Legends of Eastern Saints, chiefly from Syriac sources

Legends of Eastern saints (various dates)

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Contents

The Story of Bent-Resh **1**

The Coptic version **4**

The long Arabic version **8**

The short Arabic version **14**

The Syriac version **16**

The short Karshuni version **26**

The long Karshuni version **28**

The Story of Bent-Resh

THE STORY OF BENT-RESH. — The Story of Bent-Resh.
Lo), his majesty) was in Naharin according to his yearly custom, while the chiefs of every country came bowing down in peace, because of the fame of his majesty. From the marshes was their tribute; silver, gold, lapis lazuli, malachite and every sweet wood of God's-Land were upon their backs, each one leading his neighbour. Then the chief of Bekhten caused his tribute to be brought, and he placed his eldest daughter in front thereof, praising his majesty, and craving life from him. Now, she was exceedingly beautiful to the heart of his majesty, beyond everything. Then they affixed her titulary as: "Great King's-Wife, Nefrure". When his majesty arrived in Egypt, she fulfilled all the functions of King's-wife. ---- When the year 23, the tenth month, the twenty-second day, came, while his majesty was in Thebes, the victorious, the mistress of cities, performing the pleasing ceremonies of his father, Amon-Re, Lord of Thebes, at his beautiful feast of Southern Opet (Luxor), his favorite seat, of the beginning (of the world), came one to say to his majesty: "A messenger of the chief of Bekhten has come, bearing many gifts for the King's-Wife". Then he was brought before his majesty together with his gifts. He said, praising his majesty: "Praise to thee, Sun of the nine Bows! Give |4 us life from thee". So spake he, smelling the earth before his majesty. He spake again before his majesty: "I come to thee, o King, my lord, on account of Bentresh, thy great sister of the King's-Wife, Nefrure. Sickness has penetrated into her limbs. May thy majesty send a wise man to see her".

Then said his majesty: "Bring to me the sacred scribes and the officials of the court". They were led to him immediately. Said his majesty: "Let one read to you, till you hear this thing. Then bring to me one experienced in his heart, who can write with his fingers from your midst". The king's-scribe, Thutemhab, came before his majesty, and his majesty commanded that he go to Bekhten together with this messenger. The wise man arrived in Bekhten; he found Bentresh in the condition of one possessed of a spirit. He found her [unable] to contend with him. The chief of Bekhten repeated in the presence of his majesty, saying: "O King, my lord, let his majesty command to have this god brought.....). [Then the wise man whom his majesty had sent, returned] to his majesty in the year 26, the ninth month, at the feast of Amon, while his majesty was in Thebes.

Then his majesty repeated (it) before Khonsu-in-Thebes-Beautiful-Rest, saying: ”O my good lord, I repeat before thee concerning the daughter of the chief of Bekhten”.Then they led Khonsu-in-Thebes-Beautiful-Rest to Khonsu-the-Plan-Maker, the great god, smiting the evil spirits. Then said his majesty before Khonsu-in-Thebes-Beautiful-Rest: ”O thou good lord, if thou inclinest thy face to |5 Khonsu-the-Plan-Maker, the great god, smiting the evil spirits, he shall be conveyed to Bekhten”. There was violent nodding. Then said his majesty: ”Send thy protection with him, that I may cause his majesty to go to Bekhten, to save the daughter of the chief of Bekhten”. Khonsu-in-Thebes-Beautiful-Rest nodded the head violently. Then he wrought the protection of Khonsu-the-Plan-Maker-in-Thebes, four times. His majesty commanded to cause Khonsu-the-Plan-Maker-in-Thebes to proceed to a great ship, five transports, numerous chariots and horses of the west and the east. This god arrived in Bekhten in a full year and five months. Then the chief of Bekhten came, with his soldiers and his nobles, before Khonsu-the-Plan-Maker. He threw himself upon his belly, saying: ”Thou comest to us, thou art welcome with us, by command of the King Usermare-Setepnere (Ramses II)”.

Then this god went to the place where Bentresh was. Then he wrought the protection of the daughter of the chief of Bekhten. She became well immediately. Then said this spirit which was in her before Khonsu-the-Plan-Maker-in-Thebes: ”Thou comest in peace, thou great god, smiting the barbarians. Thy city is Bekhten, thy servants are its people, I am thy servant, I will go to the place whence I came, to satisfy the heart concerning that, on account of which thou comest. (But) let thy majesty command to celebrate a feast-day with me and with the chief of Bekhten”. Then this god nodded to his priest, saying: ”Let the chief of Bekhten make a great offering before this spirit”. While these things were happening, which Khonsu-the-Plan-Maker-in-Thebes wrought with the spirit, the chief of Bekhten |6 stood with his soldiers, and feared very greatly. Then he made a great offering before Khonsu-the-Plan-Maker-in-Thebes and the spirit; and the chief of Bekhten celebrated a feast-day [with] them. Then the spirit departed in peace to the place he desired, by command of Khonsu-the-Plan-Maker-in-Thebes, and the chief of Bekhten rejoiced very greatly, together with every man who was in Bekhten.

Then he took counsel with his heart, saying: ”I will cause this god to remain with me in Bekhten; I will not permit that he return to Egypt”. Then this god tarried three years and nine months in Bekhten. Then the chief of Bekhten slept upon his bed, and he saw this god coming to him, to forsake his shrine; he was a hawk of gold, and he flew upward to Egypt. He (the chief) awoke in fright. Then he said to the priest of Khonsu-the-Plan-Maker-in-Thebes: ”This god, he is still with us; let him depart to Egypt; let his chariot depart to Egypt”. Then the chief of Bekhten caused this god to proceed to Egypt, and gave to him very many gifts of every good thing, very many soldiers and horses. They arrived in peace at Thebes. Then came the city of Thebes, and the Plan-Maker-in-Thebes to the house of Khonsu-in-Thebes-Beautiful-Rest. He set the gift which the chief of Bekhten had given to him, of good things, before Khonsu-in-Thebes-Beautiful-Rest, (but) he gave not everything thereof into his house. Khonsu-the-Plan-Maker-in-Thebes arrived [at] his [plac]e in peace

in the year 33, the second month, the ninth day, of King Usermare-Setepnere; that he might be given life like Re, forever.

[Footnotes renumbered and placed at the end] 1. 1) I have omitted the titles at the beginning of this story. 2. 2) Ramses II. 3. 1) Lacuna.

The Coptic version

THE STORY OF THE TWO DAUGHTERS OF KING ZENO. TRANSLATION OF THE COPTIC TEXT.

The story of the two daughters of king Zeno.
[He knew not that she was a woman)]. He gave her a cell near his own cell, to the south of the church. Together with a philosopher, named apa Martyrios, he visited her twice every day. And the words which the saint apa Pambô spake to her for the profit of her soul were translated into Greek by apa Martyrios; for this reason the girl learned the Egyptian language. When she had dwelled there three years, the Lord revealed to Pambô, that she was a woman, but he knew not that she was the daughter of the king. When he knew that she was a woman, he said to her secretly: "Let nobody know that thou art a woman, for it is not suitable for our manner of life that a woman dwell amongst us, lest anybody be hurt for our sake." Nine years later, when they saw the girl beardless amongst the brethren, they called her Hilarion the eunuch, for there were many men in such a condition. Her breasts were not like the breasts of other women, on account of her ascetic practices they were withered; and she) was not subjected to the illness of women, for God had ordained it in this way. |10

When she had passed nine years under these severe ascetic practices, and her parents had already ceased to think of her, a demon took possession of her younger sister in Constantinople. She was brought into the presence of the great ascetics of Byzantium, that they might pray for her; but God did not grant her recovery at their hands. The courtiers gave advice to the king and said: "May the king live for ever)! If it please thy majesty to accept our advice, thou shouldst send thy daughter to the ascetics of Shiit), who are great I in holiness), and we believe that God will grant her recovery on account of their prayers." The king on hearing their advice rejoiced, for there was great sorrow in his house for the sake of the girl. He prepared what was useful for his daughter and sent with her two eunuchs and two virgins and other servants for her service.

He wrote to Rakote) to the commander and to the governor to accompany her to Shiit. The king wrote [also] a letter to Shiit, asking for paper and ink to write with his own hand, lest haughty words should be put in the letter, such as are becoming to the royal rank. "The unworthy king Zeno, whom God hath given this honour above his merits, writeth to the

saints, worthy of being loved, who pray for us in [the name of] the Lord, Hail. Above all, I worship your assembly in Christ, and if you hold me worthy enough, I shall kiss the dust of your sanctity's feet. But I inform you of what the Lord hath done me, on account of my |11 many sins. I had two daughters. I had no consolation except them. The eldest went from me, she is gone. Hath she died in the sea? Hath she become the prey of the wild beasts? (Hath she been captured by the Barbarians)? God knoweth in what manner she died. A great sorrow struck me on her account, for I found not her corpse to bury her. (When I had consoled myself somewhat about her, saying: The will of the Lord be [accomplished]) ---- then another sorrow struck me, much more vehement than the first one: the other [daughter], who was my support, a demon took possession of her; we keep watch over her day and night. I have been advised to send her to your holiness. Now the end of this letter is truly, that God will not reject your prayer".

When the girl had arrived at Rakote, the commander and the governor went with her to Shiit; and when they came into the presence of the saint apa Pambô, they gave him the letter of the king and told him about the girl who was possessed by the demon. He called all the brethren together and read before them the letter of the king. But when they had begun to pray over her the demon took possession of her in the midst of the brethren, threw her on the ground and continued to torment her so that the commander and the governor wondered greatly. As to the saint Hilaria, when she saw her lay sister, she recognised her: but the lay sister did not recognise her sister, the nun: and how could she recognise her? |12 For her colour had altered, the beauty of her body had withered, her eyes were sunken in, she was only bones and skin.

When she saw her sister, she was vehemently troubled, her bowels were disturbed about her sister, she threw herself at her sister's neck, weeping till the earth was soaked with her tears. When the brethren saw her weeping, they said: "She hath compassion of heart with her". But when she had recovered a little from her illness, he) called an old ascetic and said to him: "Take the girl to thy cell and pray over her, till God granteth her recovery". But he said: "I have not attained such a degree of perfection as to be able to take a woman into my cell". But the philosopher Martyrios said to Pambô: "Trust her to Hilarion the eunuch, he is able to take a woman into his house". They trusted the girl to her sister, who took her into her house. When she saw the face of her sister, she was troubled, she threw herself on the ground and weeped vehemently: when she had recovered she kissed her mouth. Sometimes she slept with her on the same bench.

After seven days God granted her the recovery [of her sister]. She took her to the midst of the church and said: "On account of your prayers God hath granted recovery to the daughter of the king". The commander and the governor held a religious meeting and turned back and departed. As to the brethren they wrote to the king through his daughter: "The unworthy [persons] of the Nitrian mountain write to the triumphant king |13 Zeno. Above all we adore thy lofty majesty. May the Lord preserve thy empire without any scandal, like that of David and Solomon. Farewell, thou who providest for us and the whole church". In this

way they arrived at Constantinople. There was a great joy over the recovery of the king's daughter. The king made a feast for all weak and ill persons, he stood and served them and gave everyone with his own hand a goblet of spiced wine. On the next day he made a feast for all the courtiers. But when he asked his daughter about that which had passed to her, she said to him: "They entrusted me to an ascetic, named Hilarion; he hath prayed over me and God hath granted me recovery. (Great was his compassion with me). Sometimes he kissed my mouth, sometimes he slept with me on the same bench during the whole night".

