

Egeria and the Holy Week Liturgies

One woman's travel diary and the difference it made.

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For Christians celebrating Holy Week—the eight-day period preceding Easter—it's hard to imagine Palm Sunday without a procession of palms or Good Friday without the adoration of the cross. Given the sacrosanct nature of worship services this time of year, it is worth remembering that, far from being handed down directly from God, much of the Easter and Holy Week liturgies come to us by way of a little-known, naturally inquisitive fourth-century Spanish nun named Egeria.

Egeria was one of a handful of upper-class Roman female converts whose support was critical for the blossoming of early Christianity, though their names lack household acclaim. Her “postcards”—sent to her fellow sisters in northwestern Spain from a three-year pilgrimage through modern-day Egypt, Israel, Palestine, and Syria—offer detailed descriptions of biblical sites, monastic communities, and worship practice in late fourth-century antiquity. Her travel diaries also served as primary source material for the modern Holy Week liturgies and evoke the image of an unusual candidate for sainthood: an adventurous woman of means whose curiosity matched her piety.

Of all the early church matriarchs, Egeria is among the more enigmatic. Since a 19th-century scholar discovered the 22-page fragment of her travel narrative on the shelves of the Brotherhood of Arezzo in 1887, church historians have been arguing about her identity. A variation of Egeria's name first appeared in a letter from a seventh-century Spanish monk praising the intrepid spirituality of "Aetheria," a consecrated virgin or nun who had many years earlier written about her extensive pilgrimage from the farthest western shores of Spain all the way to the eastern part of the Roman Empire.

Writing to her sisters back in Spain, Egeria described the Sunday before Easter, now known as Palm Sunday, as it was celebrated in Jerusalem at the end of the fourth century. For anyone who has received a palm in church, heard the story of the Passion recited by clergy and members of the congregation, and processed around the pew benches on Palm Sunday morning, this account should be familiar. According to Egeria,

As the eleventh hour draws near ... all the children who are [gathered at the top of the Mount of Olives], including those who are not yet able to walk because they are too young and therefore are carried on their parents' shoulders, all of them bear branches, some carrying palms, others, olive branches. And the bishop is led in the same manner as the Lord once was led. [In the gospel accounts, Jesus rides into Jerusalem on a donkey.]... From the top of the mountain as far as the city and from there through the entire city ... everyone accompanies the bishop the whole way on foot, and this includes distinguished ladies and men of consequence.

Likewise, Egeria's description of Holy Week in Jerusalem also includes the first eyewitness account of the practice of venerating the cross—in her case, the “true cross” recently discovered by St. Helena—on Good Friday. Awed by being present for worship on the spot where Jesus had been crucified, Egeria wrote in painstaking detail to her community back home all that she saw going on in what is now the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

A throne is set up for the bishop on Golgotha behind the Cross, which now stands there. ... The gilded silver casket containing the sacred wood of the cross is brought in and opened. ... It is the practice here for all the people to come forth one by one, the faithful as well as the catechumens to bow down before the table, kiss the holy wood, and then move on.

Echoes of this practice exist today in Roman Catholics, Episcopalians, and Russian and Greek Orthodox Good Friday services, where church leaders will often carry a life-sized wooden cross down the central aisle of the church and hold it up at the foot of the altar for members of the congregation to revere. Worshippers who are gathered to commemorate the execution of Jesus for three hours of readings, reflections, and hymns then come forward individually and kneel before a life-sized wooden cross, touching it, kissing it, or otherwise paying their respects.

Though Holy Week's practices owe much to Egeria, the impact of her writings is not limited to the drama of modern liturgy exclusively. Her travel narrative also paints a picture of an adventurous and spirited church woman outside the monastic mold.

Egeria's writings show her wielding more earthly power than most nuns, with state and religious officials often eager to do her bidding. She "sends back" Roman soldiers once she has been escorted through the "unsafe places" and asks a group of monastic guides—who have just given her gifts and hiked with her up to the top of Mount Sinai—to then show her an unspecified number of "other places." The ease with which she attained military escorts through far-flung and dangerous places suggests high connections in the imperial court. Indeed, one line of research makes her out to be the daughter of a Spanish member of the court of Theodosius the Great, emperor from 379 to 395, and possibly the leader of what St. Jerome rancorously described as a wealthy and ostentatiously behaved travel party heading to the East at about that time. Another, more controversial scholarly finding combines a later letter from St. Jerome with some passages from her diary to argue that Egeria was, in fact, a cousin of the empress, and a well-known Arian heretic.

As luminaries of the church go, Egeria's intrepid spirituality and curiosity for the places and people of the Holy Land make her an unlikely pillar of the faith. At this time of year, though, the gifts of an ancient, enthusiastic tourist with a passion for liturgy and an eye for detail speak for themselves.



THE PILGRIMAGE OF ETHERIA

<https://www.ccel.org/m/mcclure/etheria/etheria.htm>

M.L. McClure and C. L. Feltoe, ed. and trans.

London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1919.

Be it noted that the pilgrim's name is currently spelled "Egeria" by most scholars.

<57>

IV

LENT

And when the Paschal days come they are observed thus:¹ Just as with us forty days are kept before Easter, so here eight weeks are kept before

Easter. And eight weeks are kept because there is no fasting on the Lord's Days, nor on the Sabbaths, except on the one Sabbath on which the Vigil of Easter falls, in which case the fast is obligatory. With the exception then of that one day, there is never fasting on any Sabbath here throughout the year. Thus, deducting the eight Lord's Days and the seven Sabbaths (for on the one Sabbath, as I said above, the fast is obligatory) from the eight weeks, there remain forty-one fast days, which they call here *Eortae*, that is *Quadragesimae*.²

¹ No traces of the Quadragesima are found before the fourth century. The fifth Canon of the Council of Nicaea (325) contains the earliest mention of it. Various endeavours were made in various countries to combine the Quadragesima with Holy Week. S. Chrysostom speaks of the Quadragesima being finished and the "Great week" beginning. At Rome and at Alexandria Holy Week was included in the Quadragesima in such a manner that the whole fast lasted only six weeks, but at Constantinople and in the countries observing the use of Antioch the fast was observed for seven weeks. The Sundays only were excepted at Rome, but at Constantinople both the Sundays and Saturdays, with the exception of Easter Eve, were exempt from fasting.--(Duchesne, *Christian Worship*, 4th edit., pp. 242 f.)

