

UNPUBLISHED TEXTS
FROM THE ARAB ORTHODOX TRADITION (3):
THE PATERIKON OF THE PALESTINIAN
LAVRA OF MAR CHARITON

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Abstract

The third instalment in the “Unpublished Texts from the Arab Orthodox Tradition” series makes accessible a neglected document from the Orthodox Christian tradition in Arabic: the Paterikon of the Palestinian lavra of Mar Chariton. It includes an edition and an English translation of this text, which contains precious information about seven little-known ascetic fathers of this celebrated Palestinian monastery. Special attention is given to the ninth-century saint Eustratius of Mar Chariton, whose memory the Orthodox Church kept on 17 October. The Appendix includes an edition and an English translation of the Copto-Arabic version of the Vita of the same St. Eustratius.

Résumé

Le troisième article de la série « Textes inédits de la tradition arabe orthodoxe » rend accessible un document négligé de la tradition chrétienne orthodoxe en arabe: le Paterikon de la laure palestinienne de Mar Chariton. Il comprend une édition et une traduction anglaise de ce texte, qui contient des informations précieuses sur sept pères ascétiques peu connus de ce célèbre monastère palestinien. Une attention particulière est accordée au saint Eustrate de Mar Chariton, qui a été commémoré par l'Église orthodoxe le 17 octobre. L'appendice comprend une édition et une traduction anglaise de la version copto-arabe de la Vie du même Saint-Eustrate.

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The purpose of the present article—the third instalment in the “Unpublished Texts from the Arab Orthodox Tradition” series—is to make accessible a neglected document from the Orthodox Christian tradition in Arabic: the Paterikon of the Palestinian “Old Lavra” (παλαιὰ λάβρα / *al-sīq al-‘atīq*) of Mar Chariton (ca. 8 km south-south-east of Bethlehem, ca. 2.5 km northeast of the Palestinian village of Tuqū’/Tekoa; see Hirschfeld 2000; Pringle 1993-2009: II 221-224).² This Paterikon—a brief account of the lives, sayings, and miracles of select monks of Mar Chariton, embedded in a much more extensive compilation of stories from John Moschus’ *Spiritual Meadow*, Anastasius of Sinai’s *Narrationes*, and the *Apophthegmata Patrum*—is preserved in Sinai ar. 563 (copied in 1257), fols. 22r-31v.

The Paterikon of Mar Chariton (PMC) contains the following seven items:

1. **Andrew of Mar Chariton** (said to be of *ifranjī*, i.e. Frankish, origin) – otherwise unknown [fols. 22r-v];
2. **Constantine of Mar Chariton** (said to be of *rūmī*, i.e. Byzantine, origin) – otherwise unknown [fols. 22v-23r];
3. **Cyriacus of Mar Chariton** (a native of Corinth) – this is Cyriacus the Anchorite (Κυριακὸς ὁ Ἀναχωρητής, d. ca. 557), a well-known saint, whose memory the Orthodox Church keeps on 29 September [fols. 23v-24v];
4. **Eustratius of Mar Chariton** (a native of Sicily) – discussed below [fols. 24v-28r];
5. **Cosmas of Mar Chariton** (a Syriac-speaking monk from a village near Aleppo) – otherwise unknown [fols. 28r-29v];
6. **Gabriel the Hermit** (Ghabrīl / Ghabriyīl al-ḥabīs) – otherwise unknown [fols. 29v-30v];
7. **Gabriel of Mar Chariton** (a native of al-Balqā’ in Transjordan) – also otherwise unknown [fols. 30v-31v].

I shall now present and discuss each of these seven items in order.

² For the first and second instalments of the series, see Treiger 2014 (review: Panchenko 2014) and Treiger 2016. Section 4 of the present article will offer corrections to Treiger 2016.

1. Andrew of Mar Chariton

The first section reports a miracle performed by an otherwise unknown monk of Frankish (*ifranjī*) origin, Abba Andrew (Andhrāyā) of Mar Chariton.³ Abba Andrew accompanied an (unnamed) young monk to the Dead Sea in order to assist him in bringing wood for the construction work that the latter intended to carry out in his cell. This took place in August, and both monks were suffering from extreme heat, which the young monk was no longer able to tolerate. Abba Andrew's prayer miraculously brought down rain; yet there was no sign of rain anywhere else in the vicinity.

We have no indication as to when Abba Andrew lived. While the Byzantine period appears, on balance, somewhat more likely, there is nothing improbable about this event having taken place after the Muslim conquest. "Frankish" (*ifranjī*) monks may have been present at the Lavra of Mar Chariton both before and after the conquest, and, in fact, we will soon encounter one of the monastery's most celebrated monks, Eustratius (ninth century, discussed in Section 4 below), who was a native of Sicily.

2. Constantine of Mar Chariton

There follow two stories about Abba Constantine (Qusṭanṭīn) of Mar Chariton, an otherwise unknown saintly monk of "Byzantine" (*rūmī*) origin. In the first story, his (unnamed) disciple discovered that one Saturday night, Abba Constantine was miraculously transported to the Holy Anastasis (*al-qiyyāma al-muqaddasa*, i.e., the Church of the Holy Sepulchre) in Jerusalem—presumably to attend a vigil there—and was then transported back to his cell.

The second story describes a rain miracle. At a time of a severe drought, while he was already on his death bed, Abba Constantine was able to bring down rain through his intense prayer that lasted from Saturday night to Sunday evening.

There is no indication of when Abba Constantine lived. The Byzantine and the early Muslim periods seem equally plausible.

³ On the terms *ifranj* and *ifranjī*, see Feodorov 2012; Feodorov 2013; Feodorov 2016.

3. Cyriacus of Mar Chariton

The section on Cyriacus of Mar Chariton (=St. Cyriacus the Anchorite, d. ca. 557) is, essentially, an abridgment of certain episodes (§§8-10, 15-16, and 21) of Cyril of Scythopolis' *Vita* of this saint (CPG 7538; BHG 463; edition: Schwartz 1939: 222-235).

A hitherto unpublished Arabic translation of Cyril of Scythopolis' *Vita Cyriaci* is preserved in the Antiochian Menologion for September in Sinai ar. 395 (copied in 1328-9 AD), fols. 125r-134v (under 29 September).⁴ As shown by Gérard Garitte (Garitte 1971; cf. Pataridze 2013: 54), this Arabic translation served as an intermediary for the Georgian version, extant in a Georgian manuscript dated to 1034-1042 AD (London, BL Add. 11281). Consequently, the Arabic translation must have been produced *before* this date, in the early eleventh century at the latest, but probably quite a bit earlier (in the ninth or tenth century).

We now need to ask whether the abridgment preserved in PMC derives directly from the Greek original of Cyril of Scythopolis' *Vita Cyriaci* or from its Arabic translation. The latter possibility seems more likely, since the abridgment in PMC displays certain *verbal correspondences* with the Arabic translation. Here is a brief comparison that will show this to be the case (cf. Greek text: Schwartz 1939: 227, line 6-228, line 8; this is the entertaining episode in which, following Cyriacus' prayer, God makes bitter squill sweet).

⁴ On the Antiochian Menologion (*Kitāb al-Dūlāb*), see Treiger 2017.

Complete Version (Arabic Menologion, Sinai ar. 395)	Abridged version (PMC, Sinai ar. 563, edited below)
<p>(١٢٨ب) ... وفي السنة السابعة والسبعين من سنه اسلم القانيريشية* اي الخدمة التي كانت معه وصار الى بويّة ناطوفا وكان معه تلميذ. فلما لم يجد في تلك الاماكن شيا من اصول العشب الذي يقال له الملازغيون** طلب البار من الله من اجل اضطرار الحاجة لكيما يغتذيان من بصل العنصل الذي كان هناك، وآمن بخالق الكلّ أنّه قادر على ان يصير المرّ حلواً، ثمّ أنّه حينئذ قال لتلميذه: «اذهب انت، يا ابني، واجمع لنا من بصل العنصل شيا واسلقه، ومبارك هو الربّ، أنا نتعرّأ منه الحاجة». فذهب التلميذ وجمع منه بصلاً كما امره وسلقه وصبّ عليه ملح وقدمه، فلوقته حلّاه الله على المكان وطاب لهما طعمه، وبقيا يغتذيان منه مدّة اربع سنين.</p>	<p>(23ب) ... فلما كثر عليه سجس الناس هرب الى البريّة ومعه تلميذ له مبارك، وكان له من عمره ذلك الوقت سبعة وسبعون سنة، ولم يكن في تلك البريّة شي يتغذّأ به سوا بصل الفار، فطلب من الله فحلّاه لهم، فكانوا اذا اضطرّتهما (=اضطرّتهما) حاجة الجسد امر تلميذه يسلق منه وياكله، فاقاما على ذلك اربعة سنين.</p>
<p>فبعد تمام الاربع سنين سمع رجل من اهل تقوع من الرعاة الذين كانوا يرعون في البريّة بخر البارّ انا قرياقوس، وانّ الرجل اخذ دابةً معه فاوسقها بالخبز واتى به اليه حتى دفعه اليه وانصرف، فكانا ياكلان منه من عشية الى عشية. وفيما كان القديس يدور في البريّة الداخلة (24أ) وقد خلّف تلميذه في مغارته، اخذ كالعادة من بصل العنصل فسلقه، ولما ذاق مرارته وقع كالميت لا يتحرّك ولا يتكلّم، فعلم القديس خبره فانصرف اليه وصلى عليه ففاق وقام، فقربه جسد السيّد المسيح وعاتبه وقال له: «يا ابني، انّ الربّ لن يعمل العجايب الا في وقت الشدّة الكبيرة والخلاص للانفس ايضا».</p>	<p>فبعد ذلك سمع بهما رجل من كبار اهل تقوع فصار اليهما بوسق من الخبز فتبرّك من الشيخ ودفعه اليهما وانصرف، فكانا ياكلان منه من عشية الى عشية. وفيما كان القديس يدور في البريّة الداخلة (24أ) وقد خلّف تلميذه في مغارته، اخذ كالعادة من بصل العنصل فسلقه، ولما ذاق مرارته وقع كالميت لا يتحرّك ولا يتكلّم، فعلم القديس خبره فانصرف اليه وصلى عليه ففاق وقام، فقربه جسد السيّد المسيح وعاتبه وقال له: «يا ابني، انّ السيّد المسيح كان يحلّي لنا البصل اذ لم يكن لنا شي غيره».</p>
<p>فلما فرغ ذلك الخبر ثمّ دعتهم الحاجة الى الغذاء، بارك الشيخ ايضا لتلميذه وامره بان يصلح لهما من ذلك البصل العنصلي الى وقت الحاجة، ففعل التلميذ كما امره المعلم، فلما جا وقت الحاجة وقدم التلميذ ذلك البصل فزع التلميذ ان يذوقه لِمَا كان اصابه منه، فاخذ الشيخ وبارك ورسم الصليب المقدّس الكريم، ثمّ أنّه وضع يده لياكل اولاً، فلما نظر اليه التلميذ وقد تناول منه اطمان قلبه وجعل هو ايضا ياخذ منه ولم يضرّه ذلك شيا.</p>	<p>فلما فرغ الخبز وجاعا بارك القديس على تلميذه وامره ان يسلق من ذلك البصل ويقدمه ففعل وفزع ان يذوقه فصلّب عليه القديس واكل بصلاة معلّمه ولم ---.</p>

* Gr. τὸ κειμηλιαρχεῖον (treasury of a church).

** Gr. μελάργιον (a desert herb with an edible root).

It is true that some of these correspondences could have arisen even in two completely independent Arabic re-workings of the same Greek text; others, however, particularly the occurrence of certain roots in both Arabic versions (e.g., $\sqrt{w-s-q}$ for “load”) and a number of virtually identical sequences (e.g., *dafa ‘ahu ilayhi/ilayhimā wa-nṣarafa, fa-kānā; fa-lammā farigha l-khubz; and fazi ‘a an yadhūqahu*) strongly point to the abridged version’s dependence on the complete one. The abridged version thus seems to be a rather free re-telling of the corresponding sections of the Arabic translation of Cyril of Scythopolis’ *Vita Cyriaci*.

4. Eustratius of Mar Chariton

The section on Eustratius of Mar Chariton is by far the longest in PMC. It may be subdivided into seventeen episodes (a)-(q) each of which is represented by a separate paragraph in the edition and translation below.

- (a) Eustratius’ life prior to becoming a monk (we learn that he was born in Sicily and was then appointed by the Byzantine emperor as his chief general);
- (b) Eustratius miraculously finds a loaf of bread in the desert;
- (c) Eustratius’ stay at Sinai and miraculous revelation of the relics of Sts. John Climacus and Anastastius of Sinai;
- (d) Eustratius saves fellow-travellers from a fierce lion;
- (e) Eustratius heals a deaf boy;
- (f) Eustratius arrives at Mar Chariton and engages in extreme fasting as a self-imposed “death sentence,” and nearly dies as a result;
- (g) Eustratius engages in extreme fasting during the Fast of the Apostles;⁵
- (h) Eustratius does *not* heal the priest Abba Jonah, but instead testifies that the latter has received spiritual purification prior to his death;
- (i) Eustratius predicts an Egyptian fellow monk’s conversion to Islam (the conversion, about which, unfortunately, hardly any details are given, is said to have taken place during this monk’s trip to Egypt);⁶

⁵ The Fast of the Apostles runs from the second Monday after Pentecost to the Feast of the Apostles on 29 June. Depending on the date of Easter in a given year, it could last (on the Julian calendar) from eight to forty-two days.

⁶ This episode is significant for the study of Christian-Muslim relations.

