Encomium on Elijah the Tishbite

Pseudo-John Chrysostom (Coptic) (uncertain)

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Authorship. This encomium was handed down under Chrysostom's name, but he did not write it.

Encomium on Elijah the Tishbite

From Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology, vol. 8 (1885-6), pp.133-140. Mr. E. A. Wallis Budge read a Paper, "On a Coptic version of an Encomium on Elijah the Tishbite, attributed to Saint John Chrysostom." The manuscript containing this version of the encomium, attributed to Saint John Chrysostom, on Elijah the Tishbite, is of fine vellum, and belongs to the tenth century of our era. It is dated in the 115th year of the era of the Martyrs, i.e., a.d. 399; but this I understand to be the date of the manuscript from which that of Lord Zouche was made. It consists of 79 leaves, 10 inches by 7 inches; the headings of the works which it contains are written in red ink, and the sides of the pages containing them are ornamented with graceful floral designs and doves. The contents of the manuscript are:---- I. "The Encomium which Saint John Chrysostom, Bishop of Constantinople, composed upon Saint Elijah the Tishbite, the mighty prophet, who was taken up to heaven in chariots of fire on the sixth day of the month Tybi, in the peace of God. Amen." |134

II. "The discourse of Saint Ephraim concerning the Transfiguration of our Lord Jesus Christ upon Mount Tabor, when He appeared to His disciples, and concerning Saint Elijah the prophet."

III. "The martyrdom of the holy martyr, Father Isaac."

The original home of the manuscript was in the library of a church dedicated to Elijah the Tishbite, to which it was presented by Father Stauros, a monk in the monastery of Abba John, the Patriarch of Alexandria. Considering the high esteem in which Elijah was held by the ascetics and monks of all denominations, it would be difficult to find a gift more acceptable to the monks of a church dedicated to Elijah, than a manuscript describing the life and deed of their patron saint, composed by two such eminent livines as John Chrysostom and Ephraim the Syrian. Lord Zouche's manuscript contains about two-thirds of the Encomium on Elijah. After the title, there comes the introductory passage, "With what words shall I describe him, or what shall I say about him, O beloved brethren? I am afraid and greatly fear to enter upon this great work for which I seek. What I shall do I know not. I am afraid of that for which I ask, for I ask and crave to make an encomium upon the great luminary which rose and shone upon the whole world, Saint Elijah the holy Tishbite." Here there comes a break of thirty-six pages. They contained, no doubt, observations upon the wonderful life and deeds of Elijah. The second fragment of two pages begins with

the account of Elijah's journey to Zarephath, and ends with the widow's declaration of her absolute poverty (1 Kings, xvii, 12). A break of six pages |135 comes here, and the third and important fragment begins with the account of the poor widow's son. Following this is a narrative of Elijah going to meet Ahab, and his interview with Obadiah. The rain which followed the famine was, according to our encomium, caused by Elijah's prayer to God; and when it did come, it was so fierce that Ahab was in danger, and wept.

In the account of Elijah's contest with the priests of Baal, and the devouring of the sacrifice by fire, we are told that "the fire ate into the ground (to a depth) of seventy cubits;" and the same vividness is used in describing Jezebel, when she heard of the death of the prophets of Baal, for "she became mad like an infuriated bear." The narrative is frequently interspersed with short meditations and homilies upon the facts before related; and the writer excuses Elijah's flight from Jezebel's rage in the following words: |136 "Beloved brethren, when ye hear that Saint Elijah fled, do not imagine that he fled from the death of this world; nay, God forbid; for he longed to depart out of the death of this world, and to rest himself in the good things that are unutterable. But he feared lest, after the destruction which he had brought upon men, the famine and the fire which he had brought from heaven, and the blood of the prophets which he had poured out, which wonders the people having seen, believed upon God, if Jezebel should slay him, she would boast that she had slain the Tishbite, and that the whole multitude which had turned to God by reason of all the mighty deeds and wonders which Saint Elijah had wrought, whom Jezebel had persecuted and slain, would return to the service of idols, and that mankind would perish by forsaking God."