² The Old Arm. Lect. has: "For the Holy Quadragesima: first lection, Isa. i. 16-20; second, Ezek. xviii. 20-23; third, Rom. vi. 3-14; fourth, Col. ii. 8 foll. ; fifth, Heb. xi. 1-31; sixth, Isa. xlv. 17-26; seventh, Eph. iii. 14-iv. 13; eighth, Jer. xxxii. 19-44; ninth, Job xxxviii. 2-xxxix. 35; tenth, 1 Cor viii. 5-ix. 23; eleventh, Heb. i. 1-12; twelfth, Isa. vii. 11-vii 10; thirteenth, Isa. liii. 1-liv. 5; fourteenth, 1 Cor. xv. 1-28 {continued next page}

1. *Services on Sundays.*

Now the several days of the several weeks are kept thus:

On the Lord's Day after the first cockcrow the bishop reads in the Anastasis the account of the Lord's Resurrection from the Gospel, as on all Lord's Days throughout the whole year, and everything is done at the Anastasis and at the Cross as on all Lord's Days throughout the year, up to daybreak. Afterwards, in the morning, they proceed to the greater church, called the martyrium, which is in Golgotha behind the Cross, and all things that are customary on the Lord's Days are done there. In like manner also when the dismissal from the church has been made, they go with hymns to the Anastasis, as they always do on the Lord's Days, and while these things are being done the fifth hour is reached. *Lucernare*, however, takes place at its own hour, as usual, at the Anastasis and at the Cross, and in the various holy places; on the Lord's Day the ninth hour is¹ kept.

2. *Weekday Services.*

On the second weekday they go at the first cockcrow to the Anastasis, as they do throughout the year, and everything that is usual is done until morning. Then at the third hour they go to the

{footnote continuing from page above} fifteenth, Dan. vii. 13-27; sixteenth, 1 Cor. xii. 1-7; seventeenth, 1 Cor. xii. 1-7; eighteenth, Ezek. xxxvii. 1-14; nineteenth, 1 Tim. iii. 14-16. Here ends the canon of them that are going to

be baptized."

¹ Mgr. Duchesne would here insert "not."

<59>

Anastasis, and the things are done that are customary throughout the year at the sixth hour, for this going at the third hour in Quadragesima is additional. At the sixth and ninth hours also; and at *lucernare*, everything is done that is customary throughout the whole year at the holy places. And on the third weekday all things are done as on the second weekday.

3. *Wednesday and Friday.*

Again, on the fourth¹ weekday they go by night to the Anastasis, and all the usual things are done until morning, and also at the third and sixth hours. But at the ninth hour they go to Sion, as is customary at that hour on the fourth and sixth² weekdays throughout the year, for the reason that the fast is always kept here on the fourth and sixth weekdays even by the catechumens, except a martyrs' day should occur. For if a martyrs' day should chance to occur on the fourth or on the sixth weekday in Quadragesima, they do not go to Sion at the ninth hour. But on the days of Quadragesima, as I said above, they proceed to Sion on the fourth weekday at the ninth hour, according to the custom of the whole year, and all things that are customary at the ninth hour are done, except the oblation, for, in order that the

¹ The Old Arm. Lect. has: "In the holy Quadragesima, in the first week on the fourth day of the week, they assemble at the tenth hour in holy Sion, and this canon is performed: Exod. i. 1-ii. 10; Joel i. 14-20; Ps. li. 5ff." (Gregory Asharuni alone gives the fifth verse as the antiphon.)

² The Old Arm. Lect. : "Friday, at the tenth hour they assemble in holy Sion, and this canon is performed: Deut. vi. 4-vii. 10; Job vi. 2-vii. 13; Isa. xl. 1-8; Ps. xli.⁴"

<60>

people may always be instructed in the law, both the bishop and the priest preach diligently. But when the dismissal has been made, the people escort the bishop with hymns thence to the Anastasis, so that it is already the hour of *lucernare* when he enters the Anastasis; then hymns and antiphons are said, prayers are made, and the service (*missa*) of *lucernare* takes place in the Anastasis and at the Cross. And the service of *lucernare* is always later on those days in Quadragesima than on other days throughout the year. On the fifth weekday everything is done as on the second and third weekday. On the sixth weekday everything is done as on the fourth, including the going to Sion at the ninth hour, and the escorting of the bishop thence to the Anastasis with hymns.

4 *Saturday.*

But on the sixth weekday the vigils are observed in the Anastasis from the hour of their arrival from Sion with hymns, until morning, that is, from the hour of *lucernare* when they entered, to the morning of the next day, that is,

the Sabbath. And the oblation is made in the Anastasis the earlier, that the dismissal may take place before sunrise. Throughout the whole night psalms are said responsively in turn with antiphons and with various lections, the whole lasting until morning, and the dismissal, which takes place on the Sabbath at the Anastasis, is before sunrise, that is, the oblation, so that the dismissal may take place in the Anastasis at the hour when the sun begins to rise. Thus, then, is each week of Quadragesima kept, the dismissal taking

<61>

place earlier on the Sabbath, *i.e.* before sunrise, as I said, in order that the *hebdomadarii*, as they are called here, may finish their fast earlier. For the custom of the fast in Quadragesima is that the dismissal on the Lord's Day is at the fifth hour in order that they whom they call *hebdomadarii*, that is, they who keep the weeks' fast, may take food. And when these have taken breakfast on the Lord's Day, they do not eat until the Sabbath morning after they have communicated in the Anastasis. It is for their sake, then, that they may finish their fast the sooner, that the dismissal on the Sabbath at the Anastasis is before sunrise. For their sake the dismissal is in the morning, as I said; not that they alone communicate, but all who are so minded communicate on that day in the Anastasis.

