I. The Life of ʿAbd al-Masih an-Nağrānī


[362]
Translation

Griffith, The Arabic Account, pp. 370-372

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, one God.

This is the martyrdom of our Father, the holy Abd al- Masīḥ, the superior of Mount Sinai, who was martyred at ar-Ramlah.
There was a man of the Christianis of Nağrān, whose Christians were noble Arabs, called Rabīʿ ibn Qaqs ibn Yazīd al-Ghassānī. He was correct in worship, knowledgeable in what was his right and in what was his duty. Once upon a time, when he was [ed. 362] twenty years old, wanting to pray in Jerusalem, he set out with some Muslims of the people of Nağrān bent on raiding. On account of his association with them, they were continually beguiling him and misleading him to the point that he went with them on the raid.

He was the best of men to shoot an arrow, the most expert of people in striking with the sword and the most skilled in thrusting with a spear. Ignoring [371] race and youth, and bad companions brought him to enter Roman territory with the raiding party. He fought and did battle along with them. He killed, he plundered, he burned, and following their example, he engaged in everything forbidden. He prayed with them, and he became even more furious and harder of heart against the Romans than they. He persevered in this for thirteen years, devoting himself to raiding every year.

When these years were finished, he set out for certain cities of Syria to pass the winter in them. One noonday he entered Baalbek, and on his horse he headed straight for a church there. He entered it and saw a priest sitting there at the door of the church, reading in the Gospel. He sat down beside him to listen. He said, “What are you reading O priest?” The priest said in answer, “I am reading in the Gospel.” He said, “Translate to me what you are reading [ms L adds: in Greek (bir-rūmiyya)].” So he translated for him saying, [ed. 363]

“Whoever loves mother, or father, or brother, or anything more than me, is not worthy of me”. (Cf. Mt. 10:37 and Lk. 14:26)

When this was read, right then he wept and recalled what had been his estate, and to what he had come. Then, when he had wept copiously, the priest said to him, “What is your business, young man?” Al-Ghassānī said to him, “Do not chide me or my weeping. I once was of the adherents of this Gospel. But today I am of its enemies. Hear my story, while I recount it to you”.

When he had informed the priest of his situation, the priest said to him, “What prevents you, if you are contrite, from coming back and doing penance?” Al-Ghassānī said to him, “It is an exceedingly grievous matter. Of my own accord, I would be admitting what neither the mountains nor the lowlands will endure.” The priest said to him, “Have you not heard the Gospel saying, ‘What men cannot bear is easy for God!’” (Cf. Mt. 19:26) It also says, [ed. 364] ‘God will be glad at the return of a single sinner more more than at a hundred just’. (Cf. Lk.
15:7 & 10) Yes, my beloved brother, know that God is swifter to us than we are to Him. You told me you have read the Gospel. Remember the thief and the prodigal son.”

So the young man got up and went to pray in the church. He took out his weapon, and threw it down before the altar, and made a covenant with God that he would not go back to the thing in which he had been involved. And when the priest had performed the rite for the forgiveness of sins [372] for him, he went out, sold his horse and his weaponry, and for it he gave alms to the poor. The priest celebrated the liturgy and gave him communion, whereupon he bade him good-bye, and he set out straight away for Jerusalem.

When he arrived, he put on black and visited the patriarch, Abba John, and told him his story. The patriarch sympathized with him, encouraged him, rejoiced on his account, prayed over him, and sent him to the cloister of Mar Sabas, to the superior of the monastery, to accept him as a monk. So he went there, became a monk, and was assigned to a holy, spiritual teacher. He remained there for five years.