The account of God's finding Elijah under the juniper tree is in this encomium, but no mention is made of the wind or earthquake or the still small voice; and Elijah sums up his prayer to die, saying, "It is better for me, O God, to die than to see Baal adored again. In the answer which God makes to him, the writer of the encomium shows very clearly what were the ideas which he himself held about Elijah, and also how great was the belief in his powers as intercessor with God for mankind. Many of these were no doubt borrowed from the Talmud, and altered to suit the fancy of the sect or creed of those who adopted them. After encouraging Elijah not to fear Jezebel, and reminding him of the many times in which He has helped him, He says: "As for thee, since the days which I have appointed for thee to work in this world are fulfilled, arise, go and anoint Elisha, the |137 son of Shaphat, to be prophet to Me in thy stead. And it pleases Me to do for thee an act of grace, the like of which has never been done to any man that My hands have made from Adam the first man to the end of the world, except Enoch the Scribe. I will not allow thee to see death while there is a man of truth in the world:

but I will send to thee from heaven chariots' and horses of fire upon which thou shalt ascend that I may take thee to Myself on high: and I will set thee as a protector of the whole race of men. Thou shalt live in the body; if I desire to bring anger upon men, thou shalt pray to Me until I forgive them, for I am the Good One, and I love the work of My hands. I will grant thee to remain in |138 the body in indestructibility, for it is My desire that thou taste

not death, neither shall thine eyes see the terror thereof, until the end of the world. I will make thy name to be glorified upon earth, and mighty deeds shall be wrought in thy name. Whosoever shall be in danger at sea or upon rivers, if they cry up to Me in thy name, I will hear them and protect them and bring them into the haven of safety. Whosoever shall be in affliction or bondage, or prison or banishment, and shall cry up to Me in thy name, I will hear them quickly, and will deliver them. Whosoever shall be in sickness of any kind, or afflicted by unclean spirits, if they go into the shrine which has been built for thee in the land, and pray to Me in thy name, I will hear them quickly, and will bless them with healing.

The soul that shall build an oratory for thee on earth, shall dwell in the heavenly Jerusalem, and shall inherit the good things which I have prepared for My saints. Whosoever shall take the trouble to make and write a book in thy name, and to give it to thy shrine, I will write his name in the Book of Life, and I will make him to inherit the good things of the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever shall give a little oil or incense to thy shrine, I will remember his name in the tabernacles of eternity."

The writer of the encomium next relates briefly how Elisha became a disciple of Elijah, and then dwells at length upon the murder of Naboth, and the theft of his vineyard; and represents Jezebel as rendered speechless by the prophecy of evil to come to her which was uttered by Elijah. After the narrative, he breaks forth in joyous strains over the defeat of the "evil wild beast Jezebel," and this done, he advises all rich and powerful men who have wicked wives like Jezebel, not to uphold them in their wicked deeds against the poor, lest they fall into the danger of deserving the horrible punishments which Elijah pronounced |139 against Ahab and Jezebel. Moreover, any woman who treats the poor as Jezebel did, or who delights in dress and in ornaments of gold and silver, will become an object hateful alike to God and His holy prophet Elijah. And we are to remember that "just as Elijah was then, so he is now, for he neither dies nor perishes, but lives in the body at this present moment, and looks upon the sins of each one of us, and his word is mighty and more cutting than any two-edged sword."

The account of Ahaziah's sickness, his sending to Ekron, Elijah's message of death, and the destruction of the captains with their fifties, occupy about eight pages of the manuscript; twelve relate the circumstances of his ascent to heaven, and the last eight are filled with exhortations to us to follow in the footsteps of the mighty and ever living prophet, who was worthy of being taken to heaven without dying. The encomium, as we should expect, has been translated into Coptic from the Greek; and the narrative of the actual facts of Elijah's life are taken directly from the version of the LXX. The writer followed them so closely that he has adopted many of their mistakes. ... Many of the passages are, however, turned from the Greek with great accuracy, but at times it seems as if the writer of the encomium was aware of the mistakes made by the Greek version, for he avoids them carefully, and his narrative runs very closely with the Hebrew text, though, from the instances cited above, it is clear that he cannot have consulted it.

From Transactions of the Society of Biblical Archaeology, vol. 9 (1893) pp.355-404.

ON THE FRAGMENTS OF A COPTIC VERSION OF AN ENCOMIUM ON ELIJAH THE TISHBITE, ATTRIBUTED TO SAINT JOHN CHRYSOSTOM.

