

The Golden Legend or Lives Of The Saints
Compiled by **Jacobus de Voragine**, Archbishop of Genoa, 1275
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136// HERE BEGIN THE LIVES OF SS. PROTHUS AND JACINCTUS AND EUGENIA

THE CONVERSION OF THE THREE YOUNG NOBLES

Prothus and Jacinctus were gentlemen of noble lineage and were fellows in the study of philosophy with Eugenia, daughter of Philip, of the most noble lineage of the Romans. Which Philip had taken of the senate the provostry of Alexandria, and had led with him Claudia his wife, his sons Avitus and Sergius, and his daughter Eugenia. And Eugenia was perfect in all the liberal arts and letters. Prothus and Jacinctus had studied with her, and were come to perfection of those sciences.

And Eugenia, in the fifteenth year of her age, was required to be married of one Aquilinus, son of the consul Aquilinus, and she answered that her behoved to be married and choose a husband full of good manners and not of high lineage. And then came to her hand the doctrine of St. Paul, and she began in her courage [heart] to be made Christian by good manners.

And then at that time the Christian men were well suffered to dwell beside the city of Alexandria. And as she went playing and walking by the town, she heard Christian men sing a verse of the psalter which saith: All the gods of the miscreants be devils, our Lord certainly made the heavens.

Then said she to Prothus and Jacinctus, that had studied with her in the arts liberal: We have overpassed the arguments and syllogisms of the philosophers by study corruptible, the arguments of Aristotle, and ideas of Plato, and the enseignments [teachings] of Socrates, and shortly all that the poet sang and made, or the philosopher thought, it is all closed by his sentence; let us then be brethren and follow we our Lord Jesu Christ.

And this counsel pleased them.

EUGENIA ENTERS A MONASTERY AS A MAN

And then she took the habit of a man, and came to the monastery where Helenus was Abbot, which would in no wise suffer that any woman should come to him. And this Helenus had on a time disputed against a heresy, and when that he saw that he might not sustain the force of the arguments, he did do burn a great fire for to prove his faith, and said: We shall see now which is the right faith, and he himself entered first into the fire and came out again without hurt or grief, but the heretic would not enter into the fire, and was confused and put away.

And when Eugenia was gone to him, and had said that she was a man, he said to her: Thou sayest truly and well that thou art a man, for thou workest virtuously. And the condition of her was showed to him then of [by] God, and she received the habit with Prothus and Jacinctus, and did her to be called of all brother Eugene. And when her father and mother saw her chair come home empty and void, then they did do seek their daughter [had their daughter sought] over all, but she might not be found.

And then went they to diviners and soothsayers and demanded them where their daughter was become. And they answered that she was ravished of the gods among the stars, and therefore her father made an image of his daughter and commanded that all the people should worship her. And she dwelled among the company of brethren in the dread of God [fear of the Lord]; and when the provost of the church was dead, she was made provost.

SHE IS PROPOSITIONED BY A NOBLEWOMAN

And then in Alexandria was a lady noble and rich which was named Melancia, whom St. Eugenia anointed with oil and delivered her of a quartan [a kind of fever or ague], in the name of God, and she sent to her many gifts which she would not receive. And the said lady supposed that Eugenia had been a man, and visited her oft and beheld the greatness and beauty of her body, in such wise that she was strongly esprised and chauffed in her love, and was greatly troubled how she might do to make Eugene to have to do with her. And then she feigned her to be sick and sent for this brother Eugene to come and have pity on her, and when she was come she told to her in what manner she was taken in his love, and how she burned in desiring him, and prayed her that she would lie by her and have to do carnally, and embraced her and kissed her and exhorted her to do sin.

And Eugenia had great horror and abomination of her, and said: Thou art by right called Melancia, for it is an evil name and fulfilled of treason, thou art said black and dark, daughter of darkness, friend of the devil, light of pollution, nourishing of lechery, anguishing daughter of sempiternal [eternal] death.