- (j) Eustratius is able to discern whether or not the Holy Spirit descends upon clergy in the altar (presumably, during the Divine Liturgy);
- (k) Eustratius exposes and rebukes a fellow monk who secretly bought and cooked meat;
- (l) Eustratius is able to discern that a fellow monk has fallen into sin;
- (m) Eustratius predicts that a fellow monk (Abba Job), who was asked to become bishop of Aleppo, will be rejected and will come back to the monastery;
- (n) Eustratius is able to miraculously open the gates of a monastery in the desert;
- (o) Eustratius “reads” a fellow monk’s (Abba Stephen’s) thoughts and predicts that he will become patriarch of Antioch, albeit for a short time; this prophecy was fulfilled thirty-five years later;⁷
- (p) Eustratius “reads” a fellow monk’s (Abba Abramius’) thoughts and predicts that he will learn Syriac and become the abbot of Mar Chariton; this prophecy was fulfilled after Eustratius’ death;⁸
- (q) Eustratius knew in advance the time of his own death.

It is significant that three of these episodes—(l), (m), and (n)—are derived from the text I edited and translated in the second instalment of the “Unpublished Texts from the Arab Orthodox Tradition” series: “The Miracles of St. Eustratius” (Treiger 2016). Specifically, these three episodes correspond to Miracles Nos. 1, 4, and 6, respectively. In comparison to “The Miracles of St. Eustratius,” the version in PMC is, however, considerably abridged. Here is a comparison of Miracle No. 4 and the corresponding Episode (m).

⁷ We know nothing of a patriarch Stephen of Antioch in the ninth century.

⁸ It is significant that this episode regards knowledge of *Syriac* as a prerequisite for abbacy.

"Miracles of St. Eustratius," No. 4	PMC, Section 4, Episode (m)
<p>وايضًا كان في السيق راهب حمصي يدعا ابنا ايوب وكان قد قدم من عند ابنا ايوب بطريك انطاكية اساقفة يطلبون رجل يصلح <يصير> اسقف على حلب وكان قاصدين رجل يقال له ابنا سميون الدمشقي، فاختلفا عنهم، فلما تغيب عنهم ذلك الرجل الذي طلبوه دخلوا الى ذلك الراهب الحمصي فسالوه ان يخرج معهم، فاتي الى ابنا اسطراتيوس يستشيريه وهو في ذلك فرح، وكان اخر النهار، فلما اخبر القديس بذلك قال له: "ارجع اليّ في غد وانا اطلب الى المسيح ان يوفق لك باب الخير"، فانصرف من عنده. ولما كان سحر قاموا القوم واخذوا الرجل ولم يرجع الى عند القديس كما قال له، فلما اصبح سال القديس عن الراهب فقيل له انه قد مضى مع الاساقفة. حينئذ قال الشيخ: "حقًا اقول لكم، بيسما يرجع وسا يدركه حزن شديد لانه قد عرف ايش اريد اقول له، لذلك لم يجي اليّ". فعندما صار الى انطاكية لم يقبله ايوب البطريك ورده، فرجع حزين باكي وطرح نفسه على رجلي القديس يبكي ويتضرع ويقول: "ارحمني، يا قديس الله، واغفر لي خطيئي"، فقال له الشيخ: "لو كنت رجعت اليّ لم تحزن، ولكن افرح، الآن فانك سا تصير الى ذلك وتصير اسقف عن قليل". وانه لما ارد ابنا ايوب البطريك لابنا ايوب الحمصي عمل على حلب اسقف يدعا ابنا نقيطا، فاقام سنتين ثم تنيح وايضًا تنيح ابنا ايوب البطريك، فاختر ابنا ايوب الحمصي وجعل اسقف على حلب كما قال له القديس.</p>	<p>كان في السيق راهب يقال له ابا ايوب (27v) فطلب اسقف على حلب فجا الى القديس يشاوه، فقال له: "عود اليّ بالغداة لاطلب الى المسيح فيما يختاره لك"، فخرج مع اصحابه ولم يعود اليه، فاعلم القديس الرهبان انه يرجع ولا يقبلوه، وكذلك كان.</p>
<p>There was at the Lavra another monk from Homs, whose name was Abba Job. At that time, bishops came from Patriarch Job of Antioch to find someone who could be fit to become bishop of Aleppo. They sought a certain man called Abba Symeon from Damascus, but he hid himself from them. As they could not find the man they sought, they approached this monk from Homs and asked him to go with them. He came to Abba Eustratius to seek his council, rejoicing at the news. This was the end of the day. When he told the saint about this, the saint said: "Come back to me tomorrow, and I will pray to Christ to direct you to the gate of the good." The monk departed from his presence. At dawn, those people [i.e., the bishops] came and took the man with them, and he never came back to the saint, as the saint had bidden him to do." When it was morning, the saint inquired about that monk and was told that he had left with the bishops. The elder then said: "Verily I say to you, he will have a wretched return and will be overcome with great sorrow. He knew what I was going to say to him; this is why he never came back to me." When [Abba Job] came to Antioch, Patriarch Job did not accept him and sent him back. He came back weeping and overcome with sorrow. He then cast himself at the saint's feet, crying and beseeching him, saying: "O saint of God, have mercy on me and forgive me my sin." The elder said to him: "If you had come back to me, you would not have had to grieve, but now rejoice, for you will obtain this and will become a bishop soon." Indeed, when Patriarch Job rejected Abba Job from Homs, he appointed a bishop over Aleppo whose name was Abba Nicetas. He remained [bishop] for two years and then died. Patriarch Job also died, and Abba Job from Homs was chosen and ordained to be bishop of Aleppo, as the saint had predicted.</p>	<p>In the Lavra, there was a monk whose name was Abba Job. (27v) He was asked to become bishop of Aleppo, so he came to the saint [Abba Eustratius] to seek his council. [The saint] said to him: "Come back to me tomorrow morning, so that I can pray to Christ [that He may reveal] His will about you." However, [Abba Job] left with his companions without coming back to [Abba Eustratius]. The saint told the monks: "He will come back, [because] they will not accept him," and so it happened.</p>

In my 2016 edition of the “Miracles of St. Eustratius” I also identified—unfortunately, in overly confident terms—the protagonist of that text as Eustratius of *Mar Saba*, a disciple of the famous St. Stephen of Mar Saba; I also argued that the Lavra (*sīq*) mentioned in the “Miracles of St. Eustratius” must be the Great Lavra of Mar Saba (Treiger 2016: 8-9). In light of the new evidence now discovered in PMC, it has, however, become clear that the Lavra mentioned in the “Miracles of St. Eustratius” is the *Old Lavra of Mar Chariton* (not the Great Lavra of Mar Saba) and that, consequently, the Eustratius mentioned in both the “Miracles of St. Eustratius” and PMC should be re-designated as Eustratius of *Mar Chariton* (not Eustratius of Mar Saba).¹⁰

Moreover, it turns out that Melkite Arabic Synaxaria mention an Eustratius of Mar Chariton commemorated on the anniversary of his death, said to be 17 October (Sauget 1969: 122, 179, and 307; Bīṭār 1995: 113, with reference to Sinai ar. 418, fol. 31r, which says only, in the section on 17 October: وفيه ونياح القديس استراتيوس الذي جاهد في سيق خاريطن “and on this [day is commemorated] the repose of St. Eustratius who laboured in the Lavra of Chariton”). This is certainly the same Eustratius of Mar Chariton. We are thus lucky to have discovered two fairly detailed documents about this virtually forgotten saint: the “Miracles” text, edited and translated in my 2016 instalment (with the caveat that the protagonist should now be re-designated as Eustratius of *Mar Chariton*), and the relevant section of PMC, edited and translated below.

When did this Eustratius of Mar Chariton live? Here I believe the conclusion of my previous study still stands. His approximate years of life would be ca. 770-ca. 850 (give or take ca. 10 years). This is because, as we

⁹ *Sā* (س) is a future marker in Christian Palestinian Arabic of the first millennium (Blau 1966-1967: I 68-69, §8.1).

¹⁰ It is perhaps still possible to “salvage” the identification of this Eustratius of Mar Chariton with the Eustratius, disciple of St. Stephen of Mar Saba. PMC (Section 4, Episode (b), fols. 24v-25r) mentions that Eustratius of Mar Chariton initially became a monk in “one of the cenobitic monasteries” (*ba’ḍ al-kanūbiyyāt*). The name of the monastery is unspecified, but this *could* be Mar Saba, which was a cenobitic monastery *par excellence*. PMC then informs us that Eustratius of Mar Chariton spent twelve years in the desert, then travelled to Sinai, then returned to Jerusalem, and only then joined the Lavra of Mar Chariton, where he stayed for the remainder of his life. It is perhaps not very likely, but still conceivable that while in Jerusalem (prior to his departure to Mar Chariton) he was made *basilicarius* of the Holy Sepulchre, as we learn (from the *Life of St. Stephen of Mar Saba*) about the Eustratius who was St. Stephen’s disciple. In other words, the texts about the two Eustratii (of Mar Chariton and of Mar Saba) can perhaps be harmonized. Ultimately, however, we will probably never know whether the two are one and the same person, and it is safer not to assume their identity without further evidence.

learn from the “Miracles of St. Eustratius,” he was already a recognized saintly elder at around the time of the Patriarch Job of Antioch’s death (ca. 839 AD; on this date, see Todt & Vest 2015: I 336). As indicated above, he died on 17 October, though we are uncertain about the exact year.

It should be noted that in addition to the Melkite Arabic text presented here, there exists also a Copto-Arabic¹¹ adaptation of the life of St. Eustratius. It differs in some significant details from the Melkite life (for instance, it presents St. Eustratius, whom it calls “Abba Stratius,” as a monk at Sinai, without ever mentioning the Lavra of Mar Chariton). This Copto-Arabic adaptation is reproduced and translated in the Appendix below.

5. Cosmas of Mar Chariton

The next section of PMC discusses another wonderworking monk, Abba Cosmas, a Syriac-speaking monk from an unspecified village near Aleppo.

This section has three episodes. The first episode relates how Abba Cosmas helped a visitor to the Lavra, a man from Rabba in Transjordan, who was in financial trouble, to escape with his two poor sisters to safety in Ascalan. The second episode relates how his disciple, Abba Theodore (a native of Baalbek) discovered that Abba Cosmas and another monk, whose name was Abba Gabriel the Hermit (on him, see also Section 6 below), were miraculously transported to Rome where they spent three days praying at the tomb of the Apostles Peter and Paul. The third episode is a rain miracle, very similar to Abba Constantine’s (Section 2 above).

Abba Cosmas must have lived ca. 800, because, as we shall learn in the next section, Abba Gabriel the Hermit, Abba Cosmas’ companion on the miraculous trip to Rome, was martyred in or shortly after 809 AD.

6. Gabriel the Hermit

The sixth section is devoted to the aforementioned Abba Gabriel the Hermit. The first episode introduces his disciple Abba John¹² who, “was so advanced in abstinence that he would not excrete from below; [r]ather, at the end [of his meal], he would take in a cup of liquid and then vomit it from

¹¹ By “Copto-Arabic” I mean simply that it was written in Arabic by a Coptic Christian. I do not suggest that the text was, at any stage, redacted in Coptic.

¹² This is St. John of the Ancient Caves in Palestine, commemorated by the Orthodox Church on 19 April.

above.” The second episode relates another miracle of teleportation: Abba John discovers how Abba Gabriel the Hermit was miraculously transported to Bethlehem and then back to his cell. The third episode relates how Abba Gabriel the Hermit recovered from his seemingly terminal illness in virtue of “hidden sustenance” provided by Christ.

Finally, the fourth episode relates the story of Abba Gabriel the Hermit’s martyrdom in a Bedouin attack on Mar Chariton in the wake of caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd’s death in 809. This correlates well with historical record. In the words of Moshe Gil:

[The Byzantine historian] Theophanes tells us of the events of 809—and as he was a contemporary, his evidence with regard to these years is both interesting and quite credible—when Hārūn al-Rashīd died and a fratricidal war broke out between the brothers al-Amīn and al-Māmūn. According to him these events caused the Christians an enormous amount of suffering. Many churches and monasteries in Jerusalem and its environs were abandoned, such as those of Sts Cyriac, Theodosius, Chariton, Euthymius, and Mar Saba. Four years later, in 813, the disturbances broke out anew and many Christians, both monks and laity, fled from Palestine to Cyprus and Constantinople, where they found a refuge from the Arabs’ terrible persecution in those days of anarchy and civil war. Palestine was the scene of violence, rape and murder (Gil 1992: 474-475; cf. translation of the relevant passages from Theophanes in Mango & Scott 1997: 665 and 683).¹³

The circumstances of Gabriel the Hermit’s martyrdom resemble those of the Twenty Martyrs of Mar Saba (martyred in March 797; Blake 1950; new edition and translation: Shoemaker 2016: 68-147): in both cases, Bedouin marauders attacked the monastery in search of treasures and, having found none, executed defenseless monks. Gabriel the Hermit’s arteries were slit, and he was bound with a rope and suspended above the valley. When the rope broke, he fell to his death. The other monks discovered his body, which—according to the report—exuded “a pleasant smell superior to any perfume.”

¹³ Griffith 1986: 118 considers Theophanes account to be exaggerated: “Theophanes’ remarks give one the impression that there was no one left in the monasteries of Palestine much after the first decade of the ninth century. And there is no other Greek source available which one might consult to correct this mistake scenario.” Griffith is, of course, correct in pointing out that the great monasteries of Palestine continued to exist and even flourish after the events of 809-813. Nonetheless, our text confirms that the horrific acts of marauding and violence directed at the Palestinian monastic communities were real.

7. Gabriel of Mar Chariton

Gabriel the Hermit's namesake, Gabriel of Mar Chariton was a native of al-Balqā' in Transjordan. Before he was tonsured a monk, he had been a secretary (*kātib*) to the "governor of the land" (*wālī al-balad*). Though this is not made explicit, we can assume that the governor was a Muslim. In his capacity as the governor's secretary, Gabriel had to face a temptation with the governor's beautiful wife, who tried to seduce him. At this point, the text draws a comparison with the story of Joseph and Potiphar's wife in Genesis 39; like Joseph, Gabriel, of course, resisted the temptation. Upon becoming a monk, Gabriel distributed all his possessions to the other monks and to the poor and lived in extreme poverty. He practiced extreme fasting, similarly to Eustratius of Mar Chariton (Section 4, Episodes (f) and (g) above).

