

Contents

Introduction.....	19
1- Structure of the Text.....	19
2- Dating and Authorship.....	22
3- “To Antiochus”	38
Notes on the Translation.....	46
<i>Teachings to Antiochus the Duke</i>	48
First Mandate: On Faith	49
Second Mandate: On Simplicity	50
Third Mandate: On Truthfulness	50
Four Mandate: On Chastity.....	50
Fifth Mandate: On Patience.....	51
Sixth Mandate: On Discerning Thoughts.....	52
Seventh Mandate: On the Fear of God	53
Eighth Mandate: On Self-control.....	53
Ninth Mandate: On Trust in the Lord	54
Tenth Mandate: On Good Desire	55
Eleventh Mandate: On Cheerfulness	57
Twelfth Mandate: On the Remembrance of Death	58
<i>Questions to Antiochus the Duke</i>	74
Question 1: Since we believe and are baptized in the Holy Trinity, how is it that we do not say that there are three gods, but One and Only God?	74

Question 2: How does a man know that he has really been baptized and received the Holy Spirit?	76
Question 3: When were the angels made?	77
Question 4: Are the angels created?.....	77
Question 5: Are the angels made of light?	78
Question 6: How many angels are there?.....	78
Question 7: What is the difference between the nature of angels and demons?	78
Question 8: How many ranks of angels are there?	79
Question 9: How many heavens are there?	79
Question 10: When and why did the devil fall?.....	79
Question 11: Why did God allow the devil to make war upon the human race?.....	80
Question 12: Since the devil fell from the heavens, how does the book of Job say that he was in the midst of the angels (Job 1:6)?	80
Question 13: Can magic kill a man?	81
Question 14: What prayer do the demons fear most?	81
Question 15: Where do blasphemous thoughts originate? ..	82
Question 16: What is the soul?	82
Question 17: How do we know that the soul is immortal?.	83
Question 18: In what way is the soul separated from the body?	83
Question 19: Where are the souls of men who have already departed?	84
Question 20: Do the righteous already enjoy Paradise?.....	85

Question 21: How did the rich man in the story of Lazarus speak to Abraham while being in fire and torment?	85
Question 22: Do the souls of the departed recognize one another?	85
Question 23: Will sinners recognize one another in the resurrection?	86
Question 24: Where does recognition come from?	86
Question 25: Do the souls of the departed return to visit the living?	88
Question 26: How do saints often appear in their own sanctuaries and tombs?	88
Question 27: How does the essence of an angel differ from the essence of a human soul?	89
Question 28: How did the prophets see God?	89
Question 29: Do the angels appear to men on earth according to their essence?	90
Question 30: What is the definition of an angel's essence? .	91
Question 31: What do the heavenly powers do in heaven?	91
Question 32: Do the departed souls remember us?	91
Question 33: What do the departed souls do in the afterlife?	92
Question 34: Do the souls of sinners perceive the good works and offerings done on their behalf?	92
Question 35: Why does God not allow a soul that has departed to return?	93
Question 36: Is it beneficial for a person to know the day of his death?	93

Question 37: Why do Christians pray towards the East, and Jews towards the South?.....	94
Question 38: Since Christ was circumcised, for what reason are we not circumcised like He was?	95
Question 39: Since God commands us not to honour things made by hands, why do we honour icons and the Cross? ..	96
Question 40: Are asses holy because Christ sat on one?	98
Question 41: Why do we make replicas of the Cross, but not of the holy lance or reed or sponge?	98
Question 42: How do we know that the Christian religion is superior to all others under heaven?.	99
Question 43: Why has the devil not divided another faith into so many heresies?	100
Question 44: How do we know that the Church is not in error?.....	100
Question 45: Where did God ordain that we be called "Christians"?	101
Question 46: Who first named God "God" on earth?.....	102
Question 47: Where is Paradise?.....	102
Question 48: Is Paradise corruptible or incorruptible?	103
Question 49: How long did Adam remain in Paradise?	103
Question 50: What tree was it from whose fruit Adam ate?	104
Question 51: If Adam had not transgressed, how would humanity have come to be and multiplied?	104
Question 52: Why did God complete Creation on the seventh day?	105

