

## **GREGORY OF NYSSA, SAINT (c. 330-395)**

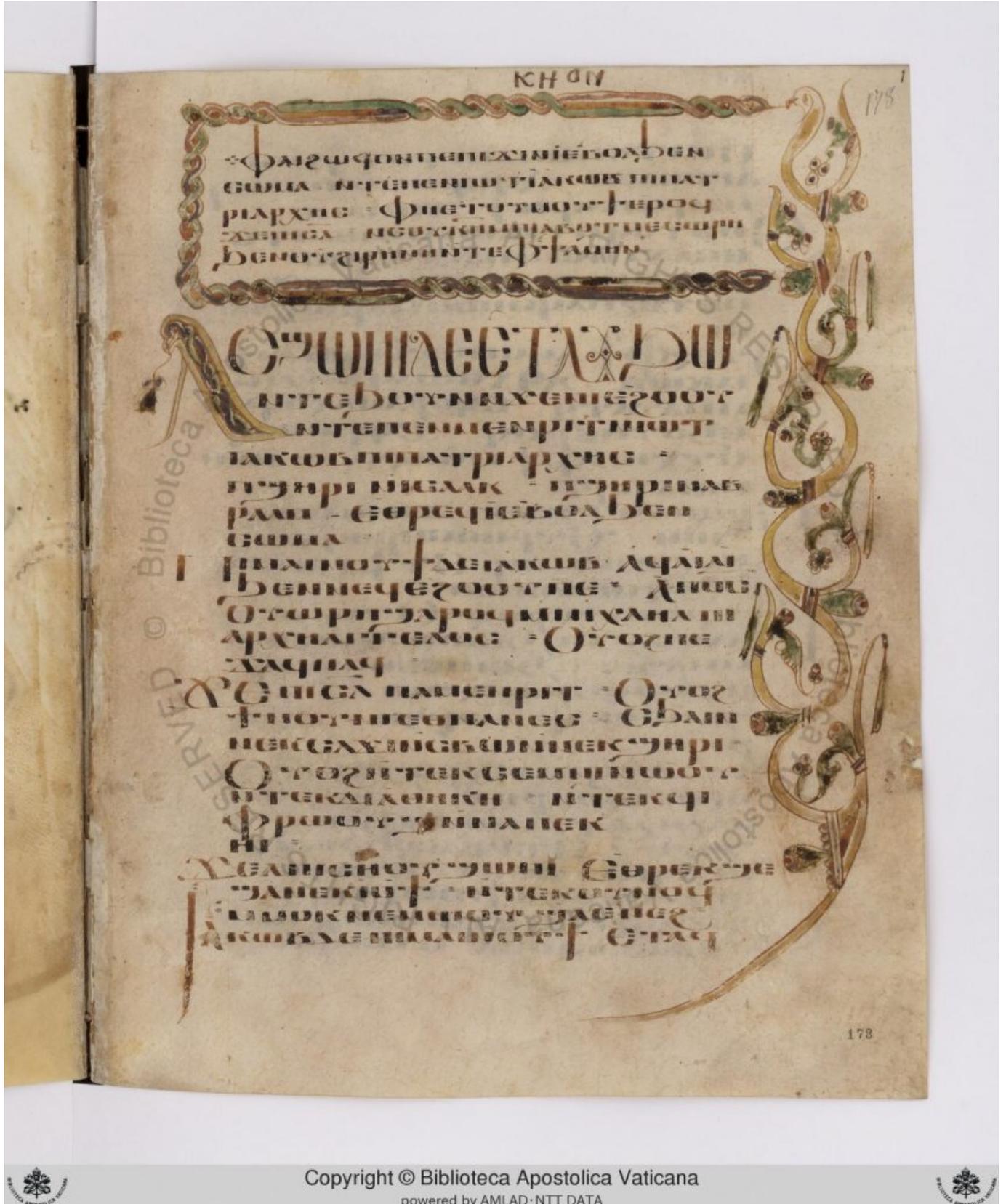
A theologian With Saint [GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS](#) and Saint [BASIL THE GREAT](#), his older brother, he was one of the three Cappadocian fathers. He set out to become a rhetorician, but Gregory of Nazianzus convinced him to dedicate himself rather to the ecclesiastical life. Basil nominated him to be bishop of Nyssa, a small city in Cappadocia. He resided there only at irregular intervals, at first because of the Arian controversy and then because of his long voyages. He participated in the First Council of CONSTANTINOPLE in 381.



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As an opponent of ARIANISM, Gregory found favor in the Coptic Church, but was not regarded as a saint, although he is in the [Roman Catholic](#) and Orthodox churches. He is best known in Coptic literature by a few translations of his philosophical works. These translations exist as follows:

1. [Vita Gregorii Thaumaturgi](#) has survived in a Sahidic [codex](#) from DAYR ANBA SHINUDAH (the White Monastery), dating from the tenth and eleventh centuries, and in a Bohairic codex by Saint MACARIUS of Scetis, dating from the ninth century. Both texts are in fragments.
2. *De deitate Filii et Spiritus Sancti* is a readaptation of the Greek text in a Bohairic [codex](#) by Macarius (Vatican Library, Coptic 61, 6), attributed in Coptic to Gregory of Nazianzus. The original text has been altered so as to employ only the part that is essentially exegetical and moral in character.
3. [De anima et resurrectione](#) is a dialogue found in a fragmentary Sahidic [codex](#) from the White Monastery.
4. [Commentary on Ecclesiastes](#) is comprised of eight homilies, found in a fragmentary Sahidic [codex](#) from the White Monastery.



These last two works, which are distinctly philosophical (particularly the dialogue), coming from a Platonic-Origenist school, seem to have been translated into Coptic and spread throughout [Egypt](#) during the period of the Origenist controversy (fourth-fifth century), a time when it might be supposed that Egypt should have sided with [Patriarch THEOPHILUS OF ALEXANDRIA](#) against the Origenists. It might have been possible, however, that one part of the monastic society had been and remained under the Origenist influence, including those monasteries in Upper Egypt where some of the translations into Sahidic were made. These same groups might also have translated the collection of writings attributed to AGATHONICUS OF TARSUS.

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