**Ἰωάννης Μόσχος, *Λειμών***

XIII.

Ἔλεγον περὶ τοῦ ἀββᾶ[[1]](#footnote-1) Μάρκου τοῦ ἀναχωρητοῦ[[2]](#footnote-2) (οὗτος δὲ ἐκάθητο πλησίον τῆς μονῆς[[3]](#footnote-3) τοῦ Πενθουκλᾶ[[4]](#footnote-4)), ὅτι ἐπὶ ἑξήκοντα ἐννέα ἔτη ταύτην ἔσχεν τὴν ἐργασίαν, τὰς ἑβδομάδας[[5]](#footnote-5) νηστεύων[[6]](#footnote-6), ὥστε νομίζειν τινὰς, ὅτι ἄσαρκός[[7]](#footnote-7) ἐστιν. Ἠργάζετο δὲ νύκτα καὶ ἡμέραν περὶ τῶν ἐπαγγελιῶν[[8]](#footnote-8) τοῦ Χριστοῦ, καὶ ἐδίδου αὐτὰς πτωχοῖς[[9]](#footnote-9), οὐδὲ παρά τινος ἔλαβεν τιποτοῦν[[10]](#footnote-10)· περὶ τούτου ἀκούσαντες φιλόχριστοι ἦλθον δοῦναι αὐτῷ τὴν ἀγάπην[[11]](#footnote-11)· ὁ δὲ ἔλεγεν· “Οὐ λαμβάνω· τὸ γὰρ ἐμὸν χείρεργον[[12]](#footnote-12) τρέφει με, καὶ τοὺς ἐρχομένους πρός με διὰ τὸν Θεόν.”

XIV.

Ὁ ἀββᾶς Πολυχρόνιος πάλιν ἡμῖν διηγήσατο[[13]](#footnote-13), ἡμῖν λέγων, ὅτι[[14]](#footnote-14) “Ἐν τῷ κοινοβίῳ[[15]](#footnote-15) τοῦ Πενθουκλᾶ, ἀδελφὸς[[16]](#footnote-16) ἦν πάνυ προσέχων[[17]](#footnote-17) αὑτὸν, καὶ ἀσκητής. Ἐπολεμήθη[[18]](#footnote-18) δὲ εἰς πορνείαν[[19]](#footnote-19), καὶ μὴ εἰσενεγκὼν τὸν πόλεμον[[20]](#footnote-20), ἐξῆλθεν τοῦ μοναστηρίου[[21]](#footnote-21), καὶ ἀπῆλθεν εἰς Ἱεριχὼ[[22]](#footnote-22) πληρῶσαι[[23]](#footnote-23) τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν αὐτοῦ. Καὶ ὡς εἰσῆλθεν εἰς τὸ καταγώγιον[[24]](#footnote-24) τῆς πορνείας, εὐθέως ἐλεπρώθη[[25]](#footnote-25) ὅλως· καὶ θεασάμενος ἑαυτὸν ἐν τοιούτῳ σχήματι[[26]](#footnote-26), εὐθέως ἐπέστρεψεν εἰς τὸ μοναστήριον αὐτοῦ, εὐχαριστῶν τῷ Θεῷ, καὶ λέγων, ὅτι ‘Ὁ Θεὸς ἐπήγαγέν μοι τὴν τοιαύτην νόσον, ἵνα ἡ ψυχή μου σωθῇ. Καὶ μεγάλως ἐδόξαζεν[[27]](#footnote-27) τὸν Θεόν.’”

XXXI.