Edition and Translation

The edition below faithfully reproduces the text as it appears in Sinai ar. 563, without attempting to "correct" numerous deviations—whether morphological or syntactical—from Classical Arabic usage (occasionally, to facilitate reading, the corresponding Classical Arabic form is indicated in the apparatus). The *hamzas* are absent, as they are in the manuscript; however, I took the liberty to indicate the *hamza* in the word ماء, "water," which, without the *hamza*, could be too easily confused with the particle ما. Asterisks indicate emendations to the text. Question marks indicate that the reading and/or the translation of a word or passage are uncertain, while three hyphens (---) indicate that a word or a part thereof is illegible in the digital copy of the manuscript at my disposal. The punctuation, occasional vocalization, and division into paragraphs are my own.

While for the most part Sinai ar. 563 is a unicum, the beginning of Section 4 (on Eustratius of Mar Chariton) is preserved in two other thirteenth-century manuscripts: Sinai ar. 438 and Sinai ar. 559. I have therefore used the following Sigla:

A = Sinai ar. 563, fols. 22r-31v

B = Sinai ar. 438, fols. 182v-184r

C = Sinai ar. 559, fols. 64v-67r

The readings of **A** are given in the main text, while those of **B** and **C** are provided in the apparatus.

<١> (أ٢٢) خَبَرْنَا ابْهَاتَ السِّيْقِ الْعَتِيقِ أَنَّهُ كَانَ فِي دِيرِهِمْ رَاهِبٌ | (ب٢٢) كَثِيرَ الْحَبِّ وَالْإَنْضَاعِ أَفْرَنْجِي يُقَالُ لَهُ أَنْدَرِيَا، وَكَانَ لَهُ جَارٌ شَبَّ بَيْنِي فِي قَلَائِيْتِهِ، فَعَارِزَهُ قَصَبٌ فَطَلَبَ إِلَيْهِ أَنْ يَمْضِيَ مَعَهُ إِلَى الْبَحْرِ الْمَيْتِ لِيَعَاوَنَهُ عَلَى حَمْلِ الْقَصَبِ، فَجَابَهُ إِلَى ذَلِكَ، وَمَلَأَ وَصَلَا وَحَمَلَا حَاجَتَهُمَا أَنْصَرَفَا، فَصَابَهُمَا حَرًّا شَدِيدًا^{١٤} فِي شَهْرِ أَفْغَسْطُسَ، فَصَبَرَ إِبَا أَنْدَرُ <أ١> بِقُوَّةِ الرُّوحِ الْقُدُسِ السَّاكِنِ فِيهِ، وَأَمَّا الشَّابُّ فَاشْتَدَّ مَا بِهِ وَاجْهَدَهُ الْعَطَشُ فَالْقَا نَفْسَهُ كَالْمَيْتِ وَاسْتَغَاثَ^{١٥}* بِالْقُدَيْسِ، فَوَقَفَ عَلَى صَخْرَةٍ عَالِيَةٍ يَطْلُبُ إِلَى اللَّهِ بِكَأَنَّ يَرْحَمُهُ، فَبَعَثَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمَا سَحَابَةً وَوَقَعَ مَطَرٌ وَمَلَأَ بِقَاعِ كَانَتْ فِي الْمَوْضِعِ فَشَرِبَا وَحَمَلَا مَعَهُمَا مِنَ الْمَاءِ وَسَبَّحَا اللَّهَ، فَلَمَّا جَازا الْمَوْضِعَ بَيْسًا---^{١٦} لَمْ يَرِيَا لِلْمَطَرِ اثْرًا.

<٢> وَكَانَ أَيْضًا فِي هَذَا السِّيْقِ رَجُلٌ رُومِيٌّ يُقَالُ لَهُ إِبَا قُسْطَنْطِينَ تَرَاهِبٌ فِي حَدَائِثِهِ وَكَانَ كَثِيرَ الْأَمْسَاكِ وَالتَّعَبِ وَكَثُرَ دَهْرُهُ كَانَ يَدُورُ الْبَرْيَّةَ عَرِيَانًا وَعَلَى كَتْفَيْهِ بَرِيطَارَةٌ،^{١٨} فَصَارَ جَسَدُهُ أَسْوَدَ مِنْ شِدَّةِ الْحَرِّ وَالْبَرْدِ، وَكَانَ لَهُ تَلْمِيذٌ يَتَعَهَّدُهُ، فَصَارَ إِلَى قَلَائِيْتِهِ فِي لَيْلَةٍ الْوَاحِدِ وَقَرَعَ بِأَبَاهَا فَلَمْ يَكَلِّمْهُ، فَانْكَرَ ذَلِكَ وَتَسَوَّرَ^{١٩}* | (أ٢٣) الْحَايِطُ فَلَمْ يَجِدْهُ، فَتَحَيَّرَ وَخَرَجَ فَجَلَسَ عَلَى الْبَابِ، فَبَعْدَ سَاعَةٍ سَمِعَ وَجِبَةً عَظِيمَةً فِي الْقَلَائِيَّةِ وَصَوْتَ الْقُدَيْسِ يَصِلِي فِدْقَ الْبَابِ، خَرَجَ إِلَيْهِ وَقَالَ لَهُ: "مَتَى جِيتَ إِلَى هَاهُنَا؟" فَقَالَ لَهُ السَّاعَةَ، ثُمَّ أَنَّهُ خَرَّ عَلَى رِجْلَيْهِ وَهُوَ يَبْكِي فَيَسْلُهُ^{٢٠} أَنْ يَخْبِرَهُ بِأَمْرِهِ، فَبَعْدَ بَكَاءٍ كَثِيرٍ وَطَلِبَةٍ تَقَدَّمَ إِلَيْهِ أَنْ يَكْتُمَ مَا يَقُولُهُ مَدَّةَ حَيَاتِهِ، وَخَبَّرَهُ أَنَّهُ أَحَبَّ الصَّلَاةَ فِي الْقِيَامَةِ الْمُقَدَّسَةِ لَيْلَةَ الْوَاحِدِ فَحُمِّلَ إِلَيْهَا فَصَلَّى بِهَا وَرَدَّ إِلَى قَلَائِيْتِهِ.

وَإَيْضًا عَازَ الْمَطَرِ مَرَّةً مِنْ ذَلِكَ وَنَقَصَ الْمَاءُ عَنِ الرَّهْبَانِ جَدًّا فَتَضَرَّعُوا إِلَيْهِ يَطْلُبُ مِنَ اللَّهِ أَنْ يَرْحَمَ خَلْقَهُ فَامْتَنَعَ ذَلِكَ فَلَمَّا لَجَّوْا عَلَيْهِ أَمْرَهُمْ يَحْمِلُهُ إِلَى الْكَنِيسَةِ، وَذَلِكَ أَنَّهُ كَانَ مَرِيضًا عِنْدَ خُرُوجِهِ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا، وَأَمْرَهُمْ أَنْ يَجْمَعُوا مِنْ كُلِّ رَاهِبٍ ثَلَاثَ حَبَّاتٍ بَخُورٍ، وَكَانَ هَذَا لَيْلَةَ الْوَاحِدِ، فَتَقَدَّمَ إِلَى ثَلَاثَةٍ مِنَ الشَّمَامَسَةِ الَّتِي يَطْلُوْنَ الْبَخُورَ إِلَى بَكْرَةٍ فَفَعَلُوا ذَلِكَ، وَكَانَ هُوَ فِي الْأَذْيَافَتِقُونَ^{٢١} يَبْكِي وَيَطْلُبُ مِنَ اللَّهِ إِلَى بَكْرَةٍ، فَلَمَّا كَانَ عَشِيَّةَ الْوَاحِدِ نَزَلَ الْمَطَرُ غَزِيرًا وَامْتَلَتْ الْأَوْعِيَّةُ، وَبَعْدَ ذَلِكَ تَوَفَّى وَقَدْ أَرْضَا اللَّهَ وَصَارَ إِلَى النِّيَاحِ الدَّائِمِ.

¹⁴ Classical Arabic: حَرٌّ شَدِيدٌ.

¹⁵ My emendation.

¹⁶ My emendation. MS: وَاسْتَغَاثَ.

¹⁷ The end of the word is illegible.

¹⁸ Gr. ἐπιρριπτάριον (monk's cowl). A slightly different form of the word, *baribṭāriyya* is used in the Arabic translation of Leontius of Damascus' *Life of St. Stephen of Mar Saba*, §27.2, 30.13, and 66.6 (Leontius of Damascus 1999: 45, 51, and 117; on Leontius of Damascus, cf. Lamoreaux 2009).

¹⁹ My emendation. MS: وَتَسَوَّرَ.

²⁰ Classical Arabic: فَيَسْلُهُ.

²¹ Gr. διακονικόν (*diakonikon*, a chamber to the south from the altar where vestments and books are kept).

<٢٣ب> (٢٣ب) خَبَرْنَا الْإِبْهَاتِ الَّذِي^{٢٢} فِي السِّيْقِ الْعَتِيقِ عَنْ رَاهِبٍ يُقَالُ لَهُ كَبِيرٌ يَأْقُوسٌ مِنْ أَهْلِ قُورْنُثِيَا أَنَّهُ كَانَ كَثِيرَ الْحَبِّ وَالْإِتِّضَاعِ وَالطَّاعَةِ وَالْإِمْسَاكِ وَكَانَ قَدْ أَخَذَ مِنَ اللَّهِ مُوَهَبَةً عِلْمَ الْغَايِبِ، وَكَانُوا رَهْبَانَنَا يُصِيرُوا إِلَيْهِ وَيَتَعَزَّوْا عِنْدَهُ وَيَشَاوِرُوهُ وَيَشْكُوا إِلَيْهِ قِتَالَتَهُمْ، فَفَشَا خَبْرَهُ فِي بَلَدِ فِلَسْطِينَ وَكَانُوا أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ^{٢٣} الْمُقَدَّسِ وَكَلَّمَنُ يَصِيرُ إِلَى السِّيْقِ مِنْ كَافَّةِ الْبُلْدَانِ يَاتُونَهُ فَيَتَبَرَّكُوا مِنْهُ وَيَعَزِّيهِمْ بِكَلَامِهِ الرُّوحَانِيِّ.

فَلَمَّا كَثُرَ عَلَيْهِ سَجَسُ النَّاسِ هَرَبَ إِلَى الْبَرِّيَّةِ وَمَعَهُ تَلْمِيذٌ لَهُ مُبَارَكٌ، وَكَانَ لَهُ مِنْ عَمْرِهِ ذَلِكَ الْوَقْتُ سَبْعَةَ وَسَبْعُونَ سَنَةً، وَلَمْ يَكُنْ فِي تِلْكَ الْبَرِّيَّةِ شَيْءٌ يَتَغَذَّى بِهِ سِوَا بَصْلِ الْفَارِ، فَطَلَبَ مِنَ اللَّهِ فَحَلَّاهُ لَهُمْ، فَكَانُوا إِذَا أَظْطَرَّتْهُمَا^{٢٤} حَاجَةُ الْجَسَدِ أَمْرَ تَلْمِيذِهِ يَسْلُقُ مِنْهُ وَيَأْكُلَاهُ، فَاقَامَا عَلَى ذَلِكَ أَرْبَعَةَ سَنِينَ.

فَبَعْدَ ذَلِكَ سَمِعَ بِهِمَا رَجُلٌ مِنْ كِبَارِ أَهْلِ تَقْوَعِ فَصَارَ بِهِمَا بَوسِقٌ مِنَ الْخَبْزِ^{٢٥} فَتَبَرَّكَ مِنَ الشَّيْخِ وَدَفَعَهُ إِلَيْهِمَا وَأَنْصَرَفَ، فَكَانَا يَأْكُلَانِ مِنْهُ مِنْ عَشِيَّةٍ إِلَى عَشِيَّةٍ. وَفِيمَا كَانَ الْقَدِّيسُ يَدُورُ فِي الْبَرِّيَّةِ الدَّاخِلَةِ | (٢٤أ) وَقَدْ خَلَّفَ تَلْمِيذَهُ فِي مَغَارَتِهِ، أَخَذَ كَالْعَادَةِ مِنْ بَصْلِ الْعَنْصَلِ فَسَلَقَهُ، وَمِمَّا ذَاقَ مَرَاتِهِ وَقَعَ كَالْمَلِيَّتِ لَا يَتَحَرَّكُ وَلَا يَتَكَلَّمُ، فَعَلِمَ الْقَدِّيسُ خَبْرَهُ فَأَنْصَرَفَ إِلَيْهِ وَصَلَّى عَلَيْهِ فَفَاقَ^{٢٦} وَقَامَ، فَقَرَّبَهُ جَسَدَ السَّيِّدِ الْمَسِيحِ وَعَاتَبَهُ وَقَالَ لَهُ: «يَا بَنِي، إِنَّ السَّيِّدَ الْمَسِيحَ كَانَ يَحْلِي لَنَا الْبَصْلَ إِذْ لَمْ يَكُنْ لَنَا شَيْءٌ غَيْرُهُ».

فَلَمَّا فَرَّغَ الْخَبْزِ وَجَاعَا بَارَكَ الْقَدِّيسُ عَلَى تَلْمِيذِهِ وَأَمَرَهُ أَنْ يَسْلُقَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ الْبَصْلِ وَيَقْدِّمَهُ فَفَعَلَ وَفَزَعَ أَنْ يَذُوقَهُ فَصَلَّبَ عَلَيْهِ الْقَدِّيسُ وَأَكَلَ بِصَلَاةٍ مَعْلَمَهُ وَلَمْ^{٢٧}----

فَسَمِعَ بِخَبْرِ الْقَدِّيسِ رَجُلٌ مِنْ أَهْلِ تَقْوَعِ فَصَارَ إِلَيْهِ بَابِنٌ لَهُ مَجْنُونٌ وَسَالَهُ أَنْ يَصَلِّيَ عَلَيْهِ، فَرَحِمَهُ وَشَفَاهُ بِنِعْمَةِ الرُّوحِ الْقُدُّوسِ، فَأَنْصَرَفَ الرَّجُلُ شَاكِرًا لِلَّهِ يَخْبِرُ بِفَعَالِ الْقَدِّيسِ.