By E. A. Wallis Budge, M.A. Read 4th May, 1886. The manuscript from which the text of this encomium is taken is in the possession of Lord Zouche, who has most kindly given me permission to copy and publish it. It consists of 79 leaves, 10 in. by 7 in.; and is dated in the 915th year of the era of the Martyrs, i.e., A.D. 1199. Some of the leaves are wrongly paged, and there are three lacunas in the manuscript of 36, 6, and 2 pages respectively. The headings of the different works contained in it are written in red, and surrounded by an ornamental border painted in red, green, and yellow; the outer margin of such leaves being illuminated in graceful designs of flowers and birds. The contents of the manuscript are:---- I. The encomium which S. John Chrysostom, Bishop of Constantinople, composed upon Saint Elijah the Tishbite, who was taken up to heaven in chariots of fire on the sixth day of the month Tybi, in the peace of God, Amen. |356

II. The discourse of Saint Ephraim on the Transfiguration of our Lord Jesus Christ upon Mount Tabor, in which He appeared to His disciples with Saint Elijah the Prophet.

III. The martyrdom of the holy martyr Isaac of Tiphre.

The original home of the manuscript was in the library of a church dedicated to Elijah the Tishbite, to which it was presented by Father Stauros, a monk in the monastery of Father John. The donor made his gift acceptable by causing to be written in it the life and deeds of Elijah the great ascetic, and an account of the transfiguration of our Lord in which He appeared with Elijah and Moses; but it is most improbable that Chrysostom ever wrote any part of this encomium on Elijah. The account of the deeds of Elijah given in this encomium appears to have been translated direct from the Septuagint, or copied from a Coptic version of the Books of the Kings made from it. The writer as a rule quotes carefully, and every here and there moralizes at some length upon what has been said before. It is probable that there was a Greek original of this encomium, and that the fragments of the Coptic version which are printed here were made from it. I have not attempted to treat the legend of Elijah from a folk-lore point of view, for my object has been to reproduce the Coptic text, and to give a fairly literal translation which may be useful to those interested in Biblical matters and Coptic literature. |357 ... |386

Translation. The Encomium which Saint John Chrysostom pronounced when he was Bishop of Constantinople, on the mighty prophet Saint Elijah the Tishbite, who was taken up to heaven in chariots of fire on the sixth day of the month Tobi; in the peace of God, Amen. How shall I speak of him, or how shall I describe him, O beloved brethren? I am afraid and am greatly perturbed in undertaking the important matter which I seek after. How I shall do it I know not.....for I am afraid of that which I desire. I desire and wish to make an encomium upon the great luminary which shone and gave light, and who was exalted above the whole world, Saint Elijah the holy Tishbite. [36 pages wanting.] their unrepentant spirit, and hence his mercy. So Elijah the holy man came to Sarepta (a city)

of Sidonia, and he found a widow woman gathering firewood by the gate of the city. And he said to her, 'Art thou kindling a fire, O woman? |387 Bring me a little water that I may drink.' When she had gone to bring the water to him, he called after her again, saying, 'Bring with thee a little corner of bread for me in thy hand.' The woman answered and said to him, 'As God liveth, there is nothing at all left in my house except a little flour in the barrel, and a little oil in the vessel; and as thou seest I am gathering these sticks that my children may go in and prepare it for themselves to eat that they may not die.'When Saint Elijah had heard these things from the woman, he had compassion (upon her.....

[6 pages wanting.] (Art thou come) into my house to call to remembrance my evil deeds to slay my son'? The holy man Elijah said to her, 'Bring hither thy son to me,' and she brought him to him, and he took the little boy from his mother's bosom, and carried him into the upper chamber in which Saint Elijah lived, and laid him upon the bed dead. Then Saint Elijah lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, 'O God, slay not the child of the widow with whom I sojourn,' and he breathed upon his face three times, saying, 'O God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, make Thou the soul of this child to return again,' and straightway the little boy lived. And the holy man Elijah carried him down and gave him to his mother, saying, 'Take thy child, behold he liveth,' and she threw herself down at his feet, and cried out, saying, ' Verily thou art a man of God, and the word which goeth forth from thy mouth cometh to pass in very truth'; and she glorified God and Saint Elijah the Tishbite until the day of her death. |388

After these things, when God saw that the holy man Elijah entreated Him with all his heart to bring rain upon the earth, He spake with him, saying, 'Arise, go and appear to king Ahab, for I am going to bring rain upon the whole earth.' And Ahab called Obadiah the chief steward of his worldly possessions, and said to him, ' Let us arise and divide the land between us, and go into the deserts and woods and to the running streams, peradventure we shall find a little grass to keep alive our cattle that they perish not entirely; perhaps we may find Elijah the Tishbite, and ask him to bring rain upon the earth.' So they divided the land between them, Ahab went his road by himself into the desert, and Obadiah went on his road by himself. And Elijah was going to appear before Ahab, and behold he met Obadiah on the road. When Obadiah drew near to Saint Elijah, he hastened and bowed himself down to the ground, and made obeisance to him, saying, 'Art thou my lord Elijah'? he said to him, 'I am, go and say unto Ahab, Behold, Elijah (is here).' And Obadiah wept, and said, 'O my lord, my holy father, what sin have I committed that thou wouldst give me into the hand of Ahab for him to slay me?

