

UNPUBLISHED TEXTS  
FROM THE ARAB ORTHODOX TRADITION (2):  
*MIRACLES OF ST. EUSTRATIUS OF MAR SABA* (WRITTEN ca. 860)

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The purpose of the present article—the second instalment in the “Unpublished Texts from the Arab Orthodox Tradition” series—is to make accessible a hitherto neglected document from the Orthodox Christian tradition in Arabic: a brief account of the miracles of a little-known saint, St. Eustratius of Mar Saba (first half of the ninth century), a disciple of the famous St. Stephen of Mar Saba (d. 31 March 794AD).<sup>2</sup>

Leontius of Damascus’ *Life of St. Stephen of Mar Saba*,<sup>3</sup> written ca. 810AD,<sup>4</sup> provides the following information about St. Stephen’s disciple Eustratius:

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<sup>2</sup> For the first instalment of the series, see Treiger 2014 (cf. review by Panchenko 2014). An entry on the first of the two texts covered by the first instalment—*On the Origins of the Term “Melkite”* (re-titled: *A Narrative about Sophronius of Jerusalem, ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, and the Term “Melkite”*)—is forthcoming in *Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History* (it reports the discovery of a second manuscript of this text—Damascus, Rūm Orthodox Patriarchate 290 [year 1669], No. 4 [truncated at the end]).

<sup>3</sup> Leontius’ *Life of St. Stephen* was originally written in Greek (Leontius of Damascus 1723) and was translated into Arabic in 903AD at Mar Saba by Anbā Yannah ibn Iṣṭifan al-Fākhūrī (the Arabic translation has been edited and translated into English by John C. Lamoreaux: Leontius of Damascus 1999); all the references below are to the paragraph numbers of the Arabic text and English translation.

<sup>4</sup> It was written soon after Thomas/Tumayrīq became the patriarch of Jerusalem—the Greek text is very clear about this: ὁ νυνὶ τοῦ θεαδέλφου θώκου ἐπιλημμένος τοὺς οἶακας, κύρις Θωμᾶς (Leontius of Damascus 1723: 588, §136); the Arabic translation of this passage is erroneous (Leontius of Damascus 1999: II 101, §64.6, note 260). Thomas was patriarch from shortly before 807 to 821 (Blake 1950: 42-43). 810AD seems therefore to be a reasonable estimate for when Leontius’ *Life of St. Stephen* was written (Lamoreaux 2009: 407 seems to suggest that it must have been written prior to 807, but 807 is the latest possible date for Thomas’ accession to the patriarchal throne, not for when the *Life of St. Stephen* was written).

1. he was a virtuous monk at Mar Saba, who served as St. Stephen's attendant and a go-between between him and the monastery during the saint's travels (§21.2); he also accompanied St. Stephen on his travels (§26.2);
2. in his capacity as the saint's attendant, he would receive pilgrims intending to visit the saint and would facilitate their requests (§25.2-25.6);
3. after St. Stephen's death, he became a *basilicarius* (an official in charge of a basilica) of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem;<sup>5</sup> he held this position at the time of Leontius' writing (§24.1);
4. he was the source for several stories in Leontius' *Life of St. Stephen* (§§24.1, 25.1, 26.1).

We get the impression that Eustratius was a relatively young man during the last years of St. Stephen's life. Since St. Stephen died in 794AD, Eustratius was likely born sometime in the mid-760s (no later than 770AD).

The *Miracles of St. Eustratius* is preserved in a unicum thirteenth-century manuscript Sinai ar. 411 (fols. 203r-206v) and is presented for the first time below. It is a brief report about six miracles (and, more broadly, signs of clairvoyance) of a Palestinian monk named St. Eustratius. St. Eustratius' monastery is called simply *al-sīq*, "the Lavra"; used *tout court*, with no qualifier, this term typically refers to the Great Lavra of Mar Saba east of Bethlehem. While most of the miracles reported in this text cannot be dated, Miracle No. 4 is set in the years just before and just after Patriarch Job of Antioch's death (ca. 839AD, according to the careful assessment of Todt & Vest 2015: I 336).<sup>6</sup>

Given that Eustratius is a relatively rare name and that both Leontius' *Life of St. Stephen* and the *Miracles of St. Eustratius* are set at Mar Saba, it is virtually certain that the two Eustratii are identical. Moreover, since, as estimated above, the monk and *basilicarius* Eustratius (the disciple of St. Stephen) was likely born in the mid-760s, he would have been in his seventies

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<sup>5</sup> The term *basilicarius* (in Greek βασιλικάριος, in Arabic *balsiqār* or *bāsiliqār*), appears also in an early-tenth century Arabic Christian colophon (Treiger 2015a: 202, note 58).