And when she saw her deceived of that she coveted, she doubted [feared] that Eugenia should discover [reveal] her felony, and began first to cry that Eugenia would there have enforced [used force upon] her, and then she went to the provost Philip and complained, saying that “a young man, a false Christian, was come to me because of medicine, and took me and would have enforced me by strength for to have sinned with him, if I had not been holpen [helped] and delivered by a chamberer which was in my chamber.”

HER TRIAL AND VINDICATION

And when the provost heard this he was greatly moved, and sent for a multitude of people, and made Eugenia to be brought with the other servants of Jesu Christ bound in iron, and established a day when they all should be delivered to beasts for to be

devoured, and then were they called tofore the provost, which said to Eugenia: Say to me, thou right cursed wretch, if your God hath taught you to do such works as for to corrupt and defile the women forcibly against their will?

And then Eugenia, which had the head inclined because she would not be known, said that our Lord had taught and enseigned [taught] chastity entirely, and promised to them that kept it the life perdurable [eternal]. “And we may well show that Melancia is false and lieth, but it is better to us to suffer than she should be vanquished and punished, and that the fruit of our patience perish not. But notwithstanding, let her chamberer be brought forth here. She is the witness of our felony, so that the leasings [lies] of her may be reproved.”

And when she was come, she being learned of [instructed by] her lady, opposed against Eugenia, and said that he would have taken her by force, and also all the other of the meiny [household], corrupted by the lady, witnessed that it was so.

And Eugenia said: The time is passed of silence, and the time to speak is now. I will no longer suffer that this shameless creature put more blame guiltless on the servant of Jesu Christ, ne that she glorify not in her malice ne in her falsity. And because that truth surmounteth her leasing, and that wisdom surmounteth her malice, I shall show the truth, for none advantage but for the glory of our Lord.

And then she took her coat and rent it unto her girdle above, and said that she was a woman, as it appeared, and also said to the provost: Thou art my father and Claudia is my mother, and the twain that sit with thee, Avitus and Sergius, be my brethren, and I am Eugenia, thy daughter, and these twain be Prothus and Jacinctus.

And when the father heard that, he knew well his daughter, and then he and her mother embraced her and wept tenderly for joy. And then they clothed Eugenia with clothes of gold and enhanced her on high. And after this came a fire from heaven and burnt Melancia and all her meiny. Then Eugenia converted to the faith her father, mother, brethren, and all the meiny, and therefore left the father the provostry, and was ordained bishop of the Christian people. And as he was in prayer and orison he was slain of the miscreants and paynims.

HER MARTYRDOM

Then Claudia, with her sons and Eugenia, returned to Rome, and there converted much people unto the faith of Jesu Christ.

Then by the commandment of the emperor there was a great stone bound to the neck of Eugenia, and she was thrown into Tiber, but the stone brake and she went [walked] without harm upon the water. Then she was thrown into a burning furnace, but the furnace was quenched by miracle and became cold. And then she was put into a dark prison, but a great shining light made it all clear and light.

And when she had been there ten days without meat [food], our Lord Jesu Christ appeared to her, and brought to her a right white loaf and said to her: Take this meat of my hand. I am thy saviour whom thou hast loved with all thy thought. And on that day that I descend into the earth I shall receive thee.

Then on the day of the nativity of our Lord, the tormentor was sent to her and he smote off her head.

And after that she appeared to her mother, and said to her that she should follow her on the Sunday after. And when the Sunday came Claudia put herself to prayer and gave her spirit to God, and then Prothus and Jacinctus were drawn to the temple for to do sacrifice, and they by their prayers all to-brake the idol; and when they would in no wise do sacrifice, they accomplished their martyrdom in suffering their heads to be smitten off. And suffered death under Valerianus and Gallus about the year of our Lord two hundred and fifty-seven, by whose merits let us pray Almighty God to have mercy on us and bring us to his bliss. *Amen.*

The [iconography of Saints Protus and Hyacinthus](#) is available at the [Christian iconography website](#).

For other saints, see the [index to this Golden Legend website](#).

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