As the Lord God of my father liveth, and as thy soul liveth, there is not a nation or kingdom into which Ahab has omitted to send to seek for thee, and when he found thee not, he set fire to them all, and thou sayest to me, Go, say unto Ahab, 'Behold, Elijah.' Moreover, it shall come to pass that when I am gone to tell him, the Spirit of God shall take thee to a place which I know not, and when I have told him, and he |389 find thee not, he will slay me. And now, my lord, let my kindness come before thee this day, for thou knowest, my lord,

what I did for the prophets when Jezebel persecuted them, how I took one hundred of them, and hid them in two caves, and ministered unto them with bread and water. Thou knowest also, my lord, that I, thy servant, have been the servant of my lord from my youth up, and now thou givest me into the hand of Ahab for him to slay me; do not by any means do this, my lord, but let my soul be saved in thy sight.' And while Obadiah was speaking to him, the holy Elijah had compassion upon him, and said, 'Go, and fear not, but as the Lord God liveth before whom I stand to-day, I will show myself unto Ahab this very day.' Then Obadiah went and told Ahab, 'Behold, Elijah the Tishbite'; and Ahab hastened to meet Elijah.

And when he saw him, he said to him, 'Art thou he that troubleth all Israel'? the holy Elijah said to him, ' It is not I that trouble Israel, but it is thou and thy father's house, for ye have set God behind your backs, ye have slain the prophets, and ye have served Baal as God. But if thou wishest to appease the anger of God, send and gather together to me all Israel, and bring the prophets of Baal and the priests of shame who eat at the table of Jezebel up to mount Carmel.' And the king sent |390 and gathered together all Israel, together with the prophets of shame who ate at the table of Jezebel, and brought them up to Mount Carmel. Then Saint Elijah stood up on his feet, and said to all the people, 'If ye know that God exists, why do ye provoke Him to anger'? And there was no one able among the people to answer him a word. And again Elijah said to all the people, 'Behold, I am left by myself in this place, as ye see, while the prophets of Baal are four hundred and fifty, and the priests of shame are four hundred. Bring hither two bullocks, and let them take one of them and divide him, and hack him limb from limb, let them lay wood upon the altar, and the flesh upon the wood, but let them kindle no fire (beneath); and behold, I also will do likewise.

But let them take their ox first, for they are many, and let them call upon their god; and he who shall answer by fire from heaven is the true God.' And all the people cried out, saying, 'The word which thou hast said is good.' Then all the priests of Baal took the ox and slew him, and hacked him limb from limb, and they laid him upon the wood upon the altar, and they called upon Baal, saying, 'Hear us, O Baal, hear (us)'; but there was no answer to them at all. And again they cried out the more from the first hour of the day until noon; but there was no answer to them at all. And Saint Elijah cried out to them mockingly, saying, 'Cry out with a louder voice, peradventure your god is asleep, or perhaps he is dreaming, and ye must wake him up.' Then they cried out the more, and leaped upon the altar, that perhaps something might happen through this, and this they did until the hour of evening; and when they |391 saw nothing they were greatly ashamed. When the holy Tishbite Elijah knew that the hour of sacrifice had come, he straightway arose in the strength of God in which he lived, and said to the people, 'Bring me twelve stones '; and they brought them.

When he saw that the hour had come, he built an altar in the name of God, and surrounded it with a trench, and laid the wood upon the altar, and placed the flesh upon the wood. And he said to them, 'Take these water vessels and fill them with water, and empty them out upon them' (i.e. the pieces of flesh and wood); and they did so. He said to them again, 'Fill, and pour out upon them,' and they did so; and he said once more to them, 'Fill, and pour

out upon them,' Now there were four water vessels which they filled and poured out upon the flesh and the wood three times. And he filled the trench and the altar so that the water rose above the altar, and this he did that the miracles of God might be made manifest. Then the holy Elijah lifted his eyes up to heaven, and said, 'O God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, answer me by fire this day, that all this multitude may know that Thou alone art God; for Thy sake have I done all these things, and Thine is the glory for ever, Amen.' And straightway fire came down out of heaven, and devoured the sacrifice, and ate up the wood and the water, and even the stones of which the altar was built, and the altar and the earth which was round about it. Now the fire ate into the ground to a depth of seventy cubits.