فَاكثَرُوا النَّاسَ الْمَصِيرَ إِلَيْهِ بِالْمَجَانِينِ وَغَيْرِهِمْ فَكَانَ يَصَلِّيَ عَلَيْهِمْ فَيُشْفَوْنَ، فَلَمَّا كَثُرَ عَلَيْهِ النَّاسُ هَرَبَ إِلَى الْبَرِّيَّةِ الدَّاخِلَةِ الَّتِي لَمْ يَصِيرَ إِلَيْهَا أَحَدٌ مِنَ الْمُتَوَحِّدِينَ فَاقَامَ فِيهَا زَمَانًا طَوِيلًا، فَكَثُرَ الْمَوْتُ فِي النَّاسِ وَوَقَعَ فِي السِّيْقِ، وَمَضَى إِلَيْهِ بَعْضُ الرَّهْبَانِ فَأَعْلَمُوهُ بِذَلِكَ فَطَلَبُوا إِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيرَ | (٢٤ب) مَعَهُمْ إِلَى السِّيْقِ فَجَابَهُمْ وَسَكَنَ مَغَارَةَ مَارِي خَارِيطِنِ الْقَدِّيسِ، فَتَسَجَّسَ أَيْضًا وَرَجَعَ إِلَى مَوْضِعِهِ وَاتَّخَذَ مَعَهُ شَيْءًا مِنْ زَرْعِ الْبَقْلِ وَكَانَ يَتَغَذَّى بِهِ فِي الْأَوْقَاتِ، وَكَانَتْ الْوَحْشُ تَرَعَاهُ، فَشَكَا إِلَيْهِ التَّلْمِيذُ ذَلِكَ، فَلَمَّا كَانَ يَدُورُ فِي الْبَرِّيَّةِ لَقِيَهُ سَبْعُ هَائِلٍ، فَأَمَرَهُ أَنْ يَتَّبِعَهُ إِلَى مَوْضِعِ الْبَقْلِ وَيَمْنَعُ الْوَحْشَ مِنْ فَسَادِهِ، فَامْتَثَلَ السَّبْعَ أَمْرَهُ.

فَلَمَّا كَبُرَ الْقَدِّيسُ وَضَعْفَ لِأَنَّهُ جَازَ الْإِمَايَةَ سَنَةً عِلْمَ بَانَ خُرُوجَهُ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا قَرِيبَ رَجْعِ إِلَى السِّيْقِ فَتَنِيحَ وَقَدْ أَرْضَى اللَّهُ بِحَسَنِ أَعْمَالِهِ.

²² Classical Arabic: الذين.

²³ Classical Arabic: بيت.

²⁴ Classical Arabic: اضطرَّتْهُمَا.

²⁵ My emendation. MS: الخبز.

²⁶ My emendation. MS: ففاق.

²⁷ Illegible word.

<٤> خَبْرُونَا^{٢٨} ايضاً^{٢٩} رهبان السيق العتيق عن قديس آخر كان في ديرهم^{٣٠} يقال له استراتيوس^{٣١} من عظماء اهل^{٣٢} سقلية^{٣٣} وكان منذ صباه^{٣٤} عاقل^{٣٥} عفيف^{٣٦} حسن التدبير، فاتصل بملك الروم خبّره^{٣٧} ووجه^{٣٨} طلبه فصار اليه فاستنطقه^{٣٩} فوجده على افضل^{٤٠} ممّا بلغه^{٤١} فصيّره^{٤٢} ريس قوّاده وولّاه تدبير^{٤٣} الحروب^{٤٤} وكان الله^{٤٥} يعينه ويظفره^{٤٦} باعدا^{٤٧} الملك، فكبر عنده^{٤٨} وعند عظمائه ووقروه وبجلوه^{٤٩} لرجليته^{٥٠} وصلاحه واحبّوه^{٥١} جدّاً.

فزهّد^{٥٢} هذا^{٥٣} الفاضل في^{٥٤} ذلك وهرب الى الرهبانية^{٥٥} فتراهب^{٥٦} في بعض^{٥٧} الكنوبيات^{٥٨} وتعلّم سنن الرهبانية^{٥٩} وخرج^{٥٩} الى البرية فاقام بها اثني عشر سنة يتغذّى بالعشب، فاحبّ المصير الى داخل البرية،^{٦٠} فصار الى موضع يابس

²⁸ B. اخبرونا | AC خبرونا

²⁹ B. om. | C عن | A ايضاً

³⁰ B. ان كان في ديرهم راهب قديس | C عن قديس كان في ديرهم | A عن قديس آخر كان في ديرهم

³¹ B. add. انه كان

³² B. om.

³³ While the spelling سقلية is more common, سقلية, with a *sīn*, is also attested in medieval sources.

³⁴ C. صباه | AB صباه

³⁵ B. om. | C.

³⁶ C. add. فاضل | B. add. فاضلاً

³⁷ BC. ف | A و

³⁸ B. add. في

³⁹ B. فاستنطقه | AC فاستنطقه

⁴⁰ B. محاسن اكثر | C اكثر | A افضل

⁴¹ BC. عنه

⁴² C. add. جميع | B. add. على جميع

⁴³ B. add. المعارك

⁴⁴ B. add. ليزيل عنه الهموم الخطات (?)

⁴⁵ C. الرب | AB الله

⁴⁶ B. ويظفره | AC ويظفره

⁴⁷ B. باعدابه واعدا | AC باعدا

⁴⁸ B. عند الملك | AC عنده

⁴⁹ C. فجلوه ووقروه وبجلوه | B. وبجلوه ووقروه وهابوه جدا جدا | A. ووقروه وبجلوه

⁵⁰ B. add. وحسن فروسيته

⁵¹ B. فاحبوه | AC واحبوه

⁵² B. فعند ذلك زهد | AC فزهّد

⁵³ C. om. هذا

⁵⁴ BC. add. جميع

⁵⁵ B. البرية | AC الرهبانية

⁵⁶ BC. فترهب | A فتراهب

⁵⁷ B. الديارات | C الكوبيات (!) | A الكنوبيات

⁵⁸ B. الرهبنة | AC الرهبانية

⁵⁹ B. واستحثه الشوق | AC وخرج

⁶⁰ فاقام بها اثني عشر سنة يتغذا من العشب واحب المصير | A فاقام بها اثني عشر سنة يتغذا بالعشب، فاحب المصير الى داخل البرية | B. الداخلة | C الى داخل البرية

لا عشب فيه ولا شي^{٦١} يتغذّا به، فاضطرّه^{٦٢} حاجة^{٦٣} الجوع^{٦٤} ان يطلب^{٦٥} من الله المعونة^{٦٦}، وفيما هو يدور^{٦٧} البريّة في وقت جوعه^{٦٨} وجد كنيسة^{٦٩} كبيرة فيها^{٧٠} مذبح حسن وعليه خبزة^{٧١} كبيرة نقيّة^{٧٢} فتعجّب^{٧٣} من ذلك جدًّا وخشي ان^{٧٤} يكون^{٧٥} خديعة من الشيطان^{٧٦} فصلى طالبًا من^{٧٧} الله ان يعرفه السبب في ذلك، وتقدّم الى المذبح فصلى^{٧٨} وصلّب على الخبزة^{٧٩}، ثمّ مدّ يده^{٨٠} واخذها وتغذّا بها زمان طويل^{٨١} وشكر^{٨٢} الله.^{٨٣}

وبعد ذلك^{٨٤} صار الى البيت^{٨٥} المقدس فدار^{٨٦} برّيتها وصار^{٨٧} الى^{٨٨} طور سينا المقدّس^{٨٩} ودار برّيته^{٩٠} وسكنها، فكان^{٩١} الله^{٩٢} يفتقده ويعزيّه بالطعام^{٩٣} في وقت الحاجة^{٩٤} فبعد زمان^{٩٥} رجع الى الدير المقدّس^{٩٦} وحبس

61 B. شيا | AC شي.

62 BC. فاضطرته | A فاضطره.

63 BC. الحاجة من | A حاجة.

64 add. B. الشديد والعطش الذي ما عنه مزيد.

65 C. فطلب | AB ان يطلب.

66 add. B. على ذلك.

67 add. BC. في تلك.

68 C. وقد جاع | B وقد جاع جدا | A في وقت جوعه.

69 C. فاذا هو بكنيسة | B فاذاه (=فاذا هو) بكنيسة | A وجد كنيسة.

70 B. وفيها | AC فيها.

71 add. B. واحدة.

72 add. B. كالثلج.

73 BC. فعجب | A فتعجب.

74 C. وفرع ان | B وفرع ان لا | A وخشي ان.

75 add. BC. ذلك.

76 B. شيطانية | AC من الشيطان.

77 C. فصلا متضرعا الى | B فانصب مصليا ومتضرعا الى | A فصلى طالبا من.

78 om. B. فصلى.

79 C. الخبز | AB الخبزة.

80 om. BC. ثم مد يده.

81 B. مديدا | AC طويل.

82 B. وهو بهج سعيدا شاكر | AC وشكر.

83 add. B. على ذلك.

84 B. هذا | AC ذلك.

85 C. بيت | A البيت. Cf. note 23 above.

86 add. A. في.

87 C. ومضى | A وصار.

88 om. B. البيت المقدس فدار برّيتها وصار الى.

89 om. BC. المقدس.

90 C. برّيتها المقدسة | B برّيتها كلها | A برّيته.

91 BC. وكان | A فكان.

92 BC. الرب | A الله.

93 C. ويبعث له طعامه | B ويرسل له طعامه | A ويعزيه بالطعام.

94 C. الاوقات اذا اضطر اليه | B الاوقات التي كان يضطره الحاجة اليها | A قت الحاجة و.

95 BC. مدة من الزمان | A زمان.

96 add. B. طور سينا.

ذاته^{٩٧} في^{٩٨} مقبرة الرهبان^{٩٩} مدة^{١٠٠} اربعين يوماً^{١٠١} لم^{١٠٢} يذوق فيها شي^{١٠٣} بل كان يطلب من الله^{١٠٤} ان يُظهر له اجسام^{١٠٥} القديسين ربيسيّ طور سينا انسطاسيوس واقليمقس^{١٠٦} فظهرا^{١٠٧} له وتبارك منهما.

وخرج من هنالك^{١٠٨} | (٢٥ب) يريد الى^{١٠٩} بيت المقدس، ففيما هو يسير^{١١٠} في الطريق ومعه جماعة اناس لقيهم سبع عظيم^{١١١} فهاهم امره وتحيروا منه،^{١١٢} فتقدم اليه القديس وعانقه حتى عبروا^{١١٣} الناس كلهم،^{١١٤} وسبحوا الله.^{١١٥}

فلما وصلوا المنزل كان معهم غلام اخرس فطلبوا اليه يرحمه فصلى عليه وصيره متكلمًا فسبحوا الله جميع الحاضرين.

ولما بلغ بيت المقدس اتصل به ان في السيق العتيق رهبان قديسين يعملون عجائب وينبون^{١١٦} بالغائب، فاحب المقام عندهم فقبلوه بفرح وسكن قلالية يوحنا وارقادايوس القديسين وكان متولي خدمته اخ طيب يقال له ابا يوسف وكان للقديس سبب اوجب على نفسه العقوبة من اجله، فاقام ايام كثيرة لا يخرج من القلالية ولا يذوق شيا، وكان قد تقدم الى تلميذه الا يدنوا منه الى تمام اربعين يوماً، فلما تمت الايام صار التلميذ الى قلاليته ومعه جماعة من الرهبان فقرعوا الباب فلم يجيبهم احد فظنوا انه قد مات فقلعوا الباب ودخلوا فوجدوه ملقًا كاملت لا يتحرك فاحضروا طبيب كان في السيق فجسه واعلمهم ان روحه فيه وامرهم ان | (٢٦أ) ينطلوه بماء حار ففعلوا ذلك وتحرك، وعملوا له حسوا وفتحوا فمه بعود وسقوه منه شيا يسير وداووه*^{١١٧} ايامًا عدة حتى صح وقال لهم: "قد حبيت نفسي وقد كنت اوجب عليها الموت"، فسالوه عن السبب في ذلك فاعلمهم انه لما عصفور بحصاة فمات فاوجب على نفسه الموت بدله.

⁹⁷ BC. نفسه | A ذاته

⁹⁸ add. B. *Kimitir* = Gr. κοιμητήριον, "cemetery."

⁹⁹ B. الابا | AC الرهبان

¹⁰⁰ om. B. مدة

¹⁰¹ add. B. بليليتها

¹⁰² B. ولم | AC لم

¹⁰³ C. فيها ذواق | B بها طعاما | A فيها شي

¹⁰⁴ add. B. الليل والنهار

¹⁰⁵ B. جسمي | AC اجسام

¹⁰⁶ C. واكليمكس | B ويوحنا اكليمكس | A واقليمقس

¹⁰⁷ B. فظهر | AC فظهرا

¹⁰⁸ BC. هناك | A هنالك

¹⁰⁹ om. BC. الى

¹¹⁰ om. BC. يسير

¹¹¹ B. سبعا عظيمها مريعا | AC سبع عظيم

¹¹² C. متحيرين | B وبقيا من الخوف متحيرين | A وتحيروا منه

¹¹³ C. وعانقه حتى نفذوا | B واعتنقه ولم يتركه ان يرح من موضع الى ان نفذوا | A وعانقه حتى عبروا

¹¹⁴ add. B. ففجباوا | add. B. وعبروا

¹¹⁵ C. فنسل الرب الاله بشفاعه قديسيه وابراهه وشفاعة والدته ان يرحمنا، آمين | B الرب الذي يمجد ممجدا دائما، آمين | A الله

¹¹⁶ Classical Arabic: يبتئون.