Question 53: Does day have precedence over night, or night over day?.....	105
Question 54: Why did God ordain that the Lord’s day begin on the Sabbath?	106
Question 55: Why was Christ conceived on the twenty-fifth day of March?.....	106
Question 56: What were the coats of skin that God made for Adam and Eve?	106
Question 57: How did Cain learn how to murder Abel?...	107
Question 58: Who were the sons of God who saw and took the daughters of men as wives?.....	107
Question 59: Why did God appear to Moses in a bush?	107
Question 60: Why did God give the Law in a cloud?.....	107
Question 61: Why were the first two tablets of the Law broken?	108
Question 62: What are the “back parts” (Ex. 33:23) of God?	108
Question 63: Who in the Old Testament first foreshadowed the two peoples, viz. the Jews and Gentiles?.....	108
Question 64: Who in the Old Testament first foreshadowed the Cross?	109
Question 65: Who in the Old Testament is said to have been counted among the dead three times?	109
Question 66: Where is Tarshish, where Jonah fled?	109
Question 67: Are the sins of the fathers still passed on to the children unto the third and fourth generation?	109

Question 68: Do infants die because of the sins of their parents?	110
Question 69: Why do infants die and sinners prosper?	110
Question 70: Does anyone who has prospered in this life go to heaven?	112
Question 71: What is the fate of those who die in accidents?	113
Question 72: Why does the Lord say that blasphemy against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven?.....	114
Question 73: Can one be forgiven for denying Christ?	118
Question 74: What sin makes a person's prayer unacceptable before God?.....	119
Question 75: What sin admits of no repentance before God?	119
Question 76: What sin is more grievous than all other faults?	120
Question 77: Which of the commandments forgives man all his sins?	120
Question 78: How can one learn whether he has been forgiven by God or not?	120
Question 79: What happens to sinners who die before completing their repentance?.....	121
Question 80: Why are some men unable to weep?	121
Question 81: Is it possible to give alms in public?	122
Question 82: Why is the soul sometimes inclined to sympathy, but at other times is harsh and merciless?.....	122
Question 83: Should man force himself to give alms?	123

Question 84: Does the one who repents of his good deeds forfeit his reward?.....	123
Question 85: Should we give alms only after examination?	123
Question 86: Is it more honourable to make offerings to churches, or to distribute to the needy?	124
Question 87: Can one be forgiven for misappropriating money from an unbeliever?	124
Question 88: Can almsgiving erase every one of man's sins?	125
Question 89: Is it greater to be an almsgiver or a miracle-worker?.....	126
Question 90: What share of one's goods is each man required to give in charity?	127
Question 91: What should be said about alms left to the poor by the deceased?	127
Question 92: How can one be saved if he is poor and can do no ascetic deeds?.....	128
Question 93: What is humility?.....	128
Question 94: How many times will God receive a repentant sinner?	129
Question 95: How many types of adultery are there?	129
Question 96: Is bodily sin more easily forgiven than all other sins?.....	130
Question 97: How many kinds of fornication are there? ...	130
Question 98: Why are we not allowed to have multiple wives?	131

Question 99: How do dreams often tell the truth?.....	132
Question 100: Can demons foretell the future?	132
Question 101: Will the Jews and pagans who perform good works enter the kingdom of heaven?.....	133
Question 102: Does the punishment of sinners have an end?	133
Question 103: Where do plagues come from?	134
Question 104: Is it possible to escape a plague by fleeing to another land?	135
Question 105: Why do some of the righteous suffer in their final moments?	135
Question 106: Why are most people born at night, and die at night?	136
Question 107: Why do some struggle against the passion of fornication with great difficulty, while others refrain from it easily?	136
Question 108: What are the signs of the Second Coming?	137
Question 109: What are the signs of the Antichrist?.....	137
Question 110: Will the Antichrist raise the dead?.....	137
Question 111: How do heretics perform miracles?.....	138
Question 112: Can a man journeying in a foreign land take communion in a heretical church?	139
Question 113: Is there a set limit to man's life?	140
Question 114: How will the body be resurrected?.....	141
Question 115: Do dead infants and the unbaptized go to punishment or to the kingdom?	143

Question 116: Do all heretics go away to destruction?	143
Question 117: Are rulers allowed to receive bribes and spend them on the poor?	144
Question 118: Can one beseech a holy man to escape a divine punishment brought on by another?	145
Question 119: Why are some men naturally merciful whereas others are cruel and merciless?	146
Question 120: Which of all the virtues are most appropriate for rulers?	146
Question 121: Why are wicked men appointed to positions of authority?	147
Question 122: How does one know that God has heard his prayer?.....	147
Question 123: From which parts of the world do the four elements originate?	148
Question 124: How can sorcerers expel demons?.....	149
Question 125: Can a sorcerer change a man into an irrational beast?	149
Question 126: Is it a sin to visit a diviner?.....	150
Question 127: Why do some men see visions while dying?	150
Question 128: How will the soul recognize its own body in the resurrection?.....	150
Question 129: If a robber who has committed a hundred murders is captured and beheaded, has he been acquitted of the murders he committed?	150
Question 130: Can a ruler forswear himself if he has sworn a wicked oath?.....	151