When the king heard this, the matter troubled him; he said: "I never heard that monks would kiss women or sleep with them on the same bench; but I have heard that they hated them and would not condescend to speak with them at all. How is this now? I understand it not". This thought troubled the king. He wrote a second letter to Shiit, in this way: "His victorious majesty Zeno, writeth to the pious fathers dwelling in Shiit. I am a debtor to your prayers and I cannot attain the measure of your honour, nor pay what I wish [to pay)] ..... by your intermediary. So I wish that you accept my . . . and that you send me the brother |14 named Hilarion. There is an illness in the palace and I cannot....." [They called] Hilaria and said to her:) "Arrange thy matters, brother, for the king hath sent for thee".

Now the Blessed was much grieved. The brethren consoled her, saying: "Go and the Lord shall go with thee and thou shalt return in peace". They sent with her two old brethren, hermits. So they went towards Constantinople to the king. When the king heard that they had arrived, he rejoiced greatly and ordered them to be brought to him .... ["Tell me the truth, that I] may purify myself from this transgression. But thou, spare no words!" The holy Virgin meditated saying [to herself]: "I should like to conceal the matter; but lest the other monks be confounded on my account [I shall make known the matter] now that such foulness hath been conceived about these saints. She said to him: "Bring me the Gospels". He brought them her. She said to him: "Swear to me: I shall not [restrain thee] from going to my place". So he swore by the Gospel. She said to him: "I am Hilaria, thy daughter". The king, on hearing this, wondered and was perplexed; he could not speak for an hour. But at once he understood [the matter], hurried towards his daughter, embraced her, weeped on her neck, kissed her mouth like Joseph in his time, when he threw himself on Benjamin's neck and wept over him.

When Hilaria's mother and sister heard [the news], they screamed aloud. For women are naturally inclined to be perplexed. The king restrained them, |15 saying ..... lest God bereave us of our two [daughters]. But, on the contrary, let us praise Him because we have found her back alive". Because the king had sworn it to her, he revealed not the matter to the other brethren who had accompanied her and kept her during three months with him in order to continue seeing his daughter's face daily. He asked her how she had left his house, she told him how she wore her dress of a spatharios and how she had gone to Rakote and how she had gone to Shirt with the deacon. Then they took leave and returned to their place. The king gave Shiit three thousand [measures of] corn, for the eucharist and for his

daughter, with six hundred measures of oil and this hath been continued for the church of Shiit till this day.

After her arrival at Shiit she lived still twelve years. At last she fell into a severe illness and bore it with courage. She called the holy Pambô and conjured him thus: "When I shall have ceased living, thou shalt take care, because thou knowest my whole life, that this coat be not taken from me, but let me be buried with it". When she had given up the ghost, he stood over her body and buried it in the coat, according to what she had said to him; when she had been buried, he sat down and spoke to the monks a divine word. He said to them: "Verily, a weak vessel hath put to shame this multitude of monks who are dwelling at Shiit: who hath shown such an endurance, when she dwelled struggling amongst men? Who hath shown such an endurance, bereaving herself of rest of the flesh, as she hath done?"

When the brethren heard her life, they were struck |16 with wonder and praised God, saying: "Therefore He hath granted her the grace of deceasing on the day of Mary, the holy mother of God), i.e. the 21st Touba". They wrote to her father about her end. He and [Hilaria's] mother were highly grieved. Afterwards he consoled her) mother, saying: "If he who hath posterity in Sion and kindred in Jerusalem hath been called happy), verily how much happier are we, for we have posterity in the heavenly Jerusalem. Verily..... [Footnotes renumbered and moved to the end] 1. 1) Not in Amélineau's text, but supplemented by Dr. von Lemm. 2. 2) According to a correction of the Coptic text by Dr. von Lemm. 3. 1) Cf. Daniel VI, 22; The Story of Ahiqar, éd. Conybearé, R. Harris, A. Smith Lewis, p. [], 12 paen. 4. 2) Skete.

5. 3) politei/a. 6. 4) Alexandria. 7. (1----1) Only in Coptic Ms. 1101 (Or. 6073), British Museum, according to Dr. von Lemm. 8. 1) Pambô. 9. (1----1) According to corrections of Dr. von Lemm. 10. 2) i.e. my debt. 11. 1) Giron, p. 61. 12. 1) qeoto&koj 13. 2) i.e. Hilaria's. 14. 3) Dr. von Lemm compares Is. XXXI, 9 b according to LXX.

The long Arabic version

THE STORY OF HILARIA. TRANSLATION OF THE LONG ARABIC TEXT. (Forget I, p. [] et sequ.) The 21th day of the month of Tubih. On this day Hilaria the daughter of king Zeno, departed this life. He had no male child, but only two virgin daughters. He gave them a careful education; in the first place he let them learn writing, as was becoming to the royal rank, and let them learn by heart the psalms so that they could read them throughout). The name of the oldest daughter was Hilaria. She desired to remain a virgin; especially she felt inclined towards monastic life. But she shrank back from going to the monasteries of Byzantium because she knew that they would not receive her from fear before her father.

Then she took a manly resolution and determined what to do in order to enter the pure career of monastic life. One day the king went with his daughter to the cathedral at the time of the ministration of the holy sacrifice and the blessed Hilaria raised her eyes to heaven and said in her heart: ”O Lord, if Thou esteemest me worthy of the pure calling and Thou wilt make my way to succeed, let me hear words from the scripture-lessons pointing to my aim and wish. When she entered the church she listened and heard firstly the great word of the apostle: ”By faith Moses refused to be called the, son of Pharao’s daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the |20 pleasures of sin for a season”). And also from the catholic epistle: ”The wealth of this world is like grass and hay”); and from the Acts of the Apostles: ”I have coveted no silver or gold or apparel. Yea, you yourselves know that these hands have ministered unto my necessities”); and also from the Psalter: ”His joy is sweeter than gold and precious stones and honey and honey-comb”); and also from the Gospel: ”Whosoever forsaketh not all that he hath, cannot be my disciple”); and from the sermon of the bishop after the Gospel: ”Wherefore, O man, desirest thou what passeth away and what thou must leave behind. Know that the lusts of this world pass away.

Therefore confide not in riches, for riches remain here and our sins precede us to the judgment-seat of the Lord. Then she praised God saying: ”God hath given success to my course and smoothed my way. When they had received the blessing, she prepared herself for fleeing and God, the beneficent, showed her how to act. On the next morning she clad herself in the dress of a spatharios, girded herself with a girdle of Taif-leather, took a stick in her hand and went in the direction of the sea, where no one would notice her. She found

a ship sailing to a town called Safîrâ. She said to the sailor: ”I desire to be brought to the shore of Alexandria, for I have to transmit orders of the king. The sailor said: ”We go not towards that place, o spatharios; but if the king wanteth it, we cannot thwart him. So they brought her to Alexandria; at that time she was twelve years old and a beautiful girl. |21 She entered the church of Anba Petros, the last of the martyrs, prayed and beseeched him to help her and went ”to the church of the holy Mar Marcus and asked him to smooth her way. There she found a deacon, named Theodorus, and said to him: ”Peace to thee, brother. I desire that thou travellest with me to the mountain of Shihat, for I wish to visit that place and will give thee thy wages; for I have left my country in order to pay this visit.

The deacon said to her: ”O spatharios, for a long time I have wished to go to that place, and perhaps it is God’s will. But let us eat bread and depart to morrow morning. The blessed said to him: ”Good. She took a dinar and gave it him, saying: ”Buy for this dinar what we need. The deacon took the dinar and spent of it what they wanted.

The next morning they saddled beasts to ride on and went to the church of Abu Menas) where they passed the night. On the next morning they went to Shihât. When they had arrived, the holy Man Bamfu was consulted about them: ”There is a spatharios who hath brought with him a deacon.” He gave order to bring them to him. When they had entered, he clapped his hands, as is the custom of monks, and prayed. When they sat down he told them many profitable stories. Then the blessed Hilaria addressed herself to the pure old man, saying: ”I wish to be invested by thee with the monastic habit and to remain here.” Father Bamfu answered and said: ”My son, it is impossible for thee to remain here, for thou art accustomed to comfort and |22 bodily rest. But if thou desirest to become a monk, go to Anvatun because it is hidden) and in that place is a congregation of rich people who have embraced monastic life but live there without trouble, finding consolation. But we are far from Misr, at a distance of forty) days from the plain and the towns ; nay, we are even in need of clothes. And thou canst not endure our meagre food and our hard life.” The blessed Hilaria answered him saying: ”Know, my father, that I have) come to this holy mountain with my whole heart and now thou repellest me, but the Lord shall call thee to account for my sake.”

When the pure old Anba Bamfu heard this he wondered at the acuteness of the boy’s answer. At once he cleared a place for her and the deacon where they could be lodged. But the deacon took the prayer) [of the prior] and returned to the town. Hilaria, the daughter of the king, said to the prior: ”My Father, take this little sum from me and distribute it among the poor.” He answered: ”We need nothing of it, for the labour of our hands is sufficient for us. But if thou possessest something, I will give it the deacon in order to transmit it to the patriarch.” Hilaria gave him all that she possessed and the golden stick and her girdle.

The deacon took leave of them and departed. Then Hilaria turned towards the holy Anba Bamfu and said: ”My Father, I desire that thou investest me with the monastic habit. He explained [the precepts] to her, |23 examined her and taught her the ascetic practices, gave her a repaired mitre and a coat of hair. At once she would put them on; he prayed over them

and invested her with them, without knowing her to be the daughter of the king. He gave her a cell near his own and visited her at all times. The Lord showed her his grace, so that she learned to speak the language of the Egyptian people. She was extremely ascetic and zealously fasting and praying. The monks wondered how the softness of her body suffered those harsh clothes. When she had stayed there nine years without getting a beard they called her Hilari the eunuch. On account of her frequent fasting and praying and ascetic practices her breasts withered and it ceased to be with her after the manner of women. After the lapse of so long a period her parents had despaired of seeing her again, but the Lord (blessed be His name) would show her and make her known to them. Her younger sister became possessed by a mean villainous demon. So her father the king sent her, escorted by soldiers and two masters, to many monasteries and dwellingplaces of ascetic old men, but the Lord gave her no healing at their hands because God planned Hilaria's glorification.

So the courtiers gave advice to the king, saying: "May our Lord the king live for ever); know that in Wadi Habib there are pure holy monks. Send thy daughter to them and we believe that God will heal thy daughter on account of their pure prayers. When the king heard this he rejoiced greatly. He ordered two masters and two slave-girls and soldiers from his armies to accompany the girl and |24 wrote to the governor of Alexandria ordering him to send his daughter to the mountain of Shihât. He wrote also to the old men: "Thus writeth Zeno, the unworthy of the kingdom, whom God hath given this gift which he meriteth not, to the holy, pious, beloved Fathers, who strive to liberate themselves from the whole world, the ascetic, selfdenying monks in the holy mountain of Shïhât, called balance of hearts, Hail. In the first place I prostrate myself with my face before your holiness. Then I will inform you, my Fathers, of what the Lord hath done me on account of my many sins and trespasses. God had given me two daughters. One left me and I know nothing about her; so I was in great sorrow on her account. And while I had to suffer this great sorrow, there struck me another sorrow greater than the first one:

the other daughter, whom I had expected to be my consolation and a compensation for her sister, a demon took possession of her and tormented her day and night so that I am near to saying that death is preferable for her to life. My courtiers have given me advice to send her to your holiness. And now my whole hope is upon you, that God will not reject your request and that she will be saved by your prayers."

