The Lament of the Virgin (Mingana translation)

Syriac and Arabic apocrypha (anonymous) (medieval, from Syriac and Garshuni manuscripts)

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Prefatory Note and Translation

I. The Lament of the Virgin.

Prefatory Note.
I GIVE in the following pages the text and the translation (accompanied by a critical apparatus) of a new document dealing with the resurrection of our Lord and the lamentations of His mother over His body on the occasion of His crucifixion. The immediate author of the document is said to be Cyriacus, bishop of Oxyrhynchus, but the real although naturally apocryphal author of all the historical events that it contains is Gamaliel, who often speaks in it in the first person. It seems to constitute another link in the apocryphal chain of the Acta Pilati or the Gospel of Nicodemus. It has also the advantage of supplying the deficiencies of the Coptic fragments published by Revillout under the general but possibly inaccurate title of Evangile des douze Apôtres. In some respect it may also be brought within the circle of the documents edited by Lacau in his Fragments d'Apocryphes Coptes, and of the Coptic Gospel of Bartholomew first translated by Crum and then edited and translated by Budge.

I have edited the work from two MSS. of my own collection numbered Mingana Syr. 87 and Mingana Syr. 127 (henceforth M. 87 and M. 127). M. 87 has no date, but on palæographic ground may be ascribed to about A.D. 1450, and M. 127 is dated 1994 of the Greeks (A.D. 1683). I was unable to find a third MS. containing the document in the catalogues of the public libraries of Europe. There are sufficient variants in the two MSS. to justify us in holding that they are independent of each other, but we should be infringing the rules of philology and textual criticism were we to assert that they represent two distinct recensions of the same story. The story is undoubtedly one and the variant readings exhibited by the MSS. are to a greater or lesser degree similar to those exhibited by more than half of all the existing Oriental MSS.

I placed the text of M. 87 in the body of the page and relegated to the foot-notes the variants of M. 127. As the number of these variants is not very considerable, I have not found it cumbersome to register almost all of them with the exception of those which are exclusively of the domain of orthography. I have likewise referred in the translation to all the important discrepancies of the two MSS. I have edited the text in Garshūni (Arabic in Syriac characters) as it is found in the MSS., and in order not to swell the foot-notes without appreciable

advantage I have neglected to correct the numerous grammatical mistakes committed by the author. These are more or less similar to those to which I often drew the attention of the reader in the notes found in the first volume of my Woodbrooke Studies. To show the close relationship that exists between our new document and the mutilated Coptic fragments published by E. Revillout in the Pat. Orient. (ii. 169-174), I shall give here a complete translation of the latter. It will be seen at a glance that our new document is derived from Coptic sources, and that in the case of fragment 15 it is a direct translation from such Coptic texts as the following. I indicate the lacunæ in the fragments by three dots.

Fragment 14.

". . . The mothers who in these countries have seen the death of their children, when they go to their tomb in order to see the body of those over whom they weep, great consolation and great . . . result for them. As to me I came out to see it . . . with all these . . . hanging on the cross like a robber . . . Lo . . . ". . . She opened her eyes, as they were closed in order not to look towards the earth because of its scandals. And she said to Him with joy: 'O Master, my Lord, my God, my Son, you have risen, you have truly risen.' But He restrained her and implored her, saying: 'O my mother, do not touch me. Wait for a while, because it is the garment which my Father gave me when He raised me up. It is impossible that anything carnal should touch me until I go to heaven.'

"This body, however, is the one in which I spent nine months in your womb. . . . Know these things, O my mother. This flesh is the one which I received in you. It is the one which rested in my tomb, and it is also the one which rose to-day and which stands now before you. Examine well my hands and my feet, O Mary, my mother, and know that it is me whom you have nourished. Do not doubt, O my mother, that I am your Son. It is I who delivered you into the hands of John at the time when I was hanging on the cross. "Now, O my mother, go in haste and tell my brethren and say to them . . . according to His words which I uttered to you, go to Galilee where you will find me. Hasten because it is not possible for me not to go to heaven to my Father.

"Those who have suffered with me on the earth . . . (The rest is missing.)

Fragment 15.

". . . And (Pilate) called the second (soldier) and said to him: 'I know that you are more truthful than all these. Tell me (how many Apostles) took the body of Jesus in the tomb? And he answered: Eleven of them came with their disciples, and took it by stealth, and separated themselves only from this one' (i.e. Judas?). "And he summoned the third and said to him: 'I esteem your witness more than that of the rest. Who took the body of Jesus in the tomb?' And he replied to him: 'Joseph and Nicodemus and their parents' (sic). "And he summoned the fourth and said to him: 'You are the most important one among them, and I let them go all of them. Tell me now (what happened) when they took from your hands the body of Jesus in the tomb?' And he replied to him: 'O my lord, we were asleep. We had forgotten ourselves and we were not able to know who took it. Then we rose up and looked for it but did not find it. . . . We have apprised . . .'

". . . Pilate said to the Jews and to the centurion: 'These people are lying in this way and their words are contradictory.' And he gave orders to secure soldiers until he had gone to the tomb. At that moment he rose up with the heads of the Jews, the Sanhedrin, and the high priests. They found the wrappings placed on the ground without body there. "And Pilate said, 'O men who hate their own souls, if they had taken the body they would have also taken the wrappings.' And they said to him: 'Do you not see that they are not his but that they belong to some others?' Pilate remembered then the words of Jesus: 'It is imperative that great miracles should take place in my tomb.' Pilate hastened then to enter into the tomb. He seized the wrappings of Jesus, which he pressed against his breast and over which he wept. He kissed them with joy as if Jesus were wrapt in them. Then he looked at the centurion who was standing at the door of the tomb and noticed that he had one eye only—because they had put out the other in a war—which he hid with his hand all the time in order not to see the light.

"Then Pilate . . . ". . . The flame of his wrath has come on you. And they acquiesced in this condemnation, saying: 'may His blood and His death be on us for ever!' "And Pilate said to the centurion: 'O my brother, do not exchange in vain the true life which you have received for the lie and the quiet (sic) of the Jews.' This is what he said in the presence of the Jews. . . . ". . . Pilate and the centurion went to the well of water of the garden, which was very deep. And I Gamaliel followed them in the crowd. They looked in the well and the Jews cried: 'O Pilate . . . Is this not the body of Jesus who died?' And (Joseph and Nicodemus) said: 'O our Lord, the wrappings which you hold are those of Jesus. As to this body it belongs to the robber who was crucified with Jesus . . . Joseph and Nicodemus placed the wrappings . . .

