viii whole months.

11. Now on the aforesaid day, Paophi xxvii, he [the prefect] published an Edict of the Emperor Julianus, that Athanasius, Bishop, should retire from [Alexandria](#), and no sooner was the Edict published, than the Bishop left the town and abode round about Thereu. Soon after his departure Olympus the prefect, in [obedience](#) to the same Pythiodorus, and those who were with him, most difficult [persons](#), sent into exile Paulus and Astericius, [presbyters](#) of Alexandria, and directed them to live at the town of Andropolis.

VIII. 12. Now Olympus the same prefect, in the month Mensor, xxvi day, Coss. Julianus Augustus IV. and Sallustius (Aug. 20, 363), announced that Julian the Emperor was dead, and that Jovianus a [Christian](#) was Emperor. And in the following month, Thoth xviii, a letter of the Emperor Jovianus came to Olympus the prefect that only the most high God should be worshipped, and [Christ](#), and that the peoples, holding communion in the

[Churches](#), should practise religion. Moreover Paulus and Astericius, the aforesaid [presbyters](#), returned from exile at the town of Andropolis, and entered Alexandria, on the x day of Thoth, after x months.

13. Now Bishop Athanasius, having tarried as aforesaid at Thereon, went up to the higher parts of [Egypt](#) as far as Upper Hermopolis in the Thebaid, and as far as Antinoopolis. And while he was staying in these places, it was learned that the Emperor Julian was dead, and that Jovian a [Christian](#) was Emperor. So the Bishop entered Alexandria secretly, his arrival not being [known](#) to many, and went by sea to meet the Emperor Jovian, and afterwards, Church affairs being settled, received a letter, and came to [Alexandria](#) and entered into the Church on the xix day of Athyr Coss. Jovianus and Varronianus. From his leaving Alexandria according to the order of Julian until he arrived on the aforesaid xix day of Athyr after one year and iii months, and xxii days.

IX. Now at CP. Eudoxius of Germanicia held the [Church](#), and there was a division between him and Macedonius; but by means of Eudoxius there went forth another worse [heresy](#) from the spurious [teaching] of the [Arians](#), Aetius and Patricius of Nicæa, who communicated with Eunomius, Heliodorus, and Stephen. And Eudoxius adopting this, communicated with Euzoius, Bishop at [Antioch](#), of the [Arian sect](#), and they deposed on a pretext Seleucius and Macedonius, and Hypatian, and other xv Bishops belonging to them, since they would not receive 'Unlike' nor 'Creature of the Uncreated.' Now their Exposition is as follows:—

Exposition of Patricius and Aetius, who communicated with Eunomius, Heliodorus, and Stephen.

These are the attributes of [God](#), Unbegotten, without origin, Eternal, not to be commanded, Immutable, All-seeing, Infinite, Incomparable, Almighty, [knowing](#) the future without foresight; without beginning. These do not belong to the [Son](#), for He is commanded, is under command, is made from nothing, has an end, is not compared [with the Father], the Father surpasses Him...of Christ is found: as pertaining to the [Father](#), He is [ignorant](#) of the future. He was not [God](#), but [Son of God](#); God of those who are after Him: and in this He possesses invariable likeness with the [Father](#), namely He sees all things because all things...because He is not changed in goodness; [but] not like in the quality of Godhead, nor in nature. But if we said that He was born of the quality of Godhead, we say that He resembles the offspring of serpents, and that is an impious saying: and like as a [statue](#) produces rust from itself, and will be consumed by the rust itself, so also the [Son](#), if He is produced from the [nature](#) of the [Father](#), will consume the Father. But from the work, and the newness of work, the Son is naturally [God](#), and not from the Nature, but from another nature like as the [Father](#), but not from Him. For He was made the image of [God](#), and we are out of [God](#), and from [God](#). Inasmuch as all things are from [God](#), and the Son also, as if from something [else]. Like as iron if it has rust will be diminished, like as a body if it produces worms is eaten up, like as a wound if it produce discharges will be consumed by them, so [thinks] he who says that the Son is from the Nature of the Father; now let him who does not say that the Son is like the Father be put outside the Church and be [anathema](#). If we shall say that the [Son of God](#) is

[God](#), we bring in Two without beginning: we call Him Image of [God](#); he who calls Him 'out from God' Sabellianises. And he who says that he is [ignorant](#) of the nativity of God Manicheanizes: if any one shall say that the Essence of the Son is like the Essence of the Father unbegotten, he blasphemates. For just as snow and white lead are similar in whiteness but dissimilar in kind, so also the Essence of the Son is other than the Essence of the Father. But snow has a different whiteness ...

Be pleased to hear that the Son is like the Father in His operations; like as Angels cannot comprehend the Nature of Archangels, let them please to understand, nor Archangels the Nature of a Cherubin, nor Cherubins the Nature of the [Holy Spirit](#), nor the [Holy Spirit](#) the Nature of the Only-begotten, nor the Only-begotten the [nature](#) of the Unbegotten God.