When this message reached Alexandria, the emir with many soldiers went to accompany her. They reached the monastery, brought the letter of the king and gave it the holy Anba Bamfu. He assembled the brethren and read the letter before them. When they began to pray, the demon threw her down and continued to beat her among them, so that the emir and all who were with him wondered and said: "How can a demon do so among holy persons?" |25

When the holy Hilaria saw her younger sister, she recognised her and her heart was troubled on her account, her limbs ached and she wept over her. When the brethren saw her sick at heart for her sake, they were sorry. When prayer was finished Anba Bamfu called one of the brethren and said to him: "Take this girl with thee in thy cell and cease not to pray over

her till God shall have restored her health. He said humbly: "I have not reached that degree of perfection, and I cannot be entrusted with this girl. Then Anbä Martyrios said: "Trust her to Hilari the eunuch). So they trusted the girl to her sister. She began to pray, over her and to weep till she had soaked the earth, to embrace her and to kiss her face, to lie with her on one bench, while she held her to her bosom. After seven days the Lord healed her. The emir and the ka'id and the soldiers received with them the holy eucharist on Sunday and returned to Alexandria. As to the girl, God had given her grace and the villainous demon had left her; so the servants and slave-girls and soldiers took her and returned with her, rejoicing because the Lord had given success to their journey. The old men wrote a letter of explanation to king Zeno in the following terms: "The unworthy inhabitants of the mountain of Natrun write to their victorious lord Zeno, the pious. Above all we prostrate ourselves before thy venerable noble majesty.

May the Lord preserve thy throne and confirm thy kingdom like that of David and Solomon and Hezekiah) and Uzziah and rule thy kingdom without trouble. Be safe in the Lord because of thy care for |26 the church of the Lord Christ, our God. When this letter reached the king he rejoiced greatly on account of his daughter's recovery. He arranged meals for the poor and spent much money. He said: "My daughter, what hath happened to thee at Shihât? She answered: "My father, they entrusted me to a holy, ascetic monk, called Hilari the eunuch. It was he who prayed over me; then I was healed and the Lord gave me health; he was very benignant to me and many times he lay with me on the mat on the bench. But, my father, I hear that monks hate women and therefore inhabit the desert, because they will absolutely not speak with them. And how is this? I know it not."

When the king heard this from his daughter he wondered greatly and said: "This is not the custom of monks who expel demons; this is an innovation among the monks". He wrote a second letter to Shihât in the following terms: "The victorious king Zeno ventureth to write to the pure, pious Fathers on the mount of Shihât. I am indebted to you on account of your bounty and benignity and your prayers and I cannot pay . . .) so I beg you to show me the favour of sending brother Hilarion, for I am sick at heart and I cannot undertake a sea voyage and accomplish this great distance because of the heavy . . . .). The fame of his holiness hath reached us and our confidence is in him; if he cometh to us we shall profit by his prayers."

When this royal letter had arrived and had been read before the rest of the holy monks, the pure presbyter Bamfu called the blessed Hilaria and said: "Prepare |27 thyself, brother, for the king hath summoned thee. When the blessed Hilaria heard this, she felt a great sorrow. The monks consoled her saying: "Go in the peace of the Lord who will be with thee and restore thee to us safely. They sent with her two brothers and two old brothers and they went to Constantinople. When they arrived the king rejoiced and gave orders to introduce them joyfully; he received them personally. He said to them: "Pray for me, that the Lord may keep me in the loyalty of my orthodox fathers. When they went out he retained his daughter Hilaria and remained alone with her saying: "Holy Father Hilarion, we need thy

prayers and wish to speak to thee; but be not offended and be not sorry. The little girl hath told me how she was in thy blessed presence: that thou used to kiss her, mouth on mouth, and to lie with her on the mat on the same bench. So I desire that thou teilest me the reason of thy kindness towards her, whether it sprang from spiritual or from bodily love. Tell me the truth and be not ashamed or disturbed by shame, that I may be pure from this trangression. The virgin Hilaria thought:

"I should like to conceal this matter, but I fear that the king would cast an eye of contempt on all monks. She said: "The king may live for ever. Let the four holy Gospels be brought before me. When this had been done she said to him: "Swear to me that thou wilt not reveal this secret nor restrain me from going to my monastery. The king swore by the holy Gospel. Hilarion said: "I am Hilaria thy daughter. When the king heard this he wondered and became stupefied so that he could not speak during a long time. When his spirits returned he went up to his daughter |28 and embraced her like Joseph when he embraced Benjamin his brother, and wept vehemently. When her mother and sister heard the news they came running, embraced her and wept and cried, kissed her hands and her face and would restrain her from returning to her monastery. But the king checked them saying: "I have submitted myself to her will and sworn not to restrain her. Then her mother said: "We will retain her with us, in order to crown her with the royal crown. But the king said: "I will not do so, but we will give glory to the Lord, now that we have seen her alive. The king concealed her secret and retained the monks for three months in order to be able to see his daughter every day. He questioned her about her flight from the castle.

She told him the details, how she had disguised herself as a spatharios, how she had reached Alexandria and how she had gone to Shihat. When the king heard this he wondered, and gave an official order to send to the monks on the mountain of Shihat every year three thousand measures of corn for the eucharist of his daughter, and three hundred measures of oil. This hath been continued every year until to day.

The king bade them farewell and they departed towards their monastery. After her arrival Hilari lived twelve years. At the end there befell her an illness, the pains of which she bore with great courage. Then the holy virgin called Anba Bamfu and conjured him thus: "When I shall have accomplished my life, make known, my Father, the whole story of my life and allow not that this repaired cowl be taken from me, but if you shroud me, let me keep it." When she had departed this life in glory and honour, the holy Anba Bamfu told them what |29 she had ordered him. When they had buried her the holy Anba Bamfu sat down and told the brethren in an address all about the holiness of this pure virgin, saying: "I am feeble, the unworthiest of all the brethren on the mountain of Shihat. Who is there that like her possesseth the endurance to live continually among so many men? Who possesseth such selfrestraint and is able to neglect all bodily comfort and finery and pleasure?" When the brethren heard this they praised God. And behold, the Lord gave her good fortune and grace for she departed this life on the day of the departure of the mother of Light, the virgin Mary, because she had loved her (Mary's) life; so the Lord gave her this sign of grace.

They wrote to her father the king that she was dead and he began to mourn over her. But her mother consoled him saying: ”He hath been called happy who hath posterity in Sion and kindred in Jerusalem, according to what is written in Isaiah the prophet: ”Blessed who hath posterity in Sion.”) For she can be beseeched to intercede for us with our Lord Jesus Christ so that He forgive us our sins and trespasses.” These words have been written by the holy Anba Bamfu. He hath written and deposited them in the church of Shihat for the sake of glory and profit. May the Lord have mercy upon us by his prayers. Amen. |30 [Footnotes renumbered and moved to the end] 1. 1) [Arabic], ad aperturam. 2. 1) Hebrews XI, 24 et sequ. 3. 2) James 1, 10. 4. 3) Acts XX, 33 et sequ. 5. 4) Psalm XIX, 10.

6. 5) Luke XIV, 33. 7. 1) Cf. K. M. Kaufmann, Die Menasstadt und das Nationalheiligtum der altchristlichen Aegypter, I (Leipzig, 1910). 8. 1) I am not sure of the meaning of the text. 9. 2) Amélineau proposes to read: four. 10. 3) The text adds: not. 11. 4) i.e. blessing. 12. 1) Cf. p. 10, note 1. 13. 1) Text: [Arabic] 14. 2) Text: Ezekiel. 15. 1) The text is corrupt. 16. 2) The text has: hunger. 17. 1) Is. XXXI, 9b according to LXX.

The short Arabic version

TRANSLATION OF THE SHORT ARABIC TEXT. (Forget I, p. [Arabic] et sequ.) On this day (21 Tubih) died also the holy, pure Hilaria, the daughter of king Zeno. This king was orthodox and a friend of the church. He had two daughters, this saint and her sister, but no son. This pure maid Hilaria had from her youth an inclination for being alone. So she began to think about monasticistn and putting on the angelic habit. She left the palace of her father, dressed as a man, reached Egypt and went from there towards Shihât. There she met a holy old man, named Aba Bamu. She told him the plan she had conceived and that she was a woman. He concealed her secret and gave her a grotto to dwell in and took up the habit of visiting her. When she had passed fifteen years in the grotto without getting a beard, the old men thought her to be a eunuch and they called her Hilari the eunuch.

As to her sister, a villainous demon took hold of her. Her father spent much money on her behalf, but she was not healed. Then the advice was given him to send her to the old men in Shihat; for their fame had penetrated throughout the Roman empire, because of their holiness. So he sent her, accompanied by two masters and an escort and slaves and gave them a letter for the old men, in which he informed them of his sorrow, |33 and told them that the Lord had given him two daughters; one of them had left him and he knew not her place of abode, and he had not heard of her. The other was possessed by a demon, she whom he) had expected to be his) comfort and consolation. He asked their holiness to pray over her, that the Lord might heal her. When the old men had read the letter of the king, they prayed over her many days but she was not healed. Lastly they requested Hilari the eunuch, her sister, to take her and pray over her, but she excused herself. Then they induced her to take her and after a few days she was liberated from the demon.

The holy maid had recognised her sister, without being recognised by her; and she used to embrace and to kiss her and to go outdoors to weep. Then she brought her before the old men and said to them: ”Behold, the Lord hath healed her by your prayers”. Then they sent her to her father in peace. When she arrived, he and all the inhabitants of the castle rejoiced over her and uttered many thanksgivings to the Lord. Her father asked her about her manner of life among the old men. She told him how the holy Hilari had healed her and how he used to embrace her often and to kiss her. The king was disturbed by this fact and he sent a message to the old men wherein he told them to send Hilari the eunuch who

had healed his daughter in order to receive his blessing, whereupon the old men told her to go to the king. Then the holy maid wept grievously before all the old men and excused herself. They said to her: ”This king is pure, a friend of the |34 church. It is not allowed, according to the scriptures, to thwart him”. After a struggle she went to the king. He and his courtiers saluted her. When they were alone, the king drew near to her and uttered his suspicion about her kissing his daughter and how he had been disturbed on hearing this: he asked her to reveal him the cause of this. Only he and the queen were present.

So she said to them: ”Bring me the Gospel and swear to me, that you will not press me not to return to the desert, when I shall have spoken”. They swore, and thereupon she told them that she was their daughter Hilaria, and how she had left them disguised as a man, and showed them the signs they knew. Then they cried aloud and wept together and there was a great tumult in the castle. They said to her: ”We allow thee not to go”. But she reminded them of the oath and scarcely she agreed to stay a month with them. Then she departed to the desert. From this day onwards the king gave the revenues and the taxes to the inhabitants of the desert and all that they wanted from the revenues of Egypt, so that the number of the monks augmented greatly, and they began to inhabit the cells. As to the pure, holy Hilaria, after her coming back from her father, she lived five years; then she died and nobody knew her to be a woman, until after her death. May the blessing of her prayer be with us. Amen.

[Footnote moved to the end] 1. 1) The text has the 1st person.

The Syriac version

TRANSLATION OF THE SYRIAC TEXT.

The Story of the Holy Hilaria, the daughter of king Zeno.
For the pious, my Beloved, it is always good to occupy themselves with the holy doctrines, teaching the fear of God and leading us in the right ways which are pleasing unto God. And especially with the stories of the memory of the works of the Saints, who lived well with God and were perfect in the holy service. For there is nothing of such profit to the pious soul as such meditations which show forth the excellent life and holy works and humble habit of monasticism. For it is well known that there is no small consolation to be gathered from [an examination] as to how they lived and pleased God in humbleness; how they persisted in patience and in that love, which is a perfect sign of being a disciple of Christ, and in great works; how they persevered in steady and long fasting, how they humbled themselves in ascetic exercises beyond all power, and in performing abundant services beloved by God.

Not only blessed men have been seen doing this, but there have also been found women in all generations shining like stars in the whole world. And now, because |38 it is, as I have said, meritorious to make known by writing the memory of the deeds of the Saints, it is also beautiful for us to hand down and to write that which we have heard from trustworthy men who were eyewitnesses of the pious persons who were leading an angelic life by their deeds, and mortified their bodies by asceticism. So [we will speak] firstly about a woman of royal descent, whose story is above [the power] of our weak words. So it would be becoming for us to be silent, because of our inability, but as such a work, however weak, is of profit for such persons as are longing with a pious mind to hear such things, we will not refrain from speaking, asking the help of God, giver of knowledge.