<sup>6</sup> Patriarch Job of Antioch is also the author one of the first Arabic Christian homily that we know about—an unfortunately no longer extant sermon on the Feast of the Cross (van Esbroeck 1967: 147; Sauget 1970: 415, 420; Nasrallah 1979-1996: II/2 34-35).

in the late 830s and early 840s—just the right age to have come to be regarded as a saintly elder and wonderworker.

In many ways, the *Miracles of St. Eustratius* can be considered as a sequel to Leontius' *Life of St. Stephen*—and it was perhaps deliberately written as such. St. Eustratius is shown to be a worthy disciple of his saintly predecessor and a paragon of the Palestinian monastic culture that is described so vividly by Cyril of Scythopolis, John Moschus, and Leontius of Damascus. What makes the *Miracles of St. Eustratius* unique, however, is its comparatively late date (it must have been written at some remove from the events described, likely after St. Eustratius' death, and thus perhaps ca. 860) and the fact that it was likely written in Arabic rather than Greek.<sup>7</sup>

The localities that we encounter in the *Miracles of St. Eustratius* are very much those that one sees described in Cyril of Scythopolis, John Moschus, and Leontius of Damascus:

- *the Lavra* (i.e., the Great Lavra of Mar Saba);
- *the cave of St. Chariton* (in the vicinity of the “Old Lavra” of Mar Chariton near Tekoa; see Hirschfeld 2000; Pringle 1993-2009: II 221-224);
- *Choziba* (=the monastery of St. George in Wādī al-Qilt west of Jericho; see Schick 1995: 285-286; Sharon 1997-in progress: III 69-113);
- *Calamon* (=the ruined monastery in ‘Ayn Ḥajla on the Jordan river, about 1km from Dayr Ḥajla / the monastery of St. Gerasimos; see Schick 1995: 279; Sharon 1997-in progress: III 48-54, 153);
- *al-Ghawr* (=the Jordan valley);
- *Wādī al-Mūjib* (=the stream Arnon in Transjordan);
- the urban centres of Palestine, Syria, and Transjordan: *Jerusalem, Nazareth, Antioch, Aleppo, Homs, Damascus, and al-Karak* (=Characmoba in Transjordan).

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<sup>7</sup> Still, the possibility that it was written in Greek and translated into Arabic early on, perhaps even by the same Anbā Yannah ibn Iṣṭifān al-Fākhūrī who translated Leontius' *Life of St. Stephen*, cannot be excluded. There are, in fact, some stylistic similarities between the Arabic translation of the *Life of St. Stephen* and the *Miracles of St. Eustratius*, but they can be easily explained by the translator of the former and the author of the latter coming from the same linguistic milieu. It should also be noted that the name of Eustratius is spelled somewhat differently in the two texts: اسراط, اسطراط, or اسطراتيا (the last form appears in §§21.8, 21.10, 24.5, and 26.2—all these times in the vocative, reflecting the Greek Εὐστράτιε) in the *Life of St. Stephen* and اسطراتيوس or (once) اسطراتيوس in the *Miracles of St. Eustratius*.

One particularly intriguing aspect of the *Miracles of St. Eustratius* is the information it provides about the election of bishops in the Patriarchates of Jerusalem and Antioch. According to this document, bishops were often chosen from the monastic community of Mar Saba. In Miracle No. 3, we hear that two brothers from Homs, Abba Elias and Abba John, who were then both monks at Mar Saba, became bishops of Nazareth and al-Karak respectively. In Miracle No. 4, we hear that legates from the Patriarch of Antioch Job came to Mar Saba to seek out a certain monk, Abba Symeon from Damascus, to have him ordained as bishop of Aleppo;<sup>8</sup> having not found him, they took with them another monk, Abba Job; however, he was rejected by Patriarch Job and became bishop of Aleppo only after the latter's death. The *Miracles of St. Eustratius* thus shows that Mar Saba—itsself a very cosmopolitan community that attracted monks from such places as Damascus and Homs—was “supplying” bishops for various sees of the Patriarchates of Jerusalem and Antioch (such as Nazareth, al-Karak, and Aleppo).<sup>9</sup> This is quite important for reconstructing the monastery's history—and more generally, the history of the Orthodox Church in the Middle East—in the ninth century.<sup>10</sup>