Beloved, what a great and incredible miracle was this! what mighty dread and terror came upon all the people on that day! for they were afraid of all the burning fire! And all the people worshipped Elijah, saying, 'Verily thy God is in truth God, and there |392 is no other God besides Him,' Then Elijah said to all the people, 'Lay hold on all these hypocrites, and let not one of them escape'; and he commanded that they should be brought to him to the brook (Kishon), and he slew them all there. And the holy man Elijah answered and said to Ahab, 'Arise now, eat and drink, for the auger of the Lord has been appeased, and, behold, I hear the footsteps of the coming rain.' And Ahab arose, and ate and drank, and the holy man Elijah went up to Mount Carmel, and bended his knee before God, and he bowed his face between his knees, and prayed to the Lord God.

Then he said to his servant, 'Arise and look towards the sea,' and when he had looked, he said, 'Behold, I see nothing at all.' Saint Elijah said to him again, 'Look even until seven times, and search with thy vision.' And it came to pass when he had looked seven times, he said, 'Behold, I see a little cloud in the form of a man's foot (or footstep) bringing up rain.' Then the holy man Elijah said to his servant, 'Go and say unto Ahab, Yoke thy chariot and depart, that the rain stop thee not. And while Ahab was yoking his chariot, there was suddenly a great blackness in heaven, and an exceedingly mighty rainstorm, so much so that Ahab was in danger, and wept. Then the holy man Elijah girded up his loins in the strength of God which was with him, and ran before Ahab until he came into Samaria.When Ahab had gone into his house, he told his wife Jezebel everything that had happened through the holy man Elijah, and how he had slain the priests of Baal. When she heard these things from Ahab she was greatly angered, and |393 became mad like an infuriated bear, and sent to Saint Elijah, saying, 'Thou art Elijah and I am Jezebel, by this time to-morrow I will make thy soul like that of one of the prophets whom thou hast slain;' and Saint Elijah removed himself from the presence of Jezebel.

When ye hear, beloved, that Saint Elijah fled, do not imagine that he fled from the death of this world, nay, God forbid, for he wished to depart by the death of this world, and to delight himself with the unutterably good things (of heaven); but he feared lest after the destruction which he had brought upon men, that is the famine and the fire which he had brought down from heaven, and the blood of the prophets of Baal which he had shed, which wonders

the people having seen believed upon God, that Jezebel, having persecuted and slain him, should boast that she had slain the Tishbite, and that all the multitude who had turned to God after all the mighty deeds and wonders which Saint Elijah had wrought, would return to the worship of idols, and that all mankind would perish through forsaking God. This is the fear with which he was afraid.And Saint Elijah fled and went up a mountain, and sat under a tree, and he was sorrowful by reason of the corruption of mankind. And behold, the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, 'O Elijah, My chosen one, why art thou thus sad?. Saint Elijah answered and said, 'O God, they have slain Thy prophets and have destroyed Thy altars, and I only am left, and behold they seek after my life to destroy it. If Thou, O God, wilt show mercy unto me, take away my life from me, for I am no better than my fathers who are dead;

O God, it is better for me to die than to see Baal glorified again, for |394 they have forsaken Thee, and have worshipped him as God.' When God knew that the Saint was, grieved at the corruption of the people, He comforted him, saying, 'Elijah, be not grieved at the corruption of the people, for I have seven thousand men left who have not bowed the knee with the people of Baal. And now, who shall seek after thy soul to destroy it? I will preserve it in thee until the end of this world. Did not I answer thee by the drought, and after the drought by fire, and again by the floods of (rain)? Who then shall make thee afraid before the face of Jezebel? Fear thou her not then, but arise and go quickly and anoint Hazael to be king over Syria, and thou shalt anoint Jehu the son of Nimshi to be king over Israel in the place of Ahab and Jezebel the defiled; for, behold, I will bring destruction and shortness of life and desolation upon them. And now, since the days which I have appointed for thee to fulfil in this world have come to an end, arise, and go, and anoint Elisha the son of Shaphat to be a prophet to Me in thy stead.