So we will begin with the time when the famous and pious king Zeno, was reigning beautifully; he was equal in faith and love of Christ to the glorious and great Constantine; but he was vexed and suffering from his having no son and successor to the throne after his death. His desire made him frequently pray and entreat God and send to saintly-living men in mountains and caverns and monasteries, that they should ask God to grant him his wish. This he did because he was very pious and expected that on account of their intercession) with God, who loveth his elected, they could acquire all from him. So shortly after-his accession to the throne a daughter was born to him, she with whom this story dealeth, truly

a firstborn fruit of the prayer of the Saints and a reward of his rich vows. When she was sanctified by baptism, the holy sign of divine birth, she was called Hilaria. |39

She was educated as is becoming to children of faithful parents. A heavenly grace was spread over her and with her was to be found humbleness and great peacefulness; the doctrine of the holy Scriptures she learned soon and excelled by great wisdom. She had governesses who taught her the good doctrine, chaste women who were ascetically living as virgins. I mean nuns, who were visiting her constantly. While she recited with them the holy Scriptures and songs and services, there awoke in her the desire of assuming their habit. They told her about the life of holy men and humble virgins who had given themselves to God and were betrothed to Christ and had mortified their flesh by asceticism. They told her especially about the holy Fathers who were aboding in the desert of Egypt, which is called Skete. All these things she concealed secretly in her soul and hoped that they could be realised in good season. But though she was anxious to assume the holy life and to perform the duties of waking and fasting which are becoming to the holy habit, she would not do this openly because she knew that it was not agreeable to the king and queen, that she had such plans: for they hoped that she would be a source of temporal joy to them; and they thought already about her marrying and having children, that would bear the royal dignity after them.

But she, while living alone in a room in the palace, was, according to a rule of divine wisdom, symbolically practising monasticism, fasting steadily and sometimes eating only every evening or every second day, with long vigils and constant standing in prayer, day and |40 night, reading the holy Scriptures and the stories of elect holy men and holy women. Meanwhile she looked for the realisation of the plan which she had conceived namely to go away secretly and to adopt the solitary life in the foreign country. She hoped fervently to see the Egyptian desert and to live with the solitary ascetics there.

Now her parents, the king and queen, were usually admitted to see her every fifth or tenth day, according to the rule laid down by her; because she would not converse with them frequently, for she lived in a retired manner and was in this way quietly practising the habit of chastety and humbleness under a pretext. Then it happened that the king, when visiting her, perceived that the grace and royal beauty, that was spread over her handsome face, was fading away, that her body was becoming emaciated, that her strength was diminishing and day by day she was fading away and decaying and that she was sinking into a serious decline. So he said: ”What hath befallen thee, my daughter? Perhaps thou art sick and, because of thy bashfulness, thou wilt not reveal it to us? Or is there a sickness of heart of which thou informest us not? Verily, thou givest us much trouble and pain, on seeing thee fading away and decaying like one wounded and sick”. But she said to them: ”Suffer not anyhow, my father; for there is nothing that maketh me suffer, nor is there a pain that troubleth me. On the contrary, my heart rejoiceth very much, because thou art spared and enjoyest peace”. So she cheered them up by these words.

As a rule her waiting-woman with whom she had intercourse brought her food from the palace, dishes of all kinds; but she took only the bread and the rest of |41 the food she sent secretly to the poor by the medium of that servant. When she had lived in such a way five years, steadily fasting every second day (she was at that time five and twenty years old), she thought that this was the time for going away to the abode she was longing for; but how could this plan be carried out if she Was seen by her servant every day? And if she were to be sought in vain, they would turn every stone and seek her in every direction and there would be no means of escaping. But what devised she and what contrived she? She adopted the rule of delaying [the visits of her servant] more and more, saying to her: "To day I have got food that will be sufficient for three days; trouble me not with thy visit till the fourth day hence. Let nobody know this; otherwise thou wilt be in danger on my account. But take the food, which is given to thee to bring it me, and take it secretly to the poor. And if my parents ask thee, say, as usually: She hath taken and eaten it". In this way she would, when being ready to go away, be able to prolong the interval between her visits and hinder her from entering during five days or more, in order to be able to reach a far distance on her journey before being sought and missed.

Thus she did during one year, saying to her servant: "Till the fourth day hence approach not unto my door". And soon she said: "Till the fifth day", and then: "Till the seventh". When the day had come, that she was prepared for going away, she said secretly to her servant: "Take this dinar and buy for it a coat of hair and sandals and a cowl, but let nobody see or know it, for I will |42 give this to that nun, which often visiteth me, because I see that she is poorly dressed". The servant took the dinar and accomplished all according to her command. After a few days Hilaria said to her: "Visit me not during five days". Thereupon she prepared herself for departing, took off the princely dress she was wearing and put on the coat of hair and the sandals. Then she threw on the capuchin, took some food and some money for expenses and went away in the morning, while no one saw her, to the seashore which was not very far from the town, while a steady prayer was in her mouth and tears stood in her eyes.

Thus she prayed: "O God, Thou who guidest the Saints and leadest them on Thy eternal way, who art everywhere with them and leavest them never, lead me on this way and direct my feet on the way of salvation and bring me to the place which I long for, that I may have intercourse with Thy Saints and serve Thee with them in holiness and praise Thee eternally". Now it happened that, by divine Providence, at that time a ship was ready for departing in the direction of Egypt, to Alexandria, the place where she wished to go to. When she had asked the people there and had heard "what she hoped, she gave the fare and embarked. And nobody of those who saw her, knew whether she was a man or a woman, because she was dressed humbly and chastely in the humble monastic dress and in the royal residence there were many of such monks and nuns; so those who saw her thought that she was like the rest.

The ship sailed and reached Egypt in a few days. |43 Then she left the ship, entered Alexandria and visited the holy places there, churches and monasteries and strengthened herself by the prayers of those who were performing in holiness the service there. While she was still walking through the town she saw an old hermit, an excellent man of those of the desert. Addressing him she asked in the first place after the way of living of the hermits in the desert, and whether they received strangers gladly into their community, and which place or convent was the first to be reached in the desert. The hermit said to her: ”Their way of living is that each of them reciteth separately and in his own way and every one accomplisheth the holy service in his cell, which he leaveth not during the whole week. But on Sundays, at the time of the ministration of the holy sacrifice, they go to the church that is situated in the midst of the cells and partake of the holy sacraments. Some of them cover their faces with their caps so as not to see anyone and not to be seen by anyone; every one fasteth as he chooseth and according to his strength, some of them every second day, others every third or fourth day. The conspicuous take food only once a week.

This consisteth of dry bread and olives, sometimes they take also boiled vegetables; others feed upon herbs like the beasts. The monastery which is at the entrance of the desert is called that of Aba Macarius. It is said that the number of hermits belonging to it, amounteth to three thousand. And as to their love of strangers, it is great, praiseworthy and divine. But they admit amongst them no beardless youths nor indulgeth any one in seeing a woman”. |44 When she heard this she replied and asked after the way to the desert. He told it her and she made an obeisance before him and received his blessing) and each of them went his own way, without knowing the other’s sex and without asking after it. When he was far from her and out of sight, she knelt down in order to pray before God and thus she spoke: ”Our Lord Jesus Christ, the life and salvation that hath dawned for us, thou who hast come to seek the forlorn, and to bring back to the way of truth those who have gone astray, Thou who leadest Thy Saints to the eternal way ---- turn to me the lost one, for I seek Thee, my Lord, and lead me at Thy right hand to Thy way of life, for Thee alone my soul loveth. And direct my feet in the way of salvation and receive me into Thy good harbour. For Thou art my strong hope and in Thee I have confided from my youth, now and for ever. Amen”.

When she had finished her prayer and sealed herself with the holy sign, she took the way to the desert while continually prayer was in her mouth. After three days of travelling, she reached the convent of Aba Macarius, at the entrance of the desert. It was a sabbathday, and while she was passing between the cells she saw none of the solitaries without the door of his cell. She ventured not to knock at a door; but on going round in order to find some one, she came to the church, their place of congregation. She entered to pray and saw the Presbyter who constantly was aboding there. After having finished her prayer, she asked his blessing, and he invited her to take rest, |45 saying: ”From where cometh your pious person, o Father? and what is the cause, why thou visitest us, poor creatures?” For he thought that she was a man because of her manly dress and the changed colour of her face which had become dusky and black.

And thus she answered him in a manly tone: "Your servant, Father, cometh from Constantinople, in order to be the disciple of your holiness, if it please God and you". The Presbyter said: "What is Thy name?" She answered: "John the eunuch. As to my class I am a slave and I belonged to a noble and well-known Roman) man and performed with him the service of a slave. And when he deceased in peace, he freed me. Then being master of my own person, I have sought to please God above all and from fear of God I assumed the holy habit. But I had an infinite longing to see the Saints who in this desert are living ascetically and devoting their lives to God, and to pass the rest of my life with them. For that reason I have hastened to come to you now". Thereupon the Presbyter said: "Thy coming is right, Father. Stay here and take rest to-day. Tomorrow, which is a Sunday, the solitaries will assemble here as usually in order to partake of the holy sacrifice".

So on Sunday morning, at the third hour the solitaries assembled into the above mentioned church; and when they had partaken of the sacramental sacrifice, the Presbyter told them the story of John, the eunuch. On their wish, she) was brought before them and throwing herself at their feet, her) lips murmered a prayer, |46 while she) was trembling from fear, that it might be known who and what) she) was. Then they prayed over her, blessed her, spoke to her words of admonition and taught her how to conduct herself; they gave her also a separate cell and ordered a very old man in her neighbourhood: "Take John the eunuch and let him be as a son to thee and take care to be his guide in the doctrine which is necessary and in the rules laid down amongst us". Thereupon the old man took her with him and showed her the cell and she dwelt amongst them and regulated her life as they did, in good work and labour. ----Thus far about her departing and arriving in the desert. ----

As to the governess which had served her while being in the royal palace, when the days had passed during which Hilaria had forbidden her to enter, she went to her service and saw that Hilaria was gone and that her royal garments were put aside in a corner of the apartment she at once understood that Hilaria had gone to devote herself to the service of God, and that therefore she had wanted the coat of hair and the capuchin. Weeping and crying she went to the queen and told her what had happened but she revealed nothing about the rule of her food and her [rare] visits to her; for she was afraid of being endangered, because she had not told them the secret. The king and the queen, being troubled by what they had heard, went to the apartment, and seeing that |47 their daughter Hilaria had gone, they were in great sorrow and grief.

The king wept, sobbing in a loud voice, and thus lamented: "Woe, my beloved daughter. Who hath severed thee from me? How can I live without thee, support of my old age, crown on my head? Now may death hasten to me and take from me the trouble that never can be consoled away". When the nobles of the king heard what had happened, they came to lament with him. At once they sent messengers in all directions to ask and to seek. The convents were also examined but she was not found. After a few days the king recovered from his trouble, because he was certain that she had gone to devote herself to God. And Hilaria, being in the desert of Skete, was going through great struggles and performing

works of self-denial above human strength, in many vigils and long fasting, so that even the solitaries wondered at her endurance and patience.