14. Now when the Bishop Athanasius was about coming from [Antioch](#) to [Alexandria](#), the [Arians](#) Eudoxius, Theodore, Sophronius, Euzoios and Hilary took counsel and appointed Lucius, a [presbyter](#) of George, to seek audience of the Emperor Jovian at the Palace, and to say what is contained in the copies. *Now here we have omitted some less necessary matter.*

X. 15. Now after Jovian, Valentinian and Valens having been somewhat rapidly summoned to the throne, a decree of theirs, circulated everywhere, which also was delivered at Alexandria on Pachon x, Coss. Valentinian and Valens (May 5, 365), to the effect that the Bishops deposed and expelled from their Churches under Constantius, who had in the time of Julian's reign reclaimed for themselves and taken back their Bishopric, should now be cast out anew from the [Churches](#), a penalty being laid on the courts of a fine of ccc pounds of gold, unless that is they should have [ba]nished the Bishops from the Churches and towns. On which account at Alexandria great confusion and riot arose, insomuch that the whole [Church](#) was troubled, since also the officials were few in number with the prefect Flavian and his staff: and on account of the imperial order and the fine of gold they were urgent that the Bishops should leave the town; the [Christian](#) multitude resisting and gainsaying the officials and the judge, and maintaining that the Bishop Athanasius did not come under this definition nor under the Imperial order, because neither did Constantius banish him, but even restored him. Likewise also Julian [persecuted](#) him; he recalled all, and him for the sake of [idolatry](#) he cast out anew, but Jovian brought him back. This opposition and riot went on until the next month Payni, on the xiv day; for on this day the prefect Flavian made a report, declaring that he had consulted the Emperors on this very point which was stirred at Alexandria, and so they all became quiet in a short time.

XI. 16. iv months and xxiv days after, that is on Paophi viii, the Bishop Athanasius left the Church secretly by night, and retired to a villa near the New River. But the prefect Flavian and Duke Victorinus not [knowing](#) that he had retired, on the same night arrived at the Church of Dionysius with a force of soldiers: and having broken the back door, and entered the upper parts of the house in search of the Bishop's apartment, they did not find him, for, not long before he had retired, and he remained, staying at the aforesaid property from the above day, Paophi viii, till Mechir vi, that is iv whole months (Oct. 5-Jan. 31). After this, the Imperial notary Bresidas, in the same month Mechir came to

[Alexandria](#) with an Imperial letter, ordering the said Bishop Athanasius to return to Town, and hold the Churches as usual; and on the vii day of the month Mechir, after Coss. Valentinian and Valens, that is Coss. Gratian and Degalaifus, the said notary Bresidas with Duke Victorinus and Flavian the Prefect assembled at the palace and announced to the officers of the courts who were present, and the people, that the Emperors had ordered the Bishop to return to town, and straightway the said Bresidas the notary went forth with the officers of the courts, and a multitude of the people of the [Christians](#) to the aforesaid villa, and taking the Bishop Athanasius with the Imperial order, led him in to the [Church](#) which is called that of Dionysius on the vii day of the month Mechir.

XII. 17. From Coss. Gratian and Dagalaifus (366) to the next consulships of Lupicinus and Jovinus (367) and that of [Valentinian II. and] Valens II. on Payni xiv (June 8, 368) in [this] Consulship xl [years of the Bishopric] of Athanasius are finished. Out of which [years] he abode at Treveri in [Gaul](#) [ii years iv months xi days, and in [Italy](#) and the West] xc months and iii days. At Alexandria [and] in uncertain places in hiding, when he was being harassed by Hilary the notary and the Duke, lxxii months and xiv days. In [Egypt](#) and [Antioch](#) upon journeys xv months and xxii days: upon the property near the new river iv months. The result will be exactly vi months and xvii years and xx days. Moreover, he remained in quiet at Alexandria xxii years and v months x days. But also, he twice stayed a little time outside Alexandria in his last journey and at [Tyre](#) and at CP. Accordingly, the result will be as I have stated above, xl years of the [episcopate](#) of Athanasius until Payni [x]iv, Coss. Valentinian and Valens. And in the following consulate of Valentinian and Victor, Payni xiv, i year, and in the following consulships of Valentinian [III] and Valens III Payni xiv, and in the following Consulships of Gratian and Probus, [and the next of Modestus and Arintheus], and another consulship of Valentinian [IV] and Valens IV, on Pachon viii he falls asleep (May 3, 373).

XIII. 18. Now in the aforesaid consulship of Lupicinus and Jovinus, Lucius being specially desirous to claim for himself the [episcopate](#) of the [Arians](#) a long time after he had left Alexandria, arrived in the aforesaid consulship, and entered the town secretly by night on the xxvi day of the month Thoth (Sept. 24, 367): and as it is said, abode in a certain small house keeping in hiding for that day. But next day he went to a house where his mother was staying; and his arrival being [known](#) at once all over the town, the whole people assembled and blamed his entry. And Duke Trajanus and the Prefect were extremely displeased at his irrational and bold arrival, and sent officials to cast him out of the town. So the officials came to Lucius, and considering all of them that the people were [angry](#) and very riotous against him they feared to bring him out of the house by themselves, lest he should be killed by the multitude. And they reported this to the judges. And presently the judges themselves, Duke Trajan, and the Prefect Tatianus [came] to the place with many soldiers, entered the house and brought out Lucius themselves at the seventh hour of the day, on the twenty-seventh day of Thoth. Now while Lucius was following the judges, and the whole people of the town after them, [Christians](#) and Pagans, and of various [religions](#), all alike with one breath, and with one [mind](#), and of one accord, did not cease, from the house whence he was led, through the middle of the town, as far as the house of the Duke, from shouting, and hurling at him

withal insults and criminal charges, and from crying, 'Let him be taken out of the town.' However, the Duke took him into his house, and he stayed with him for the remaining hours of the day, and the whole night, and on the following the xxviii of the same month, the Duke early in the morning, and taking him in charge as far as Nicopolis, handed him over to soldiers to be escorted from [Egypt](#).

19. Now whereas Athanasius died on the viii of the month Pachon, the v day before he fell asleep, he ordained Peter, one of the ancient [presbyters](#), Bishop, who carried on the Episcopate, following him in all things. After whom Timothy his B[rother] succeeded to the Episcopate for iv years. After him Theophilus from [being] [deacon](#) was ordained Bishop (385). The End.