II. Life of Elias of Heliopolis

6. Μετ' οὗ πολύν δὲ χρόνον ὁ μὲν Ἀραψ, ὁ ἀντιλήπτωρ τοῦ ἀποστάτου, ὃν εἶχαν μιᾶν μνησευσάμενον ἀπολύσασθαι ὃ δὲ νῦν ἀυτοῦ μετὰ ταῦτα γεννήσας παιδίου [καὶ] παρατέρεσε τῶν συμπαίκτων αὐτοῦ ποιεῖ τὰ γενέθλια τοῦ παιδίου, δείπνων ἐναμασάμενος καὶ τοῦ δείπνου τελωμένον καὶ τοῦ ἀποστάτου εὐλογουμένου, προσκαλοῦνται Ἡλίαν τὸν μεγαλομάρτυρα πρὸς ὑπηρεσίαν. ἣν δὲ Ἡλίας ὡς εἴτε ἄτοις δώδεκα ὑπηρετεῖ ὁ ἄστειεύμενος καὶ συγγκριῶν τοῦ δείπνου ὡς οὔτε τοιαύτη ὑπάρχῃ καὶ ἀποφθέγματος.

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7. Καὶ τῆς νυκτὸς διελθοῦσης, ἀναστὰς τὸ πρωὶ ὁ ἄγιος μεγαλομάρτυρος Ἡλίας, ἔπει διὰ τὸν οἴκον ἐκεκοίμητο ἁμα πάντες ὁι συνδιετυῆσαντες, περιζώνυντα διὰ τὸ ἔθος τῆς χριστιανικῆς 20 πολιτείας τῇ ἡδίν τῶν αὐτὸτο καὶ ἑνεκόμης τοῦ πρόσωπον ἐξήλε τοῦ οἴκου πορευόμενον θέρη προσεύξασθαι. Ἡ ἐπιθυμίας δὲ τῆς ἐμπεφορημένου τοῦ ὁμοφόρου μεθύσματος ἑστήκε "Ἡλία, ποῦ ὑπάγεις; Ἄνταπεριθήθη ὁ ἄγιος. "Ὑπάγω εὐξασθαί", Διαλαβόν ὁ δὲ τις ἐτερος λέγει τῷ ἄγιῳ: "Καὶ οὐχ ὅψε ἡρνήσω τὴν πίστιν 25 σου"; Καταφρονήσας οὖν ὁ ἄγιος τὸν λόγο καὶ μηδὲ ἐπιστραφεῖς πρὸς τὸν εἶπόντα, ἄλλα πορευθεὶς εἰς τὴν προσευχήν, κάθειθεν ὑποστρέφεις ἐρχεται εἰς τὸ ἐργαστήριον καὶ αὐξάσεται τὸν ἀποστάτην. Καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ κάπες

καί ὁ ὄντος Ἡλία, εἰ μὴ ἢ χω ἐκώλυσα τοὺς ἐταίρους τήμιν, ἐμελλὼν ἃν λυπηθήσαί σε σήμερον, ὃτι λέγουσιν 30 ὅψε ἡρνήσα τὸν Χριστόν ὅλλ ἐργαζοῦ καὶ ἐσο ἄφοβος". Ταῦτα ἀκούσας ἐδεμβήθη ὁ ἄγιος, καὶ μικρὸν ἑγαχάσας, ἀοῦς κατὰ τὸν 50 κηρύ τοῦ ἀρίστου ἀναχωρήσας ἐρχεταί πρὸς τοὺς ἀθόλοφους αὐτού καὶ διηγεῖται αὐτοῖς το συμβάντα αὐτοῦ καὶ γνώμης γενόμενος τοῦ μείζονος ἀθόλοφοῦ, ἐμα δὲ καὶ τῆς μητρὸς ἐαυτοῦ, ἐρχονται πρὸς τὸν ἀποστάτην καὶ λέγουσι πρὸς αὐτὸν: "Ἄνθρωπα, ἢ ὁ ἀθόλοφος ἔτοι 5 ἔχει πρὸς σὲ καὶ τοῦ ἐκμισθώματος αὐτοῦ ὑπελείφθη διὰ τὰ σαι δόσης ἡμῶν ὁ δίκαιον ἡμῶν καὶ ἀπελεύσασαι ὁ ἀθόλοφος ἡμῶν ἀπὸ σοῦ, ὅτι συνείδομεν ἀπολοῦσαι αὐτὸν εἰς Ἡλιοῦσαν τὴν πατρίδα ἡμῶν". Ἄπειριθήθη ὁ ἀποστάτης καὶ λέγει: "Ὅσι ἔχετε τίποτε προσωπολειψάντων τοῦ ἐκμισθώματος τοῦ παιδός πλὴν σοῦ ἀφρός τὸν παιδα ἀπελθαντι ἀπ’ ἐμοῦ, καθὸ ἄπειρη τῆς πίστεως ὅμων τῶν χριστιανῶν, καὶ ἔχω καὶ αὐτοῦ μάρτυρα".
Translation