And she was praiseworthy and great in the eyes of all people of her class, because of her great humility and her placidity and meekness. When she had passed ten years in the desert, another daughter was born to her father the king. When this girl was five years of age, she was tried by the Evil-one. And as the Devil attacked her vehemently, her father said to himself: "There is no hope of healing my daughter, except by the prayers of the solitaries in Skete, who are very near to God and are allowed to speak to Him)". |48 Thus he resolved in his mind and prepared for her departing. He ordered a trustworthy man, one of his relatives, and he and an escort of soldiers took her, went on their way and reached the desert. The solitaries had heard of this and many of them had departed, lest they should be seen by the soldiers and the other persons. John the eunuch too had hid himself, without knowing the case exactly.

When the messengers of the king arrived, they told the monks about his belief and his hope on them and explained the reason of their coming. They left the girl with them and returned to the king without delay. On the next day the solitaries returned to their places and discussed to whom they should entrust the little girl. They choosed John the eunuch because he was a eunuch and advanced in holiness. Thereupon they sent for him and said to him: "The Fathers have discussed with whom the girl should be; and all of them agreed upon giving her to thee, be thou her support and teacher". Being forced thus he obeyed their will and took the girl to his cell. One time Hilaria asked the girl: "Answer, my sister, what I ask thee. What is the name of thy father, and what is the name of thy mother?" The girl said: "My father is called Zeno, my mother Augusta". She asked again: "Have they a son or daughter besides thee?" The girl answered: "I have no brother or sister at all, but as I have heard of my mother, who told it me weeping, before my birth they had another daughter, named Hilaria. But she went away from them secretely and nobody knoweth what became of her. They sought her industriously but she was not found". |49

When she heard this from her, she knew certainly that the girl was her sister, the daughter of the parents who had borne herself and with the fervour of a love not to be checked, she embraced her, the tears dropping from her eyes, on account of the girl's saying: "My mother told me weeping, that they had another daughter before me, who went away from them secretly". When the girl had passed five years with Hilaria, she got recovery from the Lord and became excellent in wisdom and knowledge. She was also distinguished by humbleness and chastity, because Hilaria had taken great care to adorn her with all praiseworthy qualities. So, when the messengers of the king, whom he used to send in order to get tidings of the girl, came, the Fathers sent her with them to her father. After her arrival, he noticed during his intercourse with her, that she excelled in wisdom and good works, and that she had got spiritual as well as bodily aid, being freed from the influence of the Evil one. So he rejoiced greatly and thanked and praised God.

He asked her: ”My daughter, who was it to whom thou wast entrusted and with whom thou hast been? And how was he treating thee? For I will reward him with becoming signs of honour”. The girl answered plainly: ”When I was sent by thy majesty and the old men had taken me up, they discussed the next day to whom they should entrust me. And they agreed opon giving me to a trustworthy man, whose name is John the eunuch. With him I have been thenceforth and I have improved by him. He shew unto me an infinite love and honoured me greatly. I have never seen him eating before my eyes, nor lying down on the floor to sleep. |50 But when he was overcome by sleep, he would lean against the wall for some time and so he took some comfort from sleep. Innumerable was his kneeling down on the floor, and he ceased not praying and reciting night and day. He took food only once a week”.

When the king heard this, he was grieved and he took up evil suspicions against John the eunuch, thinking that he was no eunuch. Being anxious to examine the matter exactly and to be relieved from his care, he sent for John and about ten of the other old men. Here Providence was already at work, in order to make known who John was and that he might be a good example to the glory of God. When John and his companions had arrived, he lodged them in a quiet place as was becoming to their habit. But he took John and introduced him separately into the palace and held with him many discourses.

Hilaria had a cowl covering her face lest her father should recognise her. While she spoke to him words of admonition an unchecked stream of tears flowed from her eyes, on seeing her father and mother and her sister that was healed. But the king thought that her tears came from repentance. Sometime afterwards, the king said to her: ”I have heard of the beautiful things thou art working and of the good thou hast wrought towards my daughter and that she hath received healing from the Lord by thy hands. I have called and forced thee to come towards me, that I may be deemed worthy of seeing thee and being helped by thy prayers and that my house may be blessed by thy footsteps. But I wish to hear from thee who thou art and from where thou earnest to the desert, and what |51 thy sex is”. She answered: ”Why askest thou me about this, the poorest and most miserable of all children of man? But, now that thou wilt know it, I say: as to my class I am a slave and as to my sex a eunuch. My lord freed me when dying; and being my own master I sought God, the true Lord, above all; Him I loved and to his service I devoted myself. Above all places, I have chosen the dwelling in the desert in order to receive support from the Saints there, by whose prayers I have had the joy of healing the girl”.

When the king had interrogated her circumstantially and revealed the trouble of his thoughts and the doubts of his heart, she resolved to relieve him from his cares and from the thoughts which were making a pernicious war against his soul. For she pitied him as a good father and a just king. She said to him: ”I will reveal to thee a secret. But swear to me first by the Lord, that thou shalt accomplish my will in all things 1 ask and that thou shalt not oppose me in any thing I wish and that this secret shall not be revealed to any one besides the queen and the girl”. When Hilaria had said this to the king, the tears flowed

unchecked from her eyes and she was choked by sobbing. The king swore to her plainly, without thinking of who she might be, for her face was invisible by the cowl which covered it and her speech was altered) by reciting in the Egyptian language; and, besides, twenty years had elapsed since she left them, and he thought that she had already died.

When she saw that the king had given his assurance |52 by his oath, she took them with her to an inner apartment, took the capuchin off, uncovered her face, showed herself to him and said: "I am whom thou seest, Hilaria, the poor, thy daughter whom thou knowest". When the king and the queen heard the name Hilaria, they were disturbed and they swooned and fell down on the floor and were as dead. When Hilaria saw what happened and that her parents were near dying, she took water and signed them with the cross, and sprinkled it on their faces, so that they revived and rose. The king weeped vehemently and they were in great sorrow and scarcely could check their crying and weeping. Then the king and the queen threw themselves at her and kissed her eyes and her hands. Some time afterwards the king, having recovered from his weeping, said to her: "Hilaria, my beloved daughter, it is a great thing to me, to have seen to-day in thee, that an offspring pleasing to God cometh forth from me and that I may give to God a daughter who is accepted by Him. If thou wouldst only show me this kindness". Hilaria said: "What wishest thou?" The king said: "I have sworn the oath, and thy will shall be accomplished wholly. Only, if thou art willing, allow me to make for thee and those with thee a dwelling-place in our neighbourhood, that will be an abode to thee, in the same manner as there, be it for dwelling separately or commonly, as thou desirest".

But Hilaria agreed not with this, speaking: "It is not well to alter the beautiful institutions which have pleased to the Ancients, and to change a place which has been fittingly set apart by the chosen Fathers for their rest and abode. But, if thou allowest, we soon will |53 take leave in peace. The king submitted to her will and withstood not the word of her mouth concerning all which she said to him". Five days afterwards, he dismissed her and those with her. And they gave them presents and signs of honour and gifts of gold and silver, and tapers and perfumes and oil, and costly garments for adorning the altars and churches of the convents in the desert. But Hilaria accepted not the gold and the silver saying: "Gold and silver are usually not to be seen, in the desert. But we will take these other presents". Secretly she said to him: "If thou wilt, we shall spend this gold and silver for works which I will mention to thee. There are places in the desert, where the solitaries are distressed by want of water and the large distance of it. Others are unfit for dwelling, because of the absence of materials necessary for buildings. Send a trustworthy man and let him dig pits and build well-secured dwelling-places and make holes and hidden caves for those who wish to dwell in them secretly, not openly. This will give thee the wages of righteousness".

Her father said to her: "Ay, beloved mistress, I shall accomplish all according to thy wish". Then she took leave and departed from the palace with weeping and crying, and reached the desert of Skete, with the Fathers who were accompanying her. A few days afterwards the king sent a trustworthy man according to Hilaria's wish. He gave him much money

for the expenses of the buildings and for erecting well-secured towers. And thus he spake to him: "Go straightway to John who is called the eunuch; he will tell thee what to do, accomplish his will". |54 When this trustworthy man arrived he did all that Hilaria told him; [he made] cells and pits and caves fit for dwelling therein and high, well-secured houses. Having finished all, he went back in peace. Hilaria took up her former way of life, struggling in work and difficult tasks. Her father sent continually messengers to her.

So within every month he sent some one to ask about her, secretly, nobody knowing of it. But this remained not concealed from the solitaries; although not knowing it certainly, yet they presumed John to be a relative or an acquaintance of the king. From that time they began to show her) signs of honour in the assemblies and in the church. When she perceived their presumption, she began to be afraid that gradually her position might become known and her labour might be lost by vain glory. So she left them secretly, while they perceived it not, and went to a more remote part of the desert. She concealed herself in a suitable cave in the earth, which she found according to her desire. At fixed intervals she went through the ravine, which led from the bottom of her cave under the earth to the ground, and got up to take the fresh air during a long time. At the mouth of the cave was a well and a little garden of wild vegetables. Whenever she wanted some food she took it there, and drank from the well; so she lived in the cave for ten years. The whole time of her staying in the desert was thirty years. By her heavy labour she was fast decaying so that she, from weakness and old age, |55 lay down on the bottom of her cave to perform her prayer to God. At that time God exhorted three solitaries of the desert, Aba Isidorus and Aba Isaie and Aba Isak, to go through the desert in order to visit the solitaries. They took with them fruits and bread made of flour, garments and coats, to provide and strengthen the sick and weak people with, if they should find them; or if they were dead, to shroud their corpses and to bury them honourably.

On their march through the desert, one day at noontime, they came near the place where Hilaria was living and hearing from within the earth a sound of groaning as from a sick person they wondered and investigated what it might be; so they found the entrance of the ravine on the surface of the earth, but, on going down to enter it they feared that that sound might come from a wild animal there. Going round they perceived the garden and the well and signs of human footsteps. Then they understood that a solitary must be living there. They took heart and entered the ravine and reaching the bottom of the cave, they saw a light as clear as daylight, as the rays of the sun. Then they looked and saw a human being lying on the ground and groaning; the hair of the head was white as wool. When they had prayed and said: "Bless me my Lord", she raised her eyes, perceived them, rose quickly and received them with a salutation. Then they sat down and asked about her coming there, saying: "When hast thou come here, Father? and from which direction hath come thy pious person?"

For they presumed her to be a man. She answered them and spoke with them excellent |56 words. At last she said to them: "My Fathers, you are sent to-day by God, in order to

bury me". Then she rose, and prayed. Having finished her prayer, she stretched herself on the earth and entrusted her spirit to God. When the Fathers saw that she was dead they praised God and took her immediately from that cave to the ground. There they performed over her the burial service and were going, as was becoming, to shroud her body, presuming her to be an ascetic man like others, who are beardless by great heat). But touching her corpse outwardly, they perceived it to be a woman's and, full of astonishment, they praised Christ, who kindleth the fire of His Love in all mankind, men and women, old men and youths and children.

Then they buried her as she was, and interred her. While their lips murmured a hymn of praise, they went to wash their hands in the well from which she used to drink and to eat of the vegetables there in order to receive a blessing thereby. But they found that well dried up and the garden withered; but in the cave where she had lived, the water rose, and went up to the surface of the earth and streamed there. Then they praised still more on account of a wonder, the like of which they had neither seen nor heard. They stayed there three days, entreating God and saying: "O Lord, show thy servants who thy servant was and from where she came". When the days of death were over, in a divine revelation, there was said to them: "Make a memorial-day for the odour) which was accepted by God, three |57 days before, which belongeth to Hilaria, the daughter of king Zeno, who, while dwelling amongst you before, was called John the eunuch". Three days afterwards they departed and went and told the Fathers what they had seen.