5. *The Fast.*

This is the custom of the fast in Quadragesima: some, when they have eaten after the dismissal on the Lord's Day, that is, about the fifth or sixth hour, do

not eat throughout the whole week until after the dismissal at the Anastasis on the Sabbath; these are they who keep the weeks' fast.

Nor, after having eaten in the morning, do they eat in the evening of the Sabbath, but they take a meal on the next day, that is, on the Lord's Day, after the dismissal from the church at the fifth hour or later, and then they do not breakfast until the Sabbath comes round, as I have said above. For the custom here is that all who are *apotacticae*, as they call them here, whether men or women, eat only once a day on

<62>

the day when they do eat, not only in Quadragesima, but throughout the whole year. But if any of the *apotacticae* cannot keep the entire week of fasting as described above, they take supper in the middle (of the week), on the fifth day, all through Quadragesima. And if any one cannot do even this, he keeps two days' fast (in the week) all through Quadragesima, and they who cannot do even this, take a meal every evening. For no one exacts from any how much he should do, but each does what he can, nor is he praised who has done much, nor is he blamed who has done less; that is the custom here. For their food during the days of Quadragesima is as follows:--they taste neither bread which cannot be weighed,¹ nor oil, nor anything that grows on trees, but only water and a little gruel made of flour.

Quadragesima is kept thus, as we have said. And at the end of the weeks' fast the vigil is kept in the Anastasis from the hour of *lucernare* on the sixth weekday, when the people come with psalms from Sion, to the morning of

the Sabbath, when the oblation is made in the Anastasis. And the second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth weeks in Quadragesima are kept as the first.²

¹ *Panem, quid liberari non potest*, but Archbp. Bernard reads *qui deliquari* and translates: "bread which cannot be strained as a liquid." I have adopted Gamurrini's conjecture *librari*.

² In the Old Arn. Lect. there are special lections for all these weeks. They will be found in the *Rituale Armenorum*, Appendix II., pp. 519f. As they do not specially figure in Etheria's narrative, they are not given here. The places of assembly in Jerusalem are specified with each day's lections.

<63>

V

HOLY WEEK AND THE FESTIVALS AT EASTER

1. *Saturday before Palm Sunday.--Station at Bethany.*

Now when the seventh week has come, that is, when two weeks, including the seventh, are left before Easter,¹ everything is done on each day as in the weeks that are past, except that the vigils of the sixth weekday, which were kept in the Anastasis during the first six weeks, are, in the seventh week, kept in Sion, and with the same customs that obtained during the six weeks in the Anastasis. For throughout the whole vigil psalms and antiphons are said appropriate both to the place and to the day.

And when the morning of the Sabbath² begins to dawn, the bishop offers the oblation. And at the dismissal the archdeacon lifts his voice and says: "Let us all be ready to-day at the seventh hour in the Lazarium." And so, as the seventh hour approaches, all go to the Lazarium, that is, Bethany, situated at about the second milestone from the city. And as they go from Jerusalem to the Lazarium, there is, about five hundred paces from the latter place, a church in the street on that spot where Mary the

¹ Mgr. Duchesne notes there were variations in the length of the Quadragesima at Jerusalem (*Christian Worship*, p. 243 note 4, 4th edit.). The Old Arm. Lect. reckons Holy Week as the seventh, and Etheria the eighth of Quadragesima. The meeting-places also do not quite agree in the two MSS.

² For the Saturday before Palm Sunday the Old Arm. Lect. gives: "The sixth day before Zatik (the Passover), on the Sabbath they assemble in the Lazarium, and this canon is performed: Ps. xxx.³ ; 1 Thess. iv. 12-17; Alleluiah; Ps. xl. ; S. John xi. 55-xii. 11."

<64>

sister of Lazarus met with the Lord.¹ Here, when the bishop arrives, all the monks meet him, and the people enter the church, and one hymn and one antiphon are said, and that passage is read in the Gospel where the sister of Lazarus meets the Lord. Then, after prayer has been made, and when all have been blessed, they go thence with hymns to the Lazarium And on arriving at the Lazarium, so great a multitude assembles that not only the place itself, but also the fields around, are full of people. Hymns and

antiphons suitable to the day and to the place are said, and likewise all the lessons are read. Then, before the dismissal, notice is given of Easter, that is, the priest ascends to a higher place and reads the passage that is written in the Gospel: *When Jesus six days before the Passover had come to Bethany, and the rest.*² So, that passage having been read and notice given of Easter, the dismissal is made. This is done on that day because, as it is written in the Gospel, these events took place in Bethany six days before the Passover; there being six days from the Sabbath to the fifth weekday on which, after supper, the Lord was taken by night. Then all return to the city direct to the Anastasis, and *lucernare* takes place according to custom.

2. Palm Sunday. ã(a) Services in the Churches.

On the next day, that is, the Lord's Day,³ which

¹ S. John xi. 29, 30.

² S. John xii. 1 ff.

³ The Old Arm. Lect. has: "On the Day of the Palms they assemble in the holy Shrine of the city, and this canon is fulfilled: Ps. xcvi. 8 ; Eph. i. 3-10; Alleluiah ; Ps. xcix. ; S. Matt. xxi. 1-11."

<65>

begins the Paschal week, and which they call here the Great Week, when all the customary services from cockcrow until morning have taken place in the Anastasis and at the Cross, they proceed on the morning of the Lord's Day according to custom to the greater church, which is called the

martyrium. It is called the martyrium because it is in Golgotha behind the Cross, where the Lord suffered. When all that is customary has been observed in the great church, and before the dismissal is made, the archdeacon lifts his voice and says first: "Throughout the whole week, beginning from to-morrow, let us all assemble in the martyrium, that is, in the great church, at the ninth hour." Then he lifts his voice again, saying: "Let us all be ready to-day in Eleona at the seventh hour." So when the dismissal has been made in the great church, that is, the martyrium, the bishop is escorted with hymns to the Anastasis, and after all things that are customary on the Lord's day have been done there, after the dismissal from the martyrium, every one hastens home to eat, that all may be ready at the beginning of the seventh hour in the church in Eleona, on the Mount of Olives, where is the cave in which the Lord was wont to teach.