5. This holy neomartyr and contender of Christ, Elias, descended from the most pious native born citizens of Heliopolis of Second Phoenicia, near mount Lebanon, from Christian upbringing and lowly means, and pursued a craft which they call carpentry, working with medium-sized pieces of wood. He, along with his poor mother and two brothers, leaving Heliopolis, his homeland, migrated to Damascus that was a great metropolis, in which he hoped to live an easier life. When he arrived there he hired himself out to a certain man, who was Syrian in descent, but a client and attached to one of the Arabs. Thereupon he continued in his service two years, making his living in the same craft. By the influence of the devil and the consent of the Arab, the client Syrian renounced the faith of Christ, but persevered making his livelihood in his craft. Being a child, Elias, the one who is now a great martyr, ignoring the designs of the Devil, remained hired out in his trade to the apostate.
6. A short time later the Arab, the patron of the apostate, died after engaging his son in marriage. Thereafter his son had a male child and with the exhortation of his fellows he celebrated the birthday of his son, preparing a feast. While the feast was taking place and the apostate was feasting, they called upon Elias, the great martyr, for service. Elias was about twelve years old. He served them, joking and rejoicing with them at the feast, inasmuch as he was an innocent child. The dinner guests, along with the patron of the apostate, turned to the martyr and said, “Where are you from child? For we see you to be clever and willing to share our joy.” The apostate responded taking on the reply, “He is hired out to me in my craft, and as you can see he is good.” Laying hold of him separately they said to the saint, “If you want child, you too can renounce your Christian faith and can become just like us, continuing with your master no longer as a hired servant, but as a son.” Immediately the saint replied, “You have gathered here to feast, not to offer public speeches. Stop saying these things to me.” They responded, “Meanwhile, come eat with us.” Approaching with guilelessness and eating the saint continued to serve them, when some stood up from the dinner and began dancing, and taking hold of the saint they persuaded him to dance with them. What is more, banding together they loosened the saint’s belt and threw it to the side at that time so that it would not prevent the body from easily being drawn to dance. Then the dinner of evil preparation came to an end.

7. After the night passed, the holy great martyr Elias got up in the morning. Since all the dinner guests had slept together at the house, he girded his own belt according to the custom of the Christian community, and after washing his face he departed the house and was on his way to pray to God. One of those still under the influence of the evening’s intoxication, called out and said, “Elias, where are you going?” The saint responded, “I am going to pray.” Taking up the conversation another one said to the saint, “And did you not deny your faith late last night?” The saint disdained these words, and without even turning around to the speaker went to prayer; and then returning from there he arrived at the workshop and there found the apostate. And the apostate said to him, “Indeed, Elias, if I had not prevented our companions, they would have caused you grief today because they say you denied Christ last night. But work and be without fear.” The
III. The Life St. Lazaros of Mt. Galesion by Gregory the Cellarer