¹¹⁷ My emendation. MS: وداروه.

وبعد مدّة يسيرة حضر صيام التلاميذ في شدّة الحرّ فتقدّم الى ابا يوسف تلميذه ان يغلق عليه باب القلاية ولا يقربه الى انقضا الصوم، ولم يأخذ معه شيا يتناوله، ومع تمام الصوم فتح التلميذ عليه فوجده يابس كالعود واكتوريته¹¹⁸ مبخّرة وقتديله يسرج فلم يزالوا يداووه*¹¹⁹ حتى فاق.

وكان في السيق ---¹²⁰ هذا القديس قسيس طيب فاعتلّ ووقع في التـ---ع¹²¹ وكان يعضّ لسانه ويدميه، وكانوا الرهبان يكونون ---¹²² بحضرة القديس فمضى الى القدّاس وخلفه على حالته وفيما هو واقف في القدّاس التفت الى الذي كان واقف الى جانبه فقال لهم: "انّ ابا يونا قد تبيّح ونعمًا فارق الدنيا، كان له وسخ قليل ونقاه الله."

فبعد ذلك حضر عيد تقديس*¹²³ الماء | (٢٦ب) وتهيؤوا رهبان للبوس الازكيم¹²⁴ الكبير وكان فيهم رجل مصري يقال له ابا غبريل يحسن حاجته فالبسوه الاسكيم مع اصحابه وخرجوا يعطوا الابهات ايريني،¹²⁵ فانكر ابا استراتيوس على ابا غبريل لباس الاسكيم وقال لهم: "لمّ البستموه وليس هو نصراني"، فحزنوا الرهبان لانهم كانوا يبصرون المصري حريص لازم الكنيسة حسن التدبير من قدما السيق، فبعد مدّة يسيرة خرج الى مصر واسلم بها، فعلموا الرهبان أنّ الله اكشف للقديس استراتيوس امره.

ومن بعد ذلك بأيام والقديس قايم في القدّاس على باب الدياقونيقن بدا يبكي بكا حارّ فساله قسيس يقال له ابا لاونتيوس عن السبب، فقال له: "انا حزين منجلكم¹²⁶ لاني كنت ارى الروح القدس ينزل عليكم في كلّ قدّاس ولم اراه اليوم نزل عليكم وقد ارتفع عنكم"، فقالوا له: "يا ابونا، بيننا كلام كثير وسجس فاطلب من الله ان يرفعه عنّا".

قاتل العدو مرّة لبعض رهباننا بالسيق العتيق ياكل اللحم فاحتال واشتراه وطبخه، فعرف القديس ذلك بالروح الساكن فيه | (٢٧أ) فلمّا همّ الراهب ياكله قرع استراتيوس باب قلايته ففتح وخرّ له ساجدًا، فلمّا عملوا صلاة قال له الراهب: "ايها الاب القديس، ايش عناك اليوم الى مسكتني؟"، فاجابه: "اشتيت اليوم اعمل معك محبة"¹²⁷، ففرح به جدًّا وقدم له ممّا رزق الله من طعام الرهبان، فقال له القديس: "اطعمني

¹¹⁸ Possibly, Gr. οικήτηριον (dwelling-place, habitation), though the Arabic transliteration is unusual. One wonders if perhaps this word is related to the Syriac ܡܠܚܡܐ or ܡܠܚܡܐ, "incense burner" (especially as the parallel place in the Copto-Arabic version, edited in the Appendix below, reads ܡܠܚܡܐ, "censer").

¹¹⁹ My emendation. MS: يدارهو.

¹²⁰ Illegible word.

¹²¹ Illegible word.

¹²² Illegible word.

¹²³ My emendation. MS: قديس.

¹²⁴ The spelling اسكيم (used below) is more common.

¹²⁵ Gr. εἰρήνη.

¹²⁶ Classical Arabic: من أهلكم.

¹²⁷ The Arabic *maḥabba* is evidently used as a calque of the Greek ἀγάπη, "love," used in the sense of a joint "agape meal."

من القِدْر التي طبخت الساعة"، فُبْهت الراهب واحضر القِدْر وجعلها بين يديه، فوَيْخه القديس وقال له: "ياخي،¹²⁸ تُدْنَس نفسك من اجل شهوتك وتُطيع افكارك"،¹²⁹ ثم امره ان يجيب¹³⁰ فاس فحفر به حفرة في حاكورة، وطمر فيها القِدْر وداسها برجله وصلّى على الاخ وانصرف.

دخل بعض الرهبان الى المدينة فوقع في خطية وخرج الى قلايته نادماً حزياً، ولما كان الليل قرع القديس باب قلايته وعمل له مطانية وقال له: "اغفر لي، يا اخي، فاني قد وقعت في خطية"، فعرف الاخ ان القديس قد عرف سببه فسجد على رجله يبكي ويقرّ بما عمله ويسله¹³¹ ان يصليّ عليه، وعزّاه وانصرف.

كان في السيق راهب يقال له ابا ايوب | (٢٧ب) فطلب اسقف على حلب فجا الى القديس يشاوره، فقال له: "عود اليّ بالغداة لاطلب الى المسيح فيما يختاره لك"، فخرج مع اصحابه ولم يعود اليه، فاعلم القديس الرهبان انه يرجع ولا يقبلوه، وكذلك كان.

كان هذا القديس يسبح ببريّة القلمون وفاشدد عليه الحرّ فصار الى باب الدير وضرب عليه فلم يكلمه احد، فصلّب على الباب وانفتح له، وكان معه راهب من السيق فاخبر بذلك.

وكان لهذا القديس تلميذين ياخذهما معه الى البريّة ويدور بهما في الليل ناحية الاردن، ففيما هما على تلك الحال وقف القديس مقابل الشرق وصلّاً طويلاً والتفت الى احدهما فقال له: "استافنا، تريد تكون بطيريك، ستصير، وايمك قليلة وليس تفرح". وبعد ذلك بخمسة وثلاثين سنة أخذ ابا استافنا بطيريك على انطاكية، واعتلّ في الطريق، فلما وصل توفّي في ثامن يوم.

كان في السيق اخ طيب يدعا ابرامه يخدم استر<ا> تيوس ويتعهده في البريّة وهو في مغارته فجاء يوم من ذلك | (٢٨) بجرّة ماء، فنظر اليه وتبسّم وقال له: "بماذا تفكرت الليلة؟" فقال: "افكاري كثيرة ولا اعلم عن ايها تسلني".¹³² فقال له القديس: "افكرت ان تتعلّم بالسريانية؟ انت تتعلّم. وفكرت ان تكون قسيس؟ انت تكون راس دير". فبعد مدّة تعلّم بالسريانية ومن بعد نياحة القديس استراتيوس صوّره ريس على السيق. ولم يزل استراتيوس يظهر العجايب وينبي بالغايب، وعرف وقت وفاته وخبر بذلك، وتنيح وارضا الله باعماله الحسنة، والربّ يرحمنا بصلواته، آمين.

<٥> وكان ايضا في هذا السيق المبارك راهب سرياني فاضل من بعض قرى حلب يظهر العجايب وينبي بالغايب¹³³* يقال له ابا قرما، فخيرت انسان من اهل الربة بائه كان عليه دين فهرب الى عسقلان وخلف اختين ضعيفتين، ففيما هو بعسقلان ذكر ضعفهما وسار الى بيت المقدس وطلب من الله ان يسبّب له امر يتفرّج به، فقال: "انني سمعت ببنت المقدس عن قديس بالسيق العتيق يقال له ابا قرما يصنع العجايب، فقصدته

¹²⁸ Classical Arabic: يا أخي.

¹²⁹ The λογισμοί, in the Evagrian sense.

¹³⁰ Classical Arabic: يجيء به.

¹³¹ Classical Arabic: ويسأله.

¹³² Classical Arabic: تسألني.

¹³³ My emendation. MS: بالعجايب.

وقرعت باب قلايته فخرج اليّ تلميذه ويده عصا، فقال لي: قد عرف المعلم | (٢٨ب) سببك فخذ هذه العصا ولا تفارقك حيثما توجّهت فلن ينقصك الله شي ولا ينالك مكروه، وصير^{١٣٤} الى بلدك واحمل اختيك الى عسقلان وخذ طريق زغر، وذلك البلد كان مفتتً والطريق فزع، فاخذت العصا بامانة فانصرفت وفعلت كما امرني، فكانت حوايجي تنهيا لي حيثما نزلت، فصرت الى البرية ودُرْتُها ولم يعترضني احداً،^{١٣٥} واخذت اختي الى عسقلان ولم يكن احد يقدر ان يسلك الطريق من شدة الخوف، فسلمنا الله ووصلنا بصلوات القديس".

كان لهذا القديس تلميذ يقال له ابا تدرس بعلبكي، خبر عنه وقال انه صار اليه يفتقده فقال له: "صير^{١٣٦} الى الحبيس ابا غبريل وقول له ان يتهيا لتلك الحاجة الليلة"، فصرت الى الحبيس وقلت له، فقال: "نعم"، فعدت الى ابا قزما واعلمته بذلك، فقال لي: "انصرف الى قلايتك واطبخ يوم الاربعاء قدر عدس وجيني بها وقت تسع ساعات"، فصلى عليّ وانصرفت، وفعلت كما امرني وطبخت وصرت يوم الاربعاء الى قلايته قبل الساعة التاسعة، فقرعت بابها فلم يجيبني، ففيما انا جالس | (٢٩أ) متحير ضرب ناقوس اتاني^{١٣٧} فسمعت القديس يعمل بصلاته في قلايته، ففتح لي وقال: "ليس قد امرتك الاّ تجي اليّ <الّا>^{١٣٨} بعد تسع ساعات؟"، فعملت له مطانية واستغفرت، فاخذ^{١٣٩} من العدس بعضه وامرني ان اصير بالباقي الى ابا غبريل الحبيس، ففعلت وعدت اليه والقيت نفسي على رجليه وقلت له: "لست ارفع راسي حتى تعرفني سببك"، فامتنع وقال: "ليس يوافقك ذلك"، فاكثر البكا والطلبه فبالجهد خبرني وقال: "لا تُعلم احد"، فقلت: "لا"، فقال لي وهو يبكي: "كان لي ولابا غبريل هوا واحد ان نصلي على قبر الرسولين بطرس وبولس برومية، فالتقينا في الابرسوخذان^{١٤٠} وقرانا ابراتي (?)^{١٤١} وطلبنا من السيد المسيح، فبقدرته صرنا في طرفة عين برومية، واقمنا بها ثلاثة ايام وصلينا هناك الساعة التاسعة وخطفنا وألقينا في قلالينا وقت التسع ساعات".

وفي بعض الاوقات احتبس المطر وكان شدة عظيمة في جميع المسكونة فاجتمعوا اليه رهبان السيق يسلوه^{١٤٢} ان يطلب من الله يتحنن عليهم، فامتنع من ذلك، فلما اكثروا الطلبة والبكا اجاب باقتضاع كثير | (٢٩ب) وكان اذ ذلك مريض، فامرهم بحمله الى كنيسة خمسة واربعين شاهد بالسيق العتيق، ثم رفع القديس يده الى السما وصاح معه الكل: "يا رب، ارحم"، فلم يخرجوا من الكنيسة حتى ينزل المطر وجرى الوادي وسبحوا الله. ولم يزل هذا القديس يظهر العجايب وينبي بالغائب، وعرف وقت وفاته واخبر بذلك وقرده بسلام.

¹³⁴ Classical Arabic: وسر.

¹³⁵ Classical Arabic: أحد.

¹³⁶ Classical Arabic: سر.

¹³⁷ My emendation. MS: اناتي.

¹³⁸ My emendation.

¹³⁹ My emendation. MS: فاخذت.

¹⁴⁰ Gr. προσευχάδιον (Trapp, *Lexikon zur byzantinischen Gräzität*, fasc. 6, p. 1436, with the meaning "Gebetsraum, Oratorium"). I gratefully acknowledge Fr. Sergey Kim's generous help in deciphering this difficult word.

¹⁴¹ Gr. πρῶτη (ῶρα). Once again, I am deeply grateful to Fr. Sergey Kim for deciphering this challenging word.

¹⁴² Classical Arabic: ليسألوه.

<٦>^{١٤٣} فأما ابا غبرييل الحبيس الذي ذكرناه فكان له تلميذ مبارك يقال له ابا يوحنا مجاهد حريص ما يذوق شراب ولا زيت ولا زفر، بل كان يأخذ معه بزر البقل الى البرية فيزرعه ومنه كان يتغذأ، ومن كثرة امساكه ما كان يطرح الفضلات من اسفل بل كان يتغذأ في اخر امره بقدح حسواً ويلقيه من فوق.

جا هذا التلميذ المبارك الى معلّمه ابا غبرييل في الليل في بعض الامور ففرع باب قلّايته فاذا لم يجيبه تسوّر الحايط فاصاب القنديل يسرج والقلّاية مبخرة وما فيها احد، فتخبر وخرج فجلس مقابل القلّاية في موضع مشرف فسمع وجبة عظيمة كالريح العاصف | (١٣٠) وقعت في القلّاية، فنزل مسرعاً فسمع صوت المعلم يصلي، فمن بعد ذلك خرج اليه وقال له: "هذا خسر"^{١٤٤*} الرهبان ان يفتشوا قلالي اخوتهم"، فوضع وجهه على رجليه باكيًا وقايلاً: "مبارك الربّ، ايّ لا رفعت وجهي عن قدميك ان لم تخبرني سببك"، فتقدّم اليه بكتمان ذلك ما دام حيّاً، وقال له: "يا اخي الحبيب، قد وهب لي السيّد المسيح بفضله ان اذهب حيث شئت بغير تعب، والساعة جيت من بيت لحم"، فتعجّب من ذلك وسبح الله.