This is the Life and holy works of Hilaria. We, chaste brethren and faithful sisters, being envious of the works of the Saints, must imitate their beautiful deeds and perform good works, that we may attain life everlasting, of which we may be deemed worthy by the Grace and Love of Christ. To Him be praise with His Father and the Holy Spirit for ever and ever. Amen. Here endeth the story of Hilaria, the daughter of king Zeno, who left the house of her parents secretly and led an ascetic life in the desert of Egypt. [Footnotes renumbered and moved to the end] 1. 1) Parrhsi/a . 2. 1) Litt, his prayer. 3. 1) i. e. Byzantine. 4. 2) The MS. has the masculine. 5. 1) The MS. has the masculine. 6. 2) I. e. her sex. 7. 1) Litt.: Who have parrhsi/a. 8. 1) According to a correction of the text.

9. 1) MS. "him". 10. 1) Cf. the Introduction. 11. 2) Cf. Acta Martyrum , ed. Bedjan, I, 187, 17.

The short Karshuni version

TRANSLATION OF THE SHORT KARSHUNI TEXT (V). It is told that Hilaria, the daughter of king Zeno, when she heard of the desert and the monks living there, left the kingdom and fled to the desert disguised as a servant. The Father of the desert received her; the Holy Ghost had revealed to him that she was a woman. But he concealed this and put her into a grotto, where she remained thirteen years, praying with the monks till her skin grew black, her appearence became altered and her bones grew thin. She reached a high degree of ascetism. When the old men saw that she remained beardless, they called her the eunuch, but her name was Alaria. It happened that her sister became insane in a vehement manner, so that her father and her mother were sorry for her sake. He said: "I will give half of my kingdom to him who healeth my daughter." But he found no one. Then there was told to him: "In Wadi Habib, near Alexandria, dwelleth a monk, called the eunuch. When he prayeth over insane persons, they are healed. He is a disciple of a disciple of Abu Macarius."

The king wrote to the governor of Alexandria, in this way: "We have heard, that in Wadi Habib, in the neighbourhood of thy city, there is a monk who healeth insane persons. We send to thee a sick person, dear to us, with an escort. When he reacheth thee, accompany him to that place. The king sent with her) much money |61 and many of those in his confidence. When they reached Alexandria [on their way] to Wâdi Habib, the governor with his soldiers encamped at a distance. Then he took the girl with her trustworthy servants to the monastery of the monks. He told the old men what the matter was. Immediately they called the eunuch. When her sister entered, Hilaria recognized her without being recognized. She wept and kept her with her seven days, weeping and praying over her. When she slept, she held her on her bosom. She used to kiss her eyes. On the seventh day the demon left her; her companions took her and journeyed with her to their country.

When they reached Constantinople and her parents saw that she was healed, they rejoiced greatly and gave opulent alms. Being alone with her they asked her about what had happened to her during her abode in that place. She told them every circumstance and how the holy eunuch (I mean her sister) had healed her. The king was very angry; he said: "A monk, a slave, healeth the sick and abuseth his monastic state in order to look on a woman; prayeth and holdeth her on his breast and kisseth her eyes." He wrote to the governor, ordering him to send the eunuch. The goyernor did so. When the monk was introduced to

the king and he saw his person, he received him, standing, very graciously, and took his blessing. But the monk was like a shadow or a spider: his skin had grown black and his bones had become thin. The king regretted to have summoned him. Afterwards he was alone with him and asked him about what his daughter had told him. He answered: "How troublest thou me and restrainest me from doing my duty by |62 [forcing me to reveal] what I am not bound to reveal to thee. In the presence of the Gospel and the patriarch thou shalt swear to me that thou wilt let me go to my place of abode."

He swore to him, that, after having been entrusted with the secret, he would immediately let him go to the monastery without restraining him. She thought: "There remaineth for me in the world only so and so much." When she was sure of him on account of his oaths, she said: "I am thy daughter Hilaria. Thou believest this not?" He believed her not until she had communicated to him some peculiarities he knew about her and she had told the story of her life, and shown to her mother a token on her body. Then they wept vehemently and pressed her on their bosom. She stayed with them three days. Then she returned to her dwelling place in Wadi Habib, as if she were a servant. For she had made them swear that they would not betray her state. The king sent many treasures with her to that place. Then she built .....) and fortified houses and churches and monasteries all over the desert. And the king ceased not to send these gifts [yearly] till after the death of his daughter. And the other kings followed his example by providing for this place, till Islam appeared. The church of Abu Macarius was built in Wadi Habib.

Their prayers be with us. Amen. [Footnotes moved to end and renumbered] 1. 1) The text has: him. 2. 1) [...] which I do not understand.

The long Karshuni version

TRANSLATION OF THE LONG KARSHUNI TEXT. In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, one God, we begin to write, with the help and assistance of God, the story of king Zeno and his wife Shams al-Munir and the chosen Hilaria their daughter. May their prayer and blessings be with us. Amen. There was a faithful king and his name was Zeno. He and his wife were honourable, just and merciful in their life like our noble father and mother Abraham and Sara and like the chosen Isaac and Rebecca, going the way of our father Jacob and Rachel, the Ancients. They were of honourable origin, but they had sorrow in this world because they were barren and had no child nor heir to govern towns and cities after their decease. One day, by the working of the grace of the Lord Christ, who loveth mankind (honour and praise to him for ever. Amen.) they conceived a plan and they spoke one to the other: ”Let us take a part of this money and go to the desert and the monasteries and to the temples of God and to the caverns and mountain-caves and to the clefts which are beneath the earth in darkness .....) who are bound, in a way pleasing to |66 God, by their own will, who are nourished and whose thirst is quenched, and who are all provided for by our Lord Jesus Christ, every one according to his wish and need; let us request them to stand before Christ and to pray for us; perhaps God will grant us a child whereby we shall be consoled for the rest of our lifetime.

So they went with zeal and warm faithfulness and with tears which flowed so as to soak their garments and with sighs which would remove mountains, partly on account of their sins and partly from longing for offspring. They reached the venerable places and attained their end by the power of Christ, for the sincere faithfulness that was in their heart. Then they returned to their appartments with joy and gladness. After the completion of a certain number of days Shams al-Munir perceived [that she was pregnant]. She said to the faithful king Zeno: ”My husband, rejoice; by the grace of the Lord and the prayers of the Fathers I perceive that I am pregnant”. Then he thanked God and began to show the monasteries and the poor still more mercy and care; till the blessed bore a girl whose beauty was not equalled in her time. Seven days afterwards she was baptized and called Hilaria, the fruit of prayer, and he) used to call her by this name.

When she had grown up and had come to years of discretion, her father built for her a pavilion and a beautiful appartment, the most beautiful of his country. And he sent [someone]

to ask and to search in the whole town for a chaste, pious, learned woman, able to read the holy Scriptures. When she was brought into the presence of |67 the king and the queen and they spoke to her, she answered in the best manner. Then they praised and thanked God for granting them their wish. Then king Zeno took the hand of his daughter and they entrusted her to her governess, in order to teach her good demeanour and science and reading, that her intellect might shine and her demeanour be beautiful. The chaste woman received [her] with gladness and great joy, kissed the feet of the king and the queen, took the hand of the chosen [maid] and went away confiding in God. He) sent with them two blessed old men to wait at the door, and food and drink and servants and utensils, suiting to royal rank. Every fifth day the king took the queen and they visited their daughter, the fruit of prayer, and the joy of their heart.

In this blessed state and good demeanour she stayed for six years; then Christ would lead her to perfection. She used to read in the stories of the martyrs and the narratives of the saints which had reached perfection in the desert. Then her heart thirsted and she loved them warmly and longed for dwelling with and amongst them. So she began to fast, to pray and to observe vigils and to shed tears, the beginning of every [spiritual] gift and of remission of sins. But her beauty began to wither. Her governess observed her and said to her: ”My daughter, I see thy beauty withered.” She made an obeisance for her and said: ”[This is caused] by my longing for meeting the saints and living amongst them. My heart is thirsting vehemently after seeing them; I hope that thy venerable person will hide me from my |68 father and mother. All food, which is brought, I shall, give to the poor; perhaps God will open for us a way to the desert by their prayers”. In this state she remained for a year. As she withered her parents observed her and said to her: ”Our daughter, blood of our hearts, we find thee withering in a vehement way and we are sorry for thy sake; is there not a secret sorrow which thou revealest not to us?” She smiled and said: ”What sorrow can he have, who enjoyeth such honour, who hath so many servants, and whose parents converse with him? Be good to me, that I may lead this agreeable life in your shadow”. So she comforted their heart by her words; they rejoiced when she spoke to them in this way; they took leave from her, kissed her and said to her: ”Remain in peace”. They greeted also her governess and went to their castle and court.

When the chosen [maid] perceived that they observed her she feared they would thwart her and her work would be idle; so she stood the whole night praying and shedding tears like rain; she beseeched God to save and liberate her according to His will and good pleasure. The next morning her governess came to her. They greeted one another and the chosen Hilaria took a golden dinar and gave it her governess, saying: ”I request thee to buy for me to day a monk’s habit”. She went to the porter and said to him: ”Run and buy for this dinar a cowl and a mantle and a habit, which must be worn out”. He went and brought her what she had commanded; she took it and went to the chosen maid who took it with joy and gladness. They wept together till their garments were soaked by tears. Then they took leave from one another. Hilaria, the |69 pure, said to her governess: ”From to day till after three days visit me not, in order that, if they ask thee, thou mayest swear sincerely: ”I

know not where she hath gone to, nor at what time she hath departed". She accepted her command and this was an achievance from God, strong is His name, exalted His praise.

She rose in the midst of the night and departed confiding in God, reciting psalms and praises and sanctifications to Our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom may be glory and praise. He sent her the angel of grace and protected her wholly against the animals and the children of man, till she arrived at Suk Misr). While she passed she saw a monk who was going his way, his head bent. She went up to him and saluted him. He answered her salutation. Then she began to ask him about the way of living of the monks in the desert and as to which monastery was the first to be reached and what its name was. He informed her about their whole way of living and said: "The first monastery thou wilt reach is that of Abu Macarius; therein are three hundred monks; part of them feedeth upon grass like the beasts; another part fasteth one, two or three days and [then] eateth some bread; part of them sleepeth not and all are, according to Christ's good pleasure, standing night and day". She said to him: "Pray over me and give me thy prayer), that I may reach them and dwell amongst them". Then they prayed over one another and went their way both of them.

She went, confiding in God, barefoot, on the thorns |70 and pebbles and thistles till the blood ran from her feet and the sun had burnt her skin and her beauty had faded away and she had become like an Abessinian. When she reached the gate of the monastery by the grace of Christ, she knocked and the porter came and opened the door saying: "What is thy wish, my brother?" He) answered: "To dwell with your holiness, if it please Christ". He said: "Stay here, my brother, till I shall have informed the prior of the monastery." He went and informed the prior of the monastery; then the prior of the monastery came to Hilaria, the chosen. When he came near her she rose towards him, made an obeisance and saluted and kissed his feet and his hands. He embraced her and said: "Blessed be thy coming to us, my child; by thy prayer God may protect our monastery from Satan". Then he) sobbed and wept. The prior of the monastery began to interrogate him saying: "From where art thou, my lord, and what is thy country and thy family? Inform me truly about

thy coming and all thy affairs". He answered: "My name is John the eunuch. I know neither father nor mother other than the Lord who created me. I was the slave of a king. When he was at the point of death he freed me. Meditating I said to myself: "The service of the children of man and of earthly kings is nothing in comparison with [the service] of the king of heaven and earth". Then I went confiding in God, bought this garment from a monk, changed my dress, till I came under the feet of your holiness, our Father. I request |71 from your holiness to guide me by your excellency and bounty. Then grace came down) upon the prior of the monastery and he knew that he) was one of the Lord's chosen. He put before him food and water to drink after the hot journey. Then he ordered the wooden gong to be rung and all the brethren assembled, three hundred in number. They brought water and washed his feet and drank the water in order to obtain a blessing. Then they put on him the holy habit, glory on glory and honour on honour), and grace came down upon him and upon the whole monastery. When they looked upon him joy and gladness increased among

them. They gave him a cell that he might perform his works as he liked; whereupon he prostrated himself at the feet of the brethren, received their prayer) and went to his cell. Then he began to do his hard works so that all the brethren and the prior of the monastery were ashamed by the ardour of his labour. ---- Now we shall return to her father Zeno and her mother.

