The Pilgrimage of Etheria (McClure and Feltoe translation)

Egeria (late 4th century)

SermonIndex.net / Church Fathers

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The Approach to Sinai

were pointed out according to the Scriptures. In the meanwhile we came on foot to a certain place where the mountains, through which we were journeying, opened out and formed an infinitely great valley, quite flat and extraordinarily beautiful, and across the valley appeared Sinai, the holy mountain of God. And this place, where the mountains opened out, lies next to the place where are the graves of lust. Now on reaching that spot, the holy guides who were with us told us, saying: "The custom is that prayer should be made by those who arrive here, when from this place the mount of God is first seen." And this we did. The whole distance from that place to the mount of God was about four miles across the aforesaid great valley.

For that valley is indeed very great, lying under the slope of the mount of God, and measuring, as far as we could judge by our sight, or as they told us, about sixteen miles in length, but they called its breadth four miles. We had, therefore, to cross that valley in order to reach the mountain. Now this is the great and flat valley wherein the children of Israel waited during those days when holy Moses went up into the mount of the Lord and remained there forty days and forty nights. This moreover is the valley in which the calf was made, and the spot is shown to this day, for a great stone stands fixed there on the very site. This also is the same valley at the head of which is the place where, while holy Moses was feeding his father-in-law's flocks, God spake to him twice out of the burning bush. And as our route was first to ascend the mount of God, which is in sight here—[because] the ascent was easier by the way we were coming—and then to descend to the head of the valley where the bush was, that being the easier descent, so we determined, having first seen all that we desired, to descend from the mount of God so as to arrive at the place of the bush, and thence to return on our journey throughout the whole length of the valley, together with the men of God, who there showed us each place which is mentioned in the Scriptures. And so it was done. Thus, going from that spot where we had prayed when we arrived from Faran, our route was to cross the middle of the head of that valley, and so turn to the mount of God.

Now the whole mountain group looks as if it were a single peak, but, as you enter the group, [you see that] there are more than one; the whole group however is called the mount of God. But that special peak which is crowned by the place where, as it is written, the Glory of God

descended, is in the centre of them all. And though all the peaks in the group attain such a height as I think I never saw before, yet the central one, on which the Glory of God came down, is so much higher than them all, that when we had ascended it, all those mountains which we had thought to be high, were so much beneath us as if they were quite little hills. This is certainly very wonderful, and not, I think, without the favour of God, that while the central height, which is specially called Sinai, on which the Glory of the Lord descended, is higher than all the rest, yet it cannot be seen until you reach its very foot, though before you go up it. But after that you have fulfilled your desire and descend, you can see it from the other side, which you cannot do before you begin to ascend. This I had learned from information given by the brethren before we had arrived at the mount of God, and after I arrived I saw that it was manifestly so.

The Ascent of Sinai

We reached the mountain late on the sabbath, and arriving at a certain monastery, the monks who dwelt there received us very kindly, showing us every kindness; there is also a church and a priest there. We stayed there that night, and early on the Lord's Day, together with the priest and the monks who dwelt there, we began the ascent of the mountains one by one. These mountains are ascended with infinite toil, for you cannot go up gently by a spiral track, as we say snail-shell wise, but you climb straight up the whole way, as if up a wall, and you must come straight down each mountain until you reach the very foot of the middle one, which is specially called Sinai. By this way, then, at the bidding of Christ our God, and helped by the prayers of the holy men who accompanied us, we arrived, at the fourth hour, at the summit of Sinai, the holy mountain of God, where the law was given, that is, at the place where the Glory of the Lord descended on the day when the mountain smoked. Thus the toil was great, for I had to go up on foot, the ascent being impossible in the saddle, and yet I did not feel the toil, on the side of the ascent, I say, I did not feel the toil, because I realized that the desire which I had was being fulfilled at God's bidding.

In that place there is now a church, not great in size, for the place itself, that is the summit of the mountain, is not very great; nevertheless, the church itself is great in grace. When, therefore, at God's bidding, we had arrived at the summit, and had reached the door of the church, lo, the priest who was appointed to the church came from his cell and met us, a hale old man, a monk from early life, and an ascetic, as they say here, in short one worthy to be in that place; the other priests also met us, together with all the monks who dwelt on the mountain, that is, such as were not hindered by age or infirmity. No one, however, dwells on the very summit of the central mountain; there is nothing there excepting only the church and the cave where holy Moses was. When the whole passage from the book of Moses had been read in that place, and when the oblation had been duly made, at which we communicated, and as we were coming out of the church, the priests of the place gave us eulogiae, that is, of fruits which grow on the mountain.

For although the holy mountain Sinai is rocky throughout, so that it has not even a shrub on it, yet down below, near the foot of the mountains, around either the central height or those which encircle it, there is a little plot of ground where the holy monks diligently plant little trees and orchards, and set up oratories with cells near to them, so that they may gather

fruits which they have evidently cultivated with their own hands from the soil of the very mountain itself. So, after we had communicated, and the holy men had given us eulogiae, and we had come out of the door of the church, I began to ask them to show us the several sites. Thereupon the holy men immediately deigned to show us the various places. They showed us the cave where holy Moses was when he had gone up again into the mount of God, that he might receive the second tables after he had broken the former ones when the people sinned; they also deigned to show us the other sites which we desired to see, and those which they themselves well knew.

But I would have you to know, ladies, reverend sisters, that from the place where we were standing, round outside the walls of the church, that is from the summit of the central mountain, those mountains, which we could scarcely climb at first, seemed to be so much below us when compared with the central one on which we were standing, that they appeared to be little hills, although they were so very great that I thought that I had never seen higher, except that this central one excelled them by far.

From thence we saw Egypt and Palestine, and the Red Sea and the Parthenian Sea, which leads to Alexandria and the boundless territories of the Saracens, all so much below us as to be scarcely credible, but the holy men pointed out each one of them to us.

Horeb

Having then fulfilled all the desire with which we had hastened to ascend, we began our descent from the summit of the mount of God which we had ascended to another mountain joined to it, which is called Horeb, where there is a church. This is that Horeb where was holy Elijah the prophet, when he fled from the face of Ahab the king, and where God spake to him and said: What doest thou here, Elijah? as it is written in the books of the Kings. The cave where holy Elijah lay hid is shown to this day before the door of the church which is there. A stone altar also is shown which holy Elijah raised to make an offering to God; thus the holy men deigned to show us each place. There, too, we made the oblation, with very earnest prayer, and also read the passage from the book of the Kings; for it was our special custom that, when we had arrived at those places which I had desired to visit, the appropriate passage from the book should always be read. The oblation having been made there, we came to another place not far off, which the priests and monks pointed out to us, where holy Aaron had stood with the seventy elders, when holy Moses was receiving the law from the Lord for the children of Israel. In that place, although it is not covered in, there is a great rock which has a flat surface, rounded in shape, on which those holy men are said to have stood; there is also in the midst of it a kind of altar made of stones. The passage from the book of Moses was read there, and one psalm, suitable to the place. Then, after prayer had been made, we descended thence.

The Bush

And now it began to be about the eighth hour, and there were still three miles left before we could get out of the mountains which we had entered late on the previous day; we had not, however, to go out on the same side by which we had entered, as I said above, because it was necessary that we should walk past and see all the holy places and the cells that were there, and thus come out at the head of the valley, as I said above, that is of the valley that lies under the mount of God. It was necessary for us to come out at the head of the valley, because there were very many cells of holy men there, and a church in the place where the bush is, which same bush is alive to this day and throws out shoots. So having made the whole descent of the mount of God we arrived at the bush about the tenth hour. This is that bush which I mentioned above, out of which the Lord spake in the fire to Moses, and the same is situated at that spot at the head of the valley where there are many cells and a church. There is a very pleasant garden in front of the church, containing excellent and abundant water, and the bush itself is in this garden. The spot is also shown hard by where holy Moses stood when God said to him: Loose the latchet of thy shoe, and the rest.

Now it was about the tenth hour when we had arrived at the place, and so, as it was late, we could not make the oblation, but prayer was made in the church and also at the bush in the garden, and the passage from the book of Moses was read according to custom. Then, as it was late, we took a meal with the holy men at a place in the garden before the bush; we stayed there also, and next day, rising very early, we asked the priests that the oblation should be made there, which was done.

The Sites in the Valley and the Return to Faran

And as our route lay through the middle and along the length of the valley—the same valley, as I said above, where the children of Israel sojourned while Moses ascended into the mount of God and descended thence—so the holy men showed us each place that we came to in the whole valley. At the top of the head of the valley where we had stayed and had seen the bush out of which God spake in the fire to holy Moses, we had seen also the spot on which holy Moses had stood before the bush when God said to him: Loose the latchet of thy shoe, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. In like manner they began to show us the other sites when we set out from the bush. They showed us the place where the camps of the children of Israel were in those days when Moses was in the mount. They also showed us the place where the calf was made, for a great stone is there to this day, fixed on the very spot. Then, too, as we were going on the other side we saw the top of the mountain which overlooks the whole valley; from which place holy Moses saw the children of Israel engaged in dancing at the time when they had made the calf.

They showed us a great rock in the place where holy Moses, as he was descending with Joshua the son of Nun, in his anger brake the tables that he was carrying, on the same rock. They showed us where they all had their dwelling places in the valley, the foundations of which dwelling places appear to this day, round in form and made with stone. They showed us also the place where holy Moses, when he returned from the mount, bade the children of Israel run from gate to gate. They showed us also the place where the calf which Aaron had made for them was burnt at holy Moses' bidding. They showed us also the stream of which holy Moses made the children of Israel drink, as it is written in Exodus. They showed us also the place where the seventy men received of the spirit that was upon Moses. They showed us also the place where the children of Israel lusted for meat. They showed us also the place which is called a Burning, because part of the camp was consumed what time holy Moses prayed, and the fire ceased. They showed us also the place where it rained manna and quails upon them. Thus were shown to us (the sites of) all the events which in the sacred books of Moses are recorded to have occurred there, viz., in the valley which, as I have said, lies under the mount of God, holy Sinai.

Now it would be too much to write of all these things one by one, for so great a number could not be remembered, but when your affection shall read the holy books of Moses it will more quickly recognize the things that were done in that place. Moreover this is the valley where the Passover was celebrated when one year had been fulfilled after that the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt. For the children of Israel abode in that valley for some time, that is, while holy Moses ascended into and descended from the mount of God the first and the second time; they tarried there also while the tabernacle was being made, together with all things that were shown (to Moses) in the mount of God. The place also was shown to us where the tabernacle was set up by Moses for the first time, and all things were finished which God had bidden Moses in the mount that they should be made. At the very end of the valley we saw the graves of lust, at the place where we resumed our route, that is where, leaving the great valley, we re-entered the way by which we had come, between the mountains of which I spoke above.

On the same day we came up with the other very holy monks who, through age or infirmity, were unable to meet us in the mount of God for the making of the oblation, who yet deigned to receive us very kindly, when we reached their cells. So now that, together with the holy men who dwelt there, we had seen all the holy places we desired, as well as all the places which the children of Israel had touched in going to and from the mount of God, we returned to Faran in the name of God. And although I ought always to give thanks to God in all things, not to speak of these so great favours which He has deigned to confer on me, unworthy as I am, that I should journey through all these places, although I deserved it not, yet I cannot sufficiently thank even all those holy men who deigned with willing mind to receive my littleness in their cells and to guide me surely through all the places which I was always seeking, according to the holy Scriptures. Moreover, many of these holy men who dwelt on or around the mount of God deigned to escort us back to Faran, but these were of greater bodily strength.