(b) Procession with Palms on the Mount of Olives. Accordingly at the seventh hour¹ all the people

¹ The Old Arm. Lect. has: "On the same day, at the ninth hour, they go forth to the Mount of Olives with palm branches; and there they pray and sing psalms until the tenth hour. And after that they go down into the holy Anastasis, chanting Ps. cxviii.²⁶ " [N.B.~This psalm formed part of the Jewish {cont.}

<66>

go up to the Mount of Olives, that is, to Eleona, and the bishop with them, to the church, where hymns and antiphons suitable to the day and to the place

are said, and lessons in like manner. And when the ninth hour approaches they go up with hymns to the Imbomon, that is, to the place whence the Lord ascended into heaven, and there they sit down, for all the people are always bidden to sit when the bishop is present; the deacons alone always stand. Hymns and antiphons suitable to the day and to the place are said, interspersed with lections and prayers. And as the eleventh hour approaches, the passage from the Gospel is read, where the children, carrying branches and palms, met the Lord, saying; *Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord*,¹ and the bishop immediately rises, and all the people with him, and they all go on foot from the top of the Mount of Olives, all the people going before him with hymns and antiphons, answering one to another: *Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord*. And all the children in the neighbourhood, even those who are too young to walk, are carried by their parents on their shoulders, all of them bearing branches, some of palms and some of olives,² and thus the bishop is escorted in the same manner as the Lord was of old. For all, even those of rank, both matrons and men, accompany the bishop all the way on foot in this manner, making these

{footnote continued} Hallel. It will be observed that Etheria's ear caught the ever-recurring antiphon: "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord" (v. 26), but she does not seem to have recognized the psalm. According to the ancient use, the antiphon was sung after each verse as a refrain.]

¹ S. Matt. xxi. 9.

² S. Matt. xxi. 8.

<67>

responses, from the top of the mount to the city, and thence through the whole city to the Anastasis, going very slowly lest the people should be wearied; and thus they arrive at the Anastasis at a late hour. And on arriving, although it is late, *lucernare* takes place, with prayer at the Cross; after which the people are dismissed.

3. *Monday in Holy Week*

On the next day, the second weekday, everything that is customary is done from the first cockcrow until morning in the Anastasis; also at the third and sixth hours everything is done that is customary throughout the whole of Quadragesima. But at the ninth hour all assemble in the great church, that is the martyrium,¹ where hymns and antiphons are said continuously until the first hour of the night and lessons suitable to the day and the place are read, interspersed always with prayers. *Lucernare* takes place when its hour approaches, that is, so that it is already night when the dismissal at the martyrium is made. When the dismissal has been made, the bishop is escorted thence with hymns to the Anastasis, where, when he has entered, one hymn is said, followed by a prayer; the catechumens and then the faithful are blessed, and the dismissal is made.

¹ The Old Arm. Lect. Has: "The second day of the week of the Fast of Zatik (Pascha) they assemble in the holy Shrine of the city, and this canon is fulfilled: Gen i. 1-iii. 20; Prov. i. 1-9; Isa. xl. 1-8; Ps. lxxv.⁵ "

4. *Tuesday in Holy Week.* On the third weekday¹ everything is done as on the second, with this one thing added--that late at night, after the dismissal of the martyrium, and after the going to the Anastasis and after the dismissal there, all proceed at that hour by night to the church, which is on the mount Eleona. And when they have arrived at that church the bishop enters the cave where the Lord was wont to teach His disciples,² and after receiving the book of the Gospel, he stands and himself reads the words of the Lord which are written in the Gospel according to Matthew, where He says: *Take heed that no man deceive you.*³ And the bishop reads through the whole of that discourse, and when he has read it, prayer is made, the catechumens and the faithful are blessed, the dismissal is made, and every one returns from the mount to his house, it being already very late at night.

5. *Wednesday in Holy Week.*

On the fourth weekday everything is done as on the second and third weekdays throughout the whole day from the first cockcrow onwards, but after the dismissal has taken place at the martyrium⁴ by night,

¹ The Old Arm. Lect. has: "On the third day of the week [the later Bodleian Codex has: 'they assemble on the Mount of Olives,' thus agreeing with Etheria], at the tenth hour. And this canon is performed: Gen. vi. 9-ix. 17; Prov. ix. 1-11; Isa. xi. 9-17 {xl. 9-17?}; Ps. xxv.¹; S. Matt. xxiv. 3-xxvi. 3."

² Cf. S. Matt. xxiv. 3.

³ S. Matt. xxiv. 4.

⁴The old Arm. Lect. has : "The fourth day of the week at the tenth hour they assemble in the holy Shrine of the city, and this canon is performed: Gen. xviii. 1-xix. 30; Prov. i. {Continued next page}

<69>

and the bishop has been escorted with hymns to the Anastasis, he at once enters the cave which is in the Anastasis, and stands within the rails; but the priest stands before the rails and receives the Gospel, and reads the passage where Judas Iscariot went to the Jews and stated what they should give him that he should betray the Lord.¹ And when the passage has been read, there is such a moaning and groaning of all the people that no one can help being moved to tears at that hour. Afterwards prayer follows, then the blessing, first of the catechumens, and then of the faithful, and the dismissal is made.

6. Maundy Thursday.--(a) Mass celebrated twice.

On the fifth weekday everything that is customary is done from the first cockcrow until morning at the Anastasis, and also at the third and at the sixth hours. But at the eighth hour all the people gather together at the martyrrium² according to custom, only

{footnote continued from above} 1-19; Zech. xi. 11-14; Ps. xli.⁴ And after the psalm they go down into the holy Anastasis, and a lection is read, S. Matt. xxvi. 14-16."

¹ S. Matt. xxvi. 14,15.