As usually they rose and went to the castle. The old men came and opened the doors; then they entered. Now she would run to meet her mother and her father joyfully and to salute them. When they entered they perceived the disorder and traces of her, but they heard no sound. They called for the governess, who began to tremble, so that she could not answer them. When they reached the room, where their daughter used to sleep, |72 they found that she had laid off her silk garments and the golden girdle which was round her waist and her shoes and that she had departed barefoot. Then the king said: ”Tell me, woman, and be not afraid, whether thou knowest where she hath gone to”. She swore to them: ”I know not where she hath gone to, nor at which time she hath departed. But three days before she gave me a golden dinar and said to me: ”I beg thee to buy for me a monk’s habit”. Then I went and bought what she wished”. Then they understood that she had gone to the desert. The king beat his breast and threw the crown from his head and began to recite about what had befallen him regarding his daughter:

”O star, that sparkled upon me, and now hath set and become obscure, O moon, that shone upon me, and now is eclipsed and become dark”. And he said: ”Thou, Lord, who makest the rivers flow and hast created the creatures in the deepest depth, that they praise Thy holy name; Thou hast created the trees and hast adorned them by beautiful fruit, that they give praises to thy great name”. With the axes of his sighs he demolished mountains and with the soap of his tears he washed his garments, saying: ”Thou, who gavest back Joseph to our father Jacob so that his sorrow and his grief ceased, just so I expect from Thy generosity, that I may see her with my eyes and augment praise and glory to Thy name”. While he recited and lamented and wept those who heard him trembled from awe before his words. And the old men cried in the metre of Mar Jacob: |73

(”The righteous have bewailed their beloved with great sorrow, Because resurrection was hidden from them and not spoken out, Abraham bewailed Sara when he buried her And accompanied and interred her with great mourning before the eyes of many. Abraham was bewailed by his heir Isaac. And when Isaac died he was bewailed by Jacob. Joseph and his brethren mourned seventy days and bewailed the old Jacob when he had died)”. Then he) threw the crown from his head; her mother p. laid aside the royal robe and put on a coat of hair and put off her veil and began to lament and to utter bitter words, till the hard stones would weep with her. She said: ”Had I wings like the dove and strength like the eagle, I should fly round the blood of my heart and make cease this heavy sorrow and grief. I must lament with the lamenting dove and cry with the nightingale when she crieth in the trees. So I lament and cry over ----the blood of my heart which hath ruined my strength and vigour and hath gone. She said in the metre of Mar Ephrem:

(This is the gate full of mercy, In it is mercy. Enter, o sinner, and beg mercy From thy Lord who is full of mercy). Weep, ye daughters of Eve, with me over a ewe which had one lamb and the wolf came and fetched it, and now how can the ewe be consoled? And over a |74 dove which had one cub and the hawk fetched it, and now whereby can the dove be consoled? And over a vineyard which had one bunch and the sparrows came and picked it away and now whereby can the vineyard be consoled? O wine in a glass, O rose of the gardens which hath withered now. O myrtle, whose odours I used to smell when the zephyr blew, which would heal my sickness". Her mother and her father remained for three days weeping and lamenting. And after three days they opened the treasuries and gave gold to the slaves of the court and said to them: "Go and search in all monasteries and dwellings of hermits; perhaps you will find the light of my eye and the blood of my heart". He took with him his bodyguard and marched towards the desert till he reached the monastery where his daughter was serving her Lord. The monks feared from awe before the king and flew into the desert. When the king...) they asked him saying:

"What is thy wish, happy king"? He beat his breast and lamented and wept, saying: "My child Hilaria, the fruit of prayer, hath flown from between my hands and, we know not what hath passed her, we hope that your holiness will, stand praying and beseeching God; perhaps He will accept your prayer and as He hath done the first time, when He gave me her, He will give her back to us this time by your prayers". They rang the wooden gong and three hundred monks assembled. They stood praying and the chosen [maid], John the eunuch, amongst them. They began to beseech and to pray, that |75 Christ might reveal to them what had passed her; but she beseeched Christ to conceal it and her prayer was accepted and got the upperhand over the three hundred so that she was not found out. Then the prior of the monastery came and began to console the king saying: "Faithful and happy king (may God prolong thy life and forgive thy sins) be not grieved nor ....) over the brilliant gem which shineth before its Creator. Compare thyself with our father Abraham, how he let down the knife on the neck of Isaac to slay him. Compare thyself, O king (who may be rendered happy by his Lord) with Jephtah who sacrificed his daughter and shed her blood from love for his Lord. Compare thyself, O king (may his Lord render him happy) with the blessed Lady Shamuni, the martyr, how she sacrificed her seven sons to God with joy and gladness. So thou wilt be consoled by Christ and He will comfort thy heart by His grace. Perhaps He will grant thee another child".

The king and queen were consoled by the speech of the venerable Father and their sorrow ceased. They returned to their home being bewildered. After a short time God granted them a girl; they rejoiced over her greatly. She was brought up in the way of princely children, in the best manner, till she had finished five years of her life. Then Satan began to throw her down and to torment her vehemently. The queen said to the king: "My husband, we cannot but send her to the monastery of Abu Macarius, perhaps Christ will heal her by their prayers". The king said: "Thy advice is accepted". At once he ordered the most splendid votive |76 presents to be brought and summoned ten old men, whom he commanded to accompany His daughter to the monastery and to stay with her three days. If she was healed

then, they should take her back; but if not, they should leave her behind in the monastery till she would have been healed. They answered: ”We shall obey thy command”. They took the girl and accompanied her to the monastery, told the monks her history, and made themselves worthy of the confidence the king had put in them. They remained three days with them and, the girl being not healed, they left her behind in the monastery and returned to the king. When it was evening the prior of the monastery and the monks deliberated: ”To whom shall we entrust this girl?

They unanimously chose John the eunuch, because he was a eunuch and more abundant in performing offices and ascetic works than any of them. Then they called him and trusted to him the girl his sister, the daughter of his mother and his father. He accepted her with joy and great gladness and took her hand and they went to his cell. When they had entered the cell the chosen [maid] rose, set her sister at her side, and began to shed tears and to sigh and to beat her pure breast and to cover the ground with her face, before Christ.

After three prostrations Satan left the girl, shrieking and flying, like a slave, more black than soot. She went up to her sister, made the sign of the cross upon her and embraced her. She praised the Lord and thanked Him, accepting the signs of His grace, for this gift and the healing which had taken place at her hands. Then she began to speak with her sister in rest and tranquillity, saying: ”What is the name of the king thy |77 father and of thy mother?” She answered: ”The name of my mother is Shams al-Munir and the name of my father is king Zeno”. She said: ”May Christ inspire them with righteousness, prolong their kingdom and give them victory over their enemies”. She answered: ”Amen. It may be according to thy word and by thy prayer”.

When she had given this sweet answer, Hilaria perceived that she was completely healed from her sickness. Then she asked, saying: ”Hast thou brethren or sisters? She answered: ”No, Father, I have no brother nor sister. But sometimes my mother sighed and shed tears. When I asked: ”Why weepest thou, mother?”, she said: ”I had a daughter, named Hilaria; she left her castle in the dead of night and we have heard nothing of her”. While she told this, the holy maid shed tears; she said: ”May the Lord help her and console her sorrow and....”). She answered: ”Amen. May it be by thy prayer, our Father. May thy word be accepted”. Then Hilaria began to teach her reading and knowledge and demeanour and agreeable speech and dignity. And by the prayer of the holy maid, her mind was opened and she began to read and to interpret like one of the old and learned men. After two months the men came to fetch her. They brought presents and all sorts of good things. They asked after the girl and it was told them that she was healed. When she was brought into their presence and they had saluted her, she gave the best answer and began to ask about her parents in most beautiful words. Then they praised God and thanked [Him for] His bounty and kissed the feet of the prior |78 of the monastery and of those who were present with him.

They stayed with them three days, till they had overcome the fatigue of the journey, then they took the girl and returned to their abode and castle. When she met her mother and

father, they were struck by her good colour and beauty. She began to tell them about the inhabitants of the monastery. Her father said to her: ”My beloved, who was the man that healed thee, who was so benevolent towards thee? [Tell us], then we shall honour him. Who hath wrought this benefaction? We shall honour him and reward him twofold for what he hath done for thee”. She answered: ”My father, when the slaves had left me and were gone, the wooden gong was rung and the monks assembled and deliberated together: ”With whom shall we leave this girl? They said unanimously: ”With the chosen John, the eunuch”. Then the prior of the monastery called him and said: ”Draw near, my child. Accept the word of thy brethren and take the daughter of the faithful king, and beseech Christ thy prayer, that she may be healed and your fame exalted and confidence in Him and in the faithful be augmented by your holiness”. Then he wept and prostrated himself on the ground, saying: ”Who am I amongst your holy persons? For I am a sinful slave, lower than all the brethren, O Father”. The prior of the monastery sobbed and wept and considered his demeanour and modesty. He laid the exalted cross on his head and said:

”Contradict not the opinion of the brethren about thyself, O saint of the Lord”. Then he drew near and kissed the feet of the prior of the monastery and of the old men, obeyed, and took my hand with love and great joy. I went with him to his cell. |79 When he had entered his cell, he turned towards the East) and began to pray.

He beat his breast and shed tears till they trickled on the ground like rain, and covered the ground with his face, so that I trembled from awe before him. When he had prostrated himself one time and two times and three full times, and laid the cross on my head ---- lo, there departed from me a slave black as soot. He cried to him and scolded him. Then he left the cell and flew. At the same moment I felt that I was healed and that my soul had become quiet. Then he stroked my head with his blessed hand and began to converse with me in quietness and tranquillity. When he spoke with me, I smelled from his mouth an odour like perfume, which refreshed me. Then he began to ask about my father and my mother, saying: ”Hast thou brethren or sisters”? And he asked about all my kindred. The more I spoke to him, the more he wept, so that I wondered for which cause those tears trickled and streamed down constantly, not to speak of fasting, prayer, and long vigils. When he desired to sleep he lent against the wall and slumbered somewhat. Then he began with passion and great strength his prostrations and humiliations. When he had finished his prayer he taught me reading and the principles of good demeanour and knowledge. He held me in great honour. And when thou sent after me, my father, it was not a light matter for me to let him alone. May the Lord show us mercy by his prayer, constantly. Amen”.

King Zeno wondered at what he heard about this |80 saint and he began to think where this eunuch might come from and which king he possibly could have served and what his origin might be. His thoughts tortured him vehemently. Then he called the old men which had brought back the girl, and said to them: ”Go and return to the monastery a second time and take with you food and drink and presents as is becoming to the sacred monastery. And greet the prior of the monastery and tell him to send me ten old men of the monks, amongst

them John the eunuch. This is absolutely necessary". Then the slaves of the king rose and loaded up all sorts of things becoming to the monastery and the monks. They departed confiding in God, like all faithful persons. When they had reached the monastery they told the prior of the monastery what the king had said to them. The prior answered: "The order of the faithful king (may God prolong his happiness and confirm his dynasty) be carried out". The wooden gong was rung and all the monks assembled and received the blessing from one another like the angels). They stood during the ministration of the exalted sacrifice, the hope of the living and the dead. The prior of the monastery selected nine old men, called John and said to him:

"Rise," confiding in Christ (honour and praise to Him who hath given this gift to thy holiness), O glory of our religion and crown of our heads, joy of our hearts; rise and go to the king and be ever more loyal to him". They received the blessing of one another and went on their way. On the whole way they recited psalms and songs of praise without break, so that the bodyguard of |81 the king trembled from awe before them. When they entered the town the king heard of their arrival. The people went to meet them with signs of honour and great esteem; and the faithful, men and women, would take dust from under their feet and give it their children to drink. And the blessing [of God] took abode in that town by their prayers and blessings.