Faran to Clysma

Now when we had arrived at Faran, which is thirty-five miles distant from the mount of God, we were obliged to stay there for two days to rest ourselves. On the third day, hastening thence, we came to a station in the desert of Faran, where we had stayed on our outward journey, as I said above. On the next day we came to water, and, travelling for a little while among the mountains, we arrived at a station which was on the sea, at the place where the route leaves the mountains, and begins to run continuously by the sea. It runs by the sea in such a manner that at one time the waves touch the feet of the animals, while at another the course is through the desert, a hundred, two hundred, and sometimes even more than five hundred paces from the sea, for there is no sort of a road there, the whole being sandy desert. The inhabitants of Faran, who are accustomed to travel there with their camels, put signs in different places, and make for these signs when they travel in the day time, but the camels mark the signs at night. In short, the inhabitants of Faran travel more quickly and safely by night in that place, being accustomed thereto, than other men can travel in places where there is a clear road. Thus on our return journey we emerged from the mountains at the place where we entered them on our journey out, and so turned towards the sea.

So also did the children of Israel return from Sinai, the mount of God, to this place by the way they had come, that is, to the place where we left the mountains and reached the Red Sea. But while we turned back from this spot along the route by which we had made our journey out, the children of Israel marched hence on their own way, as it is written in the books of holy Moses. So we returned to Clysma by the same route and the same stations by which we had come out, and when we had arrived at Clysma we were obliged to stay there also for rest, because we had travelled hard along the sandy way of the desert.

Clysma to the City of Arabia

Now although I had been acquainted with the land of Goshen ever since I was in Egypt for the first time, yet [I visited it again] in order that I might see all the places which the children of Israel touched on their journey out from Rameses, until they reached the Red Sea at the place which is now called Clysma from the fort which is there. I desired therefore that we should go from Clysma to the land of Goshen, that is, to the city called Arabia, which city is in the land of Goshen. The whole territory is called after the city, the land of Arabia, the land of Goshen, although it is part of Egypt. It is much better land than all the rest of Egypt. From Clysma, that is from the Red Sea, there are four desert stations, but though in the desert, yet there are military quarters at the stations with soldiers and officers who always escorted us from fort to fort. On that journey the holy men who were with us, clergy and monks, showed us all the places which I was always seeking in accordance with the Scriptures; some of these were on the left, some on the right of our path, some were far distant from, and some near to our route.

For I hope that your affection will believe me [when I say that], as far as I could see, the children of Israel marched in such wise that as far as they went to the right, so far did they turn back to the left; as far as they went forward, so far did they return backward, journeying thus until they reached the Red Sea. Epauleum was shown to us from the opposite side, when we were at Migdol, where there is now a fort with an officer set over soldiers to maintain Roman discipline. These escorted us thence, according to custom, to another fort, and Baal-zephon was shown to us, when we were at that place. It is a plain above the Red Sea, along the side of the mountain which I mentioned above, where the children of Israel cried out when they saw the Egyptians coming after them. Etham also was shown to us, which is on the edge of the wilderness, as it is written, also Succoth, which is a slight elevation in the middle of a valley, and by this little hill the children of Israel encamped. This is the place where the law of the Passover was received. The city of Pithom, which the children of Israel built, was shown to us on the same journey at the place where, leaving the lands of the Saracens, we entered the territory of Egypt; the same Pithom is now a fort.

The city of Hero, which existed at the time when Joseph met his father Jacob as he came, as it is written in the book of Genesis, is now a come, though a large one—a village as we say. This village has a church and martyr-memorials, and many cells of holy monks, so that we

had to alight to see each of them, in accordance with the custom which we had. The village is now called Hero; it is situated at the sixteenth milestone from the land of Goshen, and it is within the boundaries of Egypt; moreover, it is a very pleasant spot, for an arm of the Nile flows there. Then, leaving Hero, we came to the city which is called Arabia, situated in the land of Goshen, for it is written concerning it that Pharaoh said to Joseph, In the best of the land of Egypt make thy father and brethren to dwell, in the land of Goshen, in the land of Arabia.

Rameses

Rameses is four miles from the city of Arabia, and in order to arrive at the station of Arabia, we passed through the midst of Rameses. The city of Rameses is now open country, without a single habitation, but it is certainly traceable, since it was great in circumference and contained many buildings, for its ruins appear to this day in great numbers, just as they fell. There is nothing there now except one great Theban stone, on which are carved two statues of great size, which they say are those of the holy men, Moses and Aaron, raised in their honour by the children of Israel. There is also a sycomore tree, which is said to have been planted by the patriarchs; it is certainly very old, and therefore very small, though it still bears fruit. And all who have any indisposition go there and pluck off twigs, and it benefits them. This we learned from information given by the holy bishop of Arabia, who himself told us the name of the tree in Greek—dendros alethia, or as we say, the tree of truth. This holy bishop deigned to meet us at Rameses; he is an elderly man, truly pious from the time he became a monk, courteous, most kind in receiving pilgrims, and very learned in the Scriptures of God. He, after deigning to give himself the trouble of meeting us, showed us everything there and told us about the aforesaid statues, as well as about the sycomore tree. This holy bishop also informed us how Pharaoh, when he saw that the children of Israel had escaped him, before he set out after them, went with all his army into Rameses and burnt the whole city which was very great, and then set out thence in pursuit of the children of Israel.

Epiphany at the City of Arabia and the Return to Jerusalem

Now it fell out by a very happy chance that the day on which we came to the station of Arabia was the eve of the most blessed day of the Epiphany, and the vigils were to be kept in the church on the same day. Wherefore the holy bishop detained us there for some two days, a holy man and truly a man of God, well known to me from the time when I had been in the Thebaid. He became a holy bishop after being a monk, for he was brought up from a child in a cell, for which reason he is so learned in the Scriptures and chastened in his whole life, as I said above. From this place we sent back the soldiers who according to Roman discipline had given us the help of their escort as long as we had walked through suspected places. Now, however, as the public road —which passed by the city of Arabia and leads from the Thebaid to Pelusium—ran through Egypt, there was no need to trouble the soldiers further. Setting out thence we pursued our journey continuously through the land of Goshen, among vines that yield wine and vines that yield balsam, among orchards, highly cultivated fields and very pleasant gardens, our whole route lying along the bank of the river Nile among oft-recurring estates, which were once the homesteads of the children of Israel. And why should I say more? for I think that I have never seen a more beautiful country than the land of Goshen.

And travelling thus for two days from the city of Arabia through the land of Goshen continuously, we arrived at Tatnis, the city where holy Moses was born. This city of Tatnis was once Pharaoh's metropolis. Now although I had already known these places—as I said above—when I had been at Alexandria and in the Thebaid, yet I wished to learn thoroughly all the places through which the children of Israel marched on their journey from Rameses to Sinai, the holy mountain of God; this made it necessary to return to the land of Goshen and thence to Tatnis. We set out from Tatnis and, walking along the route that was already known to me, I came to Pelusium. Thence I set out again, and journeying through all those stations in Egypt through which we had travelled before, I arrived at the boundary of Palestine. Thence in the Name of Christ our God I passed through several stations in Palestine and returned to Aelia, that is Jerusalem.

Visit to the Jordan Valley

Having spent some time there, at God's bidding my will was to go as far as Arabia, to mount Nebo, where God commanded Moses to go up, saying to him: Get thee up into the mountain Arabot, into Mount Nebo, which is in the land of Moab, that is over against Jericho, and behold the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel for a possession, and die in the Mount whither thou goest up. So Jesus our God, who will not forsake them that hope in Him, deigned to give effect to this my wish. Wherefore setting out from Jerusalem and journeying with holy men, with a priest and deacons from Jerusalem and with certain brothers, that is monks, we came to that spot on the Jordan where the children of Israel had crossed when holy Joshua, the son of Nun, had led them over Jordan, as it is written in the book of Joshua, the son of Nun. The place where the children of Reuben and of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh had made an altar was shown us a little higher up on that side of the river-bank where Jericho is. Crossing the river we came to a city called Livias, which is in the plain where the children of Israel encamped at that time, for the foundations of the camp of the children of Israel and of their dwellings where they abode appear there to this day.

The plain is a very great one, lying under the mountains of Arabia above the Jordan; it is the place of which it is written: And the children of Israel wept for Moses in the Arabot Moab on the Jordan over against Jericho, forty days. This is the place where, after Moses' death, Joshua the son of Nun was straightway filled with the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands upon him, as it is written. This is the place where Moses wrote the book of Deuteronomy, and where he spake in the ears of all the congregation of Israel the words of this song until it was ended; it is written in the book of Deuteronomy. Here holy Moses, the man of God, blessed the children of Israel one by one, in order, before his death. So when we had arrived at this plain, we went to the very spot, and prayer was made; here, too, a certain part of Deuteronomy was read, as well as his song, with the blessings which he pronounced over the children of Israel; after the reading, prayer was made a second time, and giving thanks to God, we moved on thence. For it was always customary with us that, whenever we succeeded in reaching the places we desired to visit, prayer should first be made there, then the lection should be read from the book, then one appropriate psalm should be said, then prayer should be made again.

At God's bidding we always kept to this custom, whenever we were able to come to the places we desired. After this, that the work begun should be accomplished, we began to hasten in order to reach mount Nebo. As we went, the priest of the place, i.e. Livias, whom we had prayed to accompany us from the station, because he knew the places well, advised us, saying: "If you wish to see the water which flows from the rock, which Moses gave to the children of Israel when they were thirsty, you can see it if you are willing to undertake the labour of going about six miles out of the way. When he had said this, we very eagerly wished to go, and turning at once out of our way, we followed the priest who led us. In that place there is a little church under a mountain, not Nebo, but another height behind, yet not far from Nebo. Many truly holy monks dwell there, whom they call here ascetics.

These holy monks deigned to receive us very kindly, and permitted us to go in to greet them. When we had entered and prayer had been made with them, they deigned to give us eulogiae, which they are wont to give to those whom they receive kindly. There, in the midst, between the church and the cells, there flows from out of the rock a great stream of water, very beautiful and limpid, and excellent to the taste. Then we asked those holy monks who dwelt there what was this water of so good a flavour, and they said: "This is the water which holy Moses gave to the children of Israel in this desert." So prayer was made there according to custom, the lection was read from the books of Moses and one psalm said, then—with the holy clergy and monks who had come with us—we went out to the mountain. Many of the holy monks also who dwelt by that water, and who could undertake the labour, deigned to ascend mount Nebo with us. So setting out thence, we arrived at the foot of mount Nebo, which was very high; nevertheless the greater part could be ascended sitting on asses, though a little bit was steeper and had to be climbed laboriously on foot, which was done.

Mount Nebo

We arrived, then, at the summit of the mountain, where there is now a church of no great size, on the very top of mount Nebo. Inside the church, in the place where the pulpit is, I saw a place a little raised, containing about as much space as tombs usually contain. I asked the holy men what this was, and they answered: ”Here was holy Moses laid by the angels, for, as it is written: No man knoweth of his burial, since it is certain that he was buried by the angels. His tomb, indeed, where he was laid, is [not] shown to this day; for as it was shown to us by our ancestors who dwelt here where [he was laid], so do we show it to you, and our ancestors said that this tradition was handed down to them by their own ancestors. So prayer was made anon, and all things that we were accustomed to do in their order in every place were done here also, and we began to go out of the church. Then they who knew the place—the priests and holy monks—said to us: ”If you wish to see the places that are mentioned in the books of Moses, come out of the door of the church, and from the very summit, from the side on which they are visible from here, look and see, and we will tell you each place that is visible from hence. Then we rejoiced greatly and immediately came out.

From the door of the church we saw the place where the Jordan runs into the Dead Sea, which place appeared below us as we stood. On the opposite side we saw not only Livias, which was on the near side of Jordan, but also Jericho, which was beyond Jordan; to so great a height rose the lofty place where we stood, before the door of the church. The greatest part of Palestine, the land of promise, was in sight, together with the whole land of Jordan, as far as it could be seen with our eyes. On the left side we saw all the lands of the Sodomites and Segor which is the only one of the five cities that exists to-day. There is a memorial of it, but nothing appears of those other cities but a heap of ruins, just as they were turned into ashes. The place where was the inscription concerning Lot’s wife was shown to us, which place is read of in the Scriptures. But believe me, reverend ladies, the pillar itself cannot be seen, only the place is shown, the pillar is said to have been covered by the Dead Sea. Certainly when we saw the place we saw no pillar, I cannot therefore deceive you in this. The bishop of the place, that is of Segor, told us that it is now some years since the pillar could be seen. The spot where the pillar stood is about six miles from Segor, and the water now covers the whole of this space.