² The Old Arm. Lect. has: "The fifth day of the week is of the old Zatik, as

touching which Jesus said to His disciples, 'With desire have I desired to eat with you this Zatik.' They assemble at the seventh hour in the holy shrine of the city, and this canon is performed: Gen. xxii. 1-18; Isa. lxi. 1-6; Acts i. 15-26; Ps. lv.²² *Their words*, etc. Then the catechumens are dismissed. Again, Is. xxiii.⁵ {Ps xxiii. 5?}; 1 Cor. xi. 23-33; S. Matt. xxvi. 20-39.

And then the sacrifice is offered in the holy shrine, and before the holy Cross. And in the same hour they proceed to holy Sion. The canon and Apostle are the same: For I received from the Lord: S. Mark xiv. 12-26.

And in the same hour they go forth to the Mount of Olives, and perform the evening service of worship. And they join {footnote continued}

<70>

earlier than on other days, because the dismissal must be made sooner. Then, when the people are gathered together, all that should be done is done, and, the oblation is made on that day at the martyrium, the dismissal taking place about the tenth hour. But before the dismissal is made there, the archdeacon raises his voice and says: "Let us all assemble at the first hour of the night in the church which is in Eleona, for great toil awaits us to-day, in this very night." Then, after the dismissal at the martyrium, they arrive behind the Cross, where only one hymn is said and prayer is made, and the bishop offers the oblation there, and all communicate. Nor is the oblation ever offered behind the Cross on any day throughout the year, except on this one day. And after the dismissal

{footnote continued from above} with the same the vigil, and with three *gubalays* of psalms. [Mr. Conybeare believes *gubalay* to be derived from *kefalaion* = chapter. Each canon of the psalms is divided for liturgical purposes into seven *gubalays*, each *gubalay* comprising two or three Psalms, and at the end of it is repeated the *Gloria Patri*.] And the prayers are said with *gonuklisia* [genuflections].

Of the first *gubalay*, Ps. ii.²

Of the second *gubalay*, Ps. xli.⁵

Of the third *gubalay*, Ps. lix.¹

Of the fourth *gubalay*, Ps. lxxxviii.⁵, *Ktzord*, They are cut off from thy hand.

Of the fifth *gubalay*, Ps. cix², *Ktzord*, They spake of me and with deceitful tongue.

And after the fifth Psalm, and fifth *gubalay*, and fifth prayer, on the same evening they read the Gospel of S. John xiii. 31- xviii. 1.

On the same evening they go up to the hillock [on the Mt. of Olives. The Bordeaux pilgrim calls it 'the little hill.' Sir C. Wilson thinks it may be the slight elevation on the ridge of Olivet, known afterwards as Galilee], and this canon is performed: Ps. cix.⁴ ; S. Luke xxii. 39-46.

In the same hour of night they assemble in the room of the disciples, and read the lection, S. Mark xiv. 33-42."

<71>

there they go to the Anastasis, where prayer is made, the catechumens and the faithful are blessed according to custom, and the dismissal is made.

(b) *Night Station on the Mount of Olives.*

And so every one hastens back to his house to eat, because immediately after they have eaten, all go to Eleona to the church wherein is the cave where the Lord was with His Apostles on this very day. There then, until about the fifth hour of the night, hymns and antiphons suitable to the day and to the place are said, lessons, too, are read in like manner, with prayers interspersed, and the passages from the Gospel are read where the Lord addressed His disciples on that same day as He sat in the same cave which is in that church. And they go thence at about the sixth hour of the night with hymns up to the Imbomon, the place whence the Lord ascended into heaven, where again lessons are read, hymns and antiphons suitable to the day are said, and all the prayers which are made by the bishop are also suitable both to the day and to the place.

(c) *Stations at Gethsemane.*

And at the first cockcrow they come down from the Imbomon with hymns, and arrive at the place where the Lord prayed, as it is written in the Gospel¹: *and He was withdrawn*² *(from them) about a stone's cast, and prayed*, and the rest. There is in that place a graceful church. The bishop and all the people

¹ S. Luke xxii. 41.

² Lat. *et accessit*, but Vulg, has *ipse avulsus est*, see p. xxxiv.

enter, a prayer suitable to the place and to the day is said, with one suitable hymn, and the passage from the Gospel is read where He said to His disciples: *Watch, that ye enter not into temptation*¹; the whole passage is read through and prayer is made. And then all, even to the smallest child, go down with the Bishop, on foot, with hymns to Gethsemane; where, on account of the great number of people in the crowd, who are wearied owing to the vigils and weak through the daily fasts, and because they have so great a hill to descend, they come very slowly with hymns to Gethsemane. And over two hundred church candles are made ready to give light to all the people. On their arrival at Gethsemane,² first a suitable prayer is made, then a hymn is said, then the passage of the Gospel is read where the Lord was taken. And when this passage has been read there is so great a moaning and groaning of all the people, together with weeping, that their lamentation may be heard perhaps as far as the city.

(d) *Return to Jerusalem.*

From that hour they go with hymns³ to the city on foot, reaching the gate about the time when one man begins to be able to recognize another, and thence right on through the midst of the city; all, to a man, both great and small, rich and poor, all are ready

¹ S. Mark xiv. 38.

² The Old Arm. Lit. has: "In the same hour of night, in the holy Mount of Olives in Gethsemane. And they read S. Matt. xxvi. 36-56."

³ The Old Arm. Lit. has: " In the same hour of night they come singing Ps.

cxviii.¹ , and they recite it until they come before Golgotha, and he reads S. Matt. xxvi. 57-xxvii. 2."

<66>

there, for on that special day not a soul withdraws from the vigils until morning. Thus the bishop is escorted from Gethsemane to the gate, and thence through the whole of the city to the Cross.