The king summoned his confidant and said to him: "Take these old men and let them take rest, heat water and wash their feet. Spread the best cloth under them and pour the water of their feet into the storehouses that people may receive a blessing by the blessings of their prayers; and bring food as much as thou canst. He answered: "According to thy good pleasure, O king of the time. The king laid hold on John and went with him to the royal appartment. When he drew near to the girl she uttered a cry and came towards him, kissed his feet and prostrated herself on the ground and covered his feet with her face. Then the Fruit of Prayer cried, in the metre of Mar Jacob: ("Peace, peace unto you, who are far and near, sayeth the Lord, who hath spread peace among mortals. The cross hath shown the love of the Father towards the whole world. The Lord hath revealed Himself and the world hath perceived how He loveth it"). She blessed her mother and raised her head from the ground. Grace came down upon that place where she had taken abode. ---- When they had taken rest, the king opened the conversation and said: "Our Father, heavenly blessing hath come down upon us by the coming of thy highness and thou hast shown |82 us the utmost bounty and favour by the healing of our daughter.

I beseech thy holiness to tell me from where thou art and what thy extraction is, and who was the king whom thou hast served and who hath freed thee, and how thou earnest to the monastery, how thou wast liberated from [the service of] the kings, so that they let thee go to this holy monastery. After every answer the king asked a new question. Then she perceived the thoughts of her father, that he was weary on account of herself. Obedient as she was, she understood that the word of a king is not to be withstood. She said: "Happy king, if thou desirest that I speak to thy majesty about myself, give an order to these servants [to

depart] and let nobody stay except thyself and my mother the queen and the beautiful girl. He ordered those who were present to depart. They saluted the king, took Hilaria's blessing and went away. Then she conjured her father, saying: "Swear by the right hand [of God] and by the voice that cried over the Jordan when our Lord was baptized; swear to me by the whole congregation), and" by the blood and the water which flowed from His side and saved our father Adam and his posterity; and swear to me by His mighty resurrection and His ascension unto heaven, that thou wilt not press me nor divulge my secret; then I will reveal my history to thee". He trembled from awe before the oaths with which she had conjured him.

Then he swore to her all the oaths which she had conjured him by. Then she took the cape from her head and raised the cloth from her eyes. She recited, saying in the metre of Mar |83 Ephrem: ("You are my father and my mother and I am your daughter Hilaria. Let us cry and say to the Lord, the Highest: Halleluja". The king and Shamsha Munira listened to Hilaria. They were confused and trembled and they fainted, being as dead). You are my father and my mother and I am your daughter Hilaria". They trembled and fainted and were confused and (fell down) on the ground from the vehemence of what had befallen them, they lay down and were as dead. ----When she saw what had befallen her mother and her father, she wept and said: "O Lord, let them constantly be confident in Thee". Then she took water, blessed it, and sprinkled it on them so that they awoke and praised the bounteous Lord and they were no longer sorry but constantly glad; they cried together, in the metre of Mar Ephrem: ("A thousand times a thousand and ten thousand times ten thousand be the praise of Thee, who acceptest the praise of the praisers who praise Thee. The whole creation is obliged to praise Thee. The high and the low places sing Thy praise. Praise to Thee"). Then they bowed their heads till they ceased weeping.

Then they began conversation with their daughter gladly and joyfully and quietly, as she requested them. Her father said: "My daughter, light of my eyes, which hath been augmented to day so that it shineth by thy light; my daughter, my heart's blood, I shall not break towards thee the oath which I have sworn; but how can I dispense with thy holiness? What is the best way of acting, my daughter? Build for thee and for |84 these holy men, thy brethren, a monastery outside this city, that I and thy mother and sister may be with thee morning and evening". She answered: "No, my father; do not annul the institutions of the Ancients, who have laid the foundations of the monasteries in the desert. Know, my father, that the farther the monasteries are from the world the better it is. And regarding me, Christ will give thee patience and inward joy and thy soul will rejoice in the grace of thy Lord. He answered and said: "Amen, may thy word be accepted."

They stayed three days till the fatigue of the journey had disappeared. Then the saints begged him permission to depart. He said: "Your order will be done". He ordered to be brought before his daughter clothes and utensils, gold and silver, tapers and perfume, oil and food, in unnumbered masses. She said: "My father, may thy votive presents be accepted, and the Lord forgive thy sins and trespasses. As to gold and silver, we have no prescript to

take it. But I will give thee and thy servants a counsel." He said: "Give order, O blood of the heart of thy mother and father." She said to him: "My father, seven days after our depart thou shalt send masters and workmen in great number in order to make in the monastery deep pits, that all people may drink from their water and thy wages be constant till the end." He said: "Thy will be done, O crown of our heads." Then she took all that could be profitable to the holy monastery; and the rest she told her father to divide among the poor. Then they took leave from her and asked her blessing. And she also prostrated herself before her parents.

Then they went on their way. People perceived them and went to meet them. And they tore pieces from their |85 habits and took the dust from under their feet and the Lord gave them according to their fidelity. With trouble and accompanied by a crowd they departed from the town. They marched singing and sanctifying and. praising God, under the royal safeguard. And the secret remained kept. When they came near the monastery, the prior and all the brethren went to meet them. They made obeisances before one another and praised the Lord and thanked for the signs of His grace. Then everyone took the place becoming to him. After the seven days the king sent his slaves and workmen with them to the monastery. They saluted the prior of the monastery and told him the command of the king: "We have to do what John shall order us". Then John was called. He left his cell, reciting the praise of the Lord and his lips ceased not sanctifying the Lord. They went to meet him and asked his blessing. He asked after the king and the queen and the state of mind of the girl. They answered: "They wish thee much peace. The girl is well". Then they praised God and thanked Him and said to John: "See, where thou wilt have us work". He said to them: "From here till there. Work so and so and it will be completed by the power of the Lord and His good pleasure".

They began to dig and built and completed by the power of Him who worketh all completion; to Him be praise and honour eternally. Amen. When the workmen had finished and terminated their work they received the prayers and the blessings of the brethren and returned to the king and congratulated him on the completion of the work. He praised God and thanked Him, and asked after John. They said: "What shall we tell thee about his holiness, standing among us and laying |86 hand on the work like us, while his lips ceased not praising and sanctifying God? Blessed are the father and the mother who begat him. When this word reached his ear his heart trembled) and rejoiced, he gave them their wages and presents very graciously and began to send every two months presents in honour of the (secret of his heart) so that all the monasteries and everyone who heard it, wondered and they began to speak with one another, saying: "If he belonge.d not to his kindred, he would not show him this honour and submissiveness". And she used to take all the presents which her father sent and send them to the monasteries in the neigbourhood. But when she heard that the monks spoke amongst each other in that way, she feared that her history might be revealed and her work become fruitless.

Then she went away stealthily and travelled in the desert in heat and thurst, barefoot on thistles and pebbles and thorns, one, two, three days, till she reached the border part of the desert. There she found a garganas-tree and near it a waterpool; at the water grew desert herbs. Near the tree was a hole which could hold one man. She praised God and thanked Him for the signs of His grace and said: "This garganas-tree is winter food, and the herbs are summer food. Then she entered the hole and dwelt in it for ten years, nobody knowing about her except Christ who had created and sent her."

Now there were venerable old men among the priors of the monasteries who used every year to take with them a beast of burden and to load on it food and |87 drink and clothes and shrouds, and to go round the whole desert. And every one whom they saw in need of food, they would feed; and whom they saw bare, they would clothe; and whom they found sick or distressed they would cure, and whom they found dead they would bury according to God's order.

During ten years the existence of this saint remained concealed, till the day of her transition to blessed Paradise came. Then they came up to the entrance of the hole; at once they heard the sound of sighing from the depth of the earth. They thought it to be an animal growling against them. But as soon as they inspected the place they found there the traces of human footsteps. They said to one another: "There is a saint in this hole. Possibly he is ill, let us go in and look." They made the sign of the cross on their face, began to recite and entered up to the border of the hole; at once they saw the hair of the innocent one shining like a polished sword in the sunshine. When she heard their reciting she rose and made an obeisance before them. Then she went back, sat down leaning on her side and trusted her pure spirit to her Lord. At her death her pure odour spread till the desert was filled with her perfume. Then the saints began to praise and to sanctify the Lord Jesus Christ, who loveth the children of man and giveth them such beautiful gifts. They bore her out of the hole and began to put off her worn out clothes and shroud her honourably in new shrouds, as was becoming. But while they were stripping off her clothes they found her breasts withered on her pure bosom like leaves wither beneath the trees; then one of them knocked his head and cried to his companions: |88 "Look here, my brethren, and gaze at this wonder; she is a virgin and not a man." When they saw the wonder they praised God who had helped her and led her to perfection. They dug a grave and buried her and the angels descended to honour her.

When they had buried her, they went to the water-pool to drink. But they found the water dried up and the herbs withered and likewise the tree. Then they praised the great Lord and stayed wondering over this fact. Then each of them laid his head on a stone and lay down to sleep. They beseeched God to make known to them her whole history, and her coming to that place. They laid down their heads and slept. Then the angel descended and made known to them her whole history from the beginning of her beautiful demeanour up to the day of her departure as they had witnessed it. When they awoke and discussed their dream among themselves it appeared to be one and the same. Then they wrote down the

history of the chosen virgin and sent it to the parts of the whole world that it might be profitable for the faithful by her prayers.

And we, the sinners, will beseech our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ to give you security in your dwelling places and_to protect your wives and to support your old men, to give health to your youths and to bring up your children, to give abundant blessing on the work of your hands, by the prayer of the dome of. light, the mother of all creatures, the mother of Salvation, the mistress of women and men, the hope of the dead and the living, our Lady Mariam, the mother of God, the Virgin, and of Mar Petrus the Apostle, and by the prayers of the pure Prophets and Disciples and the rest of the Martyrs |89 and the Saints and by the prayer of this excellent saint Hilaria, the daughter of the faithful king Zeno. Their prayers and the prayers of all who have the same rank may protect all the faithful and the poor scribe and the reader and the hearers. The mercy of the Lord be upon every one who sayeth Amen, O Lord of the worlds, Amen, (our Father in heaven).

Here endeth the story of the holy Hilaria, the daughter of king Zeno. May the Lord protect us by her prayers. Amen. [Footnotes renumbered and moved to the end] 1. 1) Some words seem to have fallen out here. 2. 1) The king seems to be meant. 3. 1) The king. 4. 1) See introduction. 5. 2) Nearly synonymous with blessing. 6. 1) Hilaria is henceforth spoken of as of a man. 7. 2) Hilaria. 8. 1) According to A. 9. 2) Hilaria. 10. 3) The author means to say: the glorious habit on a glorious person. 11. 4) Cf. p. 64, note 2. 12. (1----1) Syriac verses. 13. 2) The king. 14. (3----3) Syriac verses. 15. 1) [Karshuni] which I do not understand. 16. 1) []. which I do not understand. 17. 1) [] which I do not understand. 18. 1) The direction of prayer for Eastern Christianity. 19. 1) Litt. the class of angels.

20. 1 ---- 1) Syriac text. 21. 1) i. e. Christianity. 22. (1 ---- 1) Syriac text, followed by an Arabic translation. 23. (2----2) Only in C. 24. (3----3) Syriac text. 25. 1) See the Glossary s. v.[]. 26. (2----2) Hilaria. 27. (1 -- 1) Syriac words.

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