

Troparion

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English translation mostly from 'The sayings of the Desert Fathers' by Benedicta Ward, SLG.

libretto

Situated in the desert of Scetis, (currently Wadi Natrun, Egypt) around the year 400 AD. A woman bends herself over a dead branch on which she sheds her tears and sprinkles holy water. Slightly behind her is her cell, a hole dug in the ground, protected by some overhanging rocks.

I

By the flood of your tears
you made the barren desert fertile,
And your longing for God brought forth
fruits in abundance.
By the radiance of miracles
you illumined the whole universe!
Our Father Hilarion, pray to Christ God
to save our souls!

O unfading light of the Spiritual Sun;
For you illumined those
in the darkness of ignorance,
Leading all to the heights of God,
as they cried:
"Rejoice, Father Hilarion, rampart of
ascetics."

I beg you, Lord,
listen to my humble plea

I

Ταῖς τῶν δακρύων σου ῥοαῖς,
τῆς ἐρήμου τὸ ἄγονον ἐγεώργησας ·
Καὶ τοῖς ἐκ βάθους στεναγμοῖς,
εἰς ἑκατὸν τοὺς πόνους ἐκαρποφόρησας ·
Καὶ γέγονας φώστηρ τῇ οἰκουμένῃ,
λάμπων τοῖς θαύμασιν,
Ἰλαρίων Πατὴρ ἡμῶν ὅσιε, πρέσβευε
Χριστῷ τῷ Θεῷ,

Ὡ φωστὴρ ἄδυτε τοῦ νοητοῦ Ἡλίου ·
Ἐλαμψας γὰρ τοῖς ἐν τῷ σκότει
τῆς ἀγνωσίας,
ἅπαντας ἀναβιβάζων πρὸς
θεῖον ὕψος,
Ἰλαρίων τοὺς βοώντας. Χαίροις ὦ Πατὴρ,
τῶν Ἀσκητῶν ἡ κρηπίς.

Ἰκετεύω σε, Κύριε,
ἄκουσόν μου τὴν ταπεινὴν προσευχὴν

and grant new life to this branch.
Let fresh twigs sprout and bring forth
an abundance of crisp and tender foliage.
Make it blossom and let it grow
in your divine light
and bear the most delicious
and exotic fruit.
May it nourish my sisters and brethren
here in the desert
of Scetis.

By the flood of your tears...etc.

See this branch, Lord,
from the tree which gave shadow
to saint Thekla
when she cured a blind
by sprinkling
a few drops of milk
from her virgin breasts
on his extinguished eyes,
let it grow.
For as the blind man thirsts
for the light, Lord,
so this branch is thirsty for new life.
May the rain of my heart that pours down
on it move You to pity.

O unfading light of the Spiritual Sun;
For you illumined those
in the darkness of ignorance.

II

I have not yet become a monk myself,
but I have seen monks.
One day when I was sitting in my cell,
my thoughts were troubling me,
suggesting that I should go to the desert
and see what I could see there.
I remained [in my cell] for five years,
fighting against this thought,
saying, perhaps it came from the demons.
But since this thought persisted,
I left for the desert.

καὶ τῆδε τῆ ῥάβδῳ νέαν ζωὴν ἐμποίησον,
ἵν' ἄλλους κλάδους φέρουσα
πολλὰ φαιδρὰ καὶ μαλακ' ἐκφύση φύλλα.
Ἵσθ' ἐξανθοῖ ἐν θειῷ
φωτί σου βλαστήσασα
καὶ τῶν ἡδίστων γένοιτο
καὶ θαυμασίων καρπόφορος,
ἃ ἂν τὰς ἀδελφάς μου τρέφῃ καὶ τοὺς
ἀδελφούς ἐν τῆδε τῆ ἐρήμῳ
τῆ τῆς Σκέτεως.

Ταῖς τῶν δακρύων σου ῥοαῖς, ...

Ἴδου τὴν ῥάβδον τήνδε, Κύριε,
ἀπὸ τοῦ δένδρου οὗ ἐν σκιᾷ καθιζομένη
ἡ ἁγία Θεόκλα
ἄνδρα τυφλὸν ἰάσατο · ὡσπερ οὖν ἐκείνη, ἐκ
τῶν παρθενίων μαστῶν
ὀλίγας γάλακτος σταγῶνας καταστάζουσα
εἰς τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτοῦ, τούτους
κατασβεσθέντας βλέποντας αὐτὴ ἐποίησεν,
οὕτω καὶ τήνδε σὺ τὴν ῥάβδον βλάστησον.
Ἵσπερ γὰρ ὁ τυφλὸς
τοῦ βλέπειν ἐρᾷ, Κύριε,
οὕτω καὶ ἡδε τοῦ ἀναβιώσασθαι.
Ἦν ἐμὲ τῆ ψακάδι τῆς καρδίας δεύουσαν,
Κύριε, ἐλεῖσον.