7. Good Friday.--(a) Service at Daybreak.

And when they arrive before the Cross the daylight is already growing bright. There the passage from the Gospel is read where the Lord is brought before Pilate, with everything that is written concerning that which Pilate spake to the Lord or to the Jews;¹ the whole is read. And afterwards the bishop addresses the people, comforting them for that they have toiled all night and are about to toil during that same day, (bidding) them not be weary, but to have hope in God, Who will for that toil give them a greater reward. And encouraging them as he is able, he addresses them thus: "Go now, each one of you, to your houses, and sit down awhile, and all of you be ready here just before the second hour of the day, that from that hour to the sixth you may be able to behold the holy wood of the Cross, each one of us believing that it will be profitable to his salvation; then from the sixth hour we must all assemble again in this place, that is, before the Cross, that we may apply ourselves to lections and to prayers until night."

(b) The Column of the Flagellation.

After this, when the dismissal at the Cross has been made, that is, before the sun rises, they all go

¹ S. Matt. xxvii. 2, etc.; S. Mark xv. 1, etc.; S. Luke xxiii, 1, etc.; S. John xviii. 28, etc.

<74>

at once with fervour to Sion, to pray at the column at which the Lord was scourged.¹ And returning thence they sit for awhile in their houses, and presently all are ready.

(c) *Veneration of the Cross.*

Then a chair is placed for the bishop in Golgotha² behind the Cross, which is now standing;³ the bishop duly takes his seat in the chair, and a table covered with a linen cloth is placed before him; the deacons stand round the table, and a silver-gilt casket is

¹ The Old Arm. Lit. has: "In the same hour of the night they go to the palace of the Judge, and he [*i.e.* the Lector] reads S. John xviii. 28-xix. 16."

² The Old Arm. Lit. has: "At dawn, on the Friday, the holy wood of the cross is set before holy Golgotha, and the congregation adore until the ninth hour.

The adoration is completed, and at the sixth hour they assemble in holy Golgotha, and repeat eight psalms and five Gospel lections. And one by one of the psalms, there are two and lections, and at the same time prayers.

Ps. xxxv. Il. [It is not easy to understand this, but Mr. Conybeare thinks the arrangement was thus: Ps. standing for Psalm, and L. for Lection : L. Ps. Ps.

L. Ps. Ps. L. Ps. Ps. L. Ps. Ps. L., making five Lections and eight Psalms.]

Lection i. : Zech. xi. 11-14; Gal. vi. 14-18, Ps. xxxviii.¹⁷ ; Isa. iii. 9-15; Phil. ii. 5
11.

Prayer with *gonuklisia* [genuflection] Ps. xli.⁶ ; Isa. l. 4-9; Rom. v. 6-11;
Alleluiah; Ps. xxii. 18; Amos viii. 9-12; 1 Cor. i. 18-31.

Prayer with *gonuklisia*: Ps. xxxi.⁵ ; Isa. lii. 13-liii.¹²; Heb. ii. 11-18; S. Matt.
xxvii. 3-53; Heb. ix. 11-28; S. Mark (in MS. Matt.) xv. 16-41.

Prayer with *gonuklisia*: Ps. lxxxviii.⁴ Lection xiii . Jer. (in MS. Isa.) xi. 18-21;
Heb. x. 19-31; S. Luke xxiii. 32-(49). [The folio being torn, the part within
brackets () is added from the Bodleian MS. and so on the next line.].

(Prayer with *gonuklisia*. Ps. cii.¹, Zech. xiv. 6-)]ll; Lection xvi.; 1 Tim. vi. 13-
16; S. John xix. 25-37."

³ See Introduction, p. xlv.

<75>

brought in which is the holy wood of the Cross. The casket is opened and
(the wood) is taken out, and both the wood of the Cross and the title¹ are
placed upon the table. Now, when it has been put upon the table, the bishop,
as he sits, holds the extremities of the sacred wood firmly in his hands,
while the deacons who stand around guard it. It is guarded thus because the
custom is that the people, both faithful and catechumens, come one by one
and, bowing down at the table, kiss the sacred wood and pass through. And
because, I know not when, some one is said to have bitten off and stolen a
portion of the sacred wood, it is thus guarded by the deacons who stand
around, lest any one approaching should venture to do so again. And as all

the people pass by one by one, all bowing themselves, they touch the Cross and the title, first with their foreheads and then with their eyes; then they kiss the Cross and pass through, but none lays his hand upon it to touch it. When they have kissed the Cross and have passed through, a deacon stands holding the ring of Solomon and the horn from which the kings were anointed; they kiss the horn also and gaze at the ring² . . . all the

¹ Rufinus, *Hist. Eccl.* i. 7, 8 (about 400), is responsible for the statement that part of the wood of the true cross was sent to Constantine and part left in a silver casket (as here) in Jerusalem. According to S. Ambrose (395) Pilate's original superscription (*titulus*) was found by Helena still attached to the Saviour's cross, which enabled her to distinguish it from the two others; but other authorities, including Rufinus, state that it was found in a separate place from the cross, and that the recognition of the true cross was due to a miracle. Evidently at the time of Etheria's visit the "title" was shown as one of the relics at Jerusalem.

² There is here an hiatus in the MS., with the two untranslatable words *minus secunda* in the middle.

<76>

people are passing through up to the sixth hour, entering by one door and going out by another; for this is done in the same place where, on the preceding day, that is, on the fifth weekday, the oblation was offered.

(d) *Station before the Cross. The Three Hours.* And when the sixth hour has come, they go before the Cross, whether it be in rain or in heat, the place

being open to the air, as it were, a court of great size and of some beauty between the Cross and the Anastasis; here all the people assemble in such great numbers that there is no thoroughfare. The chair is placed for the bishop before the Cross, and from the sixth to the ninth hour nothing else is done, but the reading of lessons, which are read thus: first from the psalms wherever the Passion is spoken of, then from the Apostle, either from the epistles of the Apostles or from their Acts, wherever they have spoken of the Lord's Passion; then the passages from the Gospels, where He suffered, are read. Then the readings from the prophets where they foretold that the Lord should suffer, then from the Gospels where He mentions His Passion. Thus from the sixth to the ninth hours the lessons are so read and the hymns said, that it may be shown to all the people that whatsoever the prophets foretold of the Lord's Passion is proved from the Gospels and from the writings of the Apostles to have been fulfilled. And so through all those three hours the people are taught that nothing was done which had not been foretold, and that nothing was foretold which was not wholly fulfilled.