ومن بعد ذلك مرض مرضاً شديداً، ففتحوا عليه الرهبان ليتباركوا منه، وكلّمّن كان له تلميذ وجّه به اليه ليصلي عليهم، فلما ابصرهم حوله صلى عليهم، وتقدّم اليهم بالصبر والاتّضاع، وقال لهم: "انصرفوا بسلام، يا اولاد، فاني لست اموت في هذه العلّة، ومونتي مكتومة ليس يعرفها الا المسيح وحده وهي موهبة منه". ومن بعد ايام يسيرة قام من مرضه واخذ في الجهاد الذي كان فيه. |

(٣٠ب) فادرك موت هارون ملك العرب واقتنتت^{١٤٥*} الدنيا وجاوو< الرهبان وسالوه الهرب معهم فامتنع قايلاً: "اما بقي ثلثة ايام ويجي الملك الكبير"، فتنحّوا الرهبان كلّمهم وبقي هو في قلّايته، فبعد ثلثة ايام دخلوا عليه اعراب فعذبوه، واذا لم يجدوا عنده شي شقّوا عرقه^{١٤٦*} مثل الشاة ونوّطوه بحبل^{١٤٧*} وعلّقوه الى الوادي فانقطع الحبل ووقع فمات. فبعد مدّة يسيرة رجعوا الرهبان يطلبوه في قلّايته فوجدوا فيها اثر دم كثير فاشرفوا الى الوادي، فلما ابصروه وانحدروا اليه فوجدوه ميّت وقد انقطع راسه المقدّس، ولم يتغيّر جسده ولا قربه وحش في مثل تلك المدّة بل كانت تفوح منه رائحة طيبة تفوق كلّ عطر، فلّفوه بحصيرة ودفنوه ببكا ونحيب، وسبّحوا الله معطي النعمة المحيية.

<٧> كان ايضا في هذا السيق المبارك راهب من اهل البلقا يقال له ابا غبرييل كان حسن السيرة | (١٣١) في العالم عفيف كثير الحبّ، وكان كاتباً لوالي البلد معين لكلّ مظلوم، وكان للوالي امرأة شابة جميلة وكان هو شابّ جميل، فكانت تخلوا به وتطلب منه بما لا ينبغي كالذي نال يوسف بمصر، وكان يمتنع من ذلك ويكتمه عن زوجها، ففي بعض الاوقات وجّهه الوالي الى منزله في بعض المهمّات، فاغلقت عليه الباب وربطت يديه

¹⁴³ The handwriting changes here.

¹⁴⁴ My emendation. MS: حسن.

¹⁴⁵ My emendation. MS: واقتنتت.

¹⁴⁶ My emendation. MS: عرقوبه.

¹⁴⁷ My emendation. MS: بخل.

ورجليه واخذت تعاقبه^{١٤٨} فصر ولم يجيبها، فاستبطاه صاحبه وحرد عليه ونهض الى منزله فوجده على تلك الحال، فتعرّف خبره وفهمه وحلّ رباطه وربط امراته وهمّ بقتلها، فطلب اليه وبكا عليه فوهبها له، واخرجها من منزله وكثرت كرامته عنده وبجله.

فمن بعد ذلك زهد بما كان فيه وخرج سرّاً وصار الى ديرنا وترهبّ فيه، وكان معه مال جزيل ففرّقه على الرهبان والمساكين ولم يترك لنفسه منه شي بل القا اهتمامه على الله واجاز ايامه بضيق ومسكنة | (٣١ب) فاغلق عليه وقت الصوم وكان تلميذه يتعهده مرّة في الجمعة، فبعد خمس جُمع وجده يابس كالميت ففتحوا فاه بعود وغذّوه بشي من حسو حتّى فاق، وبعد مدّة من الزمان تنيح في مرضاة الله.

Translation

<1> (22r) The fathers of the Old Lavra informed us that there had been in their monastery | (22v) a Frankish monk, distinguished in his love and humility, whose name was Andrew. He had a young neighbour, who was doing construction work in his cell. [The neighbour] was in need of wood, and so he asked [Abba Andrew] to go with him to the Dead Sea in order to assist him in carrying the wood. [Abba Andrew] agreed. They arrived [at the spot], carried their load, and left. Then they were tormented by scorching heat, this having been the month of August. Abba Andrew managed to withstand the heat – by the power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. As for the young man, he was suffering greatly from this and was afflicted by thirst. He cast himself down on the ground as one dead and cried for the saint's help. [Abba Andrew] stood up on an elevated rock, praying to God with tears and imploring Him to have mercy on his [companion]. Then God shadowed them with a cloud, rain came down, and the valleys around this place were filled [with water]. They drank and took some water with them, glorifying God. When, however, they travelled past that place, they could no longer see any trace of rain.

<2> In this Lavra, there was yet another [monk], a Byzantine man, whose name was Abba Constantine. He had been tonsured in his youth and excelled in abstinence and labour. Most of the time, he would walk in the desert naked, with only a monastic cowl over his shoulders. His body had become black from intense heat and cold. He had a disciple who took care of him. One Saturday night [the disciple] knocked on the door of his cell, but received

¹⁴⁸ One wonders if this word should be emended to تعانقه.

no answer. He refused [to believe this] and scaled | **(23r)** the wall, but did not find [Abba Constantine] there. Confused, he went out and sat at the door. An hour later, he heard a powerful bang inside the cell and the voice of the saint praying. He knocked on the door. [The saint] came out to him and said: “When did you come here?” He told him when, then fell at his feet crying and imploring him to disclose the matter. After much crying and importuning on his part, [the saint] bade him to keep what he was going to say a secret for as long as he was alive. He then told him that on Saturday nights he enjoyed praying at the Holy Anastasis [i.e., the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem]. So he was transported there and then returned back to his cell.

There was once a shortage of rain, and a great deficiency of water for the monks. They implored [Abba Constantine] to pray to God that He would have mercy on His creation. Initially [Abba Constantine] refused, but when they importuned him, he directed them to carry him to the church. This was because he was sick and on the verge of departure from this world. He then gave instructions to gather three grains of incense from each monk. This was on Saturday night. He then asked three deacons to keep the incense going until the following day. They did as he instructed them. [Abba Constantine] himself remained in the diakonikon,¹⁴⁹ weeping and praying to God till the morrow. Finally, on Sunday evening abundant rain came down, and the cisterns were filled. After that, [Abba Constantine] died, having [lived a life] pleasing to God, and obtained an everlasting rest.

<3> (23v) The fathers of the Old Lavra told us about a monk from the people of Corinth whose name was Cyriacus. He excelled in love, humility, obedience, and abstinence. He also obtained from God the gift of clairvoyance. Our monks would flock to him, seek his consolation and council, and complain to him about their struggles. His fame spread throughout the land of Palestine. People of Jerusalem and all others who visited the Lavra, from all the countries, would come to him in order to take his blessing, and he would console them with his spiritual teachings.

When he could no longer bear being disturbed by so many people, he fled to the desert, accompanied by one blessed disciple. He was seventy-seven years old at the time. In this desert there was nothing to feed on except sea squill. He prayed to God, and God made it sweet for them. Whenever their bodily

¹⁴⁹ A chamber to the south from the altar where vestments and books are kept.

need overcame them, he would instruct his disciple to boil it, and the two of them would eat it. They lived in this way four years.

After that, a noble man from the people of Tekoa heard about them and brought them a load of bread. He took a blessing from the elder, gave them the [bread], and left. They would then eat this [bread] every evening. One day, when the saint was walking in the inner desert, | **(24r)** having left the disciple behind in his cave, the disciple, as usual, took some of the sea squill and boiled it. As soon as he tasted its bitterness, however, he fell as one dead, unable to move or speak. The saint realized what had happened to him, came to him, and prayed over him. The disciple woke up and arose, and the saint, having administered the Body of the Lord Christ to him, scolded him, saying: “My son, the Lord Christ would make the squill sweet for us, because we had then nothing else [to eat].”

Once they had finished the bread and became hungry again, the saint gave a blessing to his disciple and instructed him to boil some of the squill again and serve him. He did so; however, he was afraid to taste it, and so the saint made the sign of the cross over it, and he ate it, [trusting] in his teacher’s prayer, and it [caused him no harm].

A man from the people of Tekoa heard about the saint and came to him with his demon-possessed son, asking [the saint] to pray over him. [The saint] had compassion on him and healed him through the grace of the Holy Spirit. The man departed thanking God and relating the story of the saint’s miracle.

People would frequently bring to him the demon-possessed and [those suffering from] other [afflictions], and he would pray over them, and they would become well again. When, however, he could no longer bear being disturbed by so many people, he fled to the inner desert—a place where none of the solitary monks would go—and stayed there for a long time. At that time, many people were dying [of disease], and [the epidemic] affected the Lavra as well. Some of the monks came to him and informed him about this, imploring him to go | **(24v)** with them to the Lavra. He agreed, and settled in the cave of the holy Mar Chariton. But he was disturbed there as well, and so returned back to the old place, taking with him only some herb seeds [to plant and] to partake of [the herbs] from time to time. However, wild animals started grazing the [herbs], and his disciple complained to him about this. Then, when the saint was walking in the desert, he met a fierce lion. He

ordered the lion to follow him to the place where herbs had been planted and to guard it from the wild animals destroying it. The lion obeyed his command.

When the saint became old and weak—for he was more than 100 years old—he knew that the time of his departure from this world had drawn near, so he returned to the Lavra and reposed in the Lord, having pleased God by his virtuous deeds.

<4> The monks of the Old Lavra told us also about another saint who lived in their monastery. His name was Eustratius, and he was one of the noblemen of Sicily. From his youth, he had been intelligent and chaste and had led a virtuous life. The Byzantine emperor heard about him and sent after him. When he arrived, the [emperor] asked [Eustratius] to speak, and found him to be even more excellent than what he had heard. He therefore appointed [Eustratius] to be his chief general and put him in charge of warfare. God was helping [Eustratius] and made him victorious over the emperor's enemies. Both the [emperor] and his noblemen held him in high esteem. They honoured him and revered him for his courage and honesty; they also loved him very much.

This virtuous man, however, renounced all this and fled to become a monk. He was tonsured in one | **(25r)** of the cenobitic monasteries and learned the rules of monasticism. After that, he left to the desert and spent twelve years there, eating grass. Then he desired to travel to the inner desert. He came to an arid place that had no vegetation and nothing else that could be used for food. Hunger forced him to pray to God for help. Then, while he was walking in the desert, suffering from hunger, he found a great church with a beautiful altar, on which lay a large and pure loaf of bread. He was greatly amazed by this. However, he feared that this could be Satan's deception; so he prayed to God imploring Him to disclose the matter to him. Then he approached the altar, prayed, and made the sign of the cross over the bread. He stretched forth his hand, took it, and sustained himself with it for a long time, thanking God.

Subsequently, he came to Jerusalem and travelled through its desert. Then he came to the holy Mount Sinai, travelled through its desert, and dwelled in [this desert]. God would visit him and console him with food whenever he needed it. After some time, he returned to the holy monastery [of Sinai] and lived as a hermit in the monks' cemetery for forty days, during which he tasted no food. All this time, he would pray to God imploring Him to reveal

unto him the bodies of the two holy abbots of Mount Sinai Anastasius and [John] Climacus. Then [their bodies] were revealed to him, and he took a blessing from them.

Subsequently, he left the place | **(25v)** and headed for Jerusalem. While he was walking on the road with a group of people, they encountered an enormous lion and were terrified and confused. The saint came up to the [lion] and embraced it, while all the people passed by, glorifying God.

When they arrived at the campsite, they had among them a deaf boy, so they asked [Eustratius] to have mercy upon him. He prayed over him, and the boy regained ability to speak. Therefore, all those present glorified God.

When [Eustratius] arrived in Jerusalem, it came to his attention that in the Old Lavra there were saintly monks, wonderworking and clairvoyant, so he desired to stay with them. They accepted him gladly. He took his dwelling in the cell of Sts. John and Arcadius.¹⁵⁰ A virtuous brother named Abba Joseph was in his service. There was a certain reason on account of which the saint imposed a penance upon himself. He would stay in his cell without going out for multiple days and without tasting food. He had asked his disciple not to approach him until the forty days were complete. After the period was over, the disciple, with a group of other monks, came to his cell and knocked on the door. Because [Eustratius] did not respond, they thought that he had died, so they broke the door and came in. They found [Eustratius] lying [on the floor] without moving, as one dead. So they called a doctor who was at the Lavra. The doctor examined him and told them that he still had his spirit within him. He gave them instructions to | **(26r)** wash him with warm water. They did this, and he moved. Then they prepared a broth for him, opened his mouth with a stick, and gave him to drink of it a little. And so they treated him for several days, until he became well and told them: “My soul has been brought back to life, though I had imposed a death sentence upon it.” They asked him about the reason for this. He told them that he had once threw a little stone at a bird and it died, and so he imposed a death sentence upon his own soul in its stead.

After a little while, the Fast of the Apostles began, and it was extremely hot. [Eustratius] instructed his disciple Abba Joseph to lock the door of his cell and not approach him until the completion of the fast. Nor did he take any

¹⁵⁰ The Orthodox Church commemorates Sts. Arcadius and John, together with their parents Sts. Xenophon and Mary on 26 January.

food inside. After the end of the fast, the disciple opened the door and found [Eustratius] to have become shrivelled as wood. His room¹⁵¹ was filled with incense, and his lamp was lit. They continued to treat him until he woke up.

[Together with?] the saint, there was at the Lavra a virtuous priest. He fell sick and had [seizures?], [during which] he would bite his tongue causing it to bleed. The monks bewailed [his situation?] in the saint's presence, but he went to the liturgy, leaving [the sick priest] behind in his [previous] state [i.e., uncured]. While standing at the liturgy, [the saint] turned to [the monk] standing next to him and said to them:¹⁵² "Abba Jonah¹⁵³ has reposed in the Lord, having departed this world in a good manner; he had had a minor stain, but God has cleansed him."

