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PROCLUS OF CONSTANTINOPLE, ENCOMIUM ON ‘ALL THE SAINTS’ (HOMILY 34). TRANSLATION AND ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

Homily 34 of Proclus of Constantinople falls in the category of one of the most popular genres in the homiletic activity of the Early Church, namely the encomium on martyrs and saints. The purpose of this paper is to analyse Homily 34 against the background of the genre of the martyr homily. An outline of the homily’s thought structure precedes the translation, and this is followed by the analysis proper, which includes the following aspects: (1) the commemoration of the saints as literary genre; (2) an analysis of the homily’s basic theme, including the notion of honour and shame, as well as the characterisation of the saints and the evil powers involved; (3) the focus then shifts on to the homiletic art of Proclus: his sentence structure as well as features that serve as markers of sentence structures and periods, his use of metaphor and comparison, ἀκροατικικαὶ, and fictitious discourse; the paper is concluded with remarks on (4) the message of the homily.

1. Outline and translation of the homily

1.1 Outline

To facilitate the reading of the homily in translation, it will be helpful, firstly, to trace the outline of the homily, the pattern of which is the preacher’s comments (nos. 1, 4 and 8), alternated with both direct speech (nos. 3, 6 and 7) and interior monologue (no. 5) placed in the mouth of the martyrs (direct speech), the tyrants

1 Critical edition by F.J. Leroy, L’homélitiques de Proclus de Constantinople. Traduction manuscrite, imprimée, études connexes. Studi e Testi 247 (Vatican City 1967) 254-36. For its authenticity, see Leroy 253. The fact that Proclus often uses sea images, and that the sea image in this homily (V.17-19) resembles a similar one in his homily on St. Stephen (PG 65, 813c – see Leroy n. 294), has led Leroy to view this as a mark of authenticity and perhaps ‘la signature de l’auteur’.
(interior monologue), the devil as tyrant *par excellence* (direct speech), and Christ (direct speech):

1) The preacher (I.1-4): introductory statement
2) The preacher (II.5-7): the resolute spirit of the martyrs
3) The martyrs (II.8-10): address of defiance directed at the tyrants
4) The preacher (III.11-12): exclamations of amazement at the resolute spirit of the martyrs
5) The tyrants (IV.13-16): helplessness of the tyrants in the face of the martyrs' courage
6) Christ (V.17-19): declaration of his power and protection of the martyrs
7) The tyrant (devil) (VI.20-22): his shame and helplessness against the martyrs' resolute spirit
8) The preacher (VII.23): the victorious crowning of martyrs; their reigning with Christ and intercession for the sake of the faithful.

### 1.2 Translation

I

1. The champions of piety not only crowned themselves (as victors) from the games, but also prepared those who honour them² to attain the very same virtues.³

2. For some, having delivered up their bodies to tortures, pluck from their very sufferings honour⁴ as fruit. And others, having displayed a like purpose of mind and surrendered themselves to toils and pains as a result of vigil²,⁴ nevertheless receive a reward worthy of their zeal, even if it is not the season for those struggles.⁴

3. For it is doubtless clear that he, who with fervent love, and readily, rushed into the present hardships, would also set himself upon greater (hardships) if he would look upon (the) present (hardships).

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² The martyrs who remained steadfast during their physical and moral sufferings, were accorded particular honours by the Church. From the end of the second century the anniversary of a martyr's death was kept as a feast with a liturgical celebration at his tomb, while with Polycarp we have the first evidence of the cult of relics of martyrs. For a more detailed discussion see below under 2.1.

³ This opening line contains the thrust of the homily. For this, see under 2.5.

⁴ For the concept or notion of honour versus shame, see discussion under 2.3.1.

⁵ Or merely 'sleeplessness'.

⁶ See reference to the third phase of the commemoration of the saints discussed below under 2.1.
4. Since, then, (the) contests of martyrs have brought us together, come and let us put forward the sufferings (caused by) those contests as theme of our discourse, and observe closely with what kind of resolution they were throwing themselves onto those dangers, and let us (thus) effect a benefit to be shared in common by all.

II

5. They (i.e. the martyrs) were not then struck with fear of the tyrants' threat, (and) were not afraid of an ardent' wrath that has been confirmed by deeds, nor (were they afraid) of the impiety that yields evil as weapon. But while running risks as if (living) in another body, they were laughing at the tyrants.

6. And they (i.e. the tyrants) were inflamed in their heart because mere simple men were laughing at them, although they (themselves) have experienced so many wars. They could not endure to see their swords being tyrannised by a simple hand. But they, calling in all respects the name of Christ, endured with pleasure the designs10 of the torturers.

7. For they rushed in against the tyrants not only with resolution, but also with contempt. For they preserved their spirit intact for Christ, but kept their contempt for the tyrants.12

8. They said:

You have a sharpened sword, 0 tyrant! I have a mind sharper than a sword, sharpened with a view to piety.

You have torture-chambers ready, I have a suit of armour, which repels the pain of your torturers.

9. Our weapons are superior to your weapons:

A blacksmith made those (belonging to you), but the Holy Spirit devised these (belonging to us).

A craftsman dipped those in water, but Christ hardened these with (his) blood.

Those were bought by perishable money, but these were acquired by (his) saving slaughter. Those are the cause of death, but these transact salvation.

10. Behold the Champion of our resolute spirit:

he had his hands nailed to a cross, but caught the whole world in his net;

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1 The Greek image is that of ‘boiling’ (κύσμα).
2 In the Greek this sentence is in the passive.
3 Literally ‘after so many wars’.
4 Literally ‘naked’.
5 Or ‘devices’.
6 Notice the assonance, play upon words and parallelism: οὖ γάρ φρονήματι ... ἄλλα καὶ καταφρονήματι — τὸ μῖαν φρονήμα ... τὸ δὲ καταφρονήμα.
he had a spear pierced through his side, but he destroyed the power of Death;
he had his hands bound, but digging through, he despoiled the tombs;
he had his eyes closed, but he woke those who have been asleep from the beginning.⁸

III
11. O new and unexpected transactions (deeds)!
Who saw defeat being the source⁹ of victory?
Who saw corruption bringing forth incorruption?
Who saw suffering being adorned with impassibility?¹⁰
Who gathered a crown from torturers?¹¹
Who saw a corpse shining brighter than a warrior?¹²
Who, having fallen, set up a trophy?
Who has constructed for himself wings from (his) blood?
Who leapt into heaven while being dragged down into a tomb?
12. This resolute spirit strengthened all the saints towards contests.
Possessing this will power, they gave up¹³ their limbs to tortures,
jumped like lions onto the tyrants,
tumbled head foremost against death-threatening sufferings,
and judged the mutilations of their limbs (to be) a joy.