Prayers

<77>

also suitable to the day are interspersed throughout. The emotion shown and the mourning by all the people at every lesson and prayer is wonderful; for there is none, either great or small, who, on that day during those three hours, does not lament more than can be conceived, that the Lord had suffered those things for us.¹

Afterwards, at the beginning of the ninth hour, there is read that passage from the Gospel according to John where He gave up the ghost.² This read, prayer and the dismissal follow.

(e) *Evening Offices.* And when the dismissal before the Cross has been made, all things are done in the greater church, at the martyrium, which are customary during this week from the ninth hour³--when the assembly takes place in the martyrium--until late. And after the dismissal at the martyrium, they go to the Anastasis, where, when they arrive, the passage from the Gospel is read where Joseph begged the Body of the Lord from Pilate and laid it in a new sepulchre.⁴ And this reading ended, a prayer is said, the catechumens are blessed, and the dismissal is made.

But on that day no announcement is made of a

¹ This is probably the earliest record we have of the observance of the "Three Hours."

² S. John xix. 30.

³ The Old Arm. Lect. has: "Prayer with *gonuklisia*. And then they go up into the church at the tenth hour. [The later Bodleian MS. in the place of "church" says "holy shrine," which agrees with Etheria's "martyrium"]. And this canon is performed: Jer. xi. 18-20. Lection xvii.; Isa. liii. 1-12; Ps. xxii.¹⁸; S. Matt. xxvii. 57-61."

⁴ S. John xix. 38-42.

vigil at the Anastasis, because it is known that the people are tired; nevertheless, it is the custom to watch there. So all of the people who are willing, or rather, who are able, keep watch, and they who are unable do not watch there until the morning. Those of the clergy, however, who are strong or young keep vigil there, and hymns and antiphons are said throughout the whole night until morning; a very great crowd also keep night-long watch, some from the late hour and some from midnight, as they are able.

8. *Vigil of Easter*. Now, on the next day, the Sabbath,¹ everything that

¹ The Old Arm. Lect. has: "On the Sabbath day at dawn, in the holy Anastasis: Ps. lxxxviii. 6; S. Matt. xxvii. 62-66.

At eventide, on the Sabbath day, they light a torch in the holy Anastasis. First the bishop repeats Ps. cxiii.² And then the bishop lights three candles; and after him the deacons, and then the whole congregation. And then, after that, they go up into the church [the martyrium] and begin the vigils of the holy Zatik [Paschal vigils, as Etheria calls them], and read twelve lections. And with each of them they sing psalms. [Here is evidently the primitive form of the ceremony of the New Fire in the ritual of the Greek Church at Jerusalem, to which such importance is still attached. The ceremony does not, however, extend beyond the Holy City, and it was not known at Rome. Etheria seems to have missed this service of the lighting of the candles: her narrative is concentrated on the newly baptized. There is no mention in the Old Arm. Lect. or in Etheria's narrative of the blessing of the Paschal candle, which was an ancient custom in N. Italy, Gaul and Spain, and perhaps Africa. Cf. Duchesne, *Christian Worship*, pp. 251 f.].

Prayers with *gonuklisia*: Ps.cxviii.²⁴ ; Gen. i.1-iii. 24: Gen. xxii. 1-18; Exod. xii.

1 24; Jonah i. 1-iv. 11; Exod. xiv. 24-xv. 21; Isa. lx. 1-13.

[This lection is farced verse by verse with the respond: 'Behold, there is come the King of Glory of light, illumining all creatures']. {footnote continues below}

<79>

is customary is done at the third hour and also at the sixth; the service at the ninth hour, however, is not held on the Sabbath, but the Paschal vigils are prepared in the great church, the martyrium. The Paschal vigils are kept as with us, with this one addition, that the children when they have been baptised and clothed, and when they issue from the font,¹ are led with the bishop first to the Anastasis; the bishop enters the rails of the Anastasis, and one hymn is said, then the bishop says a prayer for them, and then he goes with them to the greater church,

{footnote continued} Prayers with *gonuklisia*: Job xxxviii. 1-28; 4 Kings (2 Kings) ii. 1-22; Jer. xxxi. 31-34; Josh. i. 1-9; Ezek. xxxvii. 1-14; Dan. iii. 1-90, LXX. [See the Song of the Three Holy Children in the Apocrypha.]

[This is farced at v. 33 after the words: 'Take not thy mercy away from us,' with the respond, written in small uncials: 'The incorruptible Holy Trinity has beamed forth on us from incorruptible light. And do thou work propitiatory mercy; for thee alone do we know to be our Saviour.' Again, at v. 52, after the words: 'They glorified God in the midst of the furnace, and said,' comes the respond: 'The ram of Isaac hath been exchanged. Christ is become unto us for salvation.'

In the rest of the hymn the words: 'Praise and exalt Him for ever,' are repeated thirty times, as a respond after each verse.]

And while they recite the hymn, in the middle of the night, there enter the multitude of the deacons [the Bodleian MS. gives 'newly sealed.' N.B.ãThe Old Arm. Lect. seems to give two processional entries to the martyrium from the Anastasis. One, when they begin the 'vigils of the holy Zatik,' and one with the newly baptized. Etheria seems to give merely the latter. Section 8, 'Vigil of Easter'] together with the bishop, and this canon is performed: Ps. lxxv.¹ Lection: 1 Cor. xv. 1-11; Alleluiah, Ps. xxx.1; S. Matt. xxviii. 1ã20."

¹ *i.e.* in the baptistery which Constantine had built beside the church of the Anastasis. The rite was one of total immersion, and many of the catechumens were adults (Archbp. Bernard), although Etheria uses the word *infantes* of them here: see Thompson on *Baptismal Offices*, p. 177.

