

Maria Egyptiaca, quae peccatrix appellabatur, in Egypto nata, parentes anno 12 deserens, Alexandriam fugit; et ibique XVII annis publice se libidini subiecit, et nulli hominum se petenti denegavit; quin imo multos ad luxuriam obscenis actibus inseruiens provocavit. Cum autem homines regionis illius ad adorandam sanctam crucem Hierosolymam ascenderent, quibusdam iuvenibus sociata cum eis navem ascendit, Hierosolymam navigavit; et navigando omnibus indifferenter se exposuit, et plurimos secum concumbere fecit. Cum vero nautae ab ea naulum requirerent, corpus suum eis pro naulo prostituit.

Et cum Hierusalem aduenisset, et pro adoranda cruce usque ad fores ecclesiae cum aliis accessisset, subito et inuisibiliter repulsa patiebatur, et intrare nullatenus permittebatur. Ceteris quoque cunctis intransibilibus, ipsa tertio ad limen peruenientem repulsa est. Ad se igitur reuersa, et hoc propter eius enormia flagitia euenire cognoscens, pectus tundere coepit, et lachrymabiliter a cordis intimo peccata sua defleuit. Et coram imagine Dei Genitricis prostrata orare coepit, ut peccatorum sibi veniam impetraret, et sanctam crucem adorare permetteret, promittens se saeculo abrenuntiaturam et de cetero caste mansuram. Receptaque aliqua fiducia, sine repulsa ecclesiam intrauit, et crucem Domini cum ceteris adorauit. Cui quidam pro eleemosyna tres nummos tribuit, de quibus tres panes emit. Audiuitque vocem sibi dicentem quod, si Iordanem transiret, salva esset.

Mary of Egypt, who was called a sinner, born in Egypt, leaving her parents at the age of 12, fled to Alexandria, and there for 17 years she subjected herself publicly to lust, and denied herself to no man who sought her; nay rather, by being serviceable, she provoked many to lust with obscene acts. When, however, people of that region were ascending to Jerusalem to worship the holy cross, she, having joined with certain young men, boarded a ship with them, and sailed to Jerusalem, and while sailing she exposed herself indiscriminately to all, and caused many to lie with her. When the sailors demanded the fare from her, she prostituted her body to them as fare.

And when she had arrived in Jerusalem, and had approached with others the doors of the church to worship the cross, suddenly and invisibly she suffered a repulsion, and was in no way permitted to enter. Although all others were entering, she, coming three times to the threshold, was repelled. Therefore returning to herself and recognizing that this happened because of her enormous sins, she began to beat her breast, and tearfully lamented her sins from the depths of her heart. And prostrate before an image of the Mother of God, she began to pray that she might obtain pardon for her sins, and be permitted to worship the holy cross, promising that she would renounce the world, and from then on remain chaste. And having received some confidence, she entered the church without repulsion, and worshipped the cross of the Lord with the others. To her someone gave three coins as alms, with which she bought three loaves. She also heard a voice saying to her that if she crossed the Jordan, she would be saved.

Iordanem ergo transiuit, et in desertum accessit, et XLVII annis ibidem mansit; nec hominem nec quodcumque animal uidit. Tres autem panes quos secum tulerat ad instar lapidis indurauerunt, et XVII annis ei ad cibum suffecerunt.

Vestimentis autem eius putrefactis, nuda remansit; et aestu periterque gelu cute Ethiopis instar denigrata. Capilli vero cani effecti cutis nigredinem operiebant. Annis autem XVII diuersis tentationibus molestata, ipsas tandem Dei gratia omnes deuicit; et deinceps annis XXX caelesti lumine super eam diebus singulis radiata, sine cibo permansit.

Eodem tempore abbas Zozimas in coenobio Sanctorum Monachorum iuxta Iordanem morabatur, qui diuina inspiratione commotus eremum illam ingressus est, ut aliquem seruum Dei ibidem latitantem inueniret. Qui cum iter XX dierum perambulasset, uidit quandam nudo nigroque corpore perambulantem, incendio solis exustam, canis comisque respersam; quae uidentes eum fugam arripuit, et abbas post eam currere coepit. Tunc eum ex nomine uocans, cur se persequeretur interrogat; et quia nuda erat, pallium suum sibi tradi petiit, ut sic operta eum alloqui posset. Qui se nominari audiens stupefactus, pallium ei proiecit; et in terra prostratus, ut se benediceret, exorauit. Illa vero ad eum benedictionem spectare dicebat, eo quod presbyter erat. Cum autem nomen et officium suum audiuisset, magis extimuit; et instanter ab ea benedictionem obtinuit. Cumque ipsa extensis manibus oraret, uidit ipsam mensura unius cubiti a terra in aere eleuatam;

Therefore she crossed the Jordan, and entered the desert, and remaining there for 47 years, she saw neither human nor any animal. The three loaves, however, which she had carried with her, hardened like stone, and sufficed for food for 17 years. Her garments having rotted away, she remained naked, her skin darkened like that of an Ethiopian by both heat and cold, but her white hair covered the blackness of her skin. For 17 years she was troubled by various temptations, but at last by the grace of God she conquered them all, and thereafter for 30 years she remained without food, being made radiant every day by a heavenly light over her.