Then we went to the right side of the church, out of doors and opposite to us two cities were pointed out, the one Esebon, now called Exebon, which belonged to Seon, king of the Amorites, and the other, now called Sasdra, the city of Og the king of Basan. Fogor, which was a city of the kingdom of Edom, was also pointed out from thence, opposite to us. All these cities which we saw were situated on mountains, but a little below them the ground seemed to be flatter. Then we were told that in the days when holy Moses and the children of Israel had fought against those cities, they had encamped there, and indeed the signs of a camp were visible there. [From] the side of the mountain which I have called the left, which was over the Dead Sea, a very sharp-cut mountain was shown to us, which was formerly called Agri specula. This is the mountain on which Balak the son of Beor placed Balaam the sooth-sayer to curse the children of Israel, and God refused to permit it, as it is written. Then, having seen everything that we desired, we returned in the Name of God through Jericho back to Jerusalem along the whole of the route by which we had come.

Visit to Ausitis

Now after some time I wished to go to the region of Ausitis to visit the tomb of holy Job, for the sake of prayer. For I used to see many holy monks coming thence to Jerusalem to visit the holy places for the sake of prayer, who, giving information of everything concerning those places, increased my desire to undertake the toil of going to them also, if indeed that can be called toil by which a man sees his desire to be fulfilled. So I set out from Jerusalem with the holy men who deigned to give me their company on my journey—they themselves also going for the sake of prayer—making my journey from Jerusalem through eight stations to Carneas. The city of Job is now called Carneas, but it was formerly called Dennaba, in the land of Ausitis, on the confines of Idumea and Arabia. Travelling on this journey I saw on the bank of the river Jordan a very beautiful and pleasant valley abounding in vines and trees, for much excellent water was there, and in that valley there was a large village, which is now called Sedima. The village, which is situated in the middle of the level ground, has in its midst a little hill of no great size, shaped as large tombs are wont to be. There is a church on the summit and down below, around the little hill great and ancient foundations appear, while in the village itself some grave-mounds still remain.

When I saw this pleasant place I asked what it was, and it was told me: "This is the city of king Melchizedek, which was called Salem, but now, through the corruption of the language, the village is called Sedima. On the top of the little hill, which is situated in the midst of the village, the building that you see is a church, which is now called in the Greek language opu Melchisedech. For this is the place where Melchizedek offered pure sacrifices— that is bread and wine—to God, as it is written of him."

The City of Melchizedek

Directly I heard this, we alighted from our beasts, and lo! the holy priest of the place and the clergy deigned to meet us, and straightway receiving us led us up to the church. When we had arrived there, prayer was first said according to custom, then the passage from the book of holy Moses was read, then one psalm suitable to the place was said, then, after prayer made, we came down. When we had come down the holy priest addressed us. He was an elderly man, well taught in the Scriptures, and he had presided over the place from the time he had been a monk, to whose life many bishops—as we learned afterwards— bore great testimony, saying that he was worthy to preside over the place where holy Melchizedek—when Abraham was coming to meet him—was the first to offer pure sacrifices to God. When we had come down from the church, as I said above, the holy priest said to us : "Behold, these foundations which you see around the little hill are those of the palace of king Melchizedek. For from his time to the present day if any one wishes to build himself a house here, and so strikes on these foundations, he sometimes finds little fragments of silver and bronze. And this way which you see passing between the river Jordan and this village is the way by which holy Abraham returned to Sodom, after the slaughter of Chedorlaomer king of nations, and where holy Melchizedek, the king of Salem, met him."

Ænon

Then, because I remembered that it was written that S. John had baptized in Ænon near to Salim, I asked him how far off that place was. The holy priest answered: ”It is near, two hundred paces off, and, if you wish, I will now lead you there on foot. This large and pure stream of water, which you see in this village, comes from that spring. Then I began to thank him and to ask him to lead us to the place, which was done. So we began to go with him on foot through the very pleasant valley, until we reached a most pleasant orchard, in the midst of which he showed us a spring of excellent and pure water, which sent out continuously a good stream. The spring had in front of it a sort of pool, where it appears that S. John the Baptist fulfilled his ministry. Then the holy priest said to us: ”This garden is called nothing else to this day than cepos tu agiu iohannu in the Greek language, or as you say in Latin, hortus sancti Johannis. Many brethren, holy monks, direct their steps hither from various places that they may wash there. So at the spring, as in every place, prayer was made, the proper lection was read and an appropriate psalm was said, and everything that it was customary for us to do whenever we came to the holy places, we did there also.

The holy priest also told us that to this day, at Easter, all they who are to be baptized in the village, that is in the church which is called opus Melchisedech, are always baptized in this spring, returning early to vespers with the clergy and monks, saying psalms and antiphons, so that they who have been baptized are led back early from the fountain to the church of holy Melchizedek. Then, receiving eulogiae out of the orchard of S. John the Baptist from the priest, as well as from the holy monks who had cells in the same orchard, and always giving thanks to God, we set out on the way we were going.

The City of Elijah and the Brook Cherith

Then going for a time through the valley of the Jordan on the bank of the river, because our route lay that way for a while, we suddenly saw the city of the holy prophet Elijah, that is Thesbe, whence he had the name of Elijah the Tishbite. There, to this day, is the cave wherein the holy man sat; there too is the tomb of holy Getha, whose name we read in the books of the Judges. There too we gave thanks to God according to custom and pursued our journey. And as we journeyed that way we saw a very pleasant valley opening towards us on the left; it was very large and discharged a very great torrent into the Jordan, and in that valley we saw the cell of one who is now a brother, that is a monk. Then I, as I am very inquisitive, began to ask what was this valley where the holy monk had now made himself a cell, for I did not think it was without reason. Then the holy men who were journeying with us, and who knew the place, said, "This is the valley of Corra, where holy Elijah the Tishbite dwelt in the time of king Ahab, when there was a famine, and at the bidding of God the raven used to bring him food, and he drank water of the torrent. For this brook which you see running through this valley into Jordan, is Corra." Wherefore giving thanks to God Who deigned to show us everything that we desired, unworthy as we were, we began to make our journey as on other days. And as we journeyed day by day, on the left side, whence on the opposite side we saw parts of Phœnicia, there suddenly appeared a great and high mountain which extended in length . . .

[A leaf is torn out.]

The Burial-place of Job and the Return to Jerusalem

. . . which holy monk and ascetic, after so many years spent in the desert, found it necessary to move and to go down to the city of Carneas, in order to advise the bishop and clergy of that time, according as it had been revealed to him, that they should dig in that place which had been shown to him; which was done. And they, digging in that place which had been shown to him, found a cave, which they followed for about a hundred paces, when suddenly, as they dug, a stone tomb came to light, and when they had uncovered it, they found carved on its lid (the name) Job. To this Job the church which you see was then built in that place, in such a manner that the stone with the body should not be moved, but that it should be placed, where the body had been found, and that the body should lie under the altar. That church, which was built by some tribune, has been unfinished to this day. Next morning we asked the bishop to make the oblation, which he deigned to do, and the bishop blessing us, we set out. There too we communicated, and always giving thanks to God we returned to Jerusalem, journeying through each of the stations through which we had passed three years before.

Journey into Mesopotamia

Having spent some time there in the Name of God, when three full years had passed since I came to Jerusalem, and having seen all the holy places which I had visited for the sake of prayer, my mind was to return to my country. I wished, however, at God's bidding, to go to Mesopotamia in Syria, to visit the holy monks who were there in great number, and who were said to be of such holy life as could hardly be described, and also for the sake of prayer at the memorial of S. Thomas the Apostle, where his body is laid entire. This is at Edessa. For Jesus our God by a letter which He sent to Abgar the king by the hand of Ananias the courier, promised that He would send S. Thomas thither, after that He Himself had ascended into Heaven. The letter is kept with great reverence at the city of Edessa, where the memorial is. Now your affection may believe me that there is no Christian who having arrived at the holy places that are at Jerusalem, does not go on thither for the sake of prayer; it is at the twenty-fifth station from Jerusalem. And since from Antioch it is nearer to Mesopotamia, it was very convenient for me at God's bidding that as I was returning to Constantinople, and my way lying through Antioch, I should go thence to Mesopotamia. This then, at God's bidding, I did.

Antioch to Mesopotamia: the Crossing of the Euphrates

Then, setting out from Antioch to Mesopotamia in the Name of Christ our God, I journeyed through certain stations and cities of the province of Cœle-Syria, which is Antioch, and entering the borders of the province of Augustofratensis, I came to the city of Gerapolis which is the metropolis of Augustofratensis. And as this city is very beautiful and rich and abounds in everything, it was necessary for me to make a halt there, for the borders of Mesopotamia were not far distant. Then starting from Ierapolis, I came, in the Name of God, at the fifteenth milestone to the river Euphrates, of which it is very well written that it is the great river Euphrates; it is huge and, as it were, terrible, for it flows down with a current like the river Rhone, only the Euphrates is still greater. And as we had to cross in ships, and in large ships only, I waited there until after midday, and then in the Name of God I crossed the river Euphrates and entered the borders of Mesopotamia in Syria.

Edessa

Then, journeying through certain stations, I came to a city whose name we read recorded in the Scriptures—Batanis, which city exists to-day: it has a church with a truly holy bishop, both monk and confessor, and certain martyr-memorials. The city has a teeming population, and the soldiery with their tribune are stationed there. Departing thence, we arrived at Edessa in the Name of Christ our God, and, on our arrival, we straightway repaired to the church and memorial of saint Thomas. There, according to custom, prayers were made and the other things that were customary in the holy places were done; we read also some things concerning saint Thomas himself. The church there is very great, very beautiful and of new construction, well worthy to be the house of God, and as there was much that I desired to see, it was necessary for me to make a three days' stay there. Thus I saw in that city many memorials, together with holy monks, some dwelling at the memorials, while others had their cells in more secluded spots farther from the city. Moreover, the holy bishop of the city, a truly devout man, both monk and confessor, received me willingly and said: "As I see, daughter, that for the sake of devotion you have undertaken so great a labour in coming to these places from far-distant lands, if you are willing, we will show you all the places that are pleasant to the sight of Christians.

Then, first thanking God, I besought the bishop much that he would deign to do as he said. He thereupon led me first to the palace of King Abgar, where he showed me a great marble statue of him—very much like him, as they said—having a sheen as if made of pearl. From the face of Abgar it seemed that he was a very wise and honourable man. Then the holy bishop said to me: "Behold King Abgar, who before he saw the Lord believed in Him that He was in truth the Son of God. There was another statue near, made of the same marble, which he said was that of his son Magnus; this also had something gracious in the face. Then we entered the inner part of the palace, and there were fountains full of fish such as I never saw before, of so great size, so bright and of so good a flavour were they. The city has no water at all other than that which comes out of the palace, which is like a great silver river.

The Story of King Abgarus

Then the holy bishop told me about the water, saying: ”At some time, after that King Abgar had written to the Lord, and the Lord had answered King Abgar by Ananias the courier—as it is written in the letter itself—when some time had passed, the Persians came against the city and surrounded it. And straightway Abgar, bearing the letter of the Lord to the gate, with all his army, prayed publicly. And he said: O Lord Jesus, Thou hadst promised us that none of our enemies should enter this city, and lo! the Persians now attack us. And when the king had said this, holding the open letter in his uplifted hands, suddenly there came a great darkness outside the city before the eyes of the Persians, as they were approaching the city at a distance of about three miles, and they were so baffled by the darkness that they could hardly form their camp and surround the whole city about three miles off. So baffled were the Persians that they could never afterwards see the way to enter the city, but they surrounded it and shut it in with their hostile forces, at a distance of about three miles, for several months. Then, when they saw that they could by no means enter, they wished to slay those within the city by thirst.