After this, there came the Feast of the Blessing of Water,¹⁵⁴ | (26v) and [several] monks were preparing for wearing the Great Schema.¹⁵⁵ Among them there was an Egyptian man named Abba Gabriel, who was righteous in conduct,¹⁵⁶ so he was also [blessed] to wear the Schema, together with the other [monks]. They went out to give "Peace" to the fathers. However, Abba Eustratius refused to accept Abba Gabriel's wearing the Schema. He said to them: "Why did you allow him to wear the Schema, if he is not even a Christian?" The monks were overcome by sorrow, because they saw that the Egyptian man was devout, loyal to the Church, and righteous in conduct; moreover, he was one of the longest-serving monks of the Lavra. After some time, however, [this Abba Gabriel] went to Egypt and there converted to Islam, so the monks realized that God had revealed his situation to Saint Eustratius.

A few days later, the saint [Abba Eustratius] was standing at the liturgy near the door of the diakonikon.¹⁵⁷ Suddenly, he burst into tears. The priest, Abba Leontius asked him about the reason [for his crying]. [The saint] responded: "It is on your (pl.)¹⁵⁸ account that I am sad. Previously, I would see the Holy Spirit descend upon you (pl.) every liturgy, but today I did not see Him

¹⁵¹ Translation uncertain. See note 118 above.

¹⁵² A sudden shift from the singular to the plural.

¹⁵³ Apparently, this is the name of the sick priest.

¹⁵⁴ Theophany (6 January).

¹⁵⁵ The most advanced degree of Orthodox monasticism.

¹⁵⁶ Translation uncertain.

¹⁵⁷ See note 149 above.

¹⁵⁸ Presumably, the plural form signifies the priest Abba Leontius together with other clergy and servers of the altar.

descending upon you (pl.). He has departed from you (pl).” They said to him: “Father, there are a lot of disputes and quarrels among us; pray to God that He would lift them from us!”

The Enemy¹⁵⁹ once tempted one of our monks at the Old Lavra to eat meat. Through a cunning stratagem, he bought it and cooked it. The saint [Abba Eustratius] knew this by the Spirit dwelling in him, | (27r) so precisely at the time when that monk was about to eat it, Eustratius knocked on the door of his cell. The monk opened and made a prostration to him. When they prayed, the monk said to him: “Holy father, what brings you today to my habitation?” [Eustratius] responded: “I would like to have a [joint meal of] love with you today.” The monk rejoiced greatly and served him whatever monastic food he had had provided to him by God. But the saint said: “Serve me some food from the pot which you have just cooked.” Terrified, the monk brought the pot and put it in front of [the saint]. The saint rebuked him and said: “Brother, you are sullyng your soul on account of your desire and you are obeying your [evil] thoughts.” Then he ordered him to bring a hoe, dug a hole in the garden, buried the pot there, and trampled it down with his foot. After that, he prayed over the brother and left.

One of the monks went to the city¹⁶⁰ and fell into sin.¹⁶¹ Then he returned to his cell repentant and sorrowful. When night came, the saint [Abba Eustratius] knocked on the door of his cell, made a prostration to him, and said to him: “Forgive me, brother, for I have fallen into sin.” The brother realized that the saint knew what had happened to him, so he fell to his feet, crying, confessing his [evil] deed, and imploring [the saint] to pray over him. [Eustratius] consoled him and left.

In the Lavra, there was a monk whose name was Abba Job. | (27v) He was asked to become bishop of Aleppo, so he came to the saint [Abba Eustratius] to seek his council. [The saint] said to him: “Come back to me tomorrow morning, so that I can pray to Christ [that He may reveal] His will about you.” However, [Abba Job] left along with his companions without coming back to [Abba Eustratius]. The saint said to the monks: “He will come back, [because] they will not accept him,” and so it happened.

¹⁵⁹ I.e., Satan.

¹⁶⁰ Presumably, Bethlehem or Jerusalem.

¹⁶¹ Presumably, the sin of fornication.

This saint [Abba Eustratius] was travelling in the desert of Calamon,¹⁶² scorched by intense heat. Having come to the gate of the monastery, he knocked on it, but there was no response, so he made the sign of the cross over the gate, and it opened. Another monk from the Lavra accompanied him, and he is the one who told this.

This saint [Abba Eustratius] had two disciples whom he would take with him to the desert, so as to walk with them in the night towards the Jordan. While on this [journey], the saint stood facing East, prayed for a long time, then turned to one of his disciples and said: “Stephen, you want to become a patriarch; you will become one, but only for a few days, and you will find no joy [in this].” Thirty-five years later, Abba Stephen was taken to become patriarch over Antioch, but on his way there he became ill. Having arrived [there], he died on the eighth day.

In the Lavra, there was a good brother, whose name was Abramius. He used to serve Eustratius and attend to his needs in the desert, when [Eustratius] was living in his cave. One day | **(28r)** [Abramius] brought [Eustratius] a jug of water. [Eustratius] looked at him, smiled, and said: “What were you thinking about last night?” [Abramius] responded: “I had many thoughts, and I don’t know which of them you are asking about.” The saint said to him: “Were you thinking of learning Syriac? You shall learn [it]. [Were] you thinking of becoming a priest? You shall become an abbot.” After some time, [Abramius] learned Syriac, and after Eustratius’ death was appointed to be the abbot of the Lavra.”

Eustratius continued to perform miracles and show [signs of] clairvoyance. He knew the time of his death, and told [others] about it. He reposed [in the Lord], having pleased God by his righteous deeds. May the Lord have mercy on us by his prayers, Amen!

<5> In this blessed Lavra, there was another virtuous monk who was a Syriac-speaker from one of the villages near Aleppo. He was a wonderworker and clairvoyant. His name was Abba Cosmas. One man from Rabba¹⁶³ told us [the following story]. He had a debt and fled to Ascalon, leaving behind two poor [lit.: weak] sisters. While in Ascalon, he remembered their poverty

¹⁶² Calamon is the (now ruined) monastery in ‘Ayn Hajla on the Jordan River, about 1km from Dayr Hajla / the monastery of St. Gerasimos (Schick 1995: 279; Sharon 1997-in progress: III 48-54, 153).

¹⁶³ Rabba (or al-Rabba) – near al-Karak in Transjordan.

[lit.: weakness], and so he went to Jerusalem, imploring God to provide a solution to his problem. He said: “When I was in Jerusalem, I heard about a wonderworking saint in the Old Lavra whose name was Abba Cosmas. I sought him out and knocked on the door of his cell. His disciple came out, carrying a staff in his hand. He told me: ‘The teacher knows | **(28v)** your situation. Take this staff and keep it always with you wherever you go. God will see to it that you lack nothing and suffer no harm. Go back to your town [i.e., Rabba] and take your sisters with you to Ascalon. Take the road of Zoara’.¹⁶⁴ This town was then insecure, and the road was dangerous, but I took the staff in faith and left. I did everything as he had instructed me, and all my needs were provided for wherever I stayed. I went to the desert and travelled through it, and no one hindered me. Then I took my two sisters with me to Ascalon. No one was capable of walking on that road out of fear, but God kept me safe, and we arrived [safely] by the saint’s prayers.”

This saint [Abba Cosmas] had a disciple whose name was Abba Theodore of Baalbek. He told [us the following story] about him. [One day] he came to visit [Abba Cosmas], and [Abba Cosmas] told him: “Go to Abba Gabriel the Hermit and tell him to get ready for ‘That Thing’¹⁶⁵ this night.” I went to the Hermit and told him. He said: “Yes.” So I came back to Abba Cosmas and told him this. He said: “Go to your cell, cook a pot of lentils on Wednesday, and bring it to me at 9 o’clock.”¹⁶⁶ He prayed over me, and I left. I did as he bade me: cooked [the lentils] and came to his cell on Wednesday before the ninth hour. I knocked on the door, but there was no answer. While I was sitting there | **(29r)** confused, I heard the sound of a semantron (*nāqūs*)¹⁶⁷ and then heard the saint doing his prayer in his cell. He opened the door to me and said: “Didn’t I instruct you not to come to me <until> after 9 o’clock?” I made a prostration before him and asked his forgiveness. He then took some of the lentils and instructed me to bring the rest to Abba Gabriel the Hermit. I did as he bade me, then came back to him, fell to his feet, and said to him: “I shall not raise my head until you tell me your secret.” He refused, saying: “This is

¹⁶⁴ The Biblical Zoar (Gen. 14:8, 19:22-23) and present-day al-Ghawr al-Šāfi in Transjordan, near the south extremity of the Dead Sea.

¹⁶⁵ “That Thing” must have been a code word, agreed between Abba Cosmas and Abba Gabriel the Hermit. The meaning of this code word will become apparent at a later point in the narrative.

¹⁶⁶ I.e., 3 pm.

¹⁶⁷ A wooden board on which one knocks to summon monks to prayer.

not appropriate for you.” But I cried and importuned him so profusely that after much effort he agreed to tell the story, saying: “Let no one else know.” I agreed, and he spoke to me weeping: “Abba Gabriel and I had one and the same desire: to pray at the tomb of the Apostles Peter and Paul in Rome, so we met in the prayer room, read the First Hour,¹⁶⁸ and prayed to the Lord Christ, and by His power we found ourselves in the twinkling of an eye in Rome. We stayed there for three days, prayed the Ninth Hour there, and were then transported back to our cells at exactly 9 o’clock.”

It once happened that there was a drought¹⁶⁹ and great hardship through all the universe. The monks of the Lavra came to [Abba Cosmas] to ask him to pray to God that He would have mercy on them. He refused, but after they importuned him and wept profusely, he agreed with great humility. | (29v) He was sick at the time, and so he asked them to carry him to the church of the Forty-Five Martyrs¹⁷⁰ at the Old Lavra. The saint raised his hands to heaven, and everyone cried out together with him: “Lord, have mercy!” They did not leave the church until rain came down, and [water] filled the valley; then everyone gave glory to God. This saint continued to perform miracles and show [signs of] clairvoyance. He knew the time of his death, told [others] about it, and reposed in peace.

<6> Abba Gabriel the Hermit, whom we have just mentioned, had a blessed disciple whose name was Abba John. He was advanced in ascetic labours and devout. He would never taste wine, or oil, or anything fatty.¹⁷¹ Rather, he would take herb seeds with him to the desert, plant them, and feed on this. He was so advanced in abstinence that he would not excrete from below. Rather, at the end [of his meal], he would take in a cup of liquid and then vomit it from above.

This blessed disciple Abba John once came to his teacher Abba Gabriel at night on some business. He knocked on the door of his cell. There was no response, and so he scaled the wall and found the lamp burning and the cell

¹⁶⁸ I am deeply grateful to Fr. Sergey Kim and Nikolai Seleznyov for their generous help in interpreting this passage.

¹⁶⁹ Literally, “rain was blocked.”

¹⁷⁰ Presumably, these are the forty-five martyrs of Nicopolis (martyred in 319; commemorated on 10 July).

¹⁷¹ In Christian Arabic literature, the word *zafar* refers collectively to animal products other than meat (dairy, eggs, animal fat, etc.).

full of incense, but no one present there. Confused, he went out and sat down opposite the cell on an elevated spot. Suddenly, he heard a powerful bang, as though hurricane wind | **(30r)** descended upon the cell. He came down rapidly and heard the voice of his teacher praying. After that, [Abba Gabriel] came out and said: “It [causes] monks’ ruin to search their brethren’s cells.” [Abba John] fell to his feet with the face down, crying and saying: “Blessed be the Lord, I shall not raise my face from your feet unless you tell me your secret.” [Abba Gabriel] agreed—on the condition that this would remain hidden as long as he was alive—and said: “My beloved brother, through His grace, the Lord Christ gave me the ability to travel wherever I want with no effort, so I just returned from Bethlehem.” [Abba John] was amazed by this and glorified God.

After that, [Abba Gabriel]¹⁷² became seriously ill. The monks opened [the door of] his [cell] to take a blessing from him. Everyone who had a disciple brought him to the [saint] so that he could pray for them. When [the saint] saw them gathered around him, he prayed over them and addressed them patiently and humbly, saying: “Go in peace, children, for I’m not going to die from this illness. My sustenance is hidden; only Christ knows it, for it is a gift from Him.” A few days later he rose up from his illness and took on the same kind of ascetic struggle that he used to practice. |

(30v) Hārūn, the king of the Arabs, died, and the world was plunged into strife.¹⁷³ The monks came to [Abba Gabriel] importuning him to flee together with them, but he refused, saying: “It is only three days till the Great King comes.” All the monks left, and he alone remained in his cell. Three days later, Bedouins (*a rāb*) attacked him and tortured him. As they found him having no [treasures], they slit his arteries like those of a lamb, tied him with a rope, and suspended him above the valley. The rope broke, and he fell to his death. After some time, the monks came back to look for him in his cell. They found [the cell] full of traces of blood, and looked down to the valley. When they saw him, they came down and found him dead. His holy head had broken, but his body had suffered no change; nor did wild animals approach him, despite the amount of time that had passed. [His body] was exuding a pleasant smell

¹⁷² It is somewhat unclear whether the protagonist in the remainder of the story is Abba Gabriel or perhaps his disciple Abba John. The former possibility seems much more likely, so I adopt it in the translation below.

¹⁷³ The ‘Abbāsid caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd died on 24 March 809.

superior to any perfume. They wrapped him in a rug and buried him with crying and lamentation, glorifying God the Provider of life-giving grace.

