

PROCLUS SAINT

The patriarch of Constantinople (434-446), who was a preacher and writer (feast day: 20 November in the East, 24 October in the West). According to the historian Socrates, Proclus was very young when he assumed the lector's robe. From 407, when he was eighteen, to 425, he served Atticus, patriarch of Constantinople, as secretary. In 425, still according to Socrates, Proclus, along with Philip of Side, was already a candidate for the archiepiscopal throne at Constantinople.

However, Sissinius, who held the see from 426 to 427, was elected. He immediately nominated Proclus to the see of Cyzicus. The inhabitants of Cyzicus, however, contested the nomination, so Proclus remained at Constantinople. In 427, Theodosius II, in order to avoid heightening the rivalry between the partisans of Philip of Side and those of Proclus, parted them. NESTORIUS of Antioch was called to Constantinople and consecrated bishop of Cyzicus.

On the occasion of the festival of the Virgin shortly before Christmas 430, Proclus delivered the famous sermon on the THEOTOKOS, which Nestorius had forbidden (Clavis Patrum Graecorum 5800). On 25 December of the same year he no doubt gave another homily (Clavis Patrum Graecorum 5823), and on 28 February or 1 March he delivered the homily on the dogma of the Incarnation (Clavis Patrum Graecorum 5822). The preciseness of this date is provided by the heading of the Coptic version (M. Richard, 1927, Vol. 2, art. 42, p. 47). In this homily Proclus affirmed that the economy of salvation unites the two natures in one hypostasis.

After the deposition of Nestorius on 11 July because of the canonical objection to the passing from one bishopric (Cyzicus) to another, Maximius was elected bishop of Cyzicus. Finally in 434, in order the better to subdue the partisans of Nestorius, Theodosius II forced the synod to elect Proclus as patriarch. This event is recorded in the registers

of the acts of the patriarchate, which are extracts from the synodal letter of enthronement sent to John of Antioch (*Clavis Patrum Graecorum* 5907) and Maximus (PG 5908).

On 3 August 435 Proclus obtained [condemnation](#) of the works of Nestorius (*Codex Theodosian* 16.5.16). On 6 January 437, on the initiative of Melania the Younger, he succeeded in converting Volusianus, the ex-prefect of the town, and baptized him on his deathbed. According to Theophanes the Chronicler (1982), in September of the same year, following earthquakes, a vision appeared to him through the medium of a man carried up into the air. He is said to have revealed the liturgical prayer of the Trisagion (see MUSIC, COPTIC), which was then introduced by Proclus into the celebration of the Eucharist. On 27 January 438, he obtained from the emperor the solemn removal of the relics of JOHN CHRYSOSTOM from Comana to Constantinople.

In the domain of the influence of the see of Constantinople, Proclus after his election sent the *Tome*, his exposition of the doctrine of the one Christ in two natures, to the Armenians, inviting them to keep their distance from the friends of Nestorius, THEODORE OF MOPSUESTIA and Diodore of Tarsus. In 439 Proclus intervened in the election to the see of Caesarea in Cappadocia, laid hands on Thalassius, prefect of Illyricum, and participated in or approved the election of bishops at Smyrna, Ephesus, and Gangra. In 435 he had built at Zeugma near Constantinople the first Church of COSMAS AND DAMIAN, no doubt in opposition to the Nestorian assembly held at Pheremma, homeland of the *Anargyroi*. Proclus died in 446.

Proclus was early trained in rhetoric. Apostle and preacher, he left a great many homilies and some fragments of correspondence (*Clavis Patrum Graecorum* 5893-5915). Already totaling twenty-five in Migne (1864, pp. 651-852), the collection of homilies was increased by ninety items by B. Marx in 1940. F. Leroy reduced this number in 1967 by publishing eight homilies and reevaluating the identifications of Marx.

Coptic tradition has traces of six homilies, some of which are mutilated.

Coptic Tradition

Accessible only in its mutilated incipit (Paris, National Library, Coptic manuscript 1311, fol. 26), *Marian Homily 1* is the most famous and most frequently translated of the homilies of Proclus (Clavis Patrum Graecorum 5800, ed. E. Lucchesi, 1981). Today, only the Arabic version is missing. This discourse, a jewel of Marian dogma, shows at once the signs of consummate rhetorical art and a detailed knowledge of the Bible. At the time of Zeno, the Greek text received doctrinal retouching, which is reflected in the Latin and Georgian versions. Unfortunately it is impossible to verify here any retouching in Coptic.

The second Coptic homily, on the Nativity (Clavis Patrum Graecorum 5822), is taken from the [codex](#) in the British Museum (Or. 5001, published by E. A. Wallis Budge, in 1910), “the homily which Proklus, Bishop of Cyzicus, pronounced in the Great [Church of Constantinople](#) when Nestorius the heretic was present, concerning his contemptible dogma, on the Sunday which preceded the holy forty days” (p. 241). Since then, one Christological passage in particular has often been quoted: “If God’s blessing is to have much work and demands from every side through man’s whole life, I am quite blessed by God.”

The third Coptic homily, on Easter (Clavis Patrum Graecorum 5812), presents a chronological precision in the title: “Likewise a homily pronounced by Proclus Bishop of Cyzicus in the Church of Anthimus of Constantinople, on the Sunday before Easter, where he was installed in the archiepiscopal seat, and Nestorius the Heretic was present” (Budge, 1910, p. 235).

The Church of Saint Anthimus was situated to the north of the Golden Horn in the district of Ta Pikridiou. Bishop Anthimus was the martyr of Nicomedia, executed in 302. The theoretical date of the title would be 12

April 431, if given in the presence of Nestorius and at the time when Proclus did not have the authority to deliver it. But it is quite likely that there is a fictional element in the title; the personality of Anthimus resembles that of the first bishop in the [legend](#) of John Chrysostom.

The fourth Coptic homily is a discourse on the Nativity, of which there remain only the title and the incipit. It has been impossible to find in another language (Clavis Patrum Graecorum 5876). It is entitled: “Exegesis made by [Proclus] Bishop of Cyzicus in the [Church of Constantinople](#) on the day of the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ the 29th of the month Khoiak, and the offering of Mary, the Virgin who gave birth to God” (Rossi, 1893, pt. p. 42). The beginning of this mutilated text corresponds exactly to the exordium of a homily that says: “Behold, today also I rejoice and exult with you, O well beloved, for I see the whole creation celebrating, for God has sent us a word full of joy.

And so today we wish to caress your ears with the words of our mouth, words filled with benefit and happiness for your souls, O friends of the Logos, who desire always the best.” The title of this text makes [explicit](#) the term *Theotokos*, a term forbidden by Nestorius. In the absence of Nestorius, then, its date would be 25 December 431. We can neither affirm nor invalidate the authenticity of this fragment.

The formal attribution of the discourse, in the fifth Coptic homily, on John the Baptist (Clavis Patrum Graecorum 5877) to Proclus prevents one from entirely challenging the following text: “The [logos](#) pronounced by Saint Proclus, Bishop of Cyzicus, on the day when John was beheaded which is the first day of Thoth, the morning of the second day. He gave it on the second day which included the celebration of the birth of Herod” (Rossi, 1893, p. 101, n. 1). The Coptic manuscript 61 in the Vatican contains the title on page 44. In 1887 Rossi had considered it an interpolation; H. Devis reinstated it in 1922. The narrative character of the whole homily contrasts with the style of Proclus in the other homilies.

The sixth Coptic homily (Clavis Patrum Graeca 5892) already aroused Bauer's curiosity in 1919 after W. E. Crum's catalogue of 1905 (pp. 139, n. 2, and p. 407, n. 1). The homily was published by A. Maresca and introduced by T. Orlandi (1977, pp. 40, 50-54, and 60-82). It is entitled "Eulogy given by the holy father Proclus, Bishop of Cyzicus, presenting the commemoration of the XXIV old men on the 24 Hathor." In the opinion of the editors, the homily should be attributed to Pseudo-Proclus. It claims, for example, to consider as universal the cult of twenty-four elders, known only to the Copts.