Now that little hill which you see, my daughter, over against the city, supplied it with water at that time, and the Persians, perceiving this, diverted the water from the city and made it to run near that place where they had made their camp. And on that day and at that hour when the Persians diverted the water, the fountains which you see in this place burst forth at once at God’s bidding, and by the favour of God they remain here from that day to this. But the water which the Persians had diverted was dried up at that hour, so that they who were besieging the city had nothing to drink for even one day; which thing is plain to the present time, for no moisture of any sort has ever been seen there from that day to this. So, at God’s bidding, Who had promised that this should come to pass, they were obliged to return to their own home in Persia. Moreover afterwards, as often as enemies determined to come and take the city, this letter was brought out and read in the gate, and straightway all enemies were driven back by the will of God. The holy Bishop also told me that the place where these fountains broke forth had previously been open ground within the city, lying under the palace of King Abgar, which same palace had been situated on somewhat higher ground, as was plainly visible.

For the custom was at that time that, whenever palaces were built, they should always stand on higher ground. But after that these fountains had burst forth here, then Abgar built this palace for his son Magnus, whose statue I saw near that of his father, so that the fountains should be included in the palace. And when the holy bishop had told me all these things, he said to me: "Let us now go to the gate by which Ananias the courier entered with the letter of which I spoke. So when we had come to the gate, the bishop, standing, made a prayer and read us the letters; then, after he had blessed us, another prayer was made. Moreover the holy man told us that from the day on which Ananias the courier entered it with the letter of the Lord, the gate is kept to this day, that no one who is unclean, nor any mourner, should pass through nor should any dead body be borne out through it. The holy bishop also showed us the memorial of Abgar and of his whole family, very beautiful, but made in the ancient style. He took us also to the palace which King Abgar had at first, on the higher ground, and if there were any other places he showed them to us. It was very pleasant to me to receive from the holy man himself the letters of Abgar to the Lord and of the Lord to Abgar, which the holy bishop had read to us there.

For although I have copies at home, yet it seemed to me more pleasant to receive them from him, lest perhaps something less might have reached us at home, and indeed that which I received here is fuller. So if Jesus our God bids it, and I come home, you too shall read them, ladies, my own souls.

Charræ (Haran)

Then, after three days spent there, it was necessary for me to go still farther, to Charræ, as it is now called. In holy Scripture it is called Charran, where holy Abraham dwelt, as it is written in Genesis when the Lord said unto Abram: Get thee out of thy country, and from thy father's house, and go to Charran and the rest. And when I arrived at Charræ I went straightway to the church which is within the city, and soon I saw the bishop of the place, a truly holy man of God, both monk and confessor, who deigned to show us all the places there that we desired. He took us at once to the church, which is without the city on the spot where stood the house of holy Abraham; it stands on the same foundations, and it is made of the same stone, as the holy bishop said. When we had come to the church, prayer was made, the passage from Genesis was read, one psalm was said, and after a second prayer the bishop blessed us and we came out. Then he deigned to take us to the well whence holy Rebecca used to fetch water, and the holy bishop said to us: "Behold the well whence holy Rebecca watered the camels of holy Abraham's servant Eleazar"; thus he deigned to show us each thing.

Now at the church, which is outside the city, as I said, ladies, reverend sisters, where Abraham's house was originally, there is now the martyr-memorial of a certain holy monk named Helpidius. It happened very pleasantly for us that we arrived on the day before the martyr's feast of saint Helpidius, which is on the twenty-third of April. On that day it was of obligation that all the monks from all parts and from all the borders of Mesopotamia should come down to Charræ, even the greater ones who dwelt in solitude, whom they call ascetics. For this day is observed with great dignity there on account of the memorial of holy Abraham, whose house stood where the church now is, in which the body of the holy martyr is laid. So it happened to us very pleasantly beyond our expectations that we should see these holy monks of Mesopotamia, truly men of God, as well as those whose good report and manner of life had reached men's ears far and wide, whom I thought that I could not by any means see, not because it was impossible for God to give me this, Who had deigned to give me all things, but because I had heard that they never come down from their dwellings except on Easter Day and on this day. For they are men who do many wonders, and, moreover, I did not know in what month was the day of the martyr's feast which I have mentioned;

but at God's bidding it came about that I arrived on the day that I had not hoped for. We stayed there two days, for the memorial day and for the sake of seeing those holy men, who deigned to receive me very willingly for the sake of salutation, and to speak with me, of which I was not worthy. Nor were they seen there after the memorial day, for they sought the desert without delay in the night, each one returning to his own cell. In that city I found scarcely a single Christian excepting a few clergy and holy monks—if any such dwell in the city; all are heathen. And in like manner, as we gazed with great reverence at the place where the house of holy Abraham was at first for the sake of his memorial, so do those heathen gaze with great reverence at a place about a mile from the city, where are the memorials of Nahor and Bethuel. And since the bishop of that city is very learned in the Scriptures, I asked him, saying: "I beg of you, my lord, to tell me that which I desire to hear. And he said: "Tell me, daughter, what you wish, and I will tell it you, if I know it. Then I said: "I know by the Scriptures that holy Abraham came to this place with his father Terah and with Sarah his wife, and with Lot his brother's son, but I have not read when Nahor and Bethuel came here;

I know only that afterwards Abraham's servant came to Charræ that he might seek Rebecca, the daughter of Bethuel, the son of Nahor, for Isaac the son of his master Abraham. Then the holy bishop said to me: "Truly, daughter, it is written as you say, in Genesis, that holy Abraham came here with his relatives, but canonical Scripture does not say when Nahor and his relatives and Bethuel came here, but it is plain that they did come here afterwards, since their memorials are here at about a mile from the city. The Scripture does indeed relate how holy Abraham's servant came here to take holy Rebecca, and how holy Jacob came here when he took to himself the daughters of Laban the Syrian. Then I asked where was the well where holy Jacob watered the flocks which Rachel, the daughter of Laban the Syrian, was feeding. The bishop said to me: "The place is six miles hence, near the village which then was the farm of Laban the Syrian, and if you wish to go there, we will go with you and show it to you; there are also many very holy monks and ascetics, and a holy church. I also asked the holy bishop where was that place of the Chaldees where Terah lived at first with his family, and the holy bishop said to me: "The place, daughter, of which you ask, is at the tenth station hence, as you go into Persia.

There are five stations from here to Nisibis, and five stations thence to Hur, which was a city of the Chaldees, but there is now no access for Romans, for the Persians hold the whole country. This district is specially called the Eastern; it is on the borders of the Romans, the Persians and the Chaldees. And many other things he deigned to tell me, as did also the other holy bishops and holy monks, but all they told us was from the Scriptures of God or of the acts of holy men, that is of monks, either the wonderful things that those already departed had done, or what those who are still in the body do daily, at any rate those who are ascetics. For I would not that your affection should think that the monks ever told me any other stories except from the Scriptures of God or else those of the acts of the greater monks.

Rachel's Well and the Return to Antioch

Now after two days which I spent there, the bishop took us to the well where holy Jacob had watered holy Rachel's flocks; the well is six miles from Charræ, and in its honour a very great and beautiful holy church has been built hard by. When we had come to the well, prayer was made by the bishop, the passage from Genesis was read, one psalm suitable to the place was said and, after a second prayer, the bishop blessed us. We saw also, lying on a spot near the well, that very great stone which holy Jacob had moved away from the well, and which is shown to-day. No one dwells there around the well, except the clergy of the church which is there and the monks who have their cells near at hand, whose truly unheard-of mode of life the bishop described to us. Then, after prayer had been made in the church, I visited, in company with the bishop, the holy monks in their cells, giving thanks both to God and to them, who deigned with willing mind to receive me in their cells wherever I entered, and to address me in such words as were fitting to proceed out of their mouth. They deigned also to give me and all who were with me eulogiae, such as is the custom for monks to give those whom they receive with willing mind into their cells.

And the place being in a large plain, a great village over against us was pointed out to me by the holy bishop, about five hundred paces from the well, through which village our route lay. This village, as the bishop said, was once the farm of Laban the Syrian, and is called Fadana; in the village the memorial of Laban the Syrian, Jacob's father-in-law, was shown to me; the place was also shown to me where Rachel stole her father's images. So, having seen everything in the Name of God, and bidding farewell to the holy bishop and the holy monks who had deigned to conduct us to the place, we returned by the route and by the stations through which we had come from Antioch.

Antioch to Tarsus

When I had got back to Antioch, I stayed there for a week, while the things that were necessary for our journey were being prepared. Then, starting from Antioch and journeying through several stations, I came to the province called Cilicia, which has Tarsus for its metropolis. I had already been at Tarsus on my way to Jerusalem, but as the memorial of saint Thecla is at the third station from Tarsus, in Hisauria, it was very pleasant for me to go there, especially as it was so very near at hand.

Visit to Saint Thecla's Church and the Return to Constantinople

So, setting out from Tarsus, I came to a certain city on the sea, still in Cilicia, which is called Pompeiopolis. Thence I entered the borders of Hisauria and stayed in a city called Coricus, and on the third day I arrived at a city which is called Seleucia in Hisauria; on my arrival I went to the bishop, a truly holy man, formerly a monk, and in that city I saw a very beautiful church. And as the distance thence to saint Thecla, which is situated outside the city on a low eminence, was about fifteen hundred paces, I chose rather to go there in order to make the stay that I intended. There is nothing at the holy church in that place except numberless cells of men and of women. I found there a very dear friend of mine, to whose manner of life all in the East bore testimony, a holy deaconess named Marthana, whom I had known at Jerusalem, whither she had come for the sake of prayer; she was ruling over the cells of apotactitae and virgins. And when she had seen me, how can I describe the extent of her joy or of mine? But to return to the matter in hand: there are very many cells on the hill and in the midst of it a great wall which encloses the church containing the very beautiful memorial.

The wall was built to guard the church because of the Hisauri, who are very-malicious and who frequently commit acts of robbery, to prevent them from making an attempt on the monastery which is established there. When I had arrived in the Name of God, prayer was made at the memorial, and the whole of the acts of saint Thecla having been read, I gave endless thanks to Christ our God, who deigned to fulfil my desires in all things, unworthy and undeserving as I am. Then, after a stay of two days, when I had seen the holy monks and apotactitae who were there, both men and women, and when I had prayed and made my communion, I returned to Tarsus and to my journey. From Tarsus, after a halt of three days, I set out on my journey in the Name of God, and arriving on the same day at a station called Mansocrenae, which is under Mount Taurus, I stayed there. On the next day, going under Mount Taurus, and travelling by the route that was already known to me, through each province that I had traversed on my way out, to wit, Cappadocia, Galatia, and Bithynia, I arrived at Chalcedon, where I stayed for the sake of the very famous martyr-memorial of saint Euphemia, which was already known to me from a former time.

On the next day, crossing the sea, I arrived at Constantinople, giving thanks to Christ our God who deigned to give me such grace, unworthy and undeserving as I am, for He had deigned to give me not only the will to go, but also the power of walking through the places that I desired, and of returning at last to Constantinople. When I had arrived there, I went through all the churches—that of the Apostles and all the martyr-memorials, of which there are very many—and I ceased not to give thanks to Jesus our God, Who had thus deigned to bestow His mercy upon me. From which place, ladies, light of my eyes, while I send these (letters) to your affection, I have already purposed, in the Name of Christ our God, to go to Ephesus in Asia, for the sake of prayer, because of the memorial of the holy and blessed Apostle John. And if after this I am yet in the body, and am able to see any other places, I will either tell it to your affection in person, if God deigns to permit me this, or in anywise, if I have another project in mind, I will send you news of it in a letter. But do you, ladies, light of my eyes, deign to remember me, whether I am in the body or out of the body.

Jerusalem: The Daily Offices

1. Matins.

Now that your affection may know what is the order of service (operatio) day by day in the holy places, I must inform you, for I know that you would willingly have this knowledge. Every day before cockcrow all the doors of the Anastasis are opened, and all the monks and virgins, as they call them here, go thither, and not they alone, but lay people also, both men and women, who desire to begin their vigil early. And from that hour to daybreak hymns are said and psalms are sung responsively (responduntur), and antiphons in like manner; and prayer is made after each of the hymns. For priests, deacons, and monks in twos or threes take it in turn every day to say prayers after each of the hymns or antiphons. But when day breaks they begin to say the Matin hymns. Thereupon the bishop arrives with the clergy, and immediately enters into the cave, and from within the rails (cancelli) he first says a prayer for all, mentioning the names of those whom he wishes to commemorate; he then blesses the catechumens, afterwards he says a prayer and blesses the faithful. And when the bishop comes out from within the rails, every one approaches his hand, and he blesses them one by one as he goes out, and the dismissal takes place, by daylight.

2. Sext and None.

In like manner at the sixth hour all go again to the Anastasis, and psalms and antiphons are said, while the bishop is being summoned; then he comes as before, not taking his seat, but he enters at once within the rails in the Anastasis, that is in the cave, just as in the early morning, and as then, he again first says a prayer, then he blesses the faithful, and as he comes out from [within] the rails every one approaches his hand. And the same is done at the ninth hour as at the sixth.

3. Vespers.

Now at the tenth hour, which they call here licinicon, or as we say lucernare, all the people assemble at the Anastasis in the same manner, and all the candles and tapers are lit, making a very great light. Now the light is not introduced from without, but it is brought forth from within the cave, that is from within the rails, where a lamp is always burning day and night, and the vesper psalms and antiphons are said, lasting for a considerable time. Then the bishop is summoned, and he comes and takes a raised seat, and likewise the priests sit

in their proper places, and hymns and antiphons are said. And when all these have been recited according to custom, the bishop rises and stands before the rails, that is, before the cave, and one of the deacons makes the customary commemoration of individuals one by one. And as the deacon pronounces each name the many little boys who are always standing by, answer with countless voices: Kyrie eleyson, or as we say Miserere Domine. And when the deacon has finished all that he has to say, first the bishop says a prayer and prays for all, then they all pray, both the faithful and catechumens together. Again the deacon raises his voice, bidding each catechumen to bow his head where he stands, and the bishop stands and says the blessing over the catechumens.

Again prayer is made, and again the deacon raises his voice and bids the faithful, each where he stands, to bow the head, and the bishop likewise blesses the faithful. Thus the dismissal takes place at the Anastasis, and one by one all draw near to the bishop's hand. Afterwards the bishop is conducted from the Anastasis to the Cross [with] hymns, all the people accompanying him, and when he arrives he first says a prayer, then he blesses the catechumens, then another prayer is said and he blesses the faithful. Thereupon both the bishop and the whole multitude further proceed behind the Cross, where all that was done before the Cross is repeated, and they approach the hand of the bishop behind the Cross as they did at the Anastasis and before the Cross. Moreover, there are hanging everywhere a vast number of great glass chandeliers, and there are also a vast number of cereofala, before the Anastasis, before the Cross and behind the Cross, for the whole does not end until darkness has set in. This is the order of daily services (operatio) at the Cross and at the Anastasis throughout the six days.

Jerusalem: The Sunday Offices

1. Vigil.

But on the seventh day, that is on the Lord's Day, the whole multitude assembles before cockcrow, in as great numbers as the place can hold, as at Easter, in the basilica which is near the Anastasis, but outside the doors, where lights are hanging for the purpose. And for fear that they should not be there at cockcrow they come beforehand and sit down there. Hymns as well as antiphons are said, and prayers are made between the several hymns and antiphons, for at the vigils there are always both priests and deacons ready there for the assembling of the multitude, the custom being that the holy places are not opened before cockcrow. Now as soon as the first cock has crowed, the bishop arrives and enters the cave at the Anastasis; all the doors are opened and the whole multitude enters the Anastasis, where countless lights are already burning. And when the people have entered, one of the priests says a psalm to which all respond, and afterwards prayer is made; then one of the deacons says a psalm and prayer is again made, a third psalm is said by one of the clergy, prayer is made for the third time and there is a commemoration of all. After these three psalms and three prayers are ended, lo! censers are brought into the cave of the Anastasis so that the whole basilica of the Anastasis is filled with odours.

And then the bishop, standing within the rails, takes the book of the Gospel, and proceeding to the door, himself reads the (narrative of the) Resurrection of the Lord. And when the reading is begun, there is so great a moaning and groaning among all, with so many tears, that the hardest of heart might be moved to tears for that the Lord had borne such things for us. After the reading of the Gospel the bishop goes out, and is accompanied to the Cross by all the people with hymns, there again a psalm is said and prayer is made, after which he blesses the faithful and the dismissal takes place, and as he comes out all approach to his hand. And forthwith the bishop betakes himself to his house, and from that hour all the monks return to the Anastasis, where psalms and antiphons, with prayer after each psalm or antiphon, are said until daylight; the priests and deacons also keep watch in turn daily at the Anastasis with the people, but of the lay people, whether men or women, those who are so minded, remain in the place until daybreak, and those who are not, return to their houses and betake themselves to sleep.

2. Morning Services.

Now at daybreak because it is the Lord's Day every one proceeds to the greater church, built by Constantine, which is situated in Golgotha behind the Cross, where all things are done which are customary everywhere on the Lord's Day. But the custom here is that of all the priests who take their seats, as many as are willing, preach, and after them all the bishop preaches, and these sermons are always on the Lord's Day, in order that the people may always be instructed in the Scriptures and in the love of God. The delivery of these sermons greatly delays the dismissal from the church, so that the dismissal does [not] take place before the fourth or perhaps the fifth hour. But when the dismissal from the church is made in the manner that is customary everywhere, the monks accompany the bishop with hymns from the church to the Anastasis, and as he approaches with hymns all the doors of the basilica of the Anastasis are opened, and the people, that is the faithful, enter, but not the catechumens. And after the people the bishop enters, and goes at once within the rails of the cave of the martyrium. Thanks are first given to God, then prayer is made for all, after which the deacon bids all bow their heads, where they stand, and the bishop standing within the inner rails blesses them and goes out, each one drawing near to his hand as he makes his exit. Thus the dismissal is delayed until nearly the fifth or sixth hour. And in like manner it is done at lucernare, according to daily custom.

This then is the custom observed every day throughout the whole year except on solemn days, to the keeping of which we will refer later on. But among all things it is a special feature that they arrange that suitable psalms and antiphons are said on every occasion, both those said by night, or in the morning, as well as those throughout the day, at the sixth hour, the ninth hour, or at lucernare, all being so appropriate and so reasonable as to bear on the matter in hand. And they proceed to the greater church, which was built by Constantine, and which is situated in Golgotha, that is, behind the Cross, on every Lord's Day throughout the year except on the one Sunday of Pentecost, when they proceed to Sion, as you will find mentioned below; but even then they go to Sion before the third hour, the dismissal having been first made in the greater church.

[A leaf is wanting.]

Jerusalem: The Festivals at Epiphany

1. Night Station at Bethlehem.

Blessed is he that cometh in the Name of the Lord, and the rest which follows. And since, for the sake of the monks who go on foot, it is necessary to walk slowly, the arrival in Jerusalem thus takes place at the hour when one man begins to be able to recognize another, that is, close upon but a little before day-break. And on arriving there, the bishop and all with him immediately enter the Anastasis, where an exceedingly great number of lights are already burning. There a psalm is said, prayer is made, first the catechumens and then the faithful are blessed by the bishop; then the bishop retires, and every one returns to his lodging to take rest, but the monks remain there until daybreak and recite hymns.

2. Morning Services at Jerusalem.

But after the people have taken rest, at the beginning of the second hour they all assemble in the greater church, which is in Golgotha. Now it would be superfluous to describe the adornment either of the church, or of the Anastasis, or of the Cross, or in Bethlehem on that day; you see there nothing but gold and gems and silk. For if you look at the veils, they are made wholly of silk striped with gold, and if you look at the curtains, they too are made wholly of silk striped with gold. The church vessels too, of every kind, gold and jewelled, are brought out on that day, and indeed, who could either reckon or describe the number and weight of the cereofala, or of the cicindelae, or of the lucernae, or of the various vessels? And what shall I say of the decoration of the fabric itself, which Constantine, at his mother's instigation, decorated with gold, mosaic, and costly marbles, as far as the resources of his kingdom allowed him, that is, the greater church as well as the Anastasis, at the Cross, and the other holy places in Jerusalem? But to return to the matter in hand: the dismissal takes place on the first day in the greater church, which is in Golgotha, and when they preach or read the several lessons, or recite hymns, all are appropriate to the day. And afterwards when the dismissal from the church has been made, they repair to the Anastasis with hymns, according to custom, so that the dismissal takes place about the sixth hour. And on this day lucernare also takes place according to the daily use.

3. Octave of the Festival.

On the second day also they proceed in like manner to the church in Golgotha, and also on the third day; thus the feast is celebrated with all this joyfulness for three days up to the sixth hour in the church built by Constantine. On the fourth day it is celebrated in like manner with similar festal array in Eleona, the very beautiful church which stands on the Mount of Olives; on the fifth day in the Lazarium, which is distant about one thousand five hundred paces from Jerusalem; on the sixth day in Sion, on the seventh day in the Anastasis, and on the eighth day at the Cross. Thus, then, is the feast celebrated with all this joyfulness and festal array throughout the eight days in all the holy places which I have mentioned above. And in Bethlehem also throughout the entire eight days the feast is celebrated with similar festal array and joyfulness daily by the priests and by all the clergy there, and by the monks who are appointed in that place. For from the hour when all return by night to Jerusalem with the bishop, the monks of that place keep vigil in the church in Bethlehem, reciting hymns and antiphons, but it is necessary that the bishop should always keep these days in Jerusalem. And immense crowds, not of monks only, but also of the laity, both men and women, flock together to Jerusalem from every quarter for the solemn and joyous observance of that day.

4. The Presentation. Mass.

The fortieth day after the Epiphany is undoubtedly celebrated here with the very highest honour, for on that day there is a procession, in which all take part, in the Anastasis, and all things are done in their order with the greatest joy, just as at Easter. All the priests, and after them the bishop, preach, always taking for their subject that part of the Gospel where Joseph and Mary brought the Lord into the Temple on the fortieth day, and Symeon and Anna the prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, saw Him,—treating of the words which they spake when they saw the Lord, and of that offering which His parents made. And when everything that is customary has been done in order, the sacrament is celebrated, and the dismissal takes place.

Jerusalem: Lent

And when the Paschal days come they are observed thus: Just as with us forty days are kept before Easter, so here eight weeks are kept before Easter. And eight weeks are kept because there is no fasting on the Lord's Days, nor on the Sabbaths, except on the one Sabbath on which the Vigil of Easter falls, in which case the fast is obligatory. With the exception then of that one day, there is never fasting on any Sabbath here throughout the year. Thus, deducting the eight Lord's Days and the seven Sabbaths (for on the one Sabbath, as I said above, the fast is obligatory) from the eight weeks, there remain forty-one fast days, which they call here Eortae, that is Quadragesimae.

1. Services on Sundays.

Now the several days of the several weeks are kept thus: On the Lord's Day after the first cockcrow the bishop reads in the Anastasis the account of the Lord's Resurrection from the Gospel, as on all Lord's Days throughout the whole year, and everything is done at the Anastasis and at the Cross as on all Lord's Days throughout the year, up to daybreak. Afterwards, in the morning, they proceed to the greater church, called the martyrium, which is in Golgotha behind the Cross, and all things that are customary on the Lord's Days are done there. In like manner also when the dismissal from the church has been made, they go with hymns to the Anastasis, as they always do on the Lord's Days, and while these things are being done the fifth hour is reached. Lucernare, however, takes place at its own hour, as usual, at the Anastasis and at the Cross, and in the various holy places; on the Lord's Day the ninth hour is kept.

2. Weekday Services.

On the second weekday they go at the first cockcrow to the Anastasis, as they do throughout the year, and everything that is usual is done until morning. Then at the third hour they go to the Anastasis, and the things are done that are customary throughout the year at the sixth hour, for this going at the third hour in Quadragesima is additional. At the sixth and ninth hours also, and at lucernare, everything is done that is customary throughout the whole year at the holy places. And on the third weekday all things are done as on the second weekday.

3. Wednesday and Friday.

Again, on the fourth weekday they go by night to the Anastasis, and all the usual things are done until morning, and also at the third and sixth hours. But at the ninth hour they go to Sion, as is customary at that hour on the fourth and sixth weekdays throughout the year, for the reason that the fast is always kept here on the fourth and sixth weekdays even by the catechumens, except a martyrs' day should occur. For if a martyrs' day should chance to occur on the fourth or on the sixth weekday in Quadragesima, they do not go to Sion at the ninth hour. But on the days of Quadragesima, as I said above, they proceed to Sion on the fourth weekday at the ninth hour, according to the custom of the whole year, and all things that are customary at the ninth hour are done, except the oblation, for, in order that the people may always be instructed in the law, both the bishop and the priest preach diligently. But when the dismissal has been made, the people escort the bishop with hymns thence to the Anastasis, so that it is already the hour of lucernare when he enters the Anastasis; then hymns and antiphons are said, prayers are made, and the service (missa) of lucernare takes place in the Anastasis and at the Cross. And the service of lucernare is always later on those days in Quadragesima than on other days throughout the year. On the fifth weekday everything is done as on the second and third weekday. On the sixth weekday everything is done as on the fourth, including the going to Sion at the ninth hour, and the escorting of the bishop thence to the Anastasis with hymns.

4. Saturday.

But on the sixth weekday the vigils are observed in the Anastasis from the hour of their arrival from Sion with hymns, until morning, that is, from the hour of lucernare, when they entered, to the morning of the next day, that is, the Sabbath. And the oblation is made in the Anastasis the earlier, that the dismissal may take place before sunrise. Throughout the whole night psalms are said responsively in turn with antiphons and with various lections, the whole lasting until morning, and the dismissal, which takes place on the Sabbath at the Anastasis, is before sunrise, that is, the oblation, so that the dismissal may take place in the Anastasis at the hour when the sun begins to rise. Thus, then, is each week of Quadragesima kept, the dismissal taking place earlier on the Sabbath, i.e. before sunrise, as I said, in order that the hebdomadarii, as they are called here, may finish their fast earlier. For the custom of the fast in Quadragesima is that the dismissal on the Lord's Day is at the fifth hour in order that they whom they call hebdomadarii, that is, they who keep the weeks' fast, may take food. And when these have taken breakfast on the Lord's Day, they do not eat until the Sabbath morning after they have communicated in the Anastasis. It is for their sake, then, that they may finish their fast the sooner, that the dismissal on the Sabbath at the Anastasis is before sunrise. For their sake the dismissal is in the morning, as I said; not that they alone communicate, but all who are so minded communicate on that day in the Anastasis.

5. The Fast.

This is the custom of the fast in Quadragesima: some, when they have eaten after the dismissal on the Lord's Day, that is, about the fifth or sixth hour, do not eat throughout the

whole week until after the dismissal at the Anastasis on the Sabbath; these are they who keep the weeks' fast.

Nor, after having eaten in the morning, do they eat in the evening of the Sabbath, but they take a meal on the next day, that is, on the Lord's Day, after the dismissal from the church at the fifth hour or later, and then they do not breakfast until the Sabbath comes round, as I have said above. For the custom here is that all who are apotactitae, as they call them here, whether men or women, eat only once a day on the day when they do eat, not only in Quadragesima, but throughout the whole year. But if any of the apotactitae cannot keep the entire week of fasting as described above, they take supper in the middle (of the week), on the fifth day, all through Quadragesima. And if any one cannot do even this, he keeps two days' fast (in the week) all through Quadragesima, and they who cannot do even this, take a meal every evening. For no one exacts from any how much he should do, but each does what he can, nor is he praised who has done much, nor is he blamed who has done less; that is the custom here. For their food during the days of Quadragesima is as follows:—they taste neither bread which cannot be weighed, nor oil, nor anything that grows on trees, but only water and a little gruel made of flour. Quadragesima is kept thus, as we have said. And at the end of the weeks' fast the vigil is kept in the Anastasis from the hour of lucernare on the sixth weekday, when the people come with psalms from Sion, to the morning of the Sabbath, when the oblation is made in the Anastasis. And the second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth weeks in Quadragesima are kept as the first.

Holy Week and Easter: Saturday before Palm Sunday

Now when the seventh week has come, that is, when two weeks, including the seventh, are left before Easter, everything is done on each day as in the weeks that are past, except that the vigils of the sixth weekday, which were kept in the Anastasis during the first six weeks, are, in the seventh week, kept in Sion, and with the same customs that obtained during the six weeks in the Anastasis. For throughout the whole vigil psalms and antiphons are said appropriate both to the place and to the day.

And when the morning of the Sabbath begins to dawn, the bishop offers the oblation. And at the dismissal the archdeacon lifts his voice and says: "Let us all be ready to-day at the seventh hour in the Lazarium." And so, as the seventh hour approaches, all go to the Lazarium, that is, Bethany, situated at about the second milestone from the city. And as they go from Jerusalem to the Lazarium, there is, about five hundred paces from the latter place, a church in the street on that spot where Mary the sister of Lazarus met with the Lord. Here, when the bishop arrives, all the monks meet him, and the people enter the church, and one hymn and one antiphon are said, and that passage is read in the Gospel where the sister of Lazarus meets the Lord. Then, after prayer has been made, and when all have been blessed, they go thence with hymns to the Lazarium. And on arriving at the Lazarium, so great a multitude assembles that not only the place itself, but also the fields around, are full of people. Hymns and antiphons suitable to the day and to the place are said, and likewise all the lessons are read. Then, before the dismissal, notice is given of Easter, that is, the priest ascends to a higher place and reads the passage that is written in the Gospel: When Jesus six days before the Passover had come to Bethany, and the rest. So, that passage having been read and notice given of Easter, the dismissal is made. This is done on that day because, as it is written in the Gospel, these events took place in Bethany six days before the Passover; there being six days from the Sabbath to the fifth weekday on which, after supper, the Lord was taken by night. Then all return to the city direct to the Anastasis, and lucernare takes place according to custom.

Holy Week and Easter: Palm Sunday

On the next day, that is, the Lord's Day, which begins the Paschal week, and which they call here the Great Week, when all the customary services from cockcrow until morning have taken place in the Anastasis and at the Cross, they proceed on the morning of the Lord's Day according to custom to the greater church, which is called the martyrium. It is called the martyrium because it is in Golgotha behind the Cross, where the Lord suffered. When all that is customary has been observed in the great church, and before the dismissal is made, the arch-deacon lifts his voice and says first: "Throughout the whole week, beginning from to-morrow, let us all assemble in the martyrium, that is, in the great church, at the ninth hour." Then he lifts his voice again, saying: "Let us all be ready to-day in Eleona at the seventh hour." So when the dismissal has been made in the great church, that is, the martyrium, the bishop is escorted with hymns to the Anastasis, and after all things that are customary on the Lord's Day have been done there, after the dismissal from the martyrium, every one hastens home to eat, that all may be ready at the beginning of the seventh hour in the church in Eleona, on the Mount of Olives, where is the cave in which the Lord was wont to teach.

(b) Procession with Palms on the Mount of Olives.

Accordingly at the seventh hour all the people go up to the Mount of Olives, that is, to Eleona, and the bishop with them, to the church, where hymns and antiphons suitable to the day and to the place are said, and lessons in like manner. And when the ninth hour approaches they go up with hymns to the Imbomon, that is, to the place whence the Lord ascended into heaven, and there they sit down, for all the people are always bidden to sit when the bishop is present; the deacons alone always stand. Hymns and antiphons suitable to the day and to the place are said, interspersed with lections and prayers. And as the eleventh hour approaches, the passage from the Gospel is read, where the children, carrying branches and palms, met the Lord, saying; Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord, and the bishop immediately rises, and all the people with him, and they all go on foot from the top of the Mount of Olives, all the people going before him with hymns and antiphons, answering one to another: Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord. And all the children in

the neighbourhood, even those who are too young to walk, are carried by their parents on their shoulders, all of them bearing branches, some of palms and some of olives, and thus the bishop is escorted in the same manner as the Lord was of old.

For all, even those of rank, both matrons and men, accompany the bishop all the way on foot in this manner, making these responses, from the top of the mount to the city, and thence through the whole city to the Anastasis, going very slowly lest the people should be wearied; and thus they arrive at the Anastasis at a late hour. And on arriving, although it is late, lucernare takes place, with prayer at the Cross; after which the people are dismissed.

Holy Week and Easter: Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday

On the next day, the second weekday, everything that is customary is done from the first cockcrow until morning in the Anastasis; also at the third and sixth hours everything is done that is customary throughout the whole of Quadragesima. But at the ninth hour all assemble in the great church, that is the martyrium, where hymns and antiphons are said continuously until the first hour of the night and lessons suitable to the day and the place are read, interspersed always with prayers. Lucernare takes place when its hour approaches, that is, so that it is already night when the dismissal at the martyrium is made. When the dismissal has been made, the bishop is escorted thence with hymns to the Anastasis, where, when he has entered, one hymn is said, followed by a prayer; the catechumens and then the faithful are blessed, and the dismissal is made.

4. Tuesday in Holy Week.

On the third weekday everything is done as on the second, with this one thing added—that late at night, after the dismissal of the martyrium, and after the going to the Anastasis and after the dismissal there, all proceed at that hour by night to the church, which is on the mount Eleona. And when they have arrived at that church, the bishop enters the cave where the Lord was wont to teach His disciples, and after receiving the book of the Gospel, he stands and himself reads the words of the Lord which are written in the Gospel according to Matthew, where He says: Take heed that no man deceive you. And the bishop reads through the whole of that discourse, and when he has read it, prayer is made, the catechumens and the faithful are blessed, the dismissal is made, and every one returns from the mount to his house, it being already very late at night.

5. Wednesday in Holy Week.

On the fourth weekday everything is done as on the second and third weekdays throughout the whole day from the first cockcrow onwards, but after the dismissal has taken place at the martyrium by night, and the bishop has been escorted with hymns to the Anastasis, he at once enters the cave which is in the Anastasis, and stands within the rails; but the priest stands before the rails and receives the Gospel, and reads the passage where Judas Iscariot

went to the Jews and stated what they should give him that he should betray the Lord. And when the passage has been read, there is such a moaning and groaning of all the people that no one can help being moved to tears at that hour. Afterwards prayer follows, then the blessing, first of the catechumens, and then of the faithful, and the dismissal is made.

Holy Week and Easter: Maundy Thursday

On the fifth weekday everything that is customary is done from the first cockcrow until morning at the Anastasis, and also at the third and at the sixth hours. But at the eighth hour all the people gather together at the martyrium according to custom, only earlier than on other days, because the dismissal must be made sooner. Then, when the people are gathered together, all that should be done is done, and the oblation is made on that day at the martyrium, the dismissal taking place about the tenth hour. But before the dismissal is made there, the archdeacon raises his voice and says: ”Let us all assemble at the first hour of the night in the church which is in Eleona, for great toil awaits us to-day, in this very night.” Then, after the dismissal at the martyrium, they arrive behind the Cross, where only one hymn is said and prayer is made, and the bishop offers the oblation there, and all communicate. Nor is the oblation ever offered behind the Cross on any day throughout the year, except on this one day. And after the dismissal there they go to the Anastasis, where prayer is made, the catechumens and the faithful are blessed according to custom, and the dismissal is made.

(b) Night Station on the Mount of Olives.