The edition below faithfully reproduces the text as it appears in the manuscript, without attempting to “correct” numerous deviations—whether morphological (such as *لم يجيبهم* in lieu of *لم يجيبهم* or the imperatives

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<sup>8</sup> It is quite possible that, after this text was written, this Abba Symeon from Damascus became Symeon, the patriarch of Antioch, who in 884 became embroiled in a controversy with David, metropolitan of Damascus (Lamoreaux 2010; John Lamoreaux is preparing a critical edition and English translation of this immensely important text). It is perhaps worth pointing out that I have identified a second manuscript of the “David of Damascus” correspondence: Cambridge, Westminster College, the tenth-century “Apostolic Constitutions” palimpsest (formerly in possession of Agnes Smith Lewis)—I hereby express my deep gratitude to Ms. Helen Weller, the archivist of Westminster College, for photographs of this manuscript (and of another ancient palimpsest from their collection).

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Leontius' *Life of St. Stephen*, §§30.2 (Abba John becoming bishop of Kanākir = al-Karak; this John has been identified with “John of Charax the grammarian” (Winkelmann, Lilie et. al. 1998-2009 [=PmbZ]: No. 3115; Mavroudi 2015: 328, note 145), 35.11 (Abba Basil becoming bishop of Tiberias), 62.4 (Abba Eustathius becoming bishop of Lydda), and 79.7 (Abba Joseph, who “shortly thereafter became bishop”).

<sup>10</sup> Though this is not represented in the *Miracles of St. Eustratius*, we also know that Mar Saba was a multi-lingual community, with monks conversant in Greek, Syriac, Arabic, and Georgian and working on translations of Patristic and hagiographic texts between all these languages (Noble & Treiger 2014: 21-22; Treiger 2014b; Treiger 2015a: 190-191, 198-203; Treiger 2015b: 443-444; on the Syro-Greek translation of Isaac of Nineveh see Pirard 2012; on the translations into Georgian see: Pataridze 2011; Pataridze 2013).

انصرفوا اللصوص in lieu of صَلَّ and قُمْ) or syntactical (such as انصرفوا اللصوص in lieu of انصرف اللصوص)—from Classical Arabic usage. I have also retained the future marker سا, characteristic of Christian Palestinian Arabic of the first millennium (Blau 1966-1967: I 68-69, §8.1), and the colloquial form ايش (“what?” or “why?”) that one hears even today in Palestinian ‘āmmiyya. The hamzas are absent, as they are in the manuscript. Minor emendations are indicated in footnotes to the edition. The punctuation, occasional vocalization, and division into paragraphs are my own.

### Edition of Sinai ar. 411, fols. 203r-206v

#### <عجائب القديس انبا اسطراتي><sup>11</sup>

<١> بعض رهبانه دخل الى المدينة فوق في خطية وخرج الى قلايته، فلما كان الليل وهو جالس حزين في بستانه وكانت قلاية القديس مقابله، فلما جاز من الليل ساعة فاذا الشيخ قد فتح بابه وخرج، وكان الباب مطين<sup>١٢</sup> موثق، فابصره الراهب وعجب لأنه ليس كان وقت خروجه واقبل حتى بلغ الراهب وجعل | (٢٠٣ب) يقرع بابه، فقام الراهب مسرع وفتح له، فلما دخل الشيخ وصلى كفارة السنة خرّ على رجلي الراهب، فجعل الراهب يقول: «صلي عليّ، يا ابي، لاني قد وقعت في خطية»، فلما نظر الراهب ان القديس عرف امره طرح نفسه على رجلي الشيخ بيكا و<١> قرّ على خطيته وبما اصابه عند ذلك، اقامه القديس ووعظه ووصاه بخلاص نفسه وانصرف.