IV
13. And they who have sharpened their swords, were at a loss, harbouring the following thoughts:
  'What shall we do to men conquering nature?
  How shall we enslave a resolute spirit conquered by a love for the one who suffered?
  How shall we persuade a soul drunk with love for a man who has been crucified?
  How shall we hunt down a reasoning power, which is being lifted up towards heaven by sufferings?
  What nets have they surrounded (themselves with),
  what devices of words have they found?
14. Whenever we plough (through) their side with a sword,¹⁴ they grow wings from their blood (to fly) towards heaven.

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²¹ Literally ‘mother’.
²² Notice the play on words and juxtaposition τόθος ἀπόθεμα.
²³ Or ‘tortures’.
²⁴ The ἱππάρτης.
²⁵ Literally ‘they sold’.
Whenever we cut off the head, having fallen (off), it yet makes a brighter sound.
Whenever we mow down the hands, they arm their tongue to refuse (us).
Whenever we dig out (their) eyes, they see brighter than a ray (of sun).
Whenever we cut off the leg, they run everywhere faster than deer,
and roam everywhere about catching through faith the world in their nets.

15. The sword is for us14 small20 against their will power, (and) they conquer our wrath by an ardent love.
Whenever we endeavour to persuade them with words, they upset our minds by wiser thoughts.
Whenever we threaten, they laugh.
Whenever we laugh, they draw their eyebrows together.21

16. Ah, with what helplessness did the mental force of these men fill us9
No war has disgraced our might and power.22
There was no one, who, having encountered the dragon,23 was not hunted down.
The multitude of trophies is a message of our courage, but these all are gone, conquered by the mental force of plain24 men.’

V

17. Nevertheless, flesh wasted away, and streams of blood sprang up when limbs were dislocated.
But Christ, mocking their madness, said:
‘O tyrant,
bring the ripple of your impiety into motion,
raise up the waves of your lawlessness,
strike against the victory of the martyrs with (your) loud25 roar of waves.

18. If you will sink the ship, am I not a steersman?
If you will rip the ship’s deck26 into pieces, have I not secured the ship well?

14 Τῷ ὀφθαλμῷ.
15 I.e. ‘in our hands’.
20 Or ‘insignificant’.
21 This is a gesture that expresses disgust and contempt.
22 Literally ‘right hand’.
23 I.e. the devil.
24 Literally ‘naked’.
25 νάντης in the Greek.
26 Or ‘boards’.

5
If you will shatter the rudder, do I not by experience know how to move the handle of the steering-paddle?

If you will rock the ship’s keel, laugh at the anchor!

19. Using my cross as material, I have put together the boards of the ship, with faith as source I have raised the mast, with good hope as source I have given wind27 to the sails.
The furious storms of impiety cannot prevail against my ship.
A hurricane, having come upon it, will not drag it down into the depths.”

VI

20. While the tyrant then was hearing this, he was plotting greatly28 as follows:

'I am ashamed that I am being conquered by human bodies. I am ashamed that I was not capable of bending their mental force by the afflictions (of pain) of tormenters. I cannot endure the defeat. I am persuaded to renounce (my power), necessity forces me to walk another road in future.

21. It is necessary to deal subtly with the resolute spirits of these men, if by any chance I should thus be able to overthrow them. They have a law stemming from the man who was nailed to a cross, a law coloured (written) with ink on paper. This law is arming the people (the men) against me. Having taken it, I shall tear it apart, and deceive by means of forgetfulness the memory of the people (the men).

22. But I do not know how I shall be able to destroy a law which love has painted on a soul, how I shall be able to let sayings disappear that (shine) brighter than a memorial record29 (written) with (their) life; how I shall be able to wipe clean a written document which provides the hope of a kingdom. I am defeated and I cannot endure the shame, what I shall transact, I do not know.”

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27 Literally ‘let fly upwards’.
28 Συγκίνησης, In the light of the agonistic image used in this homily, the reference could be to those monuments inscribed with a record of victories, in this case of the martyrs, or it could also refer to the memorial or record of deeds (of the martyrs). C.f. for this use Origen, Socratis in Ps.15.11E. (PG 12.1209C); ἐκ τῆς ... ἑαυτοῦ στήριξις στήριξις.
VII

23. This then the tyrant and the slanderer of the salvation of the human race said.
But the soldiers and witnesses (martyrs) of Christ, both holy ones and ascetics, 30 having campaigned nobly, having trampled on his threats and despised his torturers, and having been made perfect 31 by their faith in the crucified
Christ and true God, received from him the crowns (of victory), and are now
reigning with him, and are interceding 32 for our sake, in Christ Jesus our Lord, to whom belong all the glory, honour and power till the boundless
ends of the ages. Amen.

2. Analysis

2.1 The commemoration of the saints and martyrs 33

One can distinguish several basic stages in the development of the concept
of 'saints and martyrs of the Church'. 34

(a) To begin with, all those who are baptised in Christ are called saints.
Christians are *per se* 'called to be his holy people', as Paul states in Rom.
1.7. But as a technical term 'saint(s)' came to be attached especially to
those men and women who witnessed to God's work in Christ by the

30 Οὔτως τε καὶ ἄνωτρι.
31 See in general H. Delehaye, Les origines du culte des martyrs (Brussels, 2nd edn. 1933);
W.H.C. Frend, Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church (Oxford 1965); and
G.E.M. de Ste Croix, 'Why were the Early Christians persecuted?', in M.J. Finley (ed.), Studies in Ancient Society (London 1974) 210-49. For text editions, see H. Musa-
documenti processuali* (Milan 1973); and for translations (apart from that of Musatti),
see also J.N. Bremmer & J. den Boef, *Mysterieren van de Onze Kerk* (Kampen 1988);
Homilies on Christian Martyrs from Asia Minor, Palestine and Syria* (c. AD 350–590
Herten & F. Avemarie, *Martyrdom and Noble Death* (London/New York 2002), which
also includes texts from the pagan and Jewish world of martyrs and hero deaths.
Sanctoral* in C. Jones, G. Wainwright & E. Yarnold, SJ (eds), *The Study of Liturgy
Geschiedenis van het Christendom* (Kampen 1991) 20–21.
quality of their own lives …”69 Soon this witnessing to Christ by their exceptional style of life was extended to include their death. This brings us to the next and key phase in the life of the saints of the Church – martyrdom.