And it pleases Me to do an act of grace to thee, the like of which I have never done to any man whom My hands have made from the first man Adam until the end of the world, except Enoch, the scribe. I will not let thee see death while there is a man of truth in this world, but I will send thee to heaven in chariots of fire and horses of fire, and thou shalt ascend by them that I may take thee up to Myself; and I will make thee a champion for the whole race of man while thou art in the body. |395

If I desire to bring wrath upon men, thou shalt pray unto Me until I forgive them, for I am the Good, and I love the work of My hands. While thou art in the body I will set thee in indestructibility, for it is My wish that thou shalt not taste death, nor thy eye see it to fear it until the end of the world. I will make thy name to be praised upon earth, and mighty deeds shall be done through it. Whosoever shall be in danger by sea or by water, if they cry out to Me in thy name I "will hear them, and will take care of them, and will bring them into the haven of safety. whosoever shall be in any affliction, or distress, or bondage, or banishment, and shall cry out to Me in thy name, I will hear them speedily, and will deliver them. Whosoever shall be in sickness of any kind, or whomsoever unclean spirits shall afflict, if they go into thy shrine which shall be built for thee upon earth, and shall pray

to Me in thy name, I will hear them speedily, and will bless them with healing. If women suffering in childbirth cry out to Me in thy name, I will hear them speedily. The soul that shall build a house of prayer for thee upon earth shall live in the heavenly Jerusalem, and inherit the good things which I have prepared for My holy saints.

Whosoever shall take the pains to have a book made and written in thy name, and shall dedicate it to thy shrine, I will write his name in the book of life, and will make him to inherit the good things of the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever shall dedicate a little oil or incense to thy shrine, I will remember his name in the tabernacles of eternity. Arise now, get thee hence, and anoint Jehu the son of Nimshi to be king in the room of Ahab, and anoint Elisha to be prophet in thy stead.'

Then Saint Elijah arose and did as God had commanded him. And he found Elisha the son of |396 Shaphat ploughing with twelve yoke of oxen, and Saint Elijah hastened to him and took his mantle and laid it upon the head of Elisha, who straightway forsook the yokes and ran after the Saint Elijah, saying, 'I desire, O father, to follow thee.' The holy man Elijah said to him, 'Go, my son, God has shown mercy unto thee.' And Elisha returned and slew two oxen and cooked them and gave them to the multitude, and they did eat; and he went after the holy Elijah, and became a disciple unto him.

But listen to what happened after these things. There was a vineyard, he says, of Naboth the Israelite, as Holy Scripture saith, and this was near to the house of Ahab. And Ahab spake to Naboth, saying, 'Give me thy vineyard which is near my house that I may make a vegetable garden, and I will give thee another vineyard better than this, or if thou wishest I will give thee its worth in silver.' Naboth answered and said, 'Far be it from me to sell the inheritance of my fathers to thee, thou hast a multitude of good things, let these be sufficient for thee.' So Ahab went into his house, and laid himself down upon his bed, and he covered his face, and would neither eat nor drink, for he was greatly disturbed. And Jezebel his wife came in and said to him, 'Why art thou thus so sad of spirit, and dost neither eat nor drink to-day?' Ahab answered and said unto her, 'Because of the vineyard of Naboth the Israelite.' Jezebel said to him, 'Art thou thyself the king? arise then, eat and drink, and I will obtain for thee the vineyard of Naboth the Israelite.' Then she took paper, and wrote on it in the name of Ahab, and sealed it with his seal; and she caused them to bring Naboth and to stone him and to slay him.

When |397 she knew that they had slain him, she came in and ran to tell Ahab the king, saying, 'Arise now and inherit the vineyard of Naboth the Israelite, for he is dead.' And Ahab arose and came into the vineyard of Naboth the Israelite, and inherited it. And straightway Saint Elijah arose in the strength of the Holy Spirit which worked in him, and went into the vineyard of Naboth the Israelite, and found Ahab sitting in it. Saint Elijah said to him, 'O Ahab, listen to me, and I will speak with thee. Thus saith the Lord God, "As thou hast slain Naboth the Israelite, and hast taken away his inheritance, it shall come to pass that in the place where the dogs and the swine have licked up the blood of Naboth, there shall the

dogs lick up thine own blood, and the swine shall wallow in thy blood, for thou hast without cause made evil to be wrought before God, and hast provoked Him to anger.