". . . And Pilate remembered what Jesus had said: 'The dead shall rise in my tomb.' And thereupon he summoned the heads of the Jews and said to them: 'Do you believe that this is the Nazarene?' And they answered: 'We believe.' And he said: 'It is right then to place His body in His tomb, as it is done to all the dead . . .'" There is no doubt whatever that the present Garshūni document which I am editing and translating is a translation, or at least a very close imitation, of a Coptic document of which fragments only have come down to us. That Egypt is also responsible for many other statements of the author will be made abundantly clear in the footnotes that I have ventured to add to the narrative. In my opinion the present document has nothing in common with Syriac literature or with the Syrian and Palestinian Church in general. It has been preserved to us by West Syrian copyists living either in Egypt or in Palestine, and this constitutes the only link that connects it with the great Syrian Church. This remark applies with equal right to the two works: A Jeremiah Apocryphon and A New Life of John the Baptist which I edited and translated in the first volume of my Woodbrooke Studies and to the Martyrdom of Pilate which I have also edited and translated below.

I give to the work the provisional title of The Lament of the Virgin.

Translation.

In the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, we will write a discourse

composed by Cyriacus, bishop of the town of Bahnasa, on the merits of the pure Virgin our Lady Mary, and her affectionate weeping on the day of the crucifixion of our Lord, when on the day of His holy resurrection she went to the door of the sepulchre of her Son and did not find His body, because He had risen up from the dead. May his blessing be with us. Amen. He said: The weeping of Jacob, the head of the Patriarchs, has been renewed to-day, O my beloved; why then should not the Virgin Mary weep over her Son whom she conceived in virginity? Why should not the Virgin Mary weep over the one for whom she suffered the pangs of parturition? Why should not the Virgin Mary weep over the one into whose divine mouth she placed her virginal breast? Why should not the Virgin weep over the manger, which is in Bethlehem? Why should not the Virgin weep over her beloved Son whom she carried during nine months of gestation? Why should not the Virgin weep over the one whom she brought forth and suckled?

If Rachel weeps over children whom she has never embraced, why should not the Virgin weep over the one whom she carried in her arms like all babes? If Rachel weeps over children for whom she did not run from place to place, why should not the Virgin weep over her child with whom she ran from country to country? If Rachel weeps over children whose tombs she has not seen, why should not the Virgin weep at the door of her only Son's sepulchre?

The weeping of a venerable old man has been renewed to-day for a young, virgin woman. Jacob did not see Joseph bound by his brothers, but the Virgin saw her Son nailed to the wood of the cross. Jacob did not see Joseph when his brothers threw him while hungry into the depths of the well, so that he might weep over him; but the Virgin saw her Son hanging on the cross in the middle (of two male-factors), before all the Jews. Jacob did not see Joseph when his brothers stripped him of his clothes, but the Virgin saw her Son in a naked state in the middle of Jews devoid of understanding. Jacob did not see Joseph being sold to Egyptian merchants for thirty denarii, but the Virgin saw her Son when Judas sold Him for thirty pieces of silver. Jacob wept over a foreign blood and over a robe that was not torn by wild beasts, but it is over a divine blood smeared on the rock of the Kranion that the Virgin is weeping, and over the foreign robe which her Son was wearing, since they had divided His garments among themselves. The brothers of Joseph wept and repented that they had sold their brother, but the Children of Israel did not weep when they sold their Lord. The sons of Jacob rejoiced when their brother reigned (over Egypt), but the Jews did not rejoice when their Lord rose up from the dead.

O pure Virgin, your wailing over the tomb of your beloved Son is truly sweet and your voice is melodious in the middle of the angels, when they brought to you the sad news and said : "O Mary, what are you doing sitting, while your Son is standing before the Governor and is being judged and insulted by the High Priest of the Jews ?" O Mary, what are you doing sitting, while your Son is being stripped in the court of His garment dyed (with His blood) ? O daughter of Joiakim, what are you doing sitting, while your Son is carrying alone a cross in the streets of Jerusalem, and no one comes near Him ? O dove of Hannah what are you

doing sitting, while your Son is being crucified in the place of the Kranion ? O seed of David, why have they lifted your Son on the cross ?

O my pure and Virgin Lady, your wailing is truly sweet to-day in the house of John, while saying : "Oh, how bitter is this messenger who came to me to-day ! He is more bitter than the messenger of death who came to Job and to Jacob—Israel. Oh, how cruel is the intelligencer who came to me to-day, O my Child ! He is more cruel than the one who announced to Lot the burning of his town. Oh, how painful is the news that came to me to-day, O my child ! It is more painful than the news concerning the death of the valiant men of Israel. Oh, how cruel is the messenger who brought me this bad news, O my child ! (This child) has comforted me for thirty years, and He never furnished me with an occasion to chide Him and scold Him. (What adds bitterness) to the news is that the one who brought it to me is Salome ! All my sorrow has began again !

"O my child, I have never been to a Governor, nor have I ever stood before a judge. I have never seen a robber being killed, nor have I ever gone to the Kranion, nor do I know the place of the Golgotha. O my child, I have never stood before a man engaged in litigation so that I might realise the false wisdom (that has been applied to your case) ; nor have I ever been present in a law court, so that I might realise the injustice that has been done to you. O my child, I am inside the house of John, and you are in the house of the High-Priest Annas. O my child, this cruel news that concerns you has outweighed the sadness of my orphanhood, and the painful information relating to you has to-day deprived me of my joy. The angel announced to me your birth in Nazareth, and I have been announced this cruel news about you in Jerusalem. Your Annunciation occurred to me in the house of Joseph, and this bad news was brought to me in the house of John. O my beloved, I was rejoicing in my heart and saying constantly, 'To-morrow we shall have our passover, accomplish the ordinance of the feast and return to our home;' the passover has come to me, O my beloved Son, with weeping and wailing! My feast has changed into lamentation and my passover into grief!"

The Virgin uttered this affectionate wailing in the house of John when they brought to her the sad news of her Son. Then she began to look for one of His holy disciples to walk with her, but she did not find any, because all had fled and forsaken Him from fear of the Jews. She asked for Peter to accompany her, and she was informed that from his fear of the High Priest he had denied her Son, saying, "I do not know Him," and that he had gone and hidden himself from Him. She asked for James, the brother of the Lord, and she was informed that he had fled and left Him on the mount where He was seized. She asked for Andrew, and she was informed that he had never come with Him to town at all. She asked for Thomas, and she was informed that he had thrown down his garments and fled. She asked for the son of Tulmas, and she was informed that he was the first of His brethren to flee. She asked for Philip, and she was informed that when he saw the torches burning, he was terrified and fled. She asked for James, the brother of John, and she was informed that he never even looked at Him. She asked for Matthew, and she was informed that he was afraid of

the Jews more than all others, as they had a special grudge against him from the time he used to collect taxes from them, and he had, therefore, fled in the darkness of the night. In short she asked for all of them, and she did not find a single one of them except John who had accompanied Him to the Kranion and the Golgotha.