(b) Finding themselves in a world in which they were experiencing opposition from two sides, on the one hand paganism, and on the other hand the Jews, the Christians soon became victims of persecution of varying kinds. Thus, towards the second half of the first century, the term ‘saint’ (βολτ, sanctus) had acquired a special significance, when, falsely accused of crimes against the state, of dishonouring the gods and of hatred of the human race, many Christians suffered persecution and death.70 This is also true of the word ‘martyr’ (μάρτυς): from being a witness to Christ in a general sense, the word came to signify those men and women who found themselves in circumstances in which the witness to Christ often led to their arrest, imprisonment and subsequent death. Thus the author of the Revelation of John could aptly record that he saw beneath the altar ‘the souls of all the people who had been killed on account of the Word of God’ (Rev. 6:9-11; cf. also 7:13-17; 14:12). Although the Holy Innocents (the children of Bethlehem) were accounted martyrs because they had shed their blood for Christ, and the first recorded Christian to have suffered for his faith in Christ was Stephen,71 whom the Church naturally came to celebrate as the πρωτόμαρτυς of the Church, it is only in the middle of the second century that we find the full development of the term ‘martyr’. This is evident in the case of Polycarp, who suffered martyrdom in c. 155, and the work The Martyrdom of Polycarp is evidence that the Christians of Smyrna venerated the memory of their bishop with an annual service of joy held at his tomb.72 Among the early persecutions, those under Nero and Domitian were especially severe. In 64 Nero blamed the Christians for the fire that destroyed part of Rome, and persecuted them by setting them alight while being nailed to crosses. At the end of the reign of Domitian (AD 51-96), a severe persecution of the Christians broke out. In later times the martyrdom of the forty Christian soldiers of the ‘Thundering Legion’,

69 Donovan (note 34: 420).
70 Merford (note 34: 106).
72 Donovan (note 34: 421-22.
who were martyred at Sebaste in Lesser Armenia during the Licinian persecution (c. 320), was often celebrated and commemorated in patristic and Byzantine homilies. The age before Constantine was indeed the classic period of martyrs, which came to an end when Constantine declared Christianity a religion free from persecution.

(c) This historical event in the history of the Church introduced another phase. In this period of peace for the Church, violent death was no longer a necessary qualification to be called a ‘martyr’; merely the fact that Christians persevered in their faith despite the worldly temptations and distractions could earn them the title of ‘martyr’ or ‘saint’. The present horny, of course, belongs to this period, in which the faithful are confronted by spiritual battles, for which they have the martyrs’ endurance as encouragement (see also 2.5 below). In this period of peace, the cult of the martyrs gained in importance and solemnity. The martyr’s ‘birthday’ now became a popular holiday, ‘meeting the need that ordinary people have for tangible reminders of religion and opportunities to celebrate – a need formerly met by the official state religion.’ These saints were consequently entered in the martyrologies (a martyrologium or annunciation), and they stand at the beginning of an endless line of holy men and women, revered in the Church, so that we can speak of a successio sanctorum, through which the Church is adored.40

(d) The concept of martyrology brings us, then, to a final phase, the establishment of an official list (canon) of saints. These saints and martyrs could be invoked, called upon to pray on behalf of the faithful, and thus venerated as powerful intercessors; their relics were sought after, and their lives widely read and often embellished by numerous legends. And so the theology of intercession and the cult of the saints and martyrs were firmly established in the Early Church,41 as Kelly42 confirms: ‘At first (i.e. the veneration of the saints) took the form of the reverent preservation of their relics and the annual celebration of their heavenly “birthday” (nativitas), the date of their death, because death is now the entry into risen life. From this it was a short step, since they were now with Christ in glory, to seeking their help and prayers, and in the third century evidence for the belief in their intercessory power accumulates.’43

40 Donavan (note 34) 424.
41 Wegman (note 34) 145.
42 Under the notion ‘Early Church’, I include both patristic and byzantine periods.
44 For the concept of martyria, the martyrs’ relics, the yearly festivals, and the intercessory function of the martyrs, see especially Leemans et al. (note 33) 5-22.
As Leroy has remarked, there is no indication in the text of the liturgical date when this homily was delivered, but it would seem to be the Sunday after Pentecost, which was devoted to the commemoration of the holy martyrs.46

2.2 The literary genre of the martyr homily: the eulogy or panegyric

The martyr homily can be defined as "hagiobiographical": ‘... at its centre is not so much the individual, his/her life and accomplishments as such but the individual as hagios, as a man or a woman of God.'47 The accounts of the holy men and women of the church are referred to as panegyrics, which are characterised by their intent to extol the person and virtues of their subjects. These panegyrics or encomia on the saints and martyrs of the Church were modelled on the classic panegyric,48 "an oration designed to celebrate a Greek feast ... traditionally delivered on days commemorating the gods or heroes of the past."49 For early Christian preachers, who studied Greek rhetoric, like the Cappadocian Fathers, Amphiloctius, Chrysostom and Proclus, to name a few, it was natural to apply the genre of classic panegyric to commemorate Christian festivals, saints and martyrs. With admirable rhetorical skills they emulate those who excelled in the composition of the classic panegyric.50 This aspect will be discussed in more detail in 2.4.

2.3 Theme of the homily

The basic theme of the homily is obviously the character of the saints, especially their attitude and behaviour amidst their sufferings, and their steadfastness against their persecutors or torturers, human and spiritual. In this regard an important aspect of the theme of the homily is the notion of honour and shame.

2.3.1 The notion of honour and shame

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46 Leroy (note 1) 252.
47 Leemans et al. (note 33) 22.
48 For the genre of the martyr homily, see especially Leemans et al. (note 33) 22-37.
50 For the difference between the Christian authors and their classical models, see Leemans et al. (note 33) 35-37.
Mediterranean societies of ancient times were ‘honour societies’, societies where honour and shame were the core values which regulated human interaction and defined religion. In these societies honour was connected with such virtues as (physical) strength, power, courage and valour, and shame with their opposites. With the advent and spread of Christianity these virtues of physical power and courage were replaced by the typical Christian virtues of humility, poverty, gentleness and mildness, and honour was achieved, not by competing with your fellow countrymen in the physically defined agonistic sphere of life, but by competing against evil and bodily desires. In this regard saints and martyrs, in a time of persecution, and ascetics or holy men, in the time when the Church enjoined peace, were often called ‘athletes’ or ‘soldiers’ of God.