Thus also saith the Lord God, "Behold I will bring evil upon thee, and I will wipe thee out from Israel, I will make thy house like that of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, the dogs shall devour thy wife at the gate of the city, and I will bring death and destruction and, extermination upon thee, because ye have angered the Lord and provoked Him to anger, and have troubled His spirit." 'And it came to pass that when Ahab heard these words from the mouth of the holy prophet Elijah, he rent his clothes, and great fear and terror entered into him; and Saint Elijah departed from him. And straightway Ahab went to Jezebel his wife, and showed her all the things which he had heard from the holy prophet Elijah the Tishbite. When Jezebel heard these things, her heart melted, and she was not able to open her mouth to say one evil word against Saint Elijah, but the Lord smote Ahab and Jezebel, and they disappeared speedily according to the word of Saint Elijah. |398

Let now those who said that the holy Elijah was afraid, and fled away from Jezebel, be confounded, for (if he was) how was it that he was not afraid to stay and to curse Ahab and Jezebel in this manner? Nay, but as I have already said, he was afraid lest all the people should corrupt itself a second time with the service of idols, and hence Jezebel was speechless, and her heart melted when she heard those words from Saint Elijah. Where now, O Jezebel, wild and evil beast, is the mighty power which made thee confident? O Jezebel, the infuriated, where is now the great madness and wrath of thy heart against Saint Elijah the Tishbite? Where is now thy mighty and injurious tongue which spake with devilish pride and madness, and uttered words beyond measure against Saint Elijah, saying, 'Thou art Elijah, and I am Jezebel?' What, O senseless and lawless woman, are the words which thou didst say to the holy prophet Elijah? God said to him, 'I will preserve thy soul within thee until the last day of the world,' and yet thou didst say to him, 'To-morrow at this time I will make thy soul like that of one of the prophets whom thou hast slain.' Why now hast thou not fulfilled thy word to slay the Tishbite? and why wast thou angry when thou didst hear that he had slain the priests of shame, and didst say, 'I will slay him also'?

And while he was announcing to every one an evil death for thyself and thy husband, and extermination and destruction, how and why was it that thy mouth was unable to utter a single word? Because the word of God entered into thy ears from the mouth of His holy prophet Saint Elijah the Tishbite. And now, brethren, let this be manifest to you in very truth. All rich men possessing authority in this world, and having wicked wives like Jezebel the unchaste, who |399 urge them on, like Ahab, until they do evil to the poor, these men will merit the curses which Saint Elijah the Tishbite pronounced against Ahab and Jezebel his wife, together with destruction and extermination, and blotting out of remembrance for ever. Every woman who shall be lawless like Jezebel the unchaste and lascivious before God, who delighted in her riches, who was proud, who boasted of her wicked whoredoms and the impurities of her unclean and defiled body, who lived in sin and gloried in her iniquity and in her ornaments of gold and silver, who ate and drank in violence, who was clothed with

the armour of Satan, who despised the poor, who was merciless to those whom God loved, who shall be in shame and degradation, and whose odour shall fill every place;

every woman who shall walk in these things in this manner is an enemy of God and of His holy prophet Elijah, and shall receive the part and portion of Jezebel her sister, and shall remain under the curses of destruction and extermination which Saint Elijah spake against Jezebel. Every whoremonger and every harlot do God and His holy prophet Saint Elijah hate. Every unjust person, whether male or female, is an enemy of God and of Saint Elijah the Tishbite. Every proud person, whether male or female, is an enemy of God and of Saint Elijah. It is for the sake of the unjust and their sins that God has thus kept the holy prophet Elijah in the body to be a champion for all mankind, that upon those who turn to God and repent of their sins Saint Elijah will have compassion, but upon those who persist in their wickedness the God of Saint Elijah will bring wrath and destruction and extermination and interminable punishment for ever. As Saint Elijah was at that time, so is he also now, he is not dead nor gone to |400 corruption, but remains now in the body, and sees the sins of each one of us, and his word is sharper than a two-edged sword.

Listen also to this great miracle which God wrought by the hand of Saint Elijah the Tishbite. And it came to pass after the death of Ahab, and Ahaziah had become king in Samaria in his room, that one day Ahaziah fell down from the upper chamber of his house, and he lay sick upon his bed. And he sent messengers, saying, 'Go ye and inquire of Baal the god of Ekron if I shall rise from my sickness this time.' And while they were going, Saint Elijah came out from them to the mountain, and said to them, 'Return ye to Ahaziah the king, and say to him, Thus saith the Lord, "Thou shalt not rise up from the bed on which thou liest, but shalt surely die." ' So the messengers returned to Ahaziah, and told him the words of Saint Elijah. And Ahaziah said to them, ' What manner of man was he that met you'? And they told him, 'A man covered entirely with hair, and girt about the loins with a girdle of leather.' And Ahaziah said, 'It is Elijah.' Then Saint Elijah went up on a mountain, and Ahaziah sent a captain of fifty and fifty soldiers with him to bring him to him. When the captain of fifty had drawn near to him, he said to him, 'O man of God, Ahaziah the king calleth thee;