<٢> وأيضاً اتاه قسيس الخوزيب ومعه ابن عمّ له مجنون فدخل عليه وطلب اليه ان يصلي على ذلك المجنون، فلما سمع القديس هذا من القسّ جعل نفسه مجنون يرتعد ويضرب بيديه ورجليه ويحرق اسنانه، فعلم القسّ ان القديس ايضاً يريد ان يستر نفسه، فلجّ بالطلبة والبكا، وكان | (٢٠٤أ) كلما لجّو<١> عليه زاد هو بالاضطراب والرعدة، فلم يزل يطلب اليه ويكي مع جماعة من كان معه من الاخوة، فعند ذلك رحمهم الشيخ القديس وقال: «اما انا فانسان خاطي ولم ابغ هذه الموهبة»، فعادوا اليه بالطلبة والبكا والتضرّع، فقال: «قد اعلمتكم ان لم ابغ

<sup>11</sup> The title as given in the catalogues is “Miracles of St. Eustratius” (Atiya 1955: 11; Kamil 1970: 43); though it is illegible in the digital copy at my disposal, it can be reasonably reconstructed as above.

<sup>12</sup> Read: متين?

هذا ولكن انا اكتب لكم الى راهب قديس شرقي بحر الميت، [وبحر الميت]<sup>13</sup> خلف السونية في وادي يدعا الموجب»، فكتب لهم وانطلقوا كما امرهم.

حتى بلغوا الوادي فصادفوا راهب، فظنوا انهم اليه أرسلوا، فقال لهم: «ليس انا هو، ذلك الرجل داخل مني»، فاخذهم ودخل بهم اليه، فكان الشيخ محبوس في كهف شامخ، فدقوا عليه فلم يجيبهم، فعندما طال عليهم الوقوف | (٢٠٤ ب) صاحوا وقالوا ان «انبا اسطراتي بعثنا اليك ومعنا كتابه»، فلما سمع ذكر انبا اسطراتي خرج اليهم وقبلهم بفرح واخذ الكتاب منهم وقبله ووضع علي عينيه وقال: «ايش كان يريد يبعث بكم الى ضعفي، حقا اقول لكم انه ان اراد نفع الدنيا كلها بصلاته، ولكني اصنع طاعة لانه انما ارسلكم ليوضح<sup>14</sup> اتضاعه»، فصلى علي ذلك الانسان، فخرج منه الشيطان، وانصرفوا من عنده يسبحون الله علي ما عاينوا.

<٣> وكان في السيق راهبين اخوة من اهل حمص فاضلين، فجا الشيخ انبا اسطراتي إلى راس الدير انبا يوسف وقال له: «ادخل هولاي الاخوة الى المذبح فان الى قريب يصيروا اساقفة»، وكانوا محتاجين الى | (٢٠٥ أ) كهنة فبعد زمان اختيروا اساقفة، وصار انبا الياس على الناصرة وانبا يني على الكرك، وتم قول القديس بسببهم.

<٤> وايضا كان في السيق راهب حمصي يدعا انبا ايوب وكان قد قدم من عند انبا ايوب بطريك انطاكية اساقفة يطلبون رجل يصلح <يصير> اسقف على حلب وكان قاصدين رجل يقال له انبا سميون الدمشقي، فاختلفا عنهم، فلما تغيب عنهم ذلك الرجل الذي طلبوه دخلوا الى ذلك الراهب الحمصي فسالوه ان يخرج معهم، فاتي الى انبا اسطراتيوس يستشيريه وهو في ذلك فرح، وكان اخر النهار، فلما اخبر القديس بذلك قال له: «ارجع الي في غد وانا اطلب الى المسيح ان يوفق لك باب الخير»، | (٢٠٥ ب) فانصرف من عنده.

ولما كان سحر قاموا القوم واخذوا الرجل ولم يرجع الى عند القديس كما قال له، فلما اصبح سال القديس عن الراهب فقيل له انه قد مضى مع الاساقفة. حينئذ قال الشيخ: «حقا اقول لكم، بيسما يرجع وسا<sup>15</sup> يدركه حزن شديد لانه قد عرف ايش اريد اقول له، لذلك لم يجي الي».

<sup>13</sup> MS adds here: وبحر الميت. I suggest editing it out as dittography. Otherwise, the text would have the elder try to define the location of the Dead Sea, which would make no sense, as the Dead Sea is too well known.

<sup>14</sup> My emendation. MS: لموضع.

<sup>15</sup> *Sā* (سا) is a future marker in Christian Palestinian Arabic of the first millennium (Blau 1966-1967: I 68-69, §8.1).