In this homily the notion of honour versus shame is of cardinal importance in characterising the saints (and Christ) on the one hand, and the tyrants and the devil on the other hand.

Words of honour occurring in the homily are: honour and being honoured, piety, being crowned and receiving or obtaining crowns, virtues, plucking reward as spiritual fruit, zeal, fervent love, resolute spirit, lack of fear, being mocked, enduring suffering with joy/pleasure, conquest, victory, incorruption, shining, setting up trophies, flying towards heaven, wisdom, mental force and will power, doing battle nobly, being despised, made perfect, reigning with God, interceding for the faithful.

Words of shame are: impiety, evil, madness, being mocked and laughed at, being inflamed for not being feared, unable to endure being tyrannised, being despised, helplessness and being at a loss, a loss of deeds of bravery and trophies of success, being conquered, being trampled upon, shame and being ashamed.

This list of words of honour and shame clearly points to the ‘moral’ status and evaluation of the saints and martyrs within the Christian ‘society’ on the one hand, and the contempt in which the opponents of the martyrs and Christians in general are held within the same ‘society’ on the other hand. Following, then, is an overview of the theme of the hymn, and how the

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81 See, above, the opening line of this homily. Botha (note 49) n. 3, refers to R. Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom. A Study in Early Syriac Tradition* (Cambridge 1975) 16, who argues that the idea originated from Christ’s call to discipleship in Matt. 10.34-39 ... a call to “holy war” or to the “context” (γίνεται) in terms drawing on both Old Testament and the Pauline passages on ascetical *ekkivs* (1 Cor. 9) and spiritual warfare (Eph. 6).
notion of honour and shame fits in within the broader framework of the homily.

2.3.2 Characterising the saints

Three major aspects of character and behaviour on the part of the heroes of the preacher’s story are defined and commented upon, all three part of the concept of honour, namely: (a) their lack of fear; (b) their contempt for their torturers; and (c) their joy in the face of violent and non-violent sufferings.

Proclus furthermore highlights this courageous character of the saints by the contrast created between these aspects of courage, contempt and joy on the one hand, and the anger and helplessness of the torturers, the tyrants and the devil on the other hand. This is finally refined by comments on the part of (i) Christ, who declares his power to protect his saints, and also (ii) the preacher, who, by means of various modes of communication, includes his audience in his encomium on the saints.

In the prooimion of the homily (I.1-4) the preacher obviously delineates the main points of his subject, and concludes by calling upon the audience to contemplate with him the sufferings of the saints, events which have brought them together for this occasion of celebration (I.4). It is significant, of course, that he begins his encomium on a note of victory: the saints, the champions of piety, have crowned themselves as victors (δεισιδερόντες στεφάνισθηκέν, 1.1), and have thus accomplished their roles as examples preparing those who honour them13 to attain to the same virtues. They have given their bodies over to their torturers, but have plucked the fruit of success from the (tree) of sufferings (δέ, τῷ ποιόν ἔκκαμπτόντο τῷ τεμένι, 1.2).

Having set out the theme of the homily (παθήματος τῷ λόγῳ τῷ πόλεμῳ, II.5), the preacher now comments on the three aspects of the saints’ character (II.5-7):

1. They were not at all afraid of and upset by the threats (δέησις), boiling anger (θυμὸς) and impious evil (πονηρία) of their torturers, defined as ‘the tyrants’ (II.5).
2. They were laughing (ξεκλίσαν – cf. γελοιώσαν) at the tyrants (II.6), and had nothing but contempt (αἰσθημάτωσιν) for them (II.7).
3. They inflamed their torturers because they endured their machinations and designs of torture with joy (μεθ᾽ ἱδροῦς ἐφερον) (II.6).

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13 See note 3.
14 See note 2.
The saints are now put on the stage (II.8-10), and through their discourse display their resolute spirit and point to their Divine Protection:

- They have a superior weaponry (παντοπλιάν) to their persecutors, namely:
  - a mind set on piety (λογισμόν ... πρὸς εὐρύχειον);
  - weapons fashioned by the Holy Spirit, not a blacksmith, and which Christ hardened through his blood, not through water;
  - weapons bought not by money, but by the saving slaughter of Christ;
  - weapons that do not kill, but save.

- They have a Divine Protector in Christ. Although crucified, he saved the world and destroyed the power of death, and although buried, he despoiled the tombs and raised the dead.

In III.11-12, the preacher returns to kerygmatic comments on the saints by means of an opening exclamation, expressing his awe in the light of the result of their resolute spirit (III.11):

- defeat has produced victory;
- corruption has been replaced by incorruption;
- suffering has been adorned with impassibility;
- a crown has been the reward for tortures;
- a corpse has shone brighter than a warrior;
- the fallen have set up a trophy;
- wings have been grown from blood that was shed;
- there has been relocation from the tomb to heaven.

This brings the preacher to the mental strength (τὸ δρόμον) of the saints:

- this spirit was their strength;
- and with this spirit they could deliver their bodies to the torturers;
- and attack the tyrants like lions;
- and regard their death-threatening sufferings as an object of joy.

Whereas in II.5ff. Proclus commented on the anger and helplessness of the tyrants, here in IV.13-16 he puts them on the stage, and presents the audience with their thoughts (αἰτίον μονολογίαν, λογιζόμενος). Proclus uses this ἐπιφάνεια (IV.13; 16) on the part of the tyrants as positive reflection on the
character and resolve spirit of the saints. From their inner thoughts the following aspects regarding the saints become apparent:

- The saints are men who conquer nature.
- Their spirit and mind are conquered, not by them, but by their love for Christ, and their soul is drunken with that love for him.
- This is explained and elucidated by reference to their suffering, from which they time and again arise as victors:
  - the list contains, firstly, physical suffering, with reference to mutilation of sides, heads, hands, tongues, eyes, and legs;
  - then follow references to non-violent suffering, such as attempts at persuasion, threats and mockery.
- The ἄρεισις of the tyrants is again stressed, and the reality of a loss of their power through the spirit of these men.