<80>

where, according to custom, all the people are keeping watch. Everything is done there that is customary with us also, and after the oblation¹ has been made, the dismissal takes place. After the dismissal of the vigils has been made in the greater church, they go at once with hymns to the Anastasis, where the passage from the Gospel about the Resurrection is read. Prayer is made, and the bishop again makes the oblation. But everything is done quickly on account of the people, that they should not be delayed any longer, and so the people are dismissed. The dismissal of the vigils takes place on that day at the same hour as with us.

9. *Services in the Easter Octave.*

Moreover, the Paschal days are kept up to a late hour as with us, and the dismissals take place in their order throughout the eight Paschal days, as is the custom everywhere at Easter throughout the Octave. But the adornment (of the churches) and order (of the services) here are the same throughout the Octave of Easter as they are during Epiphany, in the greater church, in the Anastasis, at the Cross, in Eleona, in Bethlehem, as well as in the Lazarium, in fact, everywhere, because these are the Paschal days. On the first Lord's Day² they proceed to the great church,

¹ The Old Arm. Lect. has: "The sacrifice is offered. And after the dismissal in the same night he offers in the holy Anastasis before holy Golgotha, and instantly reads John xx. 1-18.'

² *i.e.* Easter Day itself.

<81>

that is, the martyrrium,¹ as well as on the second² and third weekdays, but always so that after the dismissal has been made at the martyrrium, they go to the Anastasis with hymns. On the fourth weekday they proceed to Eleona, on the fifth to the Anastasis, on the sixth to Sion, on the Sabbath³ before the Cross, but on the Lord's Day,⁴ that is, on the Octave, (they

¹ The Old Arm. Lect. has: "At dawn, of the congregation on the holy Sunday of *Zatik*; they assemble in the holy Shrine, and this canon is performed: Acts

i. 1 14; Alleluiah; Ps. cxlvii. 12; S. Mark xvi. 2-8. On the same Sunday of *Zatik*, they go up at the ninth hour to the holy Mount of Olives, and there sing a Psalm; and go down with Psalms to the holy Anastasis. And thence they proceed at eventide to holy Sion, and this canon is performed: Ps. cxlix.¹ ; S. John xx. 19 25."

² "On the second day of the week they assemble in the holy shrine, and this canon is performed: Ps. lxxv. 1; Acts ii. 22-41; Alleluiah, Ps. cxlvii. 12; S. Luke xiv. 1-12.

Third day of the week, they assemble in the holy shrine of the proto-martyr Stephen, and this canon is performed: Ps. v. 12; Acts ii. 42-iii. 21; Ps. xxi. 1; S. Luke xxiv. 13-35.

Fourth day of the week, they assemble in holy Sion, and this canon is performed: Ps. cxlvii. 12; Acts iii. 22-iv. 12; S. Jas. i. 1-12; Alleluiah; Ps. lxxv. 1; S. Luke xxiv. 36-40.

Fifth day of the week, they assemble on the holy Mount of Olives, and this canon is performed: Ps. xcix. 5; Acts iv. 13-31; S. Jas. i. 13-27, Alleluiah; Ps. xv. S. Matt. v. 1-12.

Friday they assemble before holy Golgotha, and this canon is performed: Ps. xcvi. 3; Acts iv. 32-v. 11; S. Jas. ii. 1-13; Alleluiah; Ps. xciii. ; S. John xxi. 1 14."

³ "On the Sabbath they assemble in the holy Anastasis, and this canon is performed: Ps. lxxvii. 1; Acts v. 12-33; S. Jas. ii. 14-26; Alleluiah; Ps. lxxxii. ; S. John i. 15-25."

⁴ The Old Lect. has: "To-day they assemble in the holy Shrine, and this canon is performed: Ps. lxxv. ; Acts v. 34-vi. 7; S. Jas. iii. 1-13; Ps. cxlvii. 12; S. John i. 1-11.

On the same Sunday they go up to the Mount of Olives at the ninth hour, and there sing Psalms for a space. And thence they go down with Psalms to the holy Anastasis, and this canon is performed: Ps. cxlix.¹ ; S. John xx. 26-31." The following directions in the Old Arm. Lect. do not bear {footnote continued below}

<82>

proceed) to the great church again, that is, to the martyrrium.

Moreover, on the eight Paschal days the bishop goes every day after breakfast up to Eleona with all the clergy, and with all the children who have been baptised, and with all who are *apotactitae*, both men and women, and likewise with all the people who are willing. Hymns are said and prayers are made, both in the church which is on Eleona, wherein is the cave where Jesus was wont to teach His disciples, and also in the Imbomon, that is, in the place whence the Lord ascended into heaven. And when the psalms have been said and prayer has been made, they come down thence with hymns to the Anastasis at the hour of *lucernare*. This is done throughout all the eight days. 10. Vesper Station at Sion on Easter Sunday.¹ Now, on the Lord's Day at Easter, after the dismissal of *lucernare*, that is, at the Anastasis, all the people escort the bishop with hymns to Sion. And, on arriving, hymns suitable to the day and place are said, prayer is made, and the passage from the Gospel

{footnote continued from above} directly on any part of Etheria's narrative, but are given here because they bear on the administration of the

Mysteries:

"Lectons of the administration of the Mystery (=mustagwgi/a) after the dismissal are [read] in the shrine on the second day in the same week: 1 Pet. v. 8-14.

Next he administers the Mystery on the seventh day in the same week: 1 Cor. xi. 23-32.

The Sunday at the close of *Zatik*. He reads in the holy Anastasis during the administration of the Mystery: 1 Pet. ii. 1-10."

[N.B. The lections given in S. Cyril's *Catech. Orat.* seem to tally in general with this whole series.]

¹ See note 1 on preceding page.

<85>

is read where the Lord,¹ on the same day, and in the same place where the church now stands in Sion, came in to His disciples when the doors were shut. That is, when one of His disciples, Thomas, was absent, and when he returned and the other Apostles told him that they had seen the Lord, he said: "*Except I shall see, I will not believe.*"² When this has been read, prayer is again made, the catechumens and the faithful are blessed, and every one returns to his house late, about the second hour of the night.