فَعِنْدَمَا صَارَ إِلَى انْطَاكِيَةِ لَمْ يَقْبَلْهُ أَيُّوبُ الْبَطْرِيْرِكُ وَرَدَّهُ، فَرَجَعَ حَزِيْنٌ بِأَكْبَارِهِ وَطَرَحَ نَفْسَهُ عَلَى رَجُلِي الْقَدِيْسِ يَبْكِي وَيَتَضَرَّعُ وَيَقُوْلُ: «أَرْحَمْنِي، يَا قَدِيْسَ اللهِ، وَاغْفِرْ لِي خَطِيْئَتِي»، فَقَالَ لَهُ الشَّيْخُ: «لَوْ كُنْتُ رَجَعْتُ إِلَيْكَ لَمْ تَحْزَنْ، وَلَكِنْ أَفْرَحْ، الْآنَ فَإِنَّكَ سَأَلْتَ تَصِيْرًا إِلَى ذَلِكَ وَتَصِيْرًا إِلَى اسْقَافِ | (٢٠٦أ) عَنْ قَلِيْلٍ». وَأَنَّهُ لَمَّا أَرَادَ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ الْبَطْرِيْرِكُ لِأَنْبِيَا أَيُّوبَ الْحَمْصِيِّ عَمَلَ عَلَى حَلْبِ اسْقَافِ يَدْعَا أَنْبِيَا نَقِيْطًا، فَأَقَامَ سِتِّيْنِ ثُمَّ تَنِيْحًا وَإِيْضًا تَنِيْحًا أَنْبِيَا أَيُّوبَ الْبَطْرِيْرِكُ، فَأَخْتَارَ أَنْبِيَا أَيُّوبَ الْحَمْصِيِّ وَجَعَلَ اسْقَافِ عَلَى حَلْبِ كَمَا قَالَ لَهُ الْقَدِيْسُ.

<٥> وَأَنَّ هَذَا الْقَدِيْسَ أَتَى إِلَى مَغَارَةِ أَنْبِيَا خَرِيْطُنَ لِيَسْكُنَ هُنَاكَ، وَكَانَ ثَمَّ رَاهِبًا جَافِيًّا مَحَبِّ يَجْمَعُ لَهُ رَحْلًا، فَقَالَ لَهُ الْقَدِيْسُ يَوْمَ مِنَ الْإِيَّامِ: «إِيَّهَا الْإِخْوَانُ، قَوْمٌ نَفَرُوا مِنْ هَاهُنَا لِأَنَّهُ لَا بَدَّ أَنْ تَدْرِكُنَا بَلِيَّةٌ عَظِيْمَةٌ»، فَقَالَ لَهُ الرَّاهِبُ: «أَمَّا أَنَا فَلَيْسَ أِبْرَحُ مِنْ هَاهُنَا، فَإِنْ أَرَدْتَ أَنْ تَتَبَرَّحَ (؟) فَافْعَلْ». قَالَ لَهُ الشَّيْخُ: «أَمَّا أَنَا فَإِذَا قَدْ عَرَفْتَ السَّبَبَ فَمَا يَجِبُ لِي أَنْ أَذْهَبَ وَأَسْلَمَكَ»، فَلَمْ يَكْتَرِثْ لِقَوْلِهِ.

فَبَعْدَ أَيَّامٍ | (٢٠٦ب) يَسِيرَةً دَخَلَ عَلَيْهِمُ اللَّصُوصُ نَزَلُوا الْجَبَلَ وَرَبَطُوا الشَّيْخَ أَوَّلًا وَضَرَبُوهُ ضَرْبًا شَدِيْدًا وَأَخَذُوا أَيْضًا صَاحِبَهُ فَضَرَبُوهُ أَيْضًا وَأَخَذُوا كُلَّ شَيْءٍ كَانَ عِنْدَهُ، فَقَالَ لَهُ الشَّيْخُ بَعْدَ مَا أَنْصَرَفُوا اللَّصُوصُ: «لَوْ كُنْتُ قَبْلَتْ مِنْنِي مَا كَانَ أَصَابُنَا هَذَا وَأَعْلَمُ أَنَّ الَّذِي أَقْتَنَيْتُ وَجَمَعْتَ هُوَ الَّذِي جَلَبَ عَلَيْنَا هَذِهِ الْبَلِيَّةَ».