8. Thereupon, a disputation took place between the two, with the saint narrating those things that were said during the evil dinner on the one hand, and the apostate asserting obstinately that he would lead away the saint to the ruler, on the other. At that time, the saint’s brothers gave up his wages they had been demanding, and having apparently appeased the apostate, and taking the saint with them his brothers said, “Brother, we agree that you should return to Helioupolis, our homeland, and live there working to make a living as best as you can for some time, until this conversation is forgotten. For we are fearful lest seeing you here the apostate might again be stirred up and cause trouble. He has turned to such behavior since he desires to have you as his slave.” Having pacified [the apostate], the saint then returned to Helioupolis, and made a living working in his own homeland for eight years. After considering these years [to be sufficient time] he jour-
Ἐν γὰρ τῷ καιρῷ ἐκείνῳ κατὰ παραχώρησιν Θεοῦ οἱ βέβηλοι καὶ παμμίαιροι Λαγαρηνοὶ κατὰ τῶν χριστιανῶν ἐπαναστάτηκαν, [sanctam civitatem depraedantibus] πάσαν σχεδὸν τὴν οἰκουμένην καὶ τὰ ἐν αὐτῇ μοναστήρια καὶ τὰς ἐκκλησίας ἦρμησαν. Ὡν ἀρχηγὸς ἦν τις ὄνοματι Αζίζης. Οὗτος Αζίζης ἐλθὼν εἰς τὴν ἁγίαν πόλιν καὶ τὸν ναὸν τῆς τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ Θεοῦ ἡμῶν Ἀναστάσεως ἱδὼν οὕτω περικαλλῆ καὶ θαυμαστὸν ὑπάρχοντα, προστάσσει ὁ δυσσεβὴς τινα τῶν αὐτῶν ὡς εἰπέν τοις, ρώμη σῶματος καὶ τῇ κακίᾳ τῶν ἄλλων διαφέροντα, ἀνελθεῖν, ἐδόθη, καὶ τὸν τίμιον σταυρὸν τὸν ἐπάνω τῆς τρούλης χρυσοῦν ὄντα καταβιβάσαι καὶ εἰς γην ῥίψαι· οὗτος καὶ πεποίηκεν ὁ τοῦ παρανόμου καὶ παμβεβήλου ἀρχοντὸς παρανομῶτερος καὶ [Col. 515E] βεβήλοτερος ὑπηρέτης. Δυσφημίσας οὖν πλείστα ὁ ἅλιτήριος Αζίζης κατὰ τοῦ κυρίου καὶ Θεοῦ καὶ σωτήρος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, κελεύει μετὰ θυμοῦ πάντας ἀνελθεῖν καὶ τὸν ναὸν χαλάσαι. Μήπω δὲ τοῦ λόγου σχεδὸν ἐκ τοῦ μιαροῦ στόματος ἐξελθὸντος τελείως, ἐκεῖνοι, καθάπερ κόνες εἰς ἀγραν κελευόμενοι καθυλακτοῦντες, δρομαίοι ἀνελλόντες μετὰ σπουδῆς τὸ προστασθὲν αὐτοῖς ἐξεπλήρουν. Καὶ δὴ ὡς ἠρέαντο αὐτὸν χαλάν, εὐφρίσκον μέσον τοῦ τοίχου ἐν ταῖς ὑπαίς κόσμια τινα καὶ νομισματα, ἃ ἠρέαντοις ἐπὶ ποτὲ μετὰ τῆς μακαρίας Ἐλενής εκεῖς παραγενόμενοι, πόθῳ τῷ πρὸς τὸν Χριστὸν κινοῦμενον, ἀνδρεῖς τε καὶ γυναῖκες. Καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ὁ οὐκ ἐπαύσαντο χαλάντες οἱ δυσσεβεῖς, ἔως ὡς τελείως αὐτὸν ἡδάφισαν. Ταῦτα ὠρένθες δὲ τα πατήρ καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ πατέρες, [cum ceteris sedecere cogitum] — εἰκεῖς γὰρ ὡς ἔλεγεν ἱστατο οἰκείους ὀφθαλμοῖς πάντα βλέπον, — ἐκρίνων τὸν εἰκεῖς ἀναχωρήσῃ, καὶ οὐ τοσοῦτον διὰ ταῦτα, ὅσον διὰ τὸν διωγμὸν τὸν κατὰ (τὸν) καιρὸν ἐκείνον γινόμενον· πολλοὺς γὰρ ἀνεῖλον μοναχοὺς τε καὶ κοσμικοὺς· καὶ τὸ δὴ [Col. 515F] χαλαπτέρων, ὅτι πολλοὶ τὸν σωματικὸν θάνατον, οὕμοι, φοβηθέντες, κατὰ ψυχὴν τεθνήκασι τὴν πίστιν ἀρνήσαμεν καὶ ἀντὶ χριστιανῶν Σαρακηνῶν μετονομασθέντες. Τότε δὴ καὶ οὕτω ἀπάραντες ἐκ τὸν εἰκεῖς, οἱ τοῦ κόσμου φωστήρες καὶ τῶν θείων ἁπόστολον μιμηταί, ἐπὶ τὰ τῆς Ῥωμανίας κλίματα ἄλλος ἀλλαχόν διεσπάρθησαν. Καὶ γίνεται καὶ ἐπὶ αὐτοῖς, ὡσπερ πάλαι ἐπὶ τῶν ἁπόστολων ἦ τὸν Στεφάνου ἀναίρεσις, αἰτία τῆς εἰς τὸν σύμπαντα κόσμιον διασπορᾶς.