Although their mental strength could not be overcome, the preacher nevertheless (ὅτι εἰς) acknowledges the fact that the saints did indeed suffer physically (V.17). Still, this physical suffering is of no consequence for their very salvation. As a guarantee of this fact, Pseudo-novus now (V.17b-19) introduces Christ in a speaking role, mocking the tyrants and their madness (τῇ μανία ἄρεισί). The whole speech of Christ is presented in the form of the ship-at-sea image, in which the ship probably represents the life of the saints, the sea and its waves the onslaught of the tyrants, with Christ in the role of steers-man (σκόπων) of the ship.33 The main point is that nothing the tyrants can muster against this ship can overcome the divine protective power of Christ.

The tyrant among the tyrants, the devil (VII.23), now reflects upon this victory by the saints, and the section (VII.20-21) further serves to highlight the character of the saints, in this case with reference to their weaponry: the saints are men who are armed against the devil by means of a law (νόμος), written with ink on paper (ἐν χάρτῃ καὶ μέλαινα κεχρυσάμενος), given them by the crucified Christ (παρὰ τοῦ σταυροῦ προσφυγμένου δόθησεν).

In the epilogue, the preacher, returning to the note of victory expressed in the prologue, and recapitulating the main aspects of the saints’ character, points out that these soldiers and martyrs of Christ (VII.23) have fought nobly, have triumphed upon their threats, have defied the torturers and their tortures, have become perfect in their faith, have received the crown from Christ, are now reigning with him and are interesting for the preacher and his audience in Christ Jesus.

2.3.3 Characterising the tyrants and the devil

33 See below under 2.4.2, and note 1.
The tyrants and the devil form the background of the overall picture of the sufferings and victory of the saints, and represent the opposite of the Christian values. As such the characterisation of these opposing evil powers often leads to an effective *dominio memoriae* whereby Proclus reduces them to the morally base opponents of the heroes of his story.14 The following character traits are drawn with the paintbrush of the preacher:

- foremost their evil *martyr* (ποιημένον ἐνόμισεν ἔχουσα τὴν ἀνέβειον, II.5), and therefore their titles as βασιλεύς and τέρανας, II.5-6;
- their rage (ἐξπυρώσα την ἄνεβειον, ἐξέλαμπαν τῷ θεῷ, II.5), caused by mockery on the part of the saints, although they were mere (simple) men;
- the fact that they could not endure to see their *failure* to conquer simple men (οὐκ ἔφερεν ὅτι καὶ τῶν τυραννῶν, II.6);
- their *selflessness* in the face of the mental courage of the saints, expressed by Proclus by means of δύναμις and ἀπόφεις (IV.13;16). This is further confirmed by the use of the *submissions dehitalitas* in IV.13 (τῷ ποιημένῳ κτλ.), the conditional clauses of IV.14 and 15 (ὅτι), the expression of belittlement in IV.15 (μικρός ἡμῖν ὅτι, τὰ τήρημα), the use of φυλακάκια in IV.16 ("Ο πότες ἄρρητες ἢ ἐκπάθην ήμιας κτλ."); and the statements of IV.16, expressing the fact that no war or person could ever withstand them, but that now their trophies are all gone, because they are conquered by mere men.
- In the speech of Christ another trait is added, namely their *raving madness* (τῇ μάνια, V.17).
- Finally, in the section relating the plotting of the devil (ἐγινετο μερανάμενος, VI.20), and σοφή (σοφίας δὲ, σοφίσμα, VI.21), the devil reveals some traits belonging to the same category of the tyrants in general:
  - his *shame* for being conquered (αἰρεθήσομαι, twice in VI.20; τὴν αἰρεθήσομαι, VI.22).
  - The phrase οὐκ ἔδω (twice in VI.22) is used to express the *selflessness* of the devil, as well as the phrase οὐκ ἔδω (VI.20), as in the case of the tyrants (II.6).
  - The repetition of the concept of *failures* further emphasises the position of the devil (τὴν ἦτταν. ἠττήσατο, VI.20; 22).

14 See also Lecmanns et al. (note 33) 32.
2.4 Homiletic art

In the section discussed above, I have extracted the basic traits of character and conduct. The 
\textit{key or manner}, in which Proclus has drawn this picture, is part and parcel of his homiletic art. In this category two levels of stylistic features are considered. The first concerns the pattern in which sections are structured, resulting from \textquote{the search for symmetry and rhythm}, which gave the homilies \textquotesingle a distinctive melodic sound, in some passages coming close to the hymnic},\textsuperscript{26} including features that serve as markers of such sections; the second level deals with rhetorical features, which occur in the homilies of the Early Church,\textsuperscript{3} and which can be attributed to the influence of the Second Sophistic and the rhetorical handbooks in which the theory and practice of rhetoric were transmitted aurally following the peak of the Second Sophistic. Most important among these stylistic features are \textit{metaphor and comparison}, \textit{ekphrasis and periphrasis}, \textit{hyperbole}, and \textit{fictional dialogue}.\textsuperscript{28}

2.4.1 Structural patterns and elements serving as markers for the structure of sentences and periods

(a) Sentence structure

Examining only two of many similar types of structural patterns occurring in the homily would suffice to underline a style that is typical of the homilies of Proclus.\textsuperscript{30}

\begin{quote}
\textquote{Εἷς ἐτεκνία τοῖς τρόποις ἐξήγει: ἔργον ἄρτον καὶ τέργην, έχω λογισμὸν ἔξοψα ἔντερον πρὸς εὐθυμίαν τεθυμίαν. έχεις εὔρηκη μεσαντήρα, ἔχει παντοπλαία ἀποκρυόμενον σοι τὰς βασάνους τὰς ἀληθείας. Περιγίγνεται σοι τὸν ἱλιὼν τὰ ἀμύντερα ὅπλα ἐκεῖνα χαλκεῖς εἰργάσαι, ταῦτα δὲ πεμβὴ ὅμων ἐπεκτείνατο.}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{26} See J.H. Burkhan, \textit{\textquoteright{}Aspects of style and imagery in the homilies of Proclus of Constantinople\textquoteright{}}, \textit{Acta Pontificioe et Byzantinae} 9 (1998) 1-22.