<٦> وَإِيْضًا نَزَلَ هَذَا الْقَدِيْسُ إِلَى بَرِّيَّةِ الْغُورِ لِيَسْكُنَ هُنَاكَ وَأَتَا مِنَ الْكُورِيْبِ يَرِيدُ الْقَلْمُونَ وَكَانَ يَمْشِي قَلِيْلًا قَلِيْلًا حَتَّى بَلَغَ الْدَيْرَ نِصْفَ النَّهَارِ فِي شِدَّةِ الْحَرِّ وَكَانَ مَعَهُ رَاهِبٌ، فَضَرَبَ عَلَى الْبَابِ فَلَمْ يَكَلِّمْهُ أَحَدٌ، فَعِنْدَ ذَلِكَ صَنَعَ عَلَى الْبَابِ صَلِيْبًا وَقَالَ: «يَا سَيِّدَتِي مَرْتَمِرِيْمُ، افْتَحِي لِعَبْدِكَ»، فَانْفَتَحَ الْبَابُ وَدَخَلَ الْكَنِيسَةَ، فَعَجِبَ مِنْهُ الرَّاهِبُ الَّذِي كَانَ مَعَهُ وَسَبَّحَ اللَّهَ.

<sup>16</sup> See note 15 above.

## Translation

### <Miracles of the holy Abba Eustratius>

<1> One of the monks under his [guidance] went into the city<sup>17</sup> and fell into sin.<sup>18</sup> He then went back to his cell. When night came, he was sitting overwhelmed with grief in his garden, with the saint's cell right opposite him. After one hour of the night had passed, the elder suddenly opened his door and came out, even though the door had been firmly shut<sup>19</sup> and fastened. The monk saw him and was amazed, because this was not the time for him to come out. [The saint] drew near, reaching the monk's [cell], and began | **(203v)** knocking on his door. The monk arose in a rush and opened the door for him. When the elder came in, he prayed for atonement of the [last] year's sins. He then fell at the monk's feet. The monk started saying: "Pray for me, father, for I have fallen into sin!" After the monk realized that the saint already knew about his situation, he fell at the elder's feet, crying and confessing his sin and what had befallen him at that time. The saint raised him up, admonished him, gave him instructions on how to save his soul, and departed.

<2> A priest from Choziba<sup>20</sup> came to visit [the saint] with a demon-possessed (*majnūn*) cousin. He came in and implored [the saint] to pray over the demon-possessed man. When the saint heard this from the priest, he pretended as though he was himself possessed, shaking, beating with his hands and feet, and gnashing his teeth. The priest understood that the saint wanted to conceal himself,<sup>21</sup> but persisted imploring and crying. Yet | **(204r)** the more they importuned him, the more was the saint shaking and trembling. He continued to implore and to cry, together with all the brethren in attendance, and finally the elder took pity on them and said: "I am just a sinful man and I have not attained this gift."<sup>22</sup> But they continued to beseech him, crying and imploring. Finally, he said: "I told you already that I have not attained it, but I shall write you a letter for a saintly monk living to the east from the Dead Sea, past al-

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<sup>17</sup> Presumably, Jerusalem.

<sup>18</sup> Presumably, the sin of fornication.

<sup>19</sup> See note 12 above.

<sup>20</sup> Here and below, all the localities are identified in the introduction above.

<sup>21</sup> I.e., out of humility.

<sup>22</sup> I.e., the gift of exorcising demons.



Sūniyya<sup>23</sup> in a wādī called al-Mūjib.” He wrote a letter, and they departed as he bade them.

Eventually, they reached the wādī and met a monk. They thought that he was the one to whom they were sent, but he said to them: “I am not he; that person is further inland (?) than I am.” He took them and led them to him. The elder was living in seclusion in a cave up high. They knocked, but he did not respond. After being unable to wait any longer, | (204v) they shouted, saying: “Abba Eustratius has sent us to you, and we have a letter from him.” When [the elder] heard the name of Abba Eustratius, he went out to them and greeted them joyfully. He took the letter from them, kissed it, and put it upon his eyes, saying: “Why did he choose to send you to my unworthiness?! Verily I say to you, if he wanted to benefit the entire world by his prayers, [he could]. Nonetheless, I shall obey. He sent you to me only to show humility.” He prayed over that person, and the demon came out of him. They departed from his presence, glorifying God for what they had seen.

<3> There were at the Lavra [of Mar Saba] two excellent monks from Homs, who were brothers. The elder Abba Eustratius came to the abbot Abba Joseph<sup>24</sup> and said to him: “Take these brothers into the altar, for they will soon become bishops.” They were indeed in need of | (205r) priests. After a while, they were chosen to be bishops. Abba Elias<sup>25</sup> became the bishop of Nazareth, and Abba John, bishop of al-Karak.<sup>26</sup> Thus the saint’s prediction concerning them was fulfilled.