Δύο τινὲς τῶν γερόντων ἀπήρχοντο ἀπὸ Αἰγῶν εἰς Ταρσὸν τῆς Κιλικίας· καὶ ἐλθόντες εἰς πανδοχεῖον κατ’ οἰκονομίαν Θεοῦ, ἐφ’ ᾧ ἀναπαῆναι αὐτοὺς (ἦν γὰρ καύσων), εὗρον ἐκεῖ τρεῖς νεωτέρους ἀπερχομένους εἰς Αἴγας, ἔχοντας μεθ’ ἑαυτῶν μίαν πόρνην. Οἱ οὖν γέροντες ἐκάθισαν κατ’ ἰδίαν. Λαβὼν δὲ ὁ εἷς γέρων ἐκ τοῦ πηρίου αὐτοῦ τὸ ἅγιον Εὐαγγέλιον, ἀνεγίνωσκεν. Ἡ δὲ πόρνη ἡ οὖσα μετὰ τῶν νεωτέρων, ὡς εἶδεν τὸν γέροντα ἀναγινώσκοντα, καταλείψασα τοὺς νεωτέρους, ἐλθοῦσα ἐκάθισεν πλησίον τοῦ γέροντος. Ὁ δὲ γέρων ἀποτιναξάμενος αὐτῇ λέγει· Πολὺ φαίνει, ὦ ἀθλία, ἀναιδής· οὐκ ᾐδέσθης πλησίον ἡμῶν ἐλθεῖν καὶ καθίσαι; Ἡ δὲ ἀπεκρίθη λέγουσα· Μὴ, Πάτερ, μὴ βδελύξῃ με. Εἰ γὰρ καὶ πεπληρωμένη ὑπάρχω πάσης ἁμαρτίας, ἀλλ’ οὖν οὐκ ἀπώσατο τὴν προσελθοῦσαν αὐτῷ πόρνην ὁ Δεσπότης τῶν ἁπάντων ὁ Κύριος καὶ Θεὸς ἡμῶν. Ὁ δὲ γέρων ἀπεκρίθη αὐτῇ· Ἀλλ’ ἡ πόρνη ἐκείνη, οὐκέτι ἔμεινεν πόρνη. Ἡ δὲ λέγει αὐτῷ· Ἐλπίζω εἰς τὸν Υἱὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ τοῦ ζῶντος, ὅτι ἀπὸ τῆς σήμερον οὐδὲ ἐγὼ μένω ἐν τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ ταύτῃ. Καὶ καταλιποῦσα τοὺς νεωτέρους καὶ τὰ αὐτῆς πάντα, ἠκολούθησεν τοῖς γέρουσιν. Καὶ ἔβαλον αὐτὴν εἰς μοναστήριον, πλησίον Αἰγῶν, τὸ λεγόμενον τοῦ Νακκιβᾶ. Ταύτην κἀγὼ ἑώρακα γραῦν, πολλῇ συνέσει διάγουσαν· καὶ παρ’ αὐτῆς ἀκήκοα ταῦτα.

XXXII.

Μῖμός τις ἦν ἐν Ταρσῷ τῆς Κιλικίας, ὀνόματι Βαβύλας. Οὗτος εἶχεν δύο φίλας (ὄνομα τῇ μιᾷ Κομιτῶ, καὶ ὄνομα τῇ ἄλλῃ Νικῶσα)· ζῶν ἀσώτως, καὶ πράττων ὅσαπερ ἄξια τοῖς συνεργοῦσιν δαίμοσιν. Ἐν μιᾷ οὖν εἰσῆλθεν εἰς τὴν ἐκκλησίαν· καὶ κατ’ οἰκονομίαν Θεοῦ ἠνεγινώσκετο τὸ Εὐαγγέλιον, ἐν ᾧ ὑπῆρχεν ἡ περιοχὴ ἡ λέγουσα· «Μετανοεῖτε· ἤγγικεν γὰρ ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν.» Καὶ κατανυγεὶς εἰς τοῦτο, ἤρξατο μετὰ δακρύων ταλανίζειν ἑαυτὸν, ἐπὶ τοῖς πεπραγμένοις αὐτῷ. Καὶ παραχρῆμα ἐξελθὼν ἀπὸ τῆς Ἐκκλησίας, καὶ καλέσας τὰς δύο φίλας αὐτοῦ, λέγει αὐταῖς· Οἴδατε πῶς ἔζησα μεθ’ ὑμῶν ἐν ἀσωτίᾳ, καὶ ὅτι οὐδέποτε προετίμησα μίαν τῆς ἄλλης. Καὶ νῦν ἰδοὺ ἔχετε πάντα ὅσα ἐκτησάμην ὑμῖν· λάβετε δὲ καὶ τὰ ἐμὰ πάντα, καὶ μερίσασθε· ἐγὼ γὰρ ἀπὸ τῆς σήμερον ὑπάγω, ἀποτάσσομαι, καὶ γίνομαι μοναχός. Αἱ δὲ ὡς ἐξ ἑνὸς στόματος ἀπεκρίθησαν αὐτῷ, λέγουσαι μετὰ δακρύων· Εἰς μὲν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν καὶ εἰς τὴν τῆς ψυχῆς ἡμῶν ἀπώλειαν ἐκοινωνήσαμέν σοι, καὶ ἄρτι ὅτε θέλεις ποιῆσαι τοῦτο τὸ θεάρεστον ἔργον, ἀφίεις ἡμᾶς, καὶ μόνος ποιεῖς; Ὄντως οὐκ ἐᾷς, ἀλλὰ καὶ εἰς τὸ καλὸν κοινωνοῦμέν σοι. Καὶ ὁ μὲν μῖμος, εὐθὺς ἑαυτὸν ἀπέκλεισεν εἰς ἕνα τῶν τειχῶν τοῦ πύργου τῆς πόλεως· ἐκεῖναι δὲ πωλήσασαι τὰ ἑαυτῶν, δεδώκασιν πτωχοῖς, καὶ λαβοῦσαι καὶ αὐταὶ τὸ ἀσκητικὸν σχῆμα, ποιήσασαι κελλίον ἑαυταῖς πλησίον τοῦ πύργου, ἑαυτὰς ἀπέκλεισαν. Τούτῳ κἀγὼ συνέτυχον, καὶ ὠφελήθην. Ἔστιν γὰρ ὁ ἀνὴρ πάνυ συμπαθὴς, καὶ ἐλεήμων, καὶ ταπεινόφρων. Γέγραφα δὲ καὶ τοῦτο εἰς ὠφέλειαν τῶν ἐντυγχανόντων.