\textsuperscript{28} Cf. Leemans et al. (note 33) 22-37 for a description of these features within the framework of the martyr homilies.

The first important aspect that should be noted, is the short, rhythmical pattern of the Proclian sentence structure, giving an overall impression of a definite ἵνα φέρει. Several stylistic features confirm this:

- The fourfold anaphora with the verb ἔχειν, followed by the fourfold antithetical and anaphoric use of the pair ἔκείνη – ταῦτα, separated from the previous anaphora by the sentence introduced by περιγίνεται.
- Homoioteleuton underlines the poetic nature of this passage:
  - έβαλεν ἐδώ – ἐστάμασεν αἷμα
  - ἰδρύματα – περιποιήθη – ἐργάζεται – πραγματεύεται
  - ἔρωμεν – τεθηρίμενον
  - εἰργάσιμο – ἔτεκτήρατο
  - ἑαυσινιστήρα – ὅπλα.
- The parallelistic arrangement of the sentences introduced by the pair ἔκείνη – ταῦτα.

(b) Ἄν λόγος πεῖθει ἐπικεχερήσεις, ἔπεισοκλίσουσαν ἐμὲ τὰς γνώμας λογισμῶς ποιμνίτορος ἄν ἄπειλήσης, γελόσως ἄν γελάσως, συστέλλουσι τὰς ὀμής (IV,15).
(β) Anaphora
Although the use of anaphora has been pointed out in the passage above, it
features quite frequently in the rest of this short homily, and serves
to demarcate certain sections in the homily. The homily begins
with one such example: οἱ, οἱ μὲν, οἱ δὲ, οἱ θεί, οἱ δὲ (I.1-2; II.6), and other
notable examples are: ξέγεις, ξένα and ξεκινά, ταῦτα already noted above;
εἰς (eight times in II.10; εἰς (εἰς) (eight times in III.11); πεί (thrice in
IV.13; and thrice in VI.22), followed by ποιο(ν) (IV.13); διά (seven times in
IV.14-15); στέκεις (twice in IV.16), and διά — oón (four times in V.18).

(γ) Ring composition
Ring composition is another feature that rounds off sections and recapitula-
tes (an idea). Two examples of ring composition (ποικίλω) should be
noted:

- Paragraph IV consists of the interior monologue of the tyrants.
  Proclus states their helplessness in the face of the courage of the
  saints by means of the verb ἔπιστευκα, and at the end of their long
  complaint, the concluding passage (IV.16) opens with an exclamatio,
  completing the ‘ring’ that points to their helplessness: Ἡ πᾶσης
  ἑπιστευκᾶς κτλ.

- Also in paragraph IV, we find the use of ποικίλω between IV.14 and
  IV.15 with reference to the ineffectiveness of the sword against the
  saints (τοὺς νικήμα — ν ἑπιστευκῶν).

- Paragraph VI consists of the speech in which the devil is plotting the
destruction of the saints, but which, of course, also contains a strong
note of defeat on his part. His speech begins with the signif-
ient ποικίλω, which he repeats in the same utterance (VI.20), and then
he concludes his speech with the very same concept: τὴν οἰκογένειαν οὐ
δεῖμε κτλ.

(δ) Antithetical statements and juxtaposition of words
Proclus also employs in this homily, as he does in his other, antithetical
statements or paradoxical affirmations, as Old refers to them. A good
example is to be found in II.10, where such statements especially gain in
emphasis if one considers that they are pronounced by the saints with
reference to Christ, their Champion:

Behold the Champion of our resolute spirit:

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81 See also Leroy (note 1) 253 and n. 293.
82 Old (note 47) 71.
he had his hands nailed to a cross, but caught the whole world in his net;
he had a spear pierced through his side, but he destroyed the power of Death;
he had his hands bound, but digging through, he despoiled the tombs;
he had his eyes closed, but he woke those who have been asleep from the beginning.\footnote{See also e.g. Euseb. \textit{De vita Const.} 1.15 (PG 20.929C), and Leemans \textit{et al.} (note 33) 28-30.}

Juxtaposition usually functions as a technique of emphasis, and this is the case in this homily, where antithetical statements are part of the description of suffering versus torture, honour versus shame. The following should be noted: in III.11 we have examples of antithetical juxtaposition: ἄγιον υἱὸς, πάθος ἀπόθεσθε, ἵκρων ἀπέλατον, πεσὼν ἐστήκε, and ἀθώος ἀπεφαί, the function obviously being to emphasise the miraculous (ὡς κοιμών καὶ παραδόξων τριγυμίσεως) and victorious outcome of the fate of the saints at the hands of their torturers.

2.4.2 Rhetorical features descriptive in nature

(a) Metaphor and comparison
Proclus uses both story-images and minor images or metaphorical expressions. The main image of the homily is based on the ἄγιον and the ἀγανακτικος,\footnote{See also e.g. Euseb. \textit{De vita Const.} 1.15 (PG 20.929C), and Leemans \textit{et al.} (note 33) 28-30.} who in this instance, were represented by the μῆτρας, more fully defined in VII.23 as οἱ τῶν Χριστοῦ στερημέναι καὶ μάρτυρες – ‘the soldiers and martyrs of Christ’, ‘who have struggled nobly’ (γεννάτως ἀγανακτικούσιν). Within the framework of this image Proclus highlights the following elements of torture and victory or defeat:

- στέφανος: this refers obviously to the victory of the saints, and occurs in the following expressions: ἀναδίξασα τινα στέφανον (I.1); ἐκ βασάνων ηὐρεγεῖτο στέφανον (III.11). Linked with this is the general idea of reward as this is indicated in I.2: ἤκρισα τοὺς ἅμωμα.
- ἡ βάσανος, ὁ βάσανος, τὰ βασανιστήματα: these words all relate to the suffering by torture and occur in the following expressions: τὰ σώματα ταῖς βασάνοις παραδόντες (I.2); ἔφερεν τὰς τῶν βασάνων ἐπινοεῖς (II.6); ἔχεις εὐτρεπή βασανιστήμα (II.8); σος τῶν βασάνων ἀγηδόνας (II.8); ἐκ βασάνων (III.11); ἐπιλογον τοὺς
Proclus has Christ mock the tormentors (V.17-19) from the metaphorical perspective of a ship at sea, an image that occurs frequently in various forms in patristic homilies – a ship which is tossed about by the storms of the devil,