arise and come to him.' The holy man Elijah answered and said unto him, ' If I be a man of God, let fire come out of heaven, and devour thee and thy fifty soldiers'; and straightway fire came out from heaven and devoured them. And the king sent a second captain of fifty with his fifty soldiers; and when the captain had drawn near he said to him, 'O man of God, come down, for the king calleth thee.' And Saint Elijah said to him, 'If I be a man of God, let fire come out of heaven and |401 devour thee with thy fifty soldiers.' And again the fire came out straightway from heaven, and devoured him with his fifty soldiers. And again Ahaziah the king sent a third captain of fifty with his fifty soldiers.

And when that captain of fifty knew (him) while he was yet afar off, he hastened and threw himself upon his face, and worshipped Saint Elijah, saying, 'Let now, my lord, my prayer come before thee, for behold, thou hast brought fire out of heaven which devoured the first

captains of fifty and those that were with them, but now let the soul of thy servant and the souls of thy servants be precious in thy sight.' And straightway the word of the Lord came to him, saying, 'Arise, get thee to Ahaziah the king.' So Saint Elijah arose and went with him and came to Ahaziah the king, and said to him, 'Thus saith the Lord, I will do thus unto thee because thou hast sent to inquire of Baal the god of Ekron, and hast thus set God behind thy back; therefore thou shalt not rise up again from the bed on which thou liest, but shalt surely die.' And when Saint Elijah had said these things, straightway Ahaziah the king yielded up the ghost. But perhaps some one among you will say, Why did Saint Elijah cause fire to devour two captains of fifty and a hundred soldiers, since they had neither said any evil thing to him, nor had despised him, except 'The king calls thee'? Hearken unto me, and I will show thee how they despised Saint Elijah, and how he rose up against those who would compel him to make himself submissive to the king, and to go with them.

He was not afraid of a king of this world, but because they said to him mockingly, 'O man of God,' Saint Elijah spake, saying, ' If ye know that God exists, why do ye not believe in Him? And if Baal is your god, why do you then at all dare to utter the |402 name of my God in your polluted mouth? If I be a man of God in whom ye believe not, let fire come out of heaven from my God and devour you.' Oh, what a mighty miracle was this, beloved, that this earthly being was thus exalted, and his tongue was sharper than a two-edged sword. And beloved, now I have told you of a few of the mighty deeds and miracles which God wrought by the band of Saint Elijah the Tishbite, and now I will further tell you of this mightiest of all miracles, this most unspeakably glorious, exalted and honourable miracle, which no man has ever been heard to attain unto from [the time of] Adam, the first man, until now, for verily it is terrible to utter and disturbing to hear. And it came to pass, he says, that when it had pleased God to take Saint Elijah up to heaven, all the prophets which were in Jericho, which were fifty, gathered together and came to Elisha, and said to him, 'Dost thou know that God will take thy master Elijah from thee up to heaven'?

Elisha said to them, 'I know it, but hold your peace, and I will go with him everywhere.' Now when Saint Elijah knew that he should pass out of this world, Elisha went with him until he came to Bethel. And Saint Elijah answered and said to Elisha his disciple, 'My son, sit thou here, for the Lord God hath sent me to Jericho on a matter of necessity, but do thou, my son, sit here until I return to thee.' And when Elisha knew [this], he said to him, 'As the God of my father liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee.' And Elisha went after him until he came into Jericho; and the fifty prophets followed him at a distance that they might see what happened unto them. And again they came to Elisha and said unto him, 'Dost thou know that God will take thy master |403 Elijah from thee up to heaven'? And Elisha said unto them, 'I know it; hold ye your peace, and I will go with him everywhere whithersoever he goeth.' And again Saint Elijah spake to Elisha, saying, 'My son Elisha, sit thpu here, for God has sent me to the Jordan.' And Elisha was very sorrowful, and said to Elijah, 'As God liveth, and as the soul of my lord, my holy father, liveth, I will not leave thee in the place where thou goest'; so Elisha went with him until they came to the Jordan.

And the fifty prophets followed him at a distance, wishing to see what would happen to Saint Elijah, and Elisha stood by his side at the Jordan. Then the holy man Elijah threw off his mantle, and smote the waters (with it), and straightway the waters divided on this side and on that. And Saint Elijah said to Elisha, 'Sit thou here, my son, for God has commanded me to pