

(CE:1958b-1959b)

PHILOSTORGIUS, ecclesiastical historian, born about 368 in Cappadocia. He lived in Constantinople, where he wrote twelve books of ecclesiastical history covering the period about 300-425 (the death of the usurping emperor John), probably between 425 and 433.

Philostorgius was a supporter of the semi-Arian leader Eunomius of Cyzicus, and wrote his history from that point of view. Little of the original has survived, but an epitome was preserved in the library of Photius.

From the point of view of Egyptian Christianity, Philostorgius was, not unexpectedly, hostile to ATHANASIUS (*Epitome* 2.11), whose election as bishop of Alexandria in 328 he regarded as fraudulent. He is interesting, in addition, because of the apparently accurate information he preserves concerning the mission of Theophilus the Indian, down the Red Sea from Alexandria to southern Arabia and the kingdom of Axum in Ethiopia.

Philostorgius describes how Theophilus was sent on his mission by Emperor Constantius II (337-361). He went first to the Homeritae (Himyarites) in southern Arabia, and after visiting the trading center of Adana (Aden), went on to Axum (*Epitome* 3.5-6). Axum had already received Christian preaching from Frumentius, a captive trader who had settled there and prospered. He was, however, loyal to Athanasius, and about 355 had returned to Alexandria to seek consecration as bishop (Rufinus *Historia ecclesiastica* 1.9). Theophilus was anti-Nicene and had the confidence of the emperor. Philostorgius claims that "he came to the Axumite kingdom and having ordered all things correctly there, began to return to the territory of the Romans" (*Epitome* 3.6). Constantius loaded him with honors. One of the surviving fragments of Philostorgius' *History* adds that Constantius gave Theophilus the title of bishop but without a specific see, probably in preparation for bestowing on him general oversight of the Christians in Axum and in southern Arabia. Meanwhile, Constantius wrote sharply to the princes of Axum to dissuade them from accepting Frumentius as bishop and from

showing any support for Athanasius (Athanasius, *Apologia ad imperatorem Constantium* 31).

Elsewhere (*Epitome* 3.10), Philostorgius shows some knowledge of the Nile cataracts south of the Egyptian border. His source on Egyptian Christianity must have been good, and the loss of so much of his work is regrettable.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Edition and text of Philostorgius' writings by J. Bidez in *Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte*, Vol. 21 (Berlin, 1913); also trans. E. Walford (London, 1855). See also G. Fritz, "Philostorge," in *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*, Vol. 12, pt. 2 (Paris, 1935); and W. Milligan, "Philostorgius," in *A Dictionary of Christian Biography*, ed. W. Smith and H. Wace, Vol. 4 (repr. New York, 1974).

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