13 For a similar image see also his homily on St. Stephen (PG 65,813c). Leroy (note 1) 253, remarks: '... Proclus parle assez souvent de la mer... C'est le cas aux paragraphes 17 à 19, dans le discours que l'orateur prête au Christ.' For the significance of this, see note 1. See also e.g. Cyril. Alex. Comm. in Isam. 3.4 (A2023).
but is then secured and steered to safety by Christ. The following elements constitute the image, which covers the whole paragraph:

- The waves of impiety and lawlessness, directed with a loud roar at the ship of victory, the saints, as well as the storms and hurricanes of impiety: σὺν τῆς ἀπεθανάσει στο κλαδάσιον, τῆς παρανομίας τὰ κύματα, μετὰ τοῦ πολλοῦ ρόθου, τῆς ἀπεθανάσει τοις λαλαπέσι καταγής.
- The ship: τὸ σκάφος, τὴν ἀλκάδα.
- The ship’s deck, made from the cross: τὰς σινίδας.
- The ship’s rudder: τὸ πηδάλιον.
- The handle of the steering-paddle: τὴν αὐχένα.
- The ship’s keel: τὴν πτώσιν.
- The anchor: τὴν ἀγκυραν.
- The ship’s mast, established with faith as source: τὸ ἱστίον.
- The ship’s sails, put to the winds with good hope as source: τὴν ὀρῶσι.
- The ship’s steersman: κυβέρνητης.

The image is structured as follows:

- Christ, mocking the madness of the tyrants, and with three verbs in the imperative, dares the tyrant to let the waves of his impiety dash against the ship κλάμφου, ἐπέγειρον, πρόβαλε (V.17).
- This is followed by a section consisting of four conditional sentences, negated by questions that imply that this endeavor on the part of the tyrant will be in vain:
  - ἢ καταμαθύσῃς ... ὦ εἷς εἰμι ...;
  - ἢ διασκίδης ... ὦ διάπηκα ...;
  - ἢ θυμάτης ... ὦ θύμα ...; and concluded with a conditional and an imperative:
  - ἢ διανεῖσῃς ... γῆλανοι ...! (V.18)
- This is followed by three statements, all beginning with an ἐκ indicating the source, in which Christ states the material from which the ship and its parts have been made: ἐκ τοῦ σταυροῦ κλ., ἐκ πότεσις κτ., ἐξ ἔλαπου κτ.
- The image is concluded by two negative statements by means of which Christ assures the tyrant that the storms of his impiety will not destroy the ship: ὦ κατασέβοι, ὦ καθελεύσει ... (V.19).

Several images, including the use of comparisons and metaphors, refer to the saints and the way they are seen by their tormentors while being
tortured: in III.12 Proclus pictures the saints attacking the tyrants like lions, and in IV.14 the saints, even with a leg cut off, would nevertheless run everywhere faster than deer, roaming about and catching the world in their nets (of salvation), and although their eyes be cut out, they can see brighter than the rays of the sun, while they grow angry from their blood in order to fly towards heaven.

The metaphorical expressions are even more numerous:

- The saints are said to have plucked the fruit of honour by the way they have suffered: ἐκφυειασαν τῷ τιμήτῳ (I.2). A similar image is used in III.11, referring to the saints who have gathered in the fruit of victory from the tortures/torturers: ἐκ βασίλειων ἐτρέφοντες στέφανον.

- On three occasions Proclus defines the specific concept as 'boiling': ζύστατο πῦλον (I.3; IV.15) and ζύστατον θυμίον (II.5).

- In II.8 Proclus has a tortured saint taunt the tyrant as follows: ἔχω λογισμόν ... πρὸς εὐεξίαν τεθημένον: 'I have a mind ... sharpened (sharper than a sword) with a view to piety.'

- In two instances Proclus uses the metaphor of the 'net of salvation', 'catching the world in the net of salvation': τὴν οἰκουμένην πᾶσαν ἐσαγγείλεις (II.10) and παντοκράτωρ τῇ πίστει συγκείνουσι τὴν οἰκουμένην (IV.14). 'Net' is also used metaphorically or figuratively in IV.13: πῶς περιπετεύοντες δέκτων.

- In II.10 we have a military metaphor, namely Christ who has dug through the tombs of the dead and despoiled them: κοίτης τάφος διορύγας ἐκσέλεσαν. Another military image is used in IV.14: the saints arm their tongue to defend themselves: ὑπελέξουσι τὴν γιατίαν πρὸς Ἐλέησιν. Similarly IV.21, said of the Christian νόμος that arms the saints against the devil, ὅτινς ὑπέλεξεν ἁπ' ἐμοὶ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις.

- The word δίκαιον in the phrase τίς εἶδεν δίκαιον διάφων υἱοίοις turns it into an agricultural or botanical image. Notice also the alliteration on ἀθανάτοι (III.11).

- In the following phrase the word κοιμοίμουσα (τίς εἶδεν τάφος ἀπελάμβαν κοιμοίμουσα) points to figurative language. It probably originated from the world of cosmetics (‘adorned’) (III.11).

64 For the metaphorical use of ζύστατον ‘angry’, see also, inter alia, Chrys. Alex. Quæ deus salutat 8 (p. 163.5), Greg. Nyss. De reg. 3 (PG 46.329D).
65 For this metaphorical use of συγκείνουσι, see also Cyrill. Alex. Comm. in Is. 4:1, Greg. Naz. Oratio 37:1, Greg. Nyss. Hom. 5 in Cant.
• In III.11 we have another image in the phrase τίς έκκλητος πετάμενος συνεπτίζοτα: constructing wings from the blood that was shed. The same image is also used in IV.14: πετρωτισθείς προσ νύφον ἐν τῷ ἀλώτος.

• In III.12 we find a financial metaphor where the preacher states that the saints 'sold their limbs to the torturers/torturers' (πυλάκων ... τὰ μέλη).

• An interesting image is evident in the phrase ψυχήν ἁνδρός ἐστι ἐμφανές πώς πώςς μεθοδεύσαντες (IV.13): 'a soul drunk with love'.

• A hunting image is present in the phrase πώς τρικάτοισ οὐχικικόν (how shall we be able to hunt down a mind/spirit ...) (IV.13).

• An agricultural image comes to the fore in IV.14: the sword cuts into the sides of the saints as if it were a plough τῶν πλευρῶν ἀγροδεσίας (to sieve).