Ὦς γούν ἐξήλθον καὶ ἔδρον αὐτὸν, ἰδὼν αὐτὸν ὁ πατὴρ τὴν τὸν Σαρακηνὸν στολὴν ἐνδεδυμένον, μετὰ κλαυθμοῦ φονίν πρὸς αὐτὸν ἀφείς εἶπεν· &ldquo;Οίμοι, ἀδελφέ, τί ἔστιν ὁ βλέπως; οὗτος κατεφρονήσας τῆς σαυτοῦ σωτηρίας καὶ ἀπηρνήσας καὶ τὴν πίστιν καὶ τὸ σχῆμα; οὐ διὰ ταύτην τὴν αἰτίαν ἀξίος οὐλο Ἐλεγον, ὅτε ἦς μετ᾽ ἐμοῦ ἐν τῇ λαίρᾳ, μὴ ἔχειν φυλιὰν μετὰ τὸν Σαρακηνὸν; δεῦρο, ἀδελφέ μου ἦγατημένε, δεῦρο πάλιν ἐπιστρέψειν πρὸς τὸν φιλάνθρωπον Θεόν τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοὺν Χριστὸν τὸν μὴ ἠδόντον τὸν τοῦ ἀμαρτωλοῦ θάνατον ὡς τὸ ἐπιστρέψαται καὶ ξῆν αὐτὸν.&rdquo; [a fide excidisse:] Ταύτα καὶ ἦτερα τὰ εἰς μετάνοιαν συντείνοντα τοῦ πατρὸς πρὸς αὐτὸν εἰπόντος, ἐκείνος καφφή ἐχείκαν καὶ ἀλάλω· καὶ οὐδὲ ἀτενίσαται καὶ ιδεῖν τούτους ὡς αἰσχύνης ἑδύνατο. Ός οὖν οὗτος αὐτὸν ὁ πατὴρ ἑώρα· &ldquo;Τί ἔστι, πάλιν πρὸς αὐτόν, ἀδελφέ; εἶπεν· οὐκ ἀποκρίνης; οὐκ οἶδας, ὅτι διὰ σὲ καὶ ὁ χρηστὸς Παῦλος ἠλθε; δός ἦμι ἀποκρίσιν, οὖν καὶ βούλει·&rdquo; Μόλις οὖν διανοίας τὸ αὐτοῦ στόμα, πρὸς τὸν πατέρα ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν· Τί σοι ἔχω, [hic, Lazaro nitente, primum resipiscit,] ἀδελφέ, εἰπεῖν, τοσούτοις κακοὶς ἡμαίνειν περιπείρας; καὶ γὰρ εἰ καὶ θελῶσι μετανοήσας καὶ ὑμῖν ἀκολούθησαι, οὐ δύναμαι. Εἰ γὰρ εἰς γνώσιν ἐλθῇ τούτο τοῦ κατὰ τὸν τόπον ἁμηρᾶ, καὶ ἐμὲ καὶ ὑμᾶς ἀνελεῖν ἔχει. Εἰ δὲ δύνασαι σὺ ἀπελθεῖν καὶ πεῖσαι αὐτὸν τοῦ ἀπολύσαι με, ἔρχομαι μεθ᾽ ὑμῶν, ὅπου καὶ βούλεσθε.&rdquo; Ο δὲ πατὴρ τούτον τὸν λόγον μετὰ χαρᾶς δεξαμένος, εὐθὺς πρὸς τὸν ἁμηρᾶν ἠπῆλθεν. Ὁν ἱδὼν καὶ πολλὰ μετὰ δαιμόνων ὑπὲρ τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ παρακάλεσας, μόλις ἐπείσεν αὐτὸν αὐτοῖς δοθῆναι· καὶ οὕτως νυκτὸς διὰ τὸ μὴ γνωστὸν τούτο τοῖς τῶν [Col. 516C] Σαρακηνὸν γενέσθαι, οὕτως γὰρ αὐτοῖς παρῆγγελτο ὑπὸ τοῦ ἁμηρᾶ, λαβὸντες αὐτὸν διὰ τῆς ἐρήμου ὀδενοῦ.

[21] [sed mox ad vomitum redit.] Ὡς δὲ τόπον ἰκανοῦ εὖ ὦπερ ἐξήλθον διέστησαν, μικρὰν ἀνάπαυσιν ἐν αὐτοῖς δοῦναι θελήσαντες, ἐν τῇ γῇ κατακλιθέντες ὄπνονσαν. Ὁ δὲ ταλαίπωρος καὶ πεπλανημένος ἐκείνος, ως εἶδεν αὐτοὺς ὑπνώσαντας, ἀναστὰς ὦπερ κᾶν ἐπὶ τὸν ἱδὼν ἐμετον πάλιν ὑπέστρεψεν. Διαπνησθέντες οὖν ἐκεῖνοι καὶ μὴ εὑρὸντες αὐτὸν ἔγνοσαν, ὁ δὲ διδρακέν· καὶ γὰρ ἠδέσποτας τὴν αὐτοῦ διάστροφον γνώμην καὶ ὅτι ἡ μετανοία αὐτοῦ οὐκ ἦν διὰ Θεοῦ, ὦπερ ὦπερ τοῦ Ἰουώδα, ἀλλὰ καθάπερ ἐκείνος κατανοήσας, ὁ ἐποίησε, στραφεῖς ἐρρφε τὰ ἀργύρια καὶ οὕτως μὴ φέρον τὴν αἰσχύνην ἀπογνούσαν ἀπελεύθερον ἀπήγερτο, οὕτω καὶ οὕτως στενοθείς ὑπὸ τῆς τοῦ καιροῦ ἀνάγκης ἐδοξες μετανοῆσαι, διὰ δὲ τῆς ἀπογνώσεως τυφλωθείς καὶ μὴ δυνηθεὶς κατανοῆσαι [Col. 516D] τὴν τῆς μετανοίας ὀδὸν καὶ τὴν τοῦ Χριστοῦ φιλανθρωπίαν, ὑρέστρεψε πάλιν εἰς τὸ τῆς ἀπωλείας σκότος. Ἀπογνώντες οὖν οἱ πατέρες τῆς τοῦ ταπεινοῦ ἐκείνου σωτηρίας, ἀναστάντες διὰ τῆς ἐρήμου ἐπορεύοντο.
Translation:


19. But God, Who loves men, and Who of old ordered Jacob to depart to his homeland and arranged for Moses to return to Egypt again for the salvation of his own people, also (for reasons that He <alone> understands) arranged for this man to go back again to his own country (even though he was unwilling), for the salvation of the many people who have been saved and who are <still> being saved through him until the close of this age. For at that time, with God’s permission, the sacrilegious and abominable Agarenes [Arabs] rose up against the Christians and laid waste to almost the whole <civilized> world, together with the monasteries and churches in it. Their leader was a man by the name of Azizes. When this Azizes came into the Holy City [Jerusalem] and saw that the church of the Resurrection of our Christ and [102] God was so beautiful and marvelous, that impious <fellow> ordered one of his dogs (so one might say), who stood out from the others in both physical strength and evil, to climb up (woe is me!) and take down the venerable gold cross that was on the dome, and to throw it to the ground. This servant, who was even more criminal and sacrilegious than his criminal and sacrilegious master, did so. Then that wicked Azizes, after he had reviled our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ a great deal, angrily ordered all <his men> to go up and demolish the church. Almost before all the words were out of his foul mouth, those men, barking like dogs being sent out hunting, rushed up and hurried to carry out their orders. As they began to demolish the church, they found some jewelry and gold coins in the cavities in the middle of the wall; these <objects> had been placed there by those people, both men and women, who, moved by their affection for Christ, once came there with the blessed Helen. For this reason those impious men did not stop their demolition until they had completely leveled <the church> to the ground. [103]