Question 131: How ought one to ask things of God?	151
Question 132: How can one recognize whether what he intends to do is pleasing to God?	152
Question 133: What is the fate of those who have done both good and evil?	153
Question 134: What distinguishes the death of men from that of soulless beasts?	153
Question 135: What is the cause of death?	153
Question 136: How should we persuade pagans that there is One God Who created the world?	154
Question 137: How should we persuade Jews that Christ is the Messiah and God?	156
Appendix I: Sermon to Antiochus the Duke	173
Appendix II: Epistle to John and Antiochus	182

Introduction

The Greek text *Questions and Answers to Antiochus the Duke* (hereafter referred to as “the *Questions*”) has existed as both an anonymous text and a pseudonymous one. Its attribution to Saint Athanasius (c. 296-373), the archbishop of Alexandria, guaranteed it an immense circulation in the Middle Ages: in fact, two-hundred and thirty-three manuscripts of it survive in Greek, as well as translations of it into Armenian, Arabic, and Slavonic.¹ Although scholarly opinion now unanimously rejects this traditional ascription (for reasons that will be presented below), the *Questions* constitute no less fascinating a document. In addition to shedding light on the popular beliefs and practices of Christians during the time of its composition, many of the questions themselves, such as the answer to Question 72 (on blasphemy against the Holy Spirit), and the florilegium of Messianic proofs in Question 137, represent veritable tours-de-force of theological exegesis.

1- Structure of the Text

The *Questions* are an erotapokrisis² text, a Byzantine literary genre that lists questions and their responses. Originally used

¹ Ilse De Vos, “The Manuscript Tradition of the Quaestiones ad Antiochum ducem,” *On Good Authority: Tradition, Compilation and the Construction of Authority in Literature from Antiquity to the Renaissance* (Brepols: 2015), p. 43; Caroline Macé, “Les Quaestiones ad Antiochum ducem d’un Pseudo-Athanase (CPG 2257). Un état de la question,” *La littérature des questions et réponses dans l’Antiquité profane et chrétienne: de l’enseignement à l’exégèse* (Brepols : 2013), p. 121 n3.

² Literally “question-answer.” *Erotapokrisis* is a portmanteau of the Greek words ἐρώτησις (“question”) and ἀπόκρισις (“answer”). The plural form is *erotapokriseis*.

by Greek philosophers, this genre was later adopted by Christian theologians for exegetical and catechetical purposes. Among non-Christian authors, we find precedents to it in the *Problemata* ascribed to Aristotle, the *Questions and Answers on Genesis and Exodus* of the Hellenistic Jew Philo, and the *Homeric Questions* of Porphyry; Christian examples include Eusebius' *Gospel Problems and Solutions*,³ the *Canonical Answers* of Timothy of Alexandria,⁴ and the *Questions and Answers to the Orthodox* (formerly ascribed to Justin Martyr, but most likely composed by Bishop Theodoret of Cyrus in the first half of the fifth century).⁵ Saint Maximus' *Responses to Thalassius* and Photius' *Amphilochia* also follow this format.

There are one hundred and thirty-seven questions in the version of the *Questions to Antiochus* that has been translated below, which is based on the Greek text in the *Patrologia graeca*,⁶ itself a reprint of the 1698 edition by Montfaucon.⁷ It should be noted that of the surviving Greek manuscripts, only forty-six per cent contain all one hundred and thirty-seven questions, the first question being the only one that is present in every manuscript without exception.⁸ Questions 136 and 137 stand

³ PG 22: 879-958.

⁴ PG 33: 1295-1308.

⁵ PG 6: 1249-1400. See Peter Toth, "New Questions on Old Answers: Towards a Critical Edition of the Answers to the Orthodox of Pseudo-Justin," *The Journal of Theological Studies*, NS, 65.2 (2014), pp. 550-599.

⁶ PG 28: 597-700.

⁷ *Sancti Patris nostri Athanasii Archiep. Alexandrini Opera omnia quae extant*, Vol. 2, Opera et studio monachorum Ordinis S. Benedicti e Congregatione Sancti Mauri (Paris: 1698), pp. 268-306.