And so every one hastens back to his house to eat, because immediately after they have eaten, all go to Eleona to the church wherein is the cave where the Lord was with His Apostles on this very day. There then, until about the fifth hour of the night, hymns and antiphons suitable to the day and to the place are said, lessons, too, are read in like manner, with prayers interspersed, and the passages from the Gospel are read where the Lord addressed His disciples on that same day as He sat in the same cave which is in that church. And they go thence at about the sixth hour of the night with hymns up to the Imbomon, the place whence the Lord ascended into heaven, where again lessons are read, hymns and antiphons suitable to the day are said, and all the prayers which are made by the bishop are also suitable both to the day and to the place.

(c) Stations at Gethsemane.

And at the first cockcrow they come down from the Imbomon with hymns, and arrive at the place where the Lord prayed, as it is written in the Gospel: and He was withdrawn (from them) about a stone's cast, and prayed, and the rest. There is in that place a graceful church. The bishop and all the people enter, a prayer suitable to the place and to the day is said, with one suitable hymn, and the passage from the Gospel is read where He said to His disciples: Watch, that ye enter not into temptation; the whole passage is read through and prayer is made. And then all, even to the smallest child, go down with the Bishop, on foot, with hymns to Gethsemane; where, on account of the great number of people in the crowd, who are wearied owing to the vigils and weak through the daily fasts, and because they have so great a hill to descend, they come very slowly with hymns to Gethsemane. And over two hundred church candles are made ready to give light to all the people. On their arrival at Gethsemane, first a suitable prayer is made, then a hymn is said, then the passage of the Gospel is read where the Lord was taken. And when this passage has been read there is so great a moaning and groaning of all the people, together with weeping, that their lamentation may be heard perhaps as far as the city.

(d) Return to Jerusalem.

From that hour they go with hymns to the city on foot, reaching the gate about the time when one man begins to be able to recognize another, and thence right on through the midst of the city; all, to a man, both great and small, rich and poor, all are ready there, for on that special day not a soul withdraws from the vigils until morning. Thus the bishop is escorted from Gethsemane to the gate, and thence through the whole of the city to the Cross.

Holy Week and Easter: Good Friday

And when they arrive before the Cross the daylight is already growing bright. There the passage from the Gospel is read where the Lord is brought before Pilate, with everything that is written concerning that which Pilate spake to the Lord or to the Jews; the whole is read. And afterwards the bishop addresses the people, comforting them for that they have toiled all night and are about to toil during that same day, (bidding) them not be weary, but to have hope in God, Who will for that toil give them a greater reward. And encouraging them as he is able, he addresses them thus: "Go now, each one of you, to your houses, and sit down awhile, and all of you be ready here just before the second hour of the day, that from that hour to the sixth you may be able to behold the holy wood of the Cross, each one of us believing that it will be profitable to his salvation; then from the sixth hour we must all assemble again in this place, that is, before the Cross, that we may apply ourselves to lections and to prayers until night."

(b) The Column of the Flagellation.

After this, when the dismissal at the Cross has been made, that is, before the sun rises, they all go at once with fervour to Sion, to pray at the column at which the Lord was scourged. And returning thence they sit for awhile in their houses, and presently all are ready.

(c) Veneration of the Cross.

Then a chair is placed for the bishop in Golgotha behind the Cross, which is now standing; the bishop duly takes his seat in the chair, and a table covered with a linen cloth is placed before him; the deacons stand round the table, and a silver-gilt casket is brought in which is the holy wood of the Cross. The casket is opened and (the wood) is taken out, and both the wood of the Cross and the title are placed upon the table. Now, when it has been put upon the table, the bishop, as he sits, holds the extremities of the sacred wood firmly in his hands, while the deacons who stand around guard it. It is guarded thus because the custom is that the people, both faithful and catechumens, come one by one and, bowing down at the table, kiss the sacred wood and pass through. And because, I know not when, some one is said to have bitten off and stolen a portion of the sacred wood, it is thus guarded by the

deacons who stand around, lest any one approaching should venture to do so again. And as all the people pass by one by one, all bowing themselves, they touch the Cross and the title, first with their foreheads and then with their eyes; then they kiss the Cross and pass through, but none lays his hand upon it to touch it. When they have kissed the Cross and have passed through, a deacon stands holding the ring of Solomon and the horn from which the kings were anointed; they kiss the horn also and gaze at the ring . . . all the people are passing through up to the sixth hour, entering by one door and going out by another; for this is done in the same place where, on the preceding day, that is, on the fifth weekday, the oblation was offered.

(d) Station before the Cross. The Three Hours.

And when the sixth hour has come, they go before the Cross, whether it be in rain or in heat, the place being open to the air, as it were, a court of great size and of some beauty between the Cross and the Anastasis; here all the people assemble in such great numbers that there is no thoroughfare. The chair is placed for the bishop before the Cross, and from the sixth to the ninth hour nothing else is done, but the reading of lessons, which are read thus: first from the psalms wherever the Passion is spoken of, then from the Apostle, either from the epistles of the Apostles or from their Acts, wherever they have spoken of the Lord's Passion; then the passages from the Gospels, where He suffered, are read. Then the readings from the prophets where they foretold that the Lord should suffer, then from the Gospels where He mentions His Passion. Thus from the sixth to the ninth hours the lessons are so read and the hymns said, that it may be shown to all the people that whatsoever the prophets foretold of the Lord's Passion is proved from the Gospels and from the writings of the Apostles to have been fulfilled. And so through all those three hours the people are taught that nothing was done which had not been foretold, and that nothing was foretold which was not wholly fulfilled. Prayers also suitable to the day are interspersed throughout. The emotion shown and the mourning by all the people at every lesson and prayer is wonderful; for there is none, either great or small, who, on that day during those three hours, does not lament more than can be conceived, that the Lord had suffered those things for us.

Afterwards, at the beginning of the ninth hour, there is read that passage from the Gospel according to John where He gave up the ghost. This read, prayer and the dismissal follow.

(e) Evening Offices.

And when the dismissal before the Cross has been made, all things are done in the greater church, at the martyrium, which are customary during this week from the ninth hour—when the assembly takes place in the martyrium—until late. And after the dismissal at the martyrium, they go to the Anastasis, where, when they arrive, the passage from the Gospel is read where Joseph begged the Body of the Lord from Pilate and laid it in a new sepulchre. And this reading ended, a prayer is said, the catechumens are blessed, and the dismissal is made. But on that day no announcement is made of a vigil at the Anastasis, because it is known that the people are tired; nevertheless, it is the custom to watch there.

So all of the people who are willing, or rather, who are able, keep watch, and they who are unable do not watch there until the morning. Those of the clergy, however, who are strong or young keep vigil there, and hymns and antiphons are said throughout the whole night until morning; a very great crowd also keep night-long watch, some from the late hour and some from midnight, as they are able.

Holy Week and Easter: The Vigil of Easter

Now, on the next day, the Sabbath, everything that is customary is done at the third hour and also at the sixth; the service at the ninth hour, however, is not held on the Sabbath, but the Paschal vigils are prepared in the great church, the martyrium. The Paschal vigils are kept as with us, with this one addition, that the children when they have been baptised and clothed, and when they issue from the font, are led with the bishop first to the Anastasis; the bishop enters the rails of the Anastasis, and one hymn is said, then the bishop says a prayer for them, and then he goes with them to the greater church, where, according to custom, all the people are keeping watch. Everything is done there that is customary with us also, and after the oblation has been made, the dismissal takes place. After the dismissal of the vigils has been made in the greater church, they go at once with hymns to the Anastasis, where the passage from the Gospel about the Resurrection is read. Prayer is made, and the bishop again makes the oblation. But everything is done quickly on account of the people, that they should not be delayed any longer, and so the people are dismissed. The dismissal of the vigils takes place on that day at the same hour as with us.

Holy Week and Easter: The Easter Octave

Moreover, the Paschal days are kept up to a late hour as with us, and the dismissals take place in their order throughout the eight Paschal days, as is the custom everywhere at Easter throughout the Octave. But the adornment (of the churches) and order (of the services) here are the same throughout the Octave of Easter as they are during Epiphany, in the greater church, in the Anastasis, at the Cross, in Eleona, in Bethlehem, as well as in the Lazarium, in fact, everywhere, because these are the Paschal days. On the first Lord's Day they proceed to the great church, that is, the martyrium, as well as on the second and third weekdays, but always so that after the dismissal has been made at the martyrium, they go to the Anastasis with hymns. On the fourth weekday they proceed to Eleona, on the fifth to the Anastasis, on the sixth to Sion, on the Sabbath before the Cross, but on the Lord's Day, that is, on the Octave, (they proceed) to the great church again, that is, to the martyrium.

Moreover, on the eight Paschal days the bishop goes every day after breakfast up to Eleona with all the clergy, and with all the children who have been baptised, and with all who are apotactitae, both men and women, and likewise with all the people who are willing. Hymns are said and prayers are made, both in the church which is on Eleona, wherein is the cave where Jesus was wont to teach His disciples, and also in the Imbomon, that is, in the place whence the Lord ascended into heaven. And when the psalms have been said and prayer has been made, they come down thence with hymns to the Anastasis at the hour of lucernare. This is done throughout all the eight days.

Holy Week and Easter: Easter Sunday Evening to the Ascension

Now, on the Lord's Day at Easter, after the dismissal of lucernare, that is, at the Anastasis, all the people escort the bishop with hymns to Sion. And, on arriving, hymns suitable to the day and place are said, prayer is made, and the passage from the Gospel is read where the Lord, on the same day, and in the same place where the church now stands in Sion, came in to His disciples when the doors were shut. That is, when one of His disciples, Thomas, was absent, and when he returned and the other Apostles told him that they had seen the Lord, he said: "Except I shall see, I will not believe." When this has been read, prayer is again made, the catechumens and the faithful are blessed, and every one returns to his house late, about the second hour of the night.

11. Sunday after Easter.

Again, on the Octave of Easter, that is, on the Lord's Day, all the people go up to Eleona with the bishop immediately after the sixth hour. First they sit for awhile in the church which is there, and hymns and antiphons suitable to the day and to the place are said; prayers suitable to the day and to the place are likewise made. Then they go up to the Imbomon with hymns, and the same things are done there as in the former place. And when the time comes, all the people and all the apotactitae escort the bishop with hymns down to the Anastasis, arriving there at the usual hour for lucernare. So lucernare takes place at the Anastasis and at the Cross, and all the people to a man escort the bishop thence with hymns to Sion. And when they have arrived, hymns suitable to the day and to the place are said there also, and lastly that passage from the Gospel is read where, on the Octave of Easter, the Lord came in where the disciples were, and reproved Thomas because he had been unbelieving. The whole of that lesson is read, with prayer afterwards; both the catechumens and the faithful are blessed, and every one returns to his house as usual, just as on the Lord's Day of Easter, at the second hour of the night.

12. Easter to Whitsuntide.

Now, from Easter to the fiftieth day, that is, to Pentecost, no one fasts here, not even those who are apotactitae. During these days, as throughout the whole year, the customary things

are done at the Anastasis from the first cockcrow until morning, and at the sixth hour and at lucernare likewise. But on the Lord's Days the procession is always to the martyrium, that is, to the great church, according to custom, and they go thence with hymns to the Anastasis. On the fourth and sixth weekdays, as no one fasts during those days, the procession is to Sion, but in the morning; the dismissal is made in its due order.

13. The Ascension.—Festival at Bethlehem.

On the fortieth day after Easter, that is, on the fifth weekday—(for all go on the previous day, that is, on the fourth weekday, after the sixth hour to Bethlehem to celebrate the vigils, for the vigils are kept in Bethlehem, in the church wherein is the cave where the Lord was born)—On this fifth weekday, the fortieth day after Easter, the dismissal is celebrated in its due order, so that the priests and the bishop preach, treating of the things suitable to the day and the place, and afterwards every one returns to Jerusalem late.