At the same time, Abbot Zozimas was dwelling in a monastery of holy monks near the Jordan, who, moved by divine inspiration, entered that desert in order to find some servant of God hiding there. When he had walked for 20 days, he saw a certain woman walking with a naked and black body, burnt by the fire of the sun, sprinkled with white hair, who, seeing him, took flight, and the abbot began to run after her. Then she, calling him by name, asked why he was pursuing her, and because she was naked, she asked that his cloak be handed over to her, so that thus covered she might speak to him. He, hearing himself named, was astonished, threw his cloak to her, and prostrate on the ground begged that she bless him, but she said that the blessing belonged to him, because he was a priest. When, however, he heard her name and office, he feared more, and earnestly obtained a blessing from her. And when she prayed with hands outstretched, he saw her elevated in the air to the measure of one cubit from the ground.

et cogitare coepit ne forte spiritus esset qui se orare sic fingeret. Cui mox sancta eius cogitationem aperuit, et quia uere esset mulier et non spiritus affirmauit. Et adiurante sene cum eo sedit, et omnesque vite sue ordinem, ut permissum est, enarrauit; rogans senem ut ad monasterium redeat et post annum, die Dominicae Cenaе, ad Iordanem ueniat et corpus Domini secum ferat, promittens quod tunc ad ipsum locum veniet et de manu illius sacramenta Dominica sumeret.

Rediens igitur abbas ad monasterium, reuoluto anno die Cenaе Domini tulit corpus Dominicum et usque ad Iordanem perueniens, ex alia parte fluminis mulierem stantem aspexit; et cogitans quomodo ad eum sine nauicula pertransiret, subito uidit eam signo crucis edito super aquas ad se uenientem. Cumque stupens ad pedes eius se prosternere uellet, illa prohibuit, eo quod Domini corpus ferret et sacerdotii dignitate praeemineret. Sumptoque sacro ab abbate, rogauit ut sequenti ad se anno ad eremum redire uellet. Et super aquas iterum Iordanis ambulans redit, et solitudinem petiit. Zozimas uero ad suum monasterium regressus dolere coepit quod eam de nomine suo interrogare non meminerit. Sequenti uero anno ad locum ubi eam prius uiderat uenit, et ibidem eam defunctam repperit. Qui lachrymans eamque tangere non audens, timens ne forte sibi displiceret, ad caput eius litteras in terra descriptas legit, ita continentes:

And he began to think that perhaps she was a spirit, who was thus pretending to pray. To him the saint soon revealed his thought. And at the adjuration of the old man she sat with him, and narrated the whole course of her life as was permitted, asking the old man to return to the monastery, and after a year on the day of the Lord's Supper to come to the Jordan and bring with him the body of the Lord, promising that she would then come to that place, and would receive the Lord's sacraments from his hand.

The abbot therefore returning to the monastery, when a year had passed, on the day of the Lord's Supper he took the Lord's body and coming to the Jordan, he saw the woman standing on the other side of the river, and thinking how she might cross over to him without a boat, suddenly he saw her, having made the sign of the cross, coming to him over the waters. And when, amazed, he wished to prostrate himself at her feet, she forbade it because he carried the body of the Lord and was preeminent with the dignity of the priesthood. And having received the sacred host, she asked the abbot that in the following year he would return to her in the desert. And walking again over the waters of the Jordan she returned, and sought the solitude. Zozimas, however, having returned to his monastery, began to grieve that he did not remember to ask her about her name. But the following year he came to the place where he had first seen her, and there found her dead. Weeping and not daring to touch her, fearing that perhaps it would displease her, he read letters written in the ground at her head containing these words:

«Sepeli, Zozima, Mariae corpusculum; redde terrae pulverem suum; et ora pro me ad Deum, cuius praecepto die secundo Aprilis reliqui hoc saeculum.»

Tunc ille pro certo cognouit quod mox ut sacramentum Domini accepit et ad desertum rediit, uitam finierit; et quod spatium itineris dierum XX illa una hora perambulauit. Cumque terram quo foderet non haberet, leoni ad se uenienti mansuetissime iussit effodere terram. Qui iussa humiliter adimpleuit, et ad desertum ut agnus accessit. Senex quoque corpore humato ad monasterium suum, glorificans Deum, uenit. Quieuit in Domino sancta Dei Maria peccatrix 4 Nonas Aprilis.

"Bury, Zozimas, the little body of Mary, return dust to the earth, and pray for me to God, by whose command on the second day of April I left this world."

Then he knew for certain that as soon as she had received the sacrament of the Lord and returned to the desert, she ended her life, and that the space of a journey of 20 days she had traversed in one hour. And when he did not have earth with which to dig, he ordered a very tame lion that came to him to dig the earth. The lion humbly fulfilled his orders, and went to the desert like a lamb. The old man also, having buried the body, came to his monastery glorifying God. Holy Mary the sinner rested in the Lord on the 4th day before the Nones of April.