⁸ William R. Veder, Псевдо-Атанасий Александрийски: Въпроси и отговори [Pseudo-Athanasius of Alexandria: Questions and Answers], vol. 1: Introduction and Indices. Universitetsko izdatelstvo Episkop Konstantin Preslavski: 2016, p. 16.

out from the rest of the collection for their style and length, leading some editors to suspect that they are later additions, although manuscript proof for this is admittedly lacking.⁹ Question 49, due to its absence in many Greek manuscripts, is also thought to be a marginal note that was incorporated into the text during its transmission.¹⁰ Often, the order of the questions will vary between versions, and some manuscripts will include only a selection of the total questions.¹¹ Nevertheless, as noted by Ilse de Vos, who has undertaken the most in-depth study of the text to date, the manuscript tradition of the *Questions to Antiochus* is “relatively stable.”¹² A clearer picture of the *Questions’* textual history will undoubtedly have to wait until the publication of a critical edition.¹³ As they stand, the *Questions* are structured as follows:

1:	The Holy Trinity
2:	Baptism
3-15:	Angels and demons
16-36:	Human souls
37-45:	What distinguishes Christianity from other religions
46-55:	Creation and Paradise
56-66:	Questions on the Old Testament
67-71:	Inopportune deaths

⁹ Caroline Macé and Ilse De Vos, “Pseudo-Athanasius, Quaestio ad Antiochum 136 and the Theosophia,” *Studia Patristica* 66 (2011), pp. 320-21. Question 137 also circulated in manuscripts independently (e.g. the Vaticanus graecus 2518).

¹⁰ De Vos (2015), p. 54.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 45.

¹³ At the time of writing, Dr. De Vos is reviewing one hundred and two copies of the *Questions* as a basis for an edition for the *Corpus Christianorum Series Graeca*.

72-80:	Sin
81-92:	Almsgiving
93-94:	Humility and repentance
95-98:	Fornication and polygamy
99-100:	Dreams and divination
101-102:	The soul after death
103-104:	Plagues
105-107:	Miscellaneous questions
108-110:	The Antichrist
111-112:	Heretics
113-114:	Predestination and the resurrection
115-116:	The fate of infants and the unbaptized
117-123:	Miscellaneous questions
124-126:	Sorcerers
127-129:	Miscellaneous questions
130-132:	Oaths and devising plans
133:	The soul after death
134-135:	The nature of death
136-137:	How to persuade Pagans and Jews

2- Dating and Authorship

A prima facie reason for rejecting Athanasian authorship of the *Questions* is the presence of anachronisms within the text. Notably, Questions 70 and 72 depend on the forty-first homily on the Gospel of Matthew by Saint John Chrysostom (d. c. 404), and Question 125 is inspired by Blessed Theodoret of Cyrus (d. c. 466). In Question 39, there is a reference to an episode found within the *Spiritual Meadow* of John Moschus, who wrote in the second half of the sixth century.¹⁴

¹⁴ See the footnotes to the translation below.

*Our Father among the Saints Athanasius, Archbishop of
Alexandria*

To the Duke Antiochus, concerning very many and
necessary perplexing questions in the divine
Scriptures, which all Christians ought to know

Question 1: *Since we believe and are baptized in the consubstantial Trinity, and we say that the Father is God, and similarly that the Son is God, and likewise that the Holy Spirit is God, how is it that we do not say that there are three gods, but One and Only God? And if we worship One God, it is evident that, believing in a unity, we Judaize; but if in turn we worship three gods, it is clear that we imitate the pagans, bringing in multiple gods, and do not piously worship only One God.*

Answer: The ways and manner of religion are inscrutable; only by faith, not investigation, is it known and honoured.¹⁰⁵ For a God Who is comprehended is not God.¹⁰⁶ For if we are unable to comprehend the angels or our own souls, how much more incomprehensible must their Creator be?¹⁰⁷ For a mystery that

¹⁰⁵ Saint Anastasius, *Hodegos* XIV.1.25-33: "If one of the unbelievers should wish to exact from us natural proofs for the divinity of Christ, and what kind of nature this is, and whence it is clear that the Creator of all things was in His flesh, to the one curiously asking these things we are unable to answer but in the following way: 'By faith alone are the matters related to divinity transmitted, by inscrutable faith and not by investigation, nor comprehension, albeit we believers have been assured of the truth of His divinity through divine signs.'"

¹⁰⁶ Cf. Saint Augustine, *Sermon* 117.5: "Si comprehendis, non est Deus."

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Saint Athanasius, *In Illud*, 6: "Let them tell us their own nature, if they can discover how to investigate their own nature. Rash they are indeed, and

is known is no longer marvelled at. Therefore, the faith of the Christians and their tripersonal God is not a single hypostasis in the form of a man, as the children of the Greeks¹⁰⁸ teach, nor are there three gods, as if these were distant from one another. Away with these Greek myths! For the divinity of the one essence is indivisible in three Persons. But know that the human mind is incapable of understanding or describing things about the Godhead in either words or thoughts.¹⁰⁹ But those who have rushed to understand the things of God have chased their own shadows; and those who have wished to say anything concerning the essence of God have sought to measure the abyss with their own hand.¹¹⁰ And those who have thought to penetrate into it fell into grievous heresies.