Then the Virgin resumed her weeping and wailing, because she was not able to find any of the Apostles, the disciples of her Son, except John, and said while weeping: "Woe is me, O my Son and O my beloved, because your brethren fled and disappeared. O my father Peter, I was thinking every day that you would not deny your Master. You have not been given gold and silver that you denied Him so quickly. You have not been presented with a boat and oars, why then did you deny to-day your Master and your Lord? You have not had the gift of a son or a daughter (as the price of your denial), O Peter, and you have not had the offer of exchanging Him for a brother or a friend, why then this spiritless weakness of yours? You did not see a second cross, O Peter, which you believed might be for you, that you were so terrified that you denied Him. He gave you a tongue of iron, O Peter, and you melted it and spoiled it without fire or a smith. He bestowed grace upon you, O Peter, more than all men, and you did not bear now a single slap for your Master. He bestowed on you, O Peter, two eyes the light of which does not fade, and you did not feel ashamed to deny their light. He confided to you, O Peter, the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, and you did not suffer a short time (for Him) in the prison of the High Priest.

"He made you, O Peter, His deputy to all the world, and you did not endure a single temptation for your Master. He made you, O Peter, a father to all the world, and you did not act in a brotherly love for a single short hour towards my Son. He imposed His divine hand on your head, O Peter, and you did not agree to have a crown of thorns on your head before you had denied Him. Even if you say, O Peter, that my Son is not your Master but only your friend, it did not behove you to deny Him in this way. If you had to endure, O Peter, all the tribulations undergone with us by my father Joseph, you should have been dragged to Herod with my Son. If you had to bear like him the pains of the journey to the country of Egypt, you might not have been able to endure a single one of them. May the dew of heaven nurture your bones, O my father Joseph, the just man, and may the tree of life nourish your soul because you have endured my tribulations with me, and have not denied my Son! O Peter, they have not brought you before the Governor, nor have they placed you before the high tribunal that you denied your Master so quickly."

When the Virgin finished her lamentations over the denial of Peter in the house of John, she sent for John, who came and found her weeping. Then both John and the Virgin wept over the Lord Jesus. Then John said to the Virgin: "O my mother, do not weep over Peter for his denial of my Master, because he has not the same blame attached to him as that which attaches to Judas who betrayed Him. I heard what my Master said at the evening meal and what Peter said to Him, 'Be it far from you, Lord, this shall not be unto you,' but I will give my life for you. And I heard my Lord and my Master rebuking him three times saying to him, 'Go ye behind me, Satan, you have become an offence to me, for you think not of the

things that be of God, but of those things that be of men.' Now, O my Lady and my mother, do not weep over my father Peter, because his denial will be (the symbol of) repentance to sinners, as he gave the lie to his own words and corroborated the words of his Master."

Then the Virgin gave herself to bitter weeping because she had not seen her Son, and she reverted again to her painful lamentations in the house of John and said: "I adjure you, O John, to show me the way to the Kranion. I adjure you, O John, to accompany me to the Golgotha. I have never seen yet a robber being crucified, nor have I stood near a robber when he was being beheaded. I shall forsake my town and my great freedom, and shall go bare-footed to the place in which my beloved Son has been crucified like common robbers, because He is alone and not one of His brethren is standing near Him, and there is not here with you any of your friends who would say anything about you. O my child, the sorrow of a mother for her beloved son is something, and the sorrow of a friend for his friend is another thing; the pain of the heart of a mother weeping over her beloved son is something, and the weeping of a friend over his friend is another thing. My sorrow, O my child, is to-day greater than that of all the world, and of all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and my weeping is more bitter than that of all who shall gather near me."

When John noticed that she was not able to cease her weeping and wailing and that he on his part was unable to comfort her, because she was saying: "If I do not see Him I cannot be comforted," he said to her: "Get up, and I will accompany you to the Kranion, so that you may see Him." The Virgin, therefore, went out of the house of John and walked in the streets of Jerusalem. People who saw the Virgin walking said to one another: "From where is this wailing woman?" And the people of the bazaars said: "We have never seen this woman buying anything from this bazaar." Some others said "This is a foreign woman and she walks in this street as if she did not know it." The people, however, who recognised in John the disciple of the Lord Jesus, said: "This may perhaps be His mother going to see Him on the cross." Some people said: "This is the wife of Joseph," and some others said: "The news of His conception was brought to her." Finally, some people said: "Look at her, how beautiful is her face and her weeping," and yet some others said: "We have not seen another one in this town like her, and her face resembles that of her Son." In short, every one in the market was saying something about her and how noticeable was her appearance in the streets of the town. And Salome was walking behind her, while some other women covered her with her veil, but she was not observing anything but only listening to the sorrow of her heart.

When she reached the Golgotha, she noticed a great throng of people in groups of different tribes and clans looking at (her Son) on the Cross. People of various nationalities, from all districts had assembled in Jerusalem in that holy month for the immolation of the lamb: Amgazites, Balakites, Moabites, Kabarites, and Ishmaelites. All these were pressing in groups against one another for the great and wonderful sight. Some people were saying: "They condemned this one to-day with injustice," and some others were saying: "They have emptied their wrath on Him." Some were saying: "They were seeking the death of this one for many years," and some others were saying: "They have killed a brave man to-day." Some

were saying: "If there was justice in this town, they would never have been able to kill this one," and yet some others were saying: "This is the one for whom the Emperor sent in order to make Him a King over all Judæa, and that is why Herod ordered His death." Some people cursed Herod because of Him, saying: "The one who took his brother's wife while he was still alive and rendered him a poor and a wretched man, has also killed this one without pity."

As to the Virgin she inclined her face towards the earth on account of her weeping and humility, and she was not able to see her Son quickly because of her painful weeping and the thronging of the great multitudes of people. She said, therefore, to John: "Where is my beloved Son so that I may see Him; the pressing of these numerous people against one another does not allow me to see Him." And John said to her: "Lift your head towards the western side of these people, and you will see Him extended on the cross." And the Virgin looked towards all those multitudes of people, and she saw Him. She did not cease to wade with John through the multitudes until she came and stood at His right, and looked at Him in His sufferings.

When God saw His mother He looked towards John and said to him: "O man, this is your mother," and then He said to His mother: "O mother, this is your son." And John held the Virgin's hand in order to take her to his house, but the Virgin, his mother, said: "O John, let me weep over Him, as He has no brother and no sister, and do not deprive me of Him. O my Son, would that I had with you a crown of thorns on my head, and would that I could make it as painful as yours. If the penalty of all the robbers is crucifixion, why have they not stripped you of your garments, O Judas, since you are a thief and stole from the bag? O John, look at my wretchedness to-day in the middle of these multitudes. Look at my lowliness and at the pains of my heart. Let me look at His face to my satisfaction. Let me look at His sufferings to my satisfaction, as I have never seen Him in such a state before, except to-day. Let me weep over Him, because my sufferings are to-day greater than His sufferings. The lying-place of all the paupers is the dung-heap, let me then look at Him to my satisfaction, because I am an orphan without father, without mother, and without relatives."