It will be noted, however, that Proclus is celebrated on 20 November, ahead of Maximus, Anatolius, and Gennadius, bishops of Constantinople. The complete text is in the [Pierpont](#) Morgan Library ([codex](#) 591, dated 861). A folio containing this homily (British Museum, Or. 3581) was also described by Crum in 1905. The homily could be the result of a fusion of two independent sources, one on the elders, the other on the life of John Chrysostom. Orlandi has reassembled the fragments (at the beginning of *Quattro omelie copte*, 1977, pp. 11-44). A short summary of the details follows. Proclus speaks in the first person as he presents himself already on the throne of John Chrysostom. Following an illness, he goes to Tripoli to be cured by Saint Leontius.

Leaving Cyzicus, he passes through Patmos and Hieropolis. A little to the south of Patmos, "at Ariforo, a town in Thrace," he meets an old man, Festus, who tells him of the conversion of Thrace during the exile of John Chrysostom. After Chrysostom has preached and prayed, Saint Peter and Saint John appear to him and reveal to him heavenly things, notably the twenty-four elders.

This mixture has its laws of transposition in the [legend](#) of John Chrysostom. In the *History of the Church in Alexandria*, the vision is known, as well as the conversion on the island of Thrace. Other transpositions from history, geography, sermons, and legends are made in this homily. "Chalkedon" was mentioned, of course, at the council of

451.

Ariforo is placed near a river Ammotion in the eulogy of Claudius of Antioch by CONSTANTINE of Asyut. E. Pereira has recognized the Argyropotamos of which John Malalas speaks in connection with Diocletian's campaign against the Persians, who have become Thracians and Armenians with the bishop of Asyut. Crum indicates other possibilities; for example, the island of Galatia, becomes Atrike, of which Anthimus is the first bishop, according to the [legend](#) of Chrysostom.

Already in Pseudo-Codinus, Proclus is the disciple of Chrysostom. Proclus certainly had reasons for showing his sympathy for the Antiochenes in promoting the cult of Chrysostom. However, the [legend](#) has gone well past his discourse in finding in his person the most natural justifications for the Monophysite church, which created the era of the martyrs. Anthimus (martyred in 302) and Chrysostom (died a century later) are opposed on the same front; at Nicomedia, in Thrace, and in [Armenia](#) they are threatened by the emperor.

Arabic Tradition

There are five extant Arabic homilies of Proclus.

Arabic Homily 1: On Christmas (Clavis Patrum Graecorum, 5823), in the homiliary of the Ambrosian Library of Milan, in the seventh position (Cf. Sauget, 1970, p. 427). The manuscript was written in the tenth century in Sinai. This is the only Arabic homily that coincides with one of the Coptic texts. Arabic Homily 2: On Good Friday, preserved in a Sbath manuscript, (according to the Fihris 262, corresponding to Clavis Patrum Graecorum, 5809).

Arabic Homily 3: On Saint Stephen (Clavis Patrum Graecorum, 5816); this is also preserved in the homiliary of the Ambrosian Library (cf. Sauget, 1970, p. 428, in position 9; also in the Paris manuscript 151 [fourteenth

century], no. 5).

Arabic Homily 4: On the Apostle Thomas (Clavis Patrum Graecorum, 5832), in Paris manuscript 143, 12 (fourteenth century) under the name of Chrysostom.

Arabic Homily 5: The homily on Good Friday (Clavis Patrum Graecorum, 5829), which has survived only in Arabic and Syriac. It has been translated by R. Lavenant in F. Leroy (1967, pp. 217-23). The manuscript which was used as a basis is in Strasbourg ([codex](#) 4426, of which the colophon is dated 885), but it also exists in the Ambrosian homiliary (no. 58, folios 149-55; cf. Sauget, 1970, p. 456).

Finally, there are two Arabic dogmatic florilegia, the *Precious Pearl*, composed about 995 apparently by Sawirus ibn al-Muqaffa', and the *Confessions of the Fathers*, composed about 1078 by an unknown member of the entourage of the patriarchate. Both have been analyzed by G. Graf (1937, pp. 75 and 375-76); there he collected five quotations from Proclus in the first collection, and eleven in the second.

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