ὦ φωστὴρ ἄδυτε τοῦ νοητοῦ Ἡλίου ·
Ἐλαμψας γὰρ τοῖς ἐν τῷ σκότει
τῆς ἀγνωσίας.

II

Ἐγὼ οὕτω γέγονα μοναχός,
ἀλλ' εἶδον μοναχοὺς.
Καθημένῳ γὰρ μοί ποτε ἐν τῷ κελλίῳ
ὠχλησάν μοι οἱ λογισμοὶ
λέγοντες · Ἐπελθε εἰς τὴν ἔρημον,
Καὶ ἴδε τί βλέπεις ἐκεῖ.
Ἔμεινα δὲ πολεμῶν
τῷ λογισμῷ πέντε ἔτη,
λέγων, Μήπως ἀπὸ δαιμόνων ἐστίν.
Καὶ ὡς ὑπέμενεν ὁ λογισμὸς,
ἀπηλθὸν εἰς τὴν ἔρημον.

There I found a sheet of water
and an island in the midst,
and the animals of the desert
came to drink there.
In the midst of these animals
I saw two naked men,
and my body trembled,
for I believed they were spirits.

Seeing me shaking,
they said to me :
'Do not be afraid, for we are men.'

Then I said to them :
'Where do you come from,
and how did you come to this desert?'

They said :
'We come from a monastery
and having agreed together,
we came here forty years ago.
One of us is an Egyptian
and the other a Libyan.'
They questioned me and asked me :
'How is the world?
Is the water rising in due time?
Is the world enjoying prosperity?'

I replied it was,
then I asked them :
'How can I become a monk?'

They said to me :
'If you do not give up all that is in the
world, you cannot become a monk.'

I said to them :
'But I am weak, and I cannot do
as you do.'

So they said to me :
'If you cannot become like us,
then stay in your cell
and weep on your sins.
Do not sleep, unless standing upright
like a horse.

Καὶ ἦυρον ἐκεῖ λίμνην ὑδάτων,
καὶ νῆσον ἐν μέσῳ αὐτῆς ·
Καὶ ἦλθον τὰ κτήνη τῆς ἐρήμου
πιεῖν ἐξ αὐτῆς.
Καὶ εἶδον ἐν μέσῳ
αὐτῶν δύο ἀνθρώπους γυμνοὺς ·
Καὶ ἐδειλίασε τὸ σῶμά μου ·
ἐνόμισα γὰρ ὅτι πνεύματά ἐστιν

·
Αὐτοὶ δὲ με ὡς εἶδον δειλιῶντα, ἐλάλησαν
πρὸς μέ ·
Μὴ φοβοῦ · καὶ ἡμεῖς ἄνθρωποι ἐσμεν.

Καὶ εἶπον αὐτοῖς ·
Πόθεν ἐστὲ,
καὶ πῶς ἦλθετε εἰς τὴν ἔρημον ταύτην ;

Καὶ εἶπον ·
'Ἀπὸ κοινοβίου ἐσμέν,
καὶ γέγονεν ἡμῖν συμφωνία, καὶ ἐξήλθομεν
ᾧδε·ἰδοὺ τεσσαράκοντα ἔτη ·
Καὶ ὁ μὲν εἷς Αἰγύπτιος,
ὁ δὲ ἑταῖρος Λιβυκὸς ὑπάρχει.
Καὶ ἐπηρώτησάν με καὶ αὐτοῖς, λέγοντες ·
Πῶς ὁ κόσμος ;
Καὶ εἰ ἔρχεται τὸ ὕδωρ κατὰ καιρὸν αὐτοῦ,
καὶ εἰ ἔχει ὁ κόσμος τὴν εὐθηνίαν αὐτοῦ
·
Καὶ εἶπον αὐτοῖς · Ναί.
Κἀγὼ αὐτοὺς ἠρώτησα ·
Πῶς δύναμαι γενέσθαι μοναχός ;

Καὶ λέγουσί μοι ·
'Ἐὰν μὴ ἀποτάξηταί τις πᾶσι τοῖς τοῦ
κόσμου, οὐ δύναται γενέσθαι μοναχός.

Καὶ εἶπον αὐτοῖς ·
'Ἐγὼ ἀσθενὴς εἰμι,
καὶ οὐ δύναμαι ὡς ὑμεῖς.

Καὶ εἶπόν μοι καὶ αὐτοὶ ·
καὶ ἐὰν οὐ δύνασαι ὡς ὑμεῖς,
Κάθου εἰς τὸ κελλίον σου,
καὶ κλαῦσον τὰς ἁμαρτίας σου.
Μὴ κοιμήθῃς, εἰ μὴ ἰστάμενος
ὡσπερ ἵππος.

Abstain from food and
let the word of God feed you.
Weep your tears
on this dead branch.
Sprinkle it with holy water every day,
until it comes to life again,
until fresh twigs
and leaves sprout
from its withered bark
and bear you the fruit of obedience.'

I said :
'But how can this be?'

They replied :
'God is able to furnish a table
in the wilderness.
Those who sow in tears,
shall reap in joy.'

I asked them :
'When the winter comes
are you not frozen?
And when the heat comes
do not your bodies burn?'

They said :
'It is God who has made
this way of life for us.
We do not freeze in winter,
and the summer does us no harm.'

That is why I said that I have not yet
become a monk,
but I have seen monks.

III

By the flood of your tears... *etc.*

I see tens of thousands of angels
standing before God
I see choirs of the just.
I see companies of martyrs.
I see armies of monks.

Ἀπέχου παντὸς σίτου,
ἐπεὶ ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ σε θρέψει.
Ταύτην τὴν ξηρὴν
ῥάβδον δάκρυσι τοῖς σοῖς
καὶ ἁγίῳ ὕδατι καθ' ἡμέραν πότιζε
ἕως ἀναβιώσεται
καὶ ζήσει καὶ νεοὺς κλάδους
καὶ μαλακὰ φύλλα ποιήσει
ἀπὸ τοῦ ξηροῦ φλοιαρίου αὐτῆς
καὶ παρέξει καρπὸν σοι ὑπακοῆς.

Καὶ εἶπον αὐτοῖς ·
'Ἄλλὰ πῶς τοῦτο γενήσεται ;

Οἱ δὲ ·
'Ὁ Θεὸς δύνатаί τράπεζαν παρέχειν
ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ.
'Ὅστις ἂν δακρύων σπείρῃ,
οὗτος χαίρήσει θερίζων.

Καὶ ἠρώτησα αὐτούς ·
'Ὅταν γίνεται χειμῶν,
οὐ ρίγᾳτε ;
Καὶ ὅταν γίνεται καῦμα,
οὐ καίεται τὰ σώματα ὑμῶν ;

Οἱ δὲ εἶπον ·
'Ὁ Θεὸς ἐποίησεν ἡμῖν
τὴν οἰκονομίαν ταύτην ·
Καὶ οὔτε τῷ χειμῶνι ριγῶμεν,
οὔτε τῷ θέρει τὸ καῦμα ἡμᾶς ἀδικεῖ.

Διὰ τούτων εἶπον ὑμῖν, ὅτι οὐπω
γένενα μοναχός,
ἀλλ' εἶδον μοναχοὺς.

III

Ταῖς τῶν δακρύων σου ῥοαῖς...

ὄρῳ μυριάδας ἀγγέλων
τῷ θεῷ παρεστῶσας.
ὄρῳ χοροὺς δικαίων.
ὄρῳ μαρτύρων ἀθροίσματα.
ὄρῳ μοναχῶν πολιτεύματα.

I see the work of all those
who praise God.

A branch of vine comes out of my skull,
grows bigger and fills
everything under heaven.
It is laden with beautiful fruit.
All the birds of heaven come
to eat of the fruit of the vine,
and the more they eat,
the more the fruit increases.

Come, take and eat the fruit of obedience.

ὄρω πάντων τὸ ἔργον τῶν
τὸν θεὸν εὐφημούντων.

ἀνέρχεται ἄμπελος ἐν τῇ κεφαλῇ ἐμοῦ,
καὶ αὐξάνει, καὶ πληροῖ πάσαν
τὴν ὑπ' οὐρανόν, εὐκαρπὸς πάνυ ·
καὶ ἔρχουσιν πάντα τὰ πετεινὰ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ,
καὶ ἐσθίουσιν ἐκ
τοῦ καρποῦ τῆς ἀμπέλου ·
καὶ πρὸς ὃ ἐσθίουσιν,
πλεονάζει ὁ καρπὸς αὐτῆς

λάβετε, φάγετε καρπὸν ὑπακοῆς.