This is the wailing indulged in by the Virgin while she was at the right side of her Son. She was in a state of confusion owing to the intensity of her pain, and because of the greatness of her sorrow she did not notice the great multitudes that were present. She was only bent on weeping. Now there were present there Joanna, wife of Chuza, Mary Magdalene and Salome, and these got hold of the Lady (Mary) and lifted her up. Her wailing was truly sweet while she was surrounded by pure women, who were weeping with her because of the sweetness of her words. Other Jewish women who heard her weeping scoffed at her saying: "Our vengeance has come to-day on you and on your Son, because it is through you that our wombs have become childless from the year in which you brought Him forth."

The heads of the Jews spoke then with the soldiers of Herod and hardened their hearts to kill (Jesus). They had informed Herod that Pilate with a great number of people loved

Jesus, and they had added: "We fear that in going to crucify Him, those people might raise against us and snatch Him from our hands on the advice of Pilate. Give us, therefore, order and power to crucify Him." And they had given him much money, and he had given them the power required and sent his soldiers to them. This is the reason why Pilate did not go out with him that day; he feared an armed conflict between him and the Jews. Indeed Pilate and his wife loved (Jesus) like their own soul, and the flogging that he had ordered for Him was done in order to satisfy the wicked Jews, and so to save Him from death. Had he known that they would crucify Him, if he were to die with his wife and his sons, he would not have laid hands on Him at all. The Jews had lied to Pilate saying: "If you only chastise this rebel for us, and if he ceases to heal people on the Sabbath day, we will release Him." It is under this false pretext that Pilate had ordered Him to be flagellated.

The above conspiracy took place before the Virgin stood at the right side of Her Son and John wished to take her to his house. She then rose weeping and lamenting and returned to town, saying: "I leave you in peace, O my child, you and the cross upon which you have been lifted up. I salute your face full of grace, which they have insulted and at which they have railed. I salute your nudity, O King, who is in the middle of robbers. I salute your royal garment, O my child, which is in the hands of your enemies. I salute you, O my beloved, with the crown of thorns which is overshadowing you." The Virgin was saying all this while she was being taken weeping to the house of John. There she did not cease to weep, nor did she give slumber to her eyelids, but she kept weeping and wailing. After (John) had placed her in the house he did not neglect to go to the Kranion and witness till the end all the sufferings of his Master. When the body had ceased to function, He gave up the ghost. Then all the town shook from the great earthquake that occurred in the earth and the signs that took place in heaven. When the Virgin noticed that the earth quaked and that darkness spread over all the town, she said: "This is a sign that my Son has died." While she was saying this, lo, John came weeping. And the Virgin said to him: "Is it not true that my Son died on the cross?" And he inclined his head and said, "Yes, He died."

How great were the weeping and the lamentations of the Virgin at that hour! With intense pains of the heart she wept and said: "Woe is me, O my child, because of this dreadful death which you have incurred. I did not find a Governor to inquire into the injustice done to me, nor a judge to gauge the pains of my heart. O Governor, if you had judged with justice according to the law, the Son of the King would not have been killed while hungry and thirsty. O High Priest, if you had judged with justice, Judas would have been worthy of crucifixion instead of my Son. If you had pondered over your decision, O Governor, you would not have crucified my Son in His nudity. If you had judged with equity, O High Priest, you would not have released a robber from death, and killed the Prince. If you had judged with equity, O Governor, you would not have killed a valiant man while war is looking you in the face. If you had judged with equity, O High Priest, you would not have uttered insulting words to your Master.

”I hear that at a time when people are at war, if it happens that they capture the son of the King, they take great care of him and do not kill him, but send him to his father as an honour, why then, O High Priest, when you asked (my Son) the truth and He told it to you, you hated Him? You preferred a lie and put your trust on it. You asked for truth, do you not know then that the one who is standing before you is truthful, nay truth and life?” Truly, O Virgin, O holy Mary, you have met with injustice in the town of Jerusalem more than many of your generation, because they attacked the great one who was in it, and delivered Him to the judgment of death.

After all this, the Christ was still hanging on the cross, and many confessed saying: ”This man who performed all these deeds is the Son of God.” All the people who believed wept while He was on the cross. Then Pilate summoned the centurion who was sent by Herod in order to crucify (Jesus), and he ushered him into his house and said to him: ”Have you seen, O my brother, what the Jews and Herod did to this just Man, and how they killed Him with such an injustice that all this happened on the earth? I tell you, O my brother, that all this evil is not by my will but on the advice of Herod. I wished to release Him and save Him from death, but when I noticed that this was against the wish of Herod, I delivered Him to the Jews for crucifixion. See now, what ransom shall we give to God for His Son whom we have killed?” Then the centurion together with the owner of the spear and Pilate began to weep bitterly saying: ”May His blood be on Herod and on the High Priest!”

Then Pilate summoned the High Priests Annas and Caiaphas before the public and said to them: ”O haters of bodies and drinkers of blood unjustly shed, see now what happened as a consequence of the death of Jesus of Nazareth on the cross. May His blood be on you and on your children!” And they struck at their chests and at their faces saying: ”May the blood of this erring man be on us and on our children for a thousand generations!” And Pilate said, ”What! even now after all the signs that He showed in heaven and earth, you are not awestruck and amazed like all the people?” And they said: ”We are not afraid because we have fulfilled the law.” And Pilate said: ”O High Priest, if you have fulfilled the law, why are your clothes rent? The law says that if a High Priest rends his clothes, he falls from office.” And he answered: ”I rent my clothes because He blasphemed against the Most High God and against the law.” And Pilate said to him: ”I order you not to enter the temple another time like a High Priest but like a rebel. And if anyone tells me that you have gone to the temple I will cut off your head.” And the High Priest said to him: ”Which Governor among your predecessors has in the preceding time interdicted a High Priest, and has enjoyed a long term of office?” He said this because he was under the jurisdiction of Herod.

And Pilate said to him: ”Are not then the signs that have so far occurred sufficient for you, as they are for all the people?” And the High Priest said to Pilate: ”You are a young shoot in this town, and you do not know the meaning and the portent of these signs. This month is Barmudah and in it the revolution of the sun and the moon takes place. At this time the sorcerers give to the moon the colour of blood and detract the ray of the sun by their spells. They do it in order to exact work from the husbandman and to prognosticate concerning the

fruits, the crops, the wines and the oils." This is what the High Priest lied and said. Then Pilate rose from his chair and scourged him with a rough whip; he plucked also the hair of his beard, and tormented him and said: "You wish to bring the wrath (of God) on the earth on account of your hatred for Jesus." Then the centurion and the soldier said: "You prefer death to life." After having chastised him on the recommendation of Pilate, they sent him to prison on the advice of the centurion, until such time as they would send him to the Emperor.