The Festivals of Whitsuntide

1. Whitsunday.—(a) Morning Station.

But on the fiftieth day, that is, the Lord's Day, when the people have a very great deal to go through, everything that is customary is done from the first cockcrow onwards; vigil is kept in the Anastasis, and the bishop reads the passage from the Gospel that is always read on the Lord's Day, namely, the account of the Lord's Resurrection, and afterwards everything customary is done in the Anastasis, just as throughout the whole year. But when morning is come, all the people proceed to the great church, that is, to the martyrium, and all things usual are done there; the priests preach and then the bishop, and all things that are prescribed are done, the oblation being made, as is customary on the Lord's Day, only the same dismissal in the martyrium is hastened, in order that it may be made before the third hour.

(b) Station at Sion.

And when the dismissal has been made at the martyrium, all the people, to a man, escort the bishop with hymns to Sion, [so that] they are in Sion when the third hour is fully come. And on their arrival there the passage from the Acts of the Apostles is read where the Spirit came down so that all tongues [were heard and all men] understood the things that were being spoken, and the dismissal takes place afterwards in due course. For the priests read there from the Acts of the Apostles concerning the selfsame thing, because that is the place in Sion—there is another church there now—where once, after the Lord's Passion, the multitude was gathered together with the Apostles, and where this was done, as we have said above. Afterwards the dismissal takes place in due course, and the oblation is made there. Then, that the people may be dismissed, the archdeacon raises his voice, and says: "Let us all be ready to-day in Eleona, in the Imbomon, directly after the sixth hour."

(c) Station at the Mount of Olives.

So all the people return, each to his house, to rest themselves, and immediately after breakfast they ascend the Mount of Olives, that is, to Eleona, each as he can, so that there is no Christian left in the city who does not go. When, therefore, they have gone up the Mount of Olives, that is, to Eleona, they first enter the Imbomon, that is, the place whence the Lord ascended into heaven, and the bishops and the priests take their seat there, and likewise

all the people. Lessons are read there with hymns interspersed, antiphons too are said suitable to the day and the place, also the prayers which are interspersed have likewise similar references. The passage from the Gospel is also read where it speaks of the Lord's Ascension, also that from the Acts of the Apostles which tells of the Ascension of the Lord into heaven after His Resurrection. And when this is over, the catechumens and then the faithful are blessed, and they come down thence, it being already the ninth hour, and go with hymns to that church which is in Eleona, wherein is the cave where the Lord was wont to sit and teach His Apostles. And as it is already past the tenth hour when they arrive, lucernare takes place there; prayer is made, and the catechumens and likewise the faithful are blessed.

(d) Night Procession.

And then all the people to a man descend thence with the bishop, saying hymns and antiphons suitable to that day, and so come very slowly to the martyrium. It is already night when they reach the gate of the city, and about two hundred church candles are provided for the use of the people. And as it is a good distance from the gate to the great church, that is, the martyrium, they arrive about the second hour of the night, for they go the whole way very slowly lest the people should be weary from being afoot. And when the great gates are opened, which face towards the market-place, all the people enter the martyrium with hymns and with the bishop. And when they have entered the church, hymns are said, prayer is made, the catechumens and also the faithful are blessed; after which they go again with hymns to the Anastasis, where on their arrival hymns and antiphons are said, prayer is made, the catechumens and also the faithful are blessed; this is likewise done at the Cross. Lastly, all the Christian people to a man escort the bishop with hymns to Sion, and when they are come there, suitable lessons are read, psalms and antiphons are said, prayer is made, the catechumens and the faithful are blessed, and the dismissal takes place. And after the dismissal all approach the bishop's hand, and then every one returns to his house about midnight.

Thus very great fatigue is endured on that day, for vigil is kept at the Anastasis from the first cockcrow, and there is no pause from that time onward throughout the whole day, but the whole celebration (of the Feast) lasts so long that it is midnight when every one returns home after the dismissal has taken place at Sion.

2. Resumption of the Ordinary Services.

Now, from the day after the fiftieth day all fast as is customary throughout the whole year, each one as he is able, except on the Sabbath and on the Lord's Day, which are never kept as fasts in this place. On the ensuing days everything is done as during the whole year, that is, vigil is kept in the Anastasis from the first cockcrow. And if it be the Lord's Day, at the earliest cockcrow the bishop first reads in the Anastasis, as is customary, the passage from the Gospel concerning the Resurrection, which is always read on the Lord's Day, and then afterwards hymns and antiphons are said in the Anastasis until daylight. But if it be not

the Lord's Day, only hymns and antiphons are said in like manner in the Anastasis from the first cockcrow until daylight. All the apotactitae, and of the people those who are able, attend; the clergy go by turns, daily. The clergy go there at first cockcrow, but the bishop always as it begins to dawn, that the morning dismissal may be made with all the clergy present except on the Lord's Day, when (the bishop) has to go at the first cockcrow, that he may read the Gospel in the Anastasis. Afterwards everything is done as usual in the Anastasis until the sixth hour, and at the ninth, as well as at lucernare, according to the custom of the whole year. But on the fourth and sixth weekdays, the ninth hour is kept in Sion as is customary.

Baptism: Preparation of the Candidates

1. The Inscribing of the Competents.

Moreover, I must write how they are taught who are baptised at Easter. Now he who gives in his name, gives it in on the day before Quadragesima, and the priest writes down the names of all; this is before the eight weeks which I have said are kept here at Quadragesima. And when the priest has written down the names of all, after the next day of Quadragesima, that is, on the day when the eight weeks begin, the chair is set for the bishop in the midst of the great church, that is, at the martyrium, and the priests sit in chairs on either side of him, while all the clergy stand. Then one by one the competents are brought up, coming, if they are males (viri) with their fathers, and if females (feminae), with their mothers. Then the bishop asks the neighbours of every one who has entered concerning each individual, saying: "Does this person lead a good life, is he obedient to his parents, is he not given to wine, nor deceitful?" making also inquiry about the several vices which are more serious in man. And if he has proved him in the presence of witnesses to be blameless in all these matters concerning which he has made inquiry, he writes down his name with his own hand. But if he is accused in any matter, he orders him to go out, saying: "Let him amend, and when he has amended then let him come to the font (lavacrum)." And as he makes inquiry concerning the men, so also does he concerning the women. But if any be a stranger, he comes not so easily to Baptism, unless he has testimonials from those who know him.

2. Preparation for Baptism—Catechisings.

This also I must write, reverend sisters, lest you should think that these things are done without good reason. The custom here is that they who come to Baptism through those forty days, which are kept as fast days, are first exorcised by the clergy early in the day, as soon as the morning dismissal has been made in the Anastasis. Immediately afterwards the chair is placed for the bishop at the martyrium in the great church, and all who are to be baptised sit around, near the bishop, both men and women, their fathers and mothers standing there also. Besides these, all the people who wish to hear come in and sit down—the faithful however only, for no catechumen enters there when the bishop teaches the others the Law. Beginning from Genesis he goes through all the Scriptures during those forty days,

explaining them, first literally, and then unfolding them spiritually. They are also taught about the Resurrection, and likewise all things concerning the Faith during those days. And this is called the catechising.

3. "Traditio" of the Creed.

Then when five weeks are completed from the time when their teaching began, (the Competents) are then taught the Creed. And as he explained the meaning of all the Scriptures, so does he explain the meaning of the Creed; each article first literally and then spiritually. By this means all the faithful in these parts follow the Scriptures when they are read in church, inasmuch as they are all taught during those forty days from the first to the third hour, for the catechising lasts for three hours. And God knows, reverend sisters, that the voices of the faithful who come in to hear the catechising are louder (in approval) of the things spoken and explained by the bishop than they are when he sits and preaches in church. Then, after the dismissal of the catechising is made, it being already the third hour, the bishop is at once escorted with hymns to the Anastasis. So the dismissal takes place at the third hour. Thus are they taught for three hours a day for seven weeks, but in the eighth week of Quadragesima, which is called the Great Week, there is no time for them to be taught, because the things that are [described] above must be carried out.

4. "Redditio" [Recitation] of the Creed.

And when the seven weeks are past, [and] the Paschal week is left, which they call here the Great Week, then the bishop comes in the morning into the great church at the martyrium, and the chair is placed for him in the apse behind the altar, where they come one by one, a man with his father and a woman with her mother, and recite the Creed to the bishop. And when they have recited the Creed to the bishop, he addresses them all, and says: "During these seven weeks you have been taught all the law of the Scriptures, you have also heard concerning the Faith, and concerning the resurrection of the flesh, and the whole meaning of the Creed, as far as you were able, being yet catechumens. But the teachings of the deeper mystery, that is, of Baptism itself, you cannot hear, being as yet catechumens. But, lest you should think that anything is done without good reason, these, when you have been baptised in the Name of God, you shall hear in the Anastasis, during the eight Paschal days, after the dismissal from the church has been made. You, being as yet catechumens, cannot be told the more secret mysteries of God."

5. Mystic Catechisings.

But when the days of Easter have come, during those eight days, that is, from Easter to the Octave, when the dismissal from the church has been made, they go with hymns to the Anastasis. Prayer is said anon, the faithful are blessed, and the bishop stands, leaning against the inner rails which are in the cave of the Anastasis, and explains all things that are done in Baptism. In that hour no catechumen approaches the Anastasis, but only the neophytes and the faithful, who wish to hear concerning the mysteries, enter there, and the doors are shut lest any catechumen should draw near. And while the bishop discusses and

sets forth each point, the voices of those who applaud are so loud that they can be heard outside the church. And truly the mysteries are so unfolded that there is no one unmoved at the things that he hears to be so explained.

Now, forasmuch as in that province some of the people know both Greek and Syriac, while some know Greek alone and others only Syriac; and because the bishop, although he knows Syriac, yet always speaks Greek, and never Syriac, there is always a priest standing by who, when the bishop speaks Greek, interprets into Syriac, that all may understand what is being taught. And because all the lessons that are read in the church must be read in Greek, he always stands by and interprets them into Syriac, for the people's sake, that they may always be edified. Moreover, the Latins here, who understand neither Syriac nor Greek, in order that they be not disappointed, have (all things) explained to them, for there are other brothers and sisters knowing both Greek and Latin, who translate into Latin for them. But what is above all things very pleasant and admirable here, is that the hymns, the antiphons, and the lessons, as well as the prayers which the bishop says, always have suitable and fitting references, both to the day that is being celebrated and also to the place where the celebration is taking place.

The Dedication of Churches

Those are called the days of dedication when the holy church which is in Golgotha, and which they call the martyrium, was consecrated to God; the holy church also which is at the Anastasis, that is, in the place where the Lord rose after His Passion, was consecrated to God on that day. The dedication of these holy churches is therefore celebrated with the highest honour, because the Cross of the Lord was found on this same day. And it was so ordained that, when the holy churches above mentioned were first consecrated, that should be the day when the Cross of the Lord had been found, in order that the whole celebration should be made together, with all rejoicing, on the self-same day. Moreover, it appears from the Holy Scriptures that this is also the day of dedication, when holy Solomon, having finished the House of God which he had built, stood before the altar of God and prayed, as it is written in the books of the Chronicles.

So when these days of dedication are come, they are kept for eight days. And people begin to assemble from all parts many days before; not only monks and apotactitae from various provinces, from Mesopotamia and Syria, from Egypt and the Thebaid (where there are very many monks), and from every different place and province—for there is none who does not turn his steps to Jerusalem on that day for such rejoicing and for such high days—but lay people too in like manner, both men and women, with faithful minds, gather together in Jerusalem from every province on those days, for the sake of the holy day. And the bishops, even when they have been few, are present to the number of forty or fifty in Jerusalem on these days, and with them come many of their clergy. But why should I say more? for he who on these days has not been present at so solemn a feast thinks that he has committed a very great sin, unless some necessity, which keeps a man back from carrying out a good resolution, has hindered him. Now on these days of the dedication the adornment of all the churches is the same as at Easter and at Epiphany, also on each day the procession is made to the several holy places, as at Easter and at Epiphany. For on the first and second days it is to the greater church, which is called the martyrium. On the third day it is to Eleona, that is, the church which is on that mount whence the Lord ascended into heaven after His Passion, and in this church is the cave wherein the Lord used to teach His Apostles on the Mount of Olives. But on the fourth day . . .

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