<4> There was at the Lavra [of Mar Saba] another monk from Homs, whose name was Abba Job. At that time, bishops came from Patriarch Job of Antioch to find someone who could be fit to become bishop of Aleppo. They sought a certain man called Abba Symeon from Damascus, but he hid himself from them.<sup>27</sup> As they could not find the man they sought, they approached this monk from Homs and asked him to go with them. He came to Abba Eustratius

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<sup>23</sup> Location unknown.

<sup>24</sup> A solitary monk Abba Joseph is mentioned in Leontius’ *Life of St. Stephen*; Leontius also informs us that this Abba Joseph later became a bishop (§79.7; cf. note 9 above).

<sup>25</sup> Otherwise unknown.

<sup>26</sup> A bishop of al-Karak named John (possibly identical to John of Charax the grammarian) is mentioned in the *Life of St. Stephen* (§30.2; cf. note 9 above).

<sup>27</sup> Refusing, out of humility, to accept a position of authority.

to seek his council, rejoicing at the news. This was the end of the day. When he told the saint about this, the saint said: “Come back to me tomorrow, and I will pray to Christ to direct you to the gate of the good.” | **(205v)** The monk departed from his presence.

At dawn, those people [i.e., the bishops] came and took the man with them, and he never came back to the saint, as the saint had bidden him to do.” When it was morning, the saint inquired about that monk and was told that he had left with the bishops. The elder then said: “Verily I say to you, he will have a wretched return and will be overcome with great sorrow. He knew what I was going to say to him; this is why he never came back to me.”

When [Abba Job] came to Antioch, Patriarch Job did not accept him and sent him back. He came back weeping and overcome with sorrow. He then cast himself at the saint’s feet, crying and beseeching him, saying: “O saint of God, have mercy on me and forgive me my sin.” The elder said to him: “If you had come back to me, you would not have had to grieve, but now rejoice, for you will obtain this and will become a bishop | **(206r)** soon.” Indeed, when Patriarch Job rejected Abba Job from Homs, he appointed a bishop over Aleppo whose name was Abba Nicetas.<sup>28</sup> He remained [bishop] for two years and then died. Patriarch Job also died, and Abba Job from Homs was chosen and ordained to be bishop of Aleppo, as the saint had predicted.

<5> The saint [Abba Eustratius] once came to the cave of Abba Chariton to dwell there. There was another monk there who was uncouth and prone to hoarding possessions. One day, the saint said to him: “Brother, get up, let us run away from here, for a terrible disaster is bound to befall us.” The monk responded: “As for me, I shall not run away from here; but if you wish to run away, do as you please.” The elder said: “Because I know the reason [i.e., what is going to happen], I cannot go and leave you.” The monk, however, paid no attention to his words.

A few days | **(206v)** later, robbers attacked them. They came down from the mountain and, first, tied the elder and beat him severely. After that, they took his companion and beat him too, taking all his possessions. After the robbers had left, the elder said to him: “If you had listened to me, this would not have happened to us. Know also that it is the possessions that you had acquired and hoarded that brought this disaster upon us.”

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<sup>28</sup> Otherwise unknown.

<6> The saint [Abba Eustratius] once went down to the desert of al-Ghawr [i.e., the Jordan valley] to dwell there. He travelled from Choziba towards Calamon, walking very slowly. He reached the monastery [of Calamon] at midday when it was extremely hot, accompanied by another monk. He knocked on the gate, but no one responded. Then he made the sign of the cross over the gate and said: “My lady Mary, open to your servant.” The gate opened, and he entered the church. The monk who accompanied him was amazed and glorified God.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> It is tempting to suggest that it is this monk who is the author of the *Miracles of St. Eustratius*.

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<sup>30</sup> The Greek text is conveniently available on a number of websites, such as: <http://heiligenblog.de/ActaSanctorum/13.Juli.html>; [http://users.uoa.gr/~nektar/orthodoxy/agiologion/saints\\_08th-10th\\_centuries/119.htm](http://users.uoa.gr/~nektar/orthodoxy/agiologion/saints_08th-10th_centuries/119.htm) (accessed: 4 September 2015).

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<sup>31</sup> Online version: [http://telota.bbaw.de/pmbz/index\\_engl.html](http://telota.bbaw.de/pmbz/index_engl.html) (accessed: 4 September 2015).