When Lazaros and the other fathers saw this (for, as he used to say, he was standing there watching everything with his own eyes), they decided to leave the Holy Land. This was not so much because of this incident, but more because of the persecution taking place at that time, for the Muslims killed a lot of people, monks and laymen; even worse, many people who were afraid of physical death, alas, died spiritually by denying their faith and calling themselves Saracens instead of Christians. So these men, these lights of the world and
imitators of the holy apostles, departed from the Holy Land and were scattered here and there throughout the regions of Romania; and this persecution was the reason for the dispersal of these men over the whole world, just as long ago the murder of St. Stephen was for the apostles.

20. Since everyone was leaving, the father also decided to depart from [104] the Holy Land with another monk called Paul, and go to Rome, so he used to say. While they were still there at Jerusalem, however, some bad news reached them, for the monk who used to be Lazaros’ Ed. 516 fellow kanonarches at the lavra of St. Sabas, as the story has already made clear, had denied the Christian faith; the wretched man had abandoned his monastic habit and position and had gone off and become a Muslim. When the father heard this, he was very upset at the perdition of the brother and persuaded Paul to go with him and see this man, wherever he might be. So they went out and found him, and when Lazaros saw him wearing Saracen clothes, he said to him through his tears, “Alas, brother, what do I see? Have you thus scorned your salvation by denying both your faith and your habit? Wasn’t it for this very reason that I was always telling you, when you were with me in the lavra, not to make friends with the Saracens? Come, my beloved brother, come and turn back again to our compassionate God, our Lord Jesus Christ, Who does not want the death of a sinner but that he should turn back and live.” The father said these words to him and others to lead him to repentance, but the man acted deaf and dumb and could not even look directly at them for shame. When the father saw him in this state, he spoke to him again: “What is it, brother? Won’t you answer? Don’t you realize that the good Paul <here> has also come for your sake? Give us any answer you want.” Scarcely opening his mouth the man replied to the father, “What can I say to you, brother, when I have got myself caught up in such evils? Even if I want to repent and follow you, I cannot, for if it should come to the knowledge of the local emir he would kill me, and you <two> as well. But if you can go and persuade him to [105] let me go, I’ll come with you, wherever you want.” The father was glad when he heard these words and went off at once to the emir. He saw him and, after much tearful pleading on behalf of the brother, persuaded him with difficulty to give him to them. Then, taking him <with them>at night so that it should not be known to any of the Saracens (for these were the emir’s instructions), they started traveling through the desert.

21. After they had got far enough away from the place they had left, they wanted to have a short rest, and lay down on the ground and went to sleep. But that miserable and misguided <former monk>got up <again>, when he saw that they were asleep, and went back, just like a dog to its own vomit. When <Lazaros and Paul> woke up and could not find him, they
realized what he had done. They understood then that his mind was twisted and that his repentance was not on account of God, just as Judas’ was not. Thus, when <Judas> understood what he had done, he returned and cast down the silver pieces, and then, unable to bear his shame, fell into despair and went out and hanged himself; so, in the same way, this man also pretended to repent when he was trapped by force of circumstances, but because he had been blinded by his despair and was unable to perceive the way of repentance and the compassion of Christ, he turned back again to the darkness of perdition. So the fathers got up and continued their journey through the desert, despairing of the salvation of that miserable man.