• A wrestling image is contained in VI.21: ἐν ποίῳ ἀκτίνις ἀκτίνη τὸν τοῦτος κατασκαλίσας.\(^8\)

• In VI.21 Proclus has the devil refer to the Christian νόμος that arms the saints against himself (see above). The devil continues by stating that love has 'painted' this law in their souls: νόμον ὐν ἐν ψυχήν δείγματο τὸν ἡμῶν (VI.22).

(b) Εκφρασία

Ekphrasis\(^9\) or formal description was one of the most popular rhetorical devices employed by both patristic and Byzantine homilists. The purpose of ekphrasis was to render the narration of objects, events, places, seasons (especially spring) and persons in such a way that they seemed right before the

\(^8\) See e.g. also Amphil. Hom. 3.2.57 (ed. Duzema); and Cyril. Alex. Hom. pass. 5.3 for the metaphorical use of the verb μεθέχω.

\(^9\) The absolute use of πώθες in I.3 and VI.22 is, according to Leroy (note 1) 253 a mark of the authenticity of the homily as a work of Proclus.

\(^{10}\) Proclus also uses this verb metaphorically in Homily 18.2 (PG 65.820C): ἀπόστολον ... ἀμφιβολών τῷ σταυρῷ τῷ κατασκαλίσας. See Hermas, Mandata pacis 12.5.2: δεῖται ὁ δικάτου ἀμφιβολίας, κατασκαλίσας δὲ νόμον.
reader's eyes. In fact, one has to distinguish in this regard between mere narration and formal description: the former merely relates a subject in general, while the latter describes the subject in detail. In the literary genre of the encomium on the saints or martyrs, ekphrasis was especially employed to give such a detailed description of the torture the Christian martyrs suffered at the hands of their tormentors.73 Typical of these descriptions of tortures is the antithesis created within such a description between the cruelty of the torturers and the subsequent sufferings of the martyrs on the one hand, and the joy and mental courage exhibited by the martyrs on the other hand. Thus Chrysostom could write in his homily on All the Martyrs that 'the saints lay on the coals as if on roses, and thus regarded what happened with delight',74 and Proclus focuses in the same way on the courage and joy of the saints amidst their sufferings at the hand of the torturers.

(y) Fictitious discourse or dramatised form of style.75 The intention of direct speech in the form of dialogues and monologues was a well-loved and popular form of communication and technique used by homilists to make the homily livelier and catch the attention of the audience and to further the comprehension on their part.76 Thus, as shown above in the outline and analysis of the theme, martyrs, torturers, Christ and the devil are, so to speak, put onto the stage, and in this short homily, the audience indeed experience, as if before their eyes, a little dramatic performance.77

This endeavour to catch and hold the audience's attention by means of fictitious discourse is further emphasised by other means of communication, namely (i) addressing himself and the audience as 'we', (ii) disclosing to the audience the torture of the saints as the theme of his discourse in the form of

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73 See H. Delehaye, Les passions des martyrs et les genres littéraires (Brussels 1921) 216f.f.
77 We encounter direct speech in five of the seven paragraphs.
hortative subjunctives: ‘Come, let us’, etc.; and also (ii) the technique of exclamations, by means of which he obviously wishes to draw in a lively manner their attention to the subject matter before them.

2.5 Conclusion: message of the homily

The thrust of the homily is contained in the opening and concluding lines of the εἰρωνία: ‘The champions of piety not only crowned themselves as victors from the games, but also prepared those who honour them to attain to the very same virtues’ (1.1), and: ‘Come and let us put forward the sufferings (caused by) those contests as theme of our discourse, and observe closely with what kind of resolution they were throwing themselves onto those dangers, and let us (thus) effect a benefit which is shared in common by all’ (1.4).

From this it is clear that the homily has a twofold purpose: firstly, to honour and celebrate the sufferings and victory of the martyrs, the ‘soldiers of Christ’; this act of honouring and celebration is part of the ancient concept of honour and shame: for honour to be effective, it needs to be recognised and celebrated publicly, and to this very end the homily has been composed; secondly, to point to these saints as role models for the benefit of present-day Christians.

This twofold purpose finds its locus classicus in Hebrews 11-12. Having listed in chapter 11 the men of old who excelled in the virtue of faith, and therefore are in a way ‘remembered’ and thus ‘honoured’ by the author, he sets them forth in 12.1 as examples for the Christian community in Rome, for whom this discourse has been written. Using the image of the games, the author defines these men of faith as the crowds that encourage the athletes running the race of life. Keeping in mind what these men of old have obtained by their faith, and keeping their eyes on Jesus Christ, their Champion, they should run the race with perseverance: ‘With all these witnesses to faith around us like a cloud, we must throw off every encumbrance, every sin which all too readily distracts us, and run with resolution the race for which we entered …’

Within the category of the men of old in Hebrews 11, the Church also included the apostles, and after them the saints and martyrs of the Early Church. And in time many saintly members of the Church as a whole would be included among these witnesses that encourage present-day athletes of Christ to persevere in the struggle against sin, the devil and his demons, including the enemies of the Church as such. The intercession theology\(^\text{11}\) of

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\(^{10}\) See also Hebrews 13.7: ‘follow the example of their faith’.

\(^{11}\) See also the fourth phase of the commemoration of the saints discussed under 2.1.
Hornily 34.VII.23 (ἕκαστος ἐξ ἔργων τος ἀνδρονίου υἱός) naturally fits in with this role of the witnesses or crowds of faithful that have completed the race and received the crown of victory from Christ, and who therefore could serve as examples of endurance and success. And that this example, set forth by the saints, not only refers to sufferings at the hands of the enemies of the Church, but also to hardships in general, is clear from I.3,18 so that the faithful in general could imitate the endurance and victorious joy of the martyrs of the Church, and thus come to share in the honour achieved by these saints and martyrs, when they also experience and observe the shame and defeat of the powers of sin and evil in their own lives.

Thus the homily is not only a glorious celebration of the saints, but also serves as encouragement to all Christians in this present world of hardships and sufferings, in which they are mere 'aliens in a foreign land' (1 Peter 2.11; cf. Hebrews 13.14).

18 Thus also Lemaître (note 1: 252-53), who also refers to par. 4 in this regard. He writes: ‘ce sont des combats spirituels qu’affrontent à présent les hommes animés de la même détermination que les saints.’
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