<7> In this blessed Lavra, there was also another monk from Balqā' whose name was Abba Gabriel.¹⁷⁴ He led a virtuous life | **(31r)** in the world, was chaste, and was filled with love. He was a secretary of the governor of the land and was helping every oppressed person. This governor had a young and beautiful wife, and he [i.e., the secretary = Abba Gabriel in his youth] was also young and beautiful. She would stay alone with him and would demand that he do what is inappropriate, just as had happened to Joseph in Egypt.¹⁷⁵ He would refuse to do this, while concealing this from her husband. One day it happened that the governor sent him to his [i.e., the governor's] house on some business. [The governor's wife] locked the door behind him, bound his hands and feet, and started torturing¹⁷⁶ him. He endured it and gave her no response. His master [the governor] noticed that he was being late and became angry with him, so he came home and found him in this situation. He realized what had happened to him, untied him, and tied up his own wife, intending to kill her. However, [the secretary] importuned [the governor] with tears, and [the governor] agreed to release her [at] his [request].¹⁷⁷ [The secretary] led her out of the house. [The governor] held him in high esteem and honoured him.

After this, however, [the secretary] renounced his [worldly life]. He left secretly and came to our monastery, where he was tonsured a monk. He had had a lot of money, and he distributed everything to the monks and to the poor, leaving nothing for himself. He focused his attention [exclusively] on God and spent his days in hardship and poverty. During Lent, he locked himself up, and his disciple would attend to his needs once a week. | **(31v)** After five weeks, [the disciple] found him shrivelled as though dead. They opened his mouth with a stick and fed him with a small amount of broth, until he woke up. After a while, he reposed having pleased God.

¹⁷⁴ This Abba Gabriel is evidently different from Abba Gabriel the Hermit.

¹⁷⁵ Gen. 39:1-20.

¹⁷⁶ Or, alternatively, "embracing," if one were to emend the text as indicated in note 148 above.

¹⁷⁷ Lit.: "to give her to him."

Appendix: Life of St. Stratius (Copto-Arabic Version)

An interesting version of the life of St. Eustratius is preserved in an unspecified manuscript of the Dayr al-Suryān (Monastery of the Syrians) in Scetis. It was transcribed and, it seems, adapted by Abbot (*qummuṣ*) Sim‘ān al-Suryānī in his book *al-Ābā’ al-suwwāḥ* (al-Suryānī 1990: 107-110).¹⁷⁸ The text of the life of St. Eustratius as published in this book is available on a number of websites (e.g., http://www.coptic-churches.ch/sinksar/sinksar_Teil1.htm) as well as in an audio version on YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OKZPx7xWk8E>). Here is the text (with minor corrections and some notes), accompanied by an English translation. It is noteworthy that the saint’s name is given as “Stratius” rather than Eustratius.

الأبنا ستراتيوس السائح

في عصر أحد الملوك الأرثوذكسيين الذين حكموا روما كان هناك أميراً¹⁷⁹ من روما تحت سلطانه مائة جندي أدركته النعمة الإلهية فقال للملك: "أريد الآن أن أترك هذا العالم الفاني لأتي أريد الذهاب إلى البرية فأصير هناك راهباً"، وإنه ركب سفينة إلى الإسكندرية، وبعدها سافر برّاً إلى طور سينا، وكان ذلك بعد مائتي عام من نياحة القديس يوحنا الدرجي اكليماكوس صاحب السلم الدرجي للفضائل وأب رهبان سينا والقديس أنسطاس السيناوي مدبر الرهبان اللذان¹⁸⁰ ارتفعا في الفضيلة. وكان عدد رهبان الدير وقتئذ مائتان وخمسون¹⁸¹ راهباً.

سلك القديس ستراتيوس في الدير بنسك شديد، وحرارة متوقّدة بالرب يسوع المسيح فاستحقّ لباس اسكيم الرهبنة¹⁸²، ولما أمضى في مجمع الدير عدّة سنوات خدم خلالها الآباء الرهبان بكلّ محبة استأذن أبيه¹⁸³ الروحي لكي يمضي إلى البرية فسمح له أبيه¹⁸⁴ متفكراً أنّه سيسكن في مغارة قريبة لا تبعد كثيراً عن الدير،

¹⁷⁸ I am deeply grateful to Dr. Hanna Repp for a photocopy of the relevant sections and to Fr. Anthony St. Shenouda, who kindly alerted me to the published English translation of *al-Ābā’ al-suwwāḥ* (El-Souriany 2008, under the title *The Hermit Fathers*; downloadable version: http://www.saint-mary.net/coptic_faith/The%20Hermit%20Fathers.pdf). The life of “Abba Stratios the Hermit” appears on pp. 108-110 of the downloadable version. The English translation below is, however, my own.

¹⁷⁹ Classical Arabic: أمير.

¹⁸⁰ Classical Arabic: اللذين.

¹⁸¹ Classical Arabic: مائتين وخمسين.

¹⁸² My emendation. Printed: الرهبة.

¹⁸³ Classical Arabic: أباه.

¹⁸⁴ Classical Arabic: أبوه.

وإنه أخذ وشاحه وجريدته ومضى يسبح قائلاً: "أرفع عيني إلى الجبال، من حيث يأتي عوني؟ معونتي من عند الرب صانع السموات والأرض".¹⁸⁵

إلى أن وصل مغارة بعيدة داخل البرية، وهناك داوم على النسك الشديد والجهاد العنيف في حياته الروحية ومحبة الرب يسوع المسيح، وصار يفتات من الحشائش التي تنبت في الصخور ويشرب من ينوع الماء الذي كان قريباً من هذه الحشائش في البرية. لقد كان يطوي أياماً وهو صائم، بعدها يأكل ملء يده من هذه الحشائش وقليل من الماء. أما صلواته فكانت لا حصر لها لأنه تشبه بالروحانيين في تسبيحهم المستمر وصلواتهم التي لا تنقطع ... وقد داوم على ذلك اثني عشر عاماً.

لقد أُعْلِنَ له أنه سينطلق من هذا العالم الفاني إلى العالم العتيد مع القديسين بعد أربعين يوماً، فلما شعر بقرب نياحته رشم على الريح بعلامة الصليب المقدس الذي لربنا يسوع المسيح له المجد، فحمله للوقت وأتى به داخل الدير وهناك قابل أب الدير وقد صار شيخاً. فلما سأله، "من أنت؟"، أجاب: "أنا ابنك ستراتيوس الذي كنت معكم بالدير من اثني عشر عاماً. وقد جئت الآن لأن انطلاقي من هذا العالم قد قرب وسأمضي إلى العالم الجديد حيث الراحة الأبدية بعد أربعين يوماً، وأريد أن أمضي هذه الأيام القليلة مع آباء الدير وصلوات القديسين لأخذ بركتهم إلى أن أمضي".

ففرح به كثيراً وعانقه، ثم دق الناقوس فحضر الآباء وفرحوا برؤية القديس السائح. ثم أعطوه قلاية منفردة، فدخل القلاية وأغلق الباب، ثم خرج دون أن أحد يدرى، وذهب إلى قبر القديس يوحنا الدرجي (اكليماكوس) واضع سلم الفضائل وأب رهبنة فلسطين والمدبر الفاضل وقبر القديس أنسطاس السينائي مدبر الرهبان، وجثا ساجداً على قبرهما لتؤازره صلوات هذان القديسان اللذان¹⁸⁶ قد تقدماه منذ أكثر من مائتي عام.

وبينما هو يصلي ويتضرع إليهما ظهر له ملاك الرب وقال له: "يا ستراتيوس، ها القديسان يوحنا وأنسطاس قد حضرا لك بالروح ليباركا عليك، أيها القديس الطوباوي، قبل انتقالك من هذا العالم"، وللوقت رأهما وتبارك منهما، وقال له: "نحن أيضاً سنكون وقت خروج روحك من جسدك، ونصلي عليك في قلايتك التي أعطوها لك الآباء داخل الدير"، وأعطياه السلام ثم مضى، وعاد بعدها إلى قلايته.

لم يخبر أحد¹⁸⁷ بذلك سوى تلميذه إذ قال له: "يا ابني، عند تمام سبعة وثلاثين يوماً افتح علي باب القلاية إذ سأنتقل في ذلك اليوم من هذا العالم الفاني ولا تتوانى¹⁸⁸ عن تعداد هذه الأيام لتدفنوا جسدي".

فلما مضت تلك الأيام وحان ذلك الوقت قرعوا الباب فلم يجيبهم¹⁸⁹ أحد، وأخيراً كسروا باب القلاية فوجدوه مسجى، وقد غطى ذاته بوشاحه الذي كان من الصوف الخشن.

¹⁸⁵ Ps. 120/121: 1-2.

¹⁸⁶ Classical Arabic: هذين القديسين اللذين.

¹⁸⁷ Classical Arabic: أحداً.

¹⁸⁸ Classical Arabic: تتوانى.

¹⁸⁹ Classical Arabic: يجيبهم.

لقد وجدوا شيئاً عجيباً إذ أبصروا بجواره شوربة^{١٩٠} وبها فحم^{١٩١} وبخوراً متصاعداً منها ذو^{١٩٢} رائحة طيبة جداً، فلقد كان ذلك علامة أن الآباء السواح قد أتوا وصلوا عليه، وإن الآباء صلوا عليه بعد ذلك صلواتاً^{١٩٣} قصيرة، ثم دفنوه بإكرام جزيل مع الآباء القديسين الأوائل بالدير، وفاحت من جسده روائح عطرية فائقة الوصف، وصار بركة لكثيرين. ولربنا كل مجد وإكرام وسجود من الآن وإلى كل الدهور، آمين.

Translation

Abba Stratius the Hermit

At the time of one of the Orthodox kings who ruled over Rome, there lived a commander / prince¹⁹⁴ (*amīr*) from Rome who was in charge of one hundred soldiers. Divine grace descended upon him, and he said to the king: “I wish now to renounce this transitory world, because I desire to go to the desert and become a monk there.” He went by ship to Alexandria, then by land to Sinai. This was two hundred years after the repose of St. John Climacus, the author of the *Ladder of Virtues*, and of St. Anastasius of Sinai, the leader of the monks, both of whom had excelled in virtue. At that time, there were two hundred and fifty monks in this monastery.¹⁹⁵

At the monastery, St. Stratius engaged in extreme forms of asceticism, with a burning zeal for the Lord Jesus Christ. He was deemed worthy to wear the habit (*iskīm*) of monasticism. After spending a few years in this monastery’s community, during which he served the monastic fathers with great love, he asked his spiritual father’s permission to go to the desert, and his [spiritual] father permitted him this, thinking that he would take his dwelling in a nearby cave, not too far from the monastery. He, however, took his girdle and his palm branch¹⁹⁶ and left glorifying [God] and saying: “I lift my eyes to the mountains; from where shall my help come? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth” (Ps. 120/121:1-2).

¹⁹⁰ Coptic: Ⲡⲟⲩⲫⲏ, “censer” (Graf 1954: 69).

¹⁹¹ Classical Arabic: فحماً.

¹⁹² Classical Arabic: لدا.

¹⁹³ Classical Arabic: صلوات.

¹⁹⁴ Both translations are possible.

¹⁹⁵ This is an interesting detail that finds no correspondence in PMC.

¹⁹⁶ The significance of this item is unclear. Perhaps the text is corrupt here.

He reached a far-off cave in the inner desert and stayed there, persevering in extreme asceticism and intense [ascetic] labour in his spiritual life and in the love of the Lord Jesus Christ. He would feed on the herbs growing between the rocks and would drink water from a nearby spring, which was close to this grass in the wilderness. He would spend entire days fasting and after that eat [only] a handful of these herbs and a small amount of water. His prayers were without number, for he resembled spiritual beings in their constant giving glory [to God] and in their ceaseless prayer. He pursued this for twelve years.

It was revealed to him that forty days later he would depart from this transitory world to the future world together with the saints. When he felt that his end was near, he made the sign of the holy cross of our Lord Jesus Christ (glory be to Him!) over the wind, and the wind carried him away immediately and brought him right inside the monastery. There, he saw the abbot of the monastery, who in the meanwhile had become an old man. [The abbot] asked him: “Who are you?” He responded: “I am your [spiritual] son Stratius who used to be with you at the monastery twelve years ago. I have come now, because the time of my departure from this world has drawn nigh. In forty days, I shall pass on to the new world, the place of eternal rest. I wish to spend those few days with the fathers of the monastery and with the prayers of the saints, so that I could take their blessing before I depart.”

[The abbot] rejoiced greatly and embraced him. After that, he beat the semantron;¹⁹⁷ the fathers came in and rejoiced in seeing the saintly hermit. They gave him a separate cell. He entered the cell and locked the door. After that, he left without anyone noticing and went to the tomb of St. John Climacus, the author of the *Ladder of Virtues*, who was the father and virtuous leader of Palestinian monasticism, and to the tomb of St. Anastasius of Sinai, the leader of the monks. He prostrated himself on their graves asking that he may receive assistance from the prayers of these two saints who had preceded him by two hundred years.

While he was praying and imploring them, suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared to him and said to him: “Stratius, the holy John and Anastasius have appeared before you in the spirit in order to bless you, O blessed saint, before your departure from this world. Immediately, he saw them and took their blessing. They said to him: “We shall also be present at the time of your

¹⁹⁷ See note 167 above.

spirit's departure from your body and we shall pray for you in your cell, which the fathers have given you inside the monastery." They gave him peace and left, while he returned afterwards to his cell.

He did not disclose this to anyone, except to his disciple, asking him as follows: "My son, open the door of my cell after thirty-seven days, because on that day I shall depart from this transitory world. Do not be remiss in counting these days, so that you will be able to bury my body."

When these days have passed and the appointed time has arrived, they knocked on the door of his cell. There was no response, and so eventually they broke the door of the cell. They found him wrapped [in a shroud], for he had covered himself with his girdle which was made of coarse wool.

They also found an amazing thing, for next to him they saw a censer and therein a charcoal, and incense was rising from it, and its fragrance was exceedingly good. This was a sign that the hermit fathers [i.e., Sts. John Climacus and Anastasius of Sinai] had indeed come and prayed over him [at the time of his death]. The fathers held a short prayer for his [soul's repose] and after that buried him with much reverence next to the ancient holy fathers of the monastery. His body exuded perfume-like fragrance which was beyond description. Thus he became a blessing to many. To our Lord is due all glory, honour, and worship from now and unto all the ages, Amen.

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