For God the Father is not like me, a created father who begot a created son like me; and neither is the Son begotten like every carnal son;¹¹¹ and neither is the Holy Spirit like the

self-willed, not trembling to form opinions of things which angels desire to look into, who are so far above them, both in nature and in rank;” and Saint Gregory of Nyssa, *Answer to Eunomius’ Second Book*: “Whosoever searches the whole of revelation will find therein no doctrine of the divine nature, nor indeed of anything else that has a substantial existence, so that we pass our lives in ignorance of much, being ignorant first of all of ourselves, as men, and then of all things besides. For who is there who has arrived at a comprehension of his own soul?” (PG 45: 945D; *Gregorii Nysseni Opera*, ed. Jaeger, I: 257-258).

¹⁰⁸ That is, the pagans.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. Saint Athanasius, *First Letter to the Monks*: “For although it be impossible to comprehend what God is, yet it is possible to say what He is not.”

¹¹⁰ Cf. Isaiah 40:12.

¹¹¹ Saint Anastasius, *Hodegos* I.1.44-48: “Prior to any discussion at all, we must condemn however many false notions about us the opponent entertains, as when we set out to converse with Arabs we have first to condemn anyone who says, ‘Two gods,’ or anyone who says, ‘God has

circumscribed spirit of man, but the mystery of the Holy Trinity is ineffable and indescribable. And do not say, "How?", for this is beyond "how;" neither say, "In what way?", for the divine way is beyond any way; nor say, "For what reason?", for the divine reason is beyond reason. But believe in the Father: do not investigate the matter; worship the Son: do not be a busybody about His generation; praise the Holy Spirit, not scrutinizing the mystery of the Holy Trinity. Come to the Jordan, and behold clearly in deed the power of the Holy and consubstantial Trinity: the Father witnessing from above, the Son being baptized below, and the All-Holy Spirit descending in the form of a dove.¹¹² To Him be the glory, and the power, and the worship, together with the Almighty Father and the Only-Begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

***Question 2:** How does a man know that he has really been baptized and received the Holy Spirit, seeing as he was an infant in holy baptism?*

Answer: The prophet Isaiah said unto God, "Because of Your fear, O Lord, we have been with child, we have been in pain, and we have given birth; we brought forth the spirit of Your salvation."¹¹³ Therefore, just as a woman understands unfailingly from the stirring of the infant in her womb that she has conceived a child, so does the soul of a true Christian know,

carnally begotten a son.'" On Anastasius' anti-Islamic polemics, see Sidney H. Griffith, "Anastasios of Sinai, the Hodegos, and the Muslims," *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 37.4 (1987), pp. 341-358 and Paul Ulishney, "New Evidence for Conversion to Islam in Anastasius of Sinai's Hodegos," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 78 (2024), pp. 29-48.

¹¹² Matthew 3:16-17; Mark 1:10-11; Luke 3:21-22.

¹¹³ Isaiah 26:17-18, LXX.

not through the testimony of his parents, but through the workings and stirrings of his heart, and above all from the joy of his soul at the time of illumination and communion of the holy Body and Blood of Christ, that he received the Holy Spirit upon being baptized.

Question 3: When, and whence, and how were the angels made?

Answer: Where or how the angels were made, human nature cannot say. All we can say is that they were made out of nothing by the Word of God. But as for when, some say on the first day, and some say before the first day. [Our Father among the saints and wonderworker Epiphanius the Archbishop of Cyprus, in his book against Paul of Samosata in the *Panarion*, explains more fully that they were created simultaneously with the heaven and the earth, and not before, refuting by syllogisms those who maintain this. He also asserts this in another book of his.]¹¹⁴

*Question 4: Where is it evident that the angels are created? For nothing about this is mentioned in the book of Genesis.*¹¹⁵

Answer: God knew the idolatry and polytheism of men, and especially of the Jews, and hid this information concerning the angels from the book of Genesis, so that they would not deify them like they deified the calf and other things as gods.¹¹⁶ But that the angels are created, hear the Holy Spirit speaking through the prophet: “Praise the Lord, all you His angels; Praise

¹¹⁴ *Panarion* II.45: 4.8-5.4; Cf. *Anchoratus* 24.5-6; 74.6. Macé (2013) notes that this reference to Epiphanius is missing from two early manuscripts and so is likely an interpolation.

¹¹⁵ Cf. Theodoret, Q.3-4 on Genesis.

¹¹⁶ Exodus 32.