Chapter XIII - The life of abba MARK, the anchorite

Abba Mark the anchorite, who lived near the monastery of Penthucula for sixty-three years, had the ability to fast for a whole week, so that many thought he was not made of flesh and blood at all. He worked day and night, but gave everything [he earned] to the poor. He accepted nothing from anyone. Some faithful men heard of him and came offering him blessed bread (agape).

"I can't accept that," he said. "These hands of mine provide food for me and all who come to me."

Chapter XIV - The BROTHER who was attacked by the spirit of fornication and became leprous

Abba Polychronius also told us about a brother living in the coenobium of Penthucula who was very careful of himself, and continent. But once when he was attacked by the spirit of fornication he found that he was not able to fight against it, so he left the monastery and went to Jericho where he satisfied his desires. Soon afterwards, as he was going in to a harlot's house, he found that he was covered in leprosy. He returned immediately to the monastery, giving thanks to God and saying: "God has stricken me with this chastisement that my soul might be saved." And he gave great glory to God.

Chapter XVIII - The life of another OLD MAN in the monastery of Laura, who slept among lions

Abba Polychronius the presbyter told us about another old man in the Laura of abba Peter who quite often went off and wandered about on the banks of the Jordan, and if he came across a lion's den he would sleep there. One day he picked up two lions' cubs in his cloak and brought them into the church.

"If we were keeping the commandments of our Lord Jesus Christ", he said to the brothers, "these animals should really be frightened of us. But because of the sin which affects us all we seem bound to be frightened of them."

The brothers went back to their cells greatly impressed by this magnificent deed.

Chapter XXXI - The conversion and life of MARY the prostitute

Two old men were travelling from Aega to Tharsus when they stopped for refreshment at a small cottage (stabulum, which also carries the meaning of 'brothel'). In the providence of God they found there three young men who had with them a prostitute. The old men settled themselves down apart and one of them got out his holy Gospel and began to read [aloud]. And, would you believe it, the prostitute left the young men when she saw the old man reading, and came and sat down next to him.

"You've got a cheek, you wretch," said the old man, waving her away, "to dare to come and sit by us."

"Don't, I beg you, father," she said, "don't look down on me, or drive me away. I know I am full of every kind of sin, but the Lord and Saviour of all, Christ our God, did not reject the prostitute who came to him."

"Yes, but that prostitute did not remain a prostitute," the old man said.

I put my trust in the Son of the living God," she said, "that from this day onwards I won't keep on with this sinful way of life either."

She left the three young men and everything that she had, and followed those two old men. They took her to a monastery near the city of Aega. I saw her when she was an old woman of great wisdom, and learned all these things from her own mouth. Her name was Mary.

1. ἀββᾶς: titel voor een monnik, letterlijk “vader” (Aramees leenwoord), cf. ook het Franse “abbé” [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. ἀναχωρητός: letterlijk “teruggetrokken”, vandaar “kluizenaar” [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. “klooster” [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Het Penthouclas-klooster, vlakbij de Jordaan. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. ἑβδομάς: “week” [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. “vasten” [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. “niet van vlees en bloed” [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. ἐπαγγελία: “het verkondigen” [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. “bedelaar” [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. “iets”, een vroege voorloper van het Nieuwgriekse τίποτα. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. “liefde”, in dit geval: “aalmoes” [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. χείρ + ἔργον [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. διηγέομαι: vertellen [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Moet hier niet vertaald worden. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. “klooster” [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. “broeder” (hier in de religieuze betekenis) [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. “opletten” [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. πολεμέω: “aanvallen”, in dit geval “gedreven worden tot” [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. “het hoereren”, “het naar de hoeren gaan” [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. “aanvechting”, “drift” [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. “klooster” [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. De stad Jericho. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. “vervullen” [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. “hotel”, in combinatie met τῆς πορνείας: “bordeel” [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. “met lepra treffen” [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. “toestand” [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. “roemen”, “loven” [↑](#footnote-ref-27)