After this Pilate conferred with the centurion and said : "Is His body going to hang on the cross ?" And the centurion said to Pilate : "The power is in your hands, O Governor." And Pilate said to him : "Do you wish that we should take Him down from the cross and confide Him to a reliable man for three days, in order that perchance He may rise as He Himself raised many people from the dead ?" When Pilate uttered these words the heads of the Jews shouted suddenly and said : "It is against the law to deliver a dead man to any one. The grave is the resting-place of the dead." After this Joseph, who is from Arimathea, came to Pilate and asked permission to take down the body of Jesus Christ from the cross. And Pilate was pleased and he ordered it to be given to him ; and the Jews walked behind him with the guards. Joseph, then, took it down from the cross and buried it in conjunction with Nicodemus. The Jews, however, had an argument with him because they did not wish to bring down His body from the cross, but to leave it on the wood like that of all other robbers, because Jesus had made mention of His resurrection. After they had shrouded Him well in perfume, myrrh, and new linen wrappings, which had not been used for another man at all, they laid Him in a new tomb in which no other body had ever been laid, because it was newly made for Joseph himself, the owner of the garden. They then fastened Him well till the third day.

When the body of Jesus was placed in the sepulchre the Jews went to Pilate and said : "You know that it is the Sabbath ;" and they asked for four witnesses for His tomb, two from the soldiers of Herod, and two from the soldiers of the centurion. They confided the tomb to them and ordered them to guard it till the third day. And the centurion remained in Jerusalem till the third day in order to see the miracle ; and he said : "If Jesus rises from the dead, I shall have no further need of the power of Herod." After all this John went in haste to the Virgin and said to her : "They have laid my Master in a good new tomb, and have shrouded Him with new wrappings, good perfume, and myrrh of a high quality. And the Virgin enquired : Who was the one who did this good thing to my beloved Son ?" And he informed her that it was Joseph and Nicodemus, the venerable chiefs.

And the Virgin did not cease her weeping and wailing, and said: "If they have placed my beloved Son under the tree of life, I shall not be comforted unless I see Him. If they have placed the robe of Solomon over the body of my Son, I shall not be comforted unless I see His tomb. If they have poured the perfume of Aaron over the body of my Son, I cannot be comforted unless I see His burial-place. If they have laid my Son in the graves of the prophets, I shall not be comforted unless I see Him. If the grave in which my Son is lying

is that of Elisha, I shall not be comforted unless I see Him. If the place in which they have placed my son is Paradise itself, I shall not be comforted unless I see Him. May the dew of Heaven nurture you, O my father Joseph, and may the firmament nourish you, O Nicodemus, for the little good work you did to my Son on the cross!

"Would that I had been weeping under your cross, O my Son! Even if I could not find your body, O my beloved, I would have grasped your blood, because although Jacob did not find the blood of Joseph, he wept over the blood of another. Woe is me, O my beloved Son, because I have not seen your body and your blood. If I had found your blood, O my Child, I would have purified my garment with it, and if I had found your garment, it would have been as a garment of Joseph to me. The blood over which Jacob wept was a foreign blood, and that over which I weep is flowing from the side of my Son. If they have not broken your bones, O my Son, as it is written in their law, so that (the malefactors) might be delivered from their pain, they have pushed the spear-head into your divine side.

"No evil deed was left, O my beloved, which they did not do to you before they crucified you, and no injustice was left, O my beloved, which they did not do to you. Woe is me, O my beloved Son, my reins are bursting inside me. I never saw a physician healing people like you, O my beloved Son, and in spite of that they struck you. You have been a physician to their diseases which you cured, and in spite of that they nailed you to the wood of the cross. You have been a physician, O my Child, to their men born blind, and you gave them their sight, and in spite of that the unbelieving Jews did not feel ashamed to insult you. You have been a physician, O my Son, and you drove out their demons from them, and in spite of that they did not honour you but said, 'You drive them out by Beel-Zebul.' You have been a physician, O my Son, and you cured them from hæmorrhage, and in spite of that they did not feel ashamed of you, but they pierced you in your side, O my beloved, with a spear-head. I adjure you, O John, to come with me to the tomb of my Son. I implore you, O John, to accompany me to my only Son so that I may pay a visit to His cross. I know, O John, that I am putting you to much trouble with the sorrow of my heart, but have patience with me and you will receive much blessing from my beloved Son."

The Virgin uttered these and similar words in her lamentations and said: "O John, if I do not see His tomb I shall not be comforted in my sorrow." And John used to comfort her saying: "Cease your weeping because they have buried Him with perfume, incense, and new wrappings, near a garden." The Virgin, however, wept, saying: "If the ark of Noah were the place of the burial of my Son, I shall not be comforted unless I see Him and weep over Him." And John said to her: "How can you go while four soldiers from the soldiers of the Governor are lying on the sepulchre?" And the Virgin remained in this weeping and wailing over her Son in the day of His crucifixion, the Sabbath day, to the morning of Sunday. As to the soldiers whom the Governor had detailed to guard the tomb, the heads of the Jews had entered with them into a conspiracy unknown to the Governor and the Centurion, to the effect that if the erring one were perchance to rise they should inform them of the fact before the Governor. For this and for their not disclosing this conspiracy to Pilate they were

promised much money and silver. The Jews held this conspiracy with the soldiers before the latter went to guard the tomb.

When, however (Jesus) rose and many signs took place at His resurrection, the soldiers were frightened and terrified, and became like dead men. They entered the town early in the morning and remembering the deceitful words of the Jews they went to them while it was still dark before they went to the Governor and apprised them of the fact that Jesus of Nazareth had risen from the dead as He had predicted. The Jews went then in haste and related to the High Priest the words of the soldiers to the effect that Jesus had risen from the dead; and they shouted saying: "Woe to the Jews and to their lives, because this day has more evil in it for them than the day in which He was crucified. What shall we do if the Governor and the centurion hear that He rose from the dead. We shall all fall into his hands. But let us see first what really took place." And they went to the tomb while it was still early in the morning, and did not find the body of Jesus in it. Then they tore their garments, gave silver to the four soldiers apart from His garments and said: "Will He appear to everybody?" In short every one of them (in their confusion) said something.

As to the Virgin she did not neglect to go to the tomb early on Sunday morning. Mary Magdalene had, however, preceded her to the sepulchre and noticed that the stone had been rolled away from it. And the Virgin said: "This is a sign that occurred in the case of my Son, and it perplexes me; Who rolled away this stone from the door of the sepulchre?" The Virgin looked then in the four directions of the tomb, and did not find in it the body of her Son, and she sat down and reverted to her wailing and lamentation and said: "Woe is me, O my beloved Son, who is it that carried your body and added to the sorrow of my heart? I have not been at all to the tomb of my father nor to that of my mother; when my father died I was a young girl in the temple. Nor have I ever been to the grave of my father Joseph who endured so many troubles with you, O my Son. This day that I came to your tomb, O my Son, in order to inform myself concerning your body, another sorrow has been added to my sorrow. This day that I came to your tomb, O my Child, I met with a bitter disappointment, as I did not find your body in it, O my Son. On the Golgotha they did not permit me to satisfy my desire for looking at you to my satisfaction, and to-day they did not allow me to satisfy my desire for looking at your body in the grave to my heart's desire. On the day of your birth, in Bethlehem, O my beloved Son, when your star shone, Herod did not glorify you, and on the day of your crucifixion, O my Son, when the sun suffered eclipse, the Jews did not believe in you.

"On the day I brought you forth in Bethlehem, O my Son, your angels surrounded you in order to glorify you, and on the day of your resurrection, O my beloved Son, your brethren forsook you. On the day I brought you forth in Bethlehem, O my beloved Son, the shepherds came at day-break and worshipped you, and on the day of your death, O my beloved Son, I came to your tomb and did not find your body in it. On the day I brought you forth in Bethlehem, O my Son, the Magi came to you with their offerings, and on the day of your crucifixion, O my Son, a wicked robber insulted you. The day of your birth in Bethlehem, O

my Son, the animals praised it, and on the day of your crucifixion, O my beloved, I met with pain and sorrow. On the day of your birth in Bethlehem, O my beloved Son, Joseph served you, and on the day of your crucifixion, O my beloved, the same Joseph, my father, died.

"Woe is me, O my beloved, there is no sorrow like my sorrow, nor is there any pain like the pain of a mother looking at her son on the wood of the cross. O my Son, I went to the Golgotha and did not see your body on the wood of the cross; and I came to the door of your tomb asking for you, and you did not answer me. Woe is me, O my beloved Son, my sorrow is twofold to-day, because I did not see your body on the wood so that I might weep over it, and because I did not find it in the tomb so that I might worship it. I adjure the four soldiers who keep watch over your tomb and your body to deliver your body if perchance they have removed it through bribery. I implore Joseph and weep before Nicodemus to reassure me concerning your body since they took it on their own responsibility from Pilate and laid it in this tomb. I have never seen Joseph nor do I know Nicodemus, but on account of the intensity of my pain I let my heart go to them."

This is what the Virgin said over the tomb of her Son. She was perplexed in her soul from her fear of the Jews and from the fact that she did not find the body of her Son in the tomb. While she was thinking deeply a sudden light shone and an exquisite perfume was perceived from the right side of the tomb, as if wafted from an incense tree. The Virgin looked towards the direction of the scent and saw the good God standing, clad in a heavenly robe and His face greatly suffused with joy. And He said to her: "O woman, what makes you burst into this affectionate wailing at this empty tomb which contains no body?" And she replied: "It is my sorrow; and this sorrow, O my Lord, arises from the fact that I did not find the body of my Son, so that I might weep over it and be somewhat comforted." And Jesus said to her: "If you were not satisfied in weeping and wailing throughout all this length of time, had you found the body of your Son in the tomb you would have never ceased your lamentation." And she replied: "O my lord, if I had found it I would have been somewhat comforted by it."

And he said to her: "O woman, if you had seen your Son dead, you would have had no comfort in looking at His side pierced with a spear, at His hands and feet wounded by the driving of nails in them, and at His body smeared with blood. Now, O woman, comfort yourself, because it was more advantageous for you not to have seen Him dead and wept all the more over Him. What comfort did you derive when you saw Him alive on the cross, and dead with wrappings round Him? Truly, O woman, you have had much courage in your soul in coming to this place, while it is still dark and while all this great disturbance reigns in the town. The guards went from here and are now conspiring with the Jews in lying terms concerning your Son. Does the tomb, in which the body of your Son was laid belong to the Jews? No, O woman, I know the man called Joseph, and this garden belongs to him."

And the Virgin said to him: "O my lord, you know everything that happened to my Son, and the love which they showed to Him in laying Him in this tomb. I could not bear to stay in the house of John any longer, but I came to enquire after Him. Now, O my lord, since you are the owner of the garden—and the beauty of your dresses and the sweet words with

which you have answered me testify to this—if there is pity in your heart for me show it to me now, because I have no other child. Disclose to me His secret and what they did with His body since I did not find it in His tomb. Have the Jews carried it away because of their hatred for the Governor concerning it? And also, O my lord, if it is hidden in your garden and you know who took it there, have pity on me and show me its place so that I may just see it. By your life, O my brother, I have never seen this place except to-day."

And Jesus said to her: "O Mary, you have wept sufficiently. The living one is the one who is speaking to you; the one who was crucified is now standing near you; the one whom you are seeking is the one who is comforting you; the one for whom you are asking is the one who is clad in this heavenly robe; the one whose tomb you are wishing to see is the one who smashed the doors of brass. O Mary, recognise my glory; lo I am comforting you with the words of life, be not ashamed therefore, nor afraid. Look at my face, O my mother, and you will recognise me. It is I who raised Lazarus in Bethany. It is I Jesus who is resurrection and life. It is I Jesus whose blood flowed on the rock in the Kranion. It is I Jesus who is comforting you in your sorrow. It is I Jesus over whom you are weeping, who is now comforting you at the beginning of His resurrection. No one took away my body, O my mother, but I rose according to the will of my Father. You came to-day to the tomb, O my mother, and I took up out of Hades all those who were fettered in it, and saved those who had fallen into sin."

When the Virgin heard this she received strength and comfort and ceased her weeping and anxiety. She lifted up her eyes from the ground, filled her sight from Him, saw Him in the grace of His divinity and said: "You have truly risen, O my Son and my Lord! You have truly risen!" And she bent over Him and embraced Him. And He said to her: "Enough, O mother, of the joy which I granted you through my resurrection. Look now at the spoliation of Hades, O my mother, and see how glad and joyful its inmates are. I shall present them as an offering to my Father before I take them to Paradise." And the Virgin looked round Him and saw the multitudes which He had taken up from Hades, clad in white robes. She was amazed at them, and Jesus said to her: "Go in haste and announce my resurrection from the dead to my brethren. Go in haste, O my mother, leave this place and do not stand at the right side of my tomb, because a company of the Jews will come with Pilate to find out what took place, and see if I would raise the dead, and give sight to the blind and motion to the lame."

After the Lord Jesus said this to His mother He disappeared from her sight. She then left the tomb with haste and went and told the Apostles and the women that the Lord had risen from the dead, and they also came to see what had happened. The news spread then in all the town that Jesus of Nazareth rose from the dead as He had said, and that He told His mother: "I will precede you to Jerusalem, you will all see me and I will bless you there." As to the High Priests and the Jews, they went in the morning to Pilate, the Governor, as if they had heard nothing, and said to him: "O our lord Governor, error has increased and scandals have multiplied to-day at the sepulchre. Summon the soldiers, one by one, so that they may relate His story to us, before any of us goes there." And Pilate said to them "I

heard that He rose from the dead. I believe what I saw in a vision that Jesus rose this day from the dead. By the life of the Emperor and by the law of Moses I do not lie when I say that I saw Him last night while I was lying in my bed, and was grieved at the fact that I had laid hands on Him, and thought that perchance He may be the Son of God on account of the signs that appeared in heaven when He died on the cross. I saw Him standing and shining more than the sun. All the town, except the gathering-place of the Jews, shone with His light more than the light of the sun. And He said to me:

'O Pilate, why are you weeping because you ordered Jesus to be flogged? What is written about Him has been fulfilled. Return to me, and I will forgive you. I am Jesus who died on the cross. I am Jesus who rose to-day from the dead. This light which you see to-day is the glory of my resurrection which has enlightened all the world with joy. Look well, O Pilate, and see that this sign which shines on the inhabited earth is more luminous than the light of the sun and is to convince you that I rose from the dead. Hasten to my tomb and you will see the wrappings lying in it guarded by angels. Kiss them and worship them. Fight for my resurrection and you will witness many miracles to-day at the sepulchre: the lame shall walk, the blind shall see, and the dead shall rise by my power. O Pilate, you will shine in the light of my resurrection, which the Jews will deny.'"

When Pilate uttered these words in his house the Jews raised their voices and said: "O our lord, the emir, it is not necessary to relate all this to the people, as it is nothing but a dream. The law says, 'At the mouth of two or three witnesses every word is established'; instead of three witnesses, lo there are four who guarded the tomb. If these tell you that He rose, their words are true, and if they do not do so, we shall have nothing to do with dreams." Then Pilate summoned the four soldiers and said to them: "What happened to-day at the sepulchre?" And they divided curse among themselves and lied and said that He did not rise but was carried away. And Pilate ordered that they should be separated from one another in different places. The first one was then ushered in, and Pilate said to him: "Tell me the truth who carried away the body of Jesus?" And he answered: "Peter and John." And the Governor ordered him to be removed to a place by himself. Then he summoned the second one and said to him: "I know that you do not speak but the truth, tell me which of the apostles carried away the body of Jesus from the tomb?" And he answered: "The eleven apostles came with His disciples and carried Him away by stealth." And Pilate ordered that this one also should be removed to a place by himself. He then summoned the third one and said to him: "I value your testimony more than that of all the others, tell me who carried away the body of Jesus from the sepulchre?" And he answered: "Joseph and Nicodemus."

Pilate then called the fourth one and said to him: "You are the head of these soldiers and I confided them to you. Disclose to me now all what took place, and how they removed the body of Jesus from the tomb while you were guarding it." And he answered: "O our Lord the emir, we were asleep and we do not know who carried it away. When we woke up we looked for it and found it below the water which is in the garden, and we said that they did this, out of fear." Then Pilate said to the Jews and to the centurion: "Are these words

consistent? Are they not sustained by lies?" And he ordered that the soldiers should be kept under guard until he had gone himself to the tomb. Then he arose with the high priests and the heads of the soldiers and went to the tomb. They found the wrappings lying in the tomb without the body. And Pilate said: "O men who hate their own life, if they had taken away the body would they not have taken the wrappings with it?" And (the Jews) answered: "See, these wrappings do not belong to Him, but to some one else." And Pilate recalled the words of Jesus to him that great miracles will take place in the sepulchre, and he hastened and entered into it, and took the wrappings, that is to say the pieces of linen with which Jesus was shrouded, wept over them and embraced them with joy.

Then he looked at the centurion who was standing at the entrance of the tomb, and who was with one eye only as his other eye had been put out in a war, and a considerable time had elapsed without him having seen anything with it. Pilate then conceived the idea, through the greatness of his faith, that these wrappings will give light to the centurion's eye and with this thought he presented the wrappings to him and said: "O my brother, do you not perceive the exquisiteness of the odour of these wrappings and see as if they were sprinkled with perfume and incense?" And the Jews said: "O Pilate, you know that Joseph placed on Him much perfume and incense, and that they shrouded Him with myrrh and sweet spices of aloe, and this sweet scent comes from them." And Pilate said to them: "If they placed perfumes on the wrappings only, why is all this tomb perfumed with musk and sweet spices of high value and exquisite odour?" And they answered: "The scent that you are smelling is the odour of the flowers of the gardens, wafted by the winds." And Pilate replied to them: "You have trodden on the path of perdition for yourselves, have walked in it and fallen in a place from which you will have no deliverance for ever." And they said to him: "Nothing is due to you from us, and you had no right to come to the tomb of this man. You are the Governor of the City and not of this tomb. Lo, the High Priests and the heads of the Jews are cognisant of the affair, and it does not behove you to fight the Jews for the sake of a dead man."

And Pilate said to the centurion: "O brother, do you not notice the bitterness of the hatred that the Jews have for the Lord Jesus? We have acted according to their desires and have crucified Him, and all the world was on the brink of ruin and destruction on account of their injustice. They want us now to stumble on their sin and aver that He has not risen from the dead, in order that His wrath may come back on us another time and destroy us completely.' Pilate uttered these words to the centurion while holding the wrappings with his hands and embracing them. Then he said: I believe that the body which has been wrapped in you rose from the dead." And the centurion also had faith like Pilate, and seizing the wrappings he embraced them, and when they touched his face he immediately saw with the blind eye as before, as if Jesus had laid His hand on it as He had done with the man who was born blind.

How great was the spectacle of the multitudes who had also gone to the tomb! They were from all countries, and they had come to Jerusalem for the Passover, and seen (Jesus) on

the cross on the day of the crucifixion. When they had heard that Pilate had gone to the sepulchre to see whether Jesus had risen, they also had come with the expectation that He might rise and appear to them like Lazarus. This is the reason why great multitudes had come to the tomb of Jesus in order to see Him. And they beheld the great miracles and how the centurion saw, and were amazed at what (Jesus) had done. And Pilate said to the centurion: "O my brother, observe the miracles of Jesus in His tomb apart from the miracles that took place at His death on the cross." And the centurion tore up his clothes in order the better to show his joy and the favour which he had received, and said: "The power of Jesus has been made manifest. He is truly God and Son of God, and I have believed in Him. My faith has increased from the fact that He being God rose from the dead. I shall not serve a king any more, but solely my God Jesus." And he threw away his sword and gave up his military career. While the wrappings were twisted round his hands he ran to this place and that place and embraced them. And Pilate was greatly amazed and glorified God.

And the Jews said to the centurion: "You are a stranger, and you do not know the deeds done by Jesus through Beel-Zebul. What He did in His life He is now doing at His death." And they added: "When a sorcerer dies, the Genii do other deeds in his grave and they deceive many people through them. These deeds are indeed those of sorcerers and conjurers." And Pilate said to them: "We have never heard that sorcerers and conjurers performed such miracles. Since you are heaping lies out of your own mind on the life of the Lord, His wrath will come on you." And they said: "We deliver our souls to judgment, may His blood be on us and our children for ever and ever." And Pilate said to the centurion: "O my brother, do not exchange cheaply the great gift which you have received for the lie of the hatred of the Jews."

Then Pilate turned to the Jews and said to them: "Where is the dead man who, you said, was Jesus? It is perchance He." And the Jews preceded Pilate and the centurion to the well which was in the garden, and it was a deep well. And I Gamaliel was following with the crowd. And they went down to the bottom of the well, and found in it the dead man shrouded and laid in a separate place. And the Jews shouted: "Here is the Nazarene sorcerer who gave us so much trouble! You say that He rose, and He is at the bottom of the well!" And Pilate ordered them to draw him up, and summoned Joseph and Nicodemus and said to them: "Are these the wrappings with which you shrouded the body of Jesus?" And they answered: "The wrappings which you are holding in your hands are those of Jesus. As to this corpse it is that of the robber who was crucified with Jesus." And the company of the Jews threw themselves on Joseph and Nicodemus wishing to cast them into the depth of the well because they had spoken the truth. They would have done it were it not for the fact that Pilate and his soldiers shielded them.

When Pilate noticed their confusion and their cry he beckoned to them to be quiet. He had full confidence in the words spoken to him by the Lord Jesus to the effect that dead men would rise from His tomb. He summoned, therefore, the heads of the Jews and said to them: "We do not believe at all that this is Jesus of Nazareth." And they replied to him: "If

you believe it or do not believe it, we do believe it." And he said to them: "It is right then that we should leave him in his tomb like other dead men." And he summoned Joseph and Nicodemus another time and said to them: "Shroud him with these wrappings as before." And the Jews shouted: "We do not accept Joseph, and Nicodemus has no portion with us, because his portion is with Jesus." And Pilate said: "I have greater right."

Then they took the wrappings that belonged to the Lord Jesus and shrouded the body of that dead man with them. And Pilate and his soldiers lifted it and placed it in the tomb in which Jesus lay. And he ordered the people to place the stone at the entrance of the tomb as they had done in the case of Jesus. Then Pilate stretched his hands and prayed at the door of the sepulchre and said thus:— "I implore you to-day, O Lord Jesus. You are the resurrection and the life, the giver of life to all and to the dead. I believe that you rose again as you appeared to me. Do not judge me, O my Lord, because I am doing this. I have not done it from fear of the Jews, nor to test your resurrection. O my Lord, I have confidence in your words and in the miracles which you have wrought. You are living because you raised many dead men. Now, O my Lord, do not be angry with me because I placed a foreign corpse in the place in which lay your body. I did this to put to shame and confusion those who deny your resurrection. To them belong shame and confusion for ever and ever, and to you are due glory and honour from the mouth of your servant Pilate for ever and for ever and ever."

When Pilate recited this prayer with outstretched hands at the tomb, a voice came from the dead man saying : "O my lord Pilate, open to me the door of the tomb in order that I may come out. I was the first to open the door of Paradise. Lift the stone, O my lord Pilate, so that I may come out by the power of my Lord Jesus Christ who rose from the dead." And Pilate shouted with jubilation on account of the joy and happiness which filled his heart and his soul, to such an extent that the rocks echoed his voice. And he then ordered the people that were standing to lift the stone from the door of the tomb, and immediately the dead man came out walking, and he bowed before Pilate, the Governor. As to the Jews who were present, they were seized with panic, shame, and confusion, and ran away wailing secretly from their fear of the Governor.

And Pilate ordered all the soldiers to pursue the Jews and strike them with the swords which they were holding, and they wounded many of them. Then Pilate turned to the dead man and said to him : "O my son, who raised you in this short time? It is only in case Jesus was with you that He would have been able to raise you so quickly." And the dead man said to him : "Did you not see the great light that shone? The Lord Jesus raised me while you were praying, and spoke to me saying, 'Tell my beloved Pilate to fight for my resurrection because I have decided to appoint him his portion in Paradise as I appointed to you. It is imperative that they should condemn him as they have condemned me, before they take off his head.'" And Pilate said to him : "From where are you, and who threw you in this well?" And the robber replied, saying : "I am the robber who has been crucified at His right. I have been deemed worthy of all favours and gifts before my Lord Jesus Christ because of the few comforting words that I uttered while He was on the wood of the cross. I was the first one

to rise from the tomb of Jesus, O my lord Pilate, and as you opened to me the door of His sepulchre, so He opened to me the door of Paradise. I recognise this high perfume as it is from the tree of life which my soul is enjoying."

At that moment I Gamaliel followed the crowd and my fathers Joseph and Nicodemus, because fear did not allow the Apostles to come to the sepulchre and witness what happened to Him. They were hiding in every place from fear of the Jews. I, Gamaliel, walked with the crowds and witnessed all what happened in the tomb of my Lord Jesus, and the great fight that Pilate undertook against the High Priests, who returned to town with haste, pressing against one another on account of His resurrection from the dead, while Pilate was holding the wrappings on his arms. And the multitudes wished to see those men who had come to town on the occasion of the feast of the Passover from every district and from every tribe. Then Pilate repaired to the house of the High Priest along with the crowd, and they demolished it and plundered all what he had. And Pilate said to the centurion: "O my brother, you saw with your own eyes and heard (with your own ears) the great number of people who believed in Jesus Christ on account of the resplendent miracles witnessed also by the wicked and accursed Jews, who did not believe."

Let us here end the discourse on the Virgin and her sweet wailing, and on the death and resurrection of her Son from the dead. These (words) have been written by Gamaliel and Nicodemus, the venerable chiefs, and they placed them in Jerusalem, the holy city, and in all the districts that surround it, by the grace and love of our Lord and God Jesus Christ to whom are due glory, power, and honour for ever and ever. Amen. Here ends this great discourse. May God have mercy upon the scribe, the reader, the attentive hearers, and all the believers! Amen. Amen. Amen.

Source. English translation by Alphonse Mingana, from ***Woodbrooke Studies: Christian documents in Syriac, Arabic and Garshūni***, edited and translated by A. Mingana, with introductions by Rendel Harris, volume 2 (Cambridge: W. Heffer & Sons, 1928); public domain. The text was read by machine (Mistral OCR) from a scan of the 1928 volume at the Internet Archive and has not been proofread against the printed book. SermonIndex has removed running heads and page numbers, joined words split across lines, and divided the text into chapters and short sections; the wording is the translator's own. Footnotes and the editor's introduction are left out. Rendel Harris's introduction and the Garshūni text are also left out. No original-language text is shown beside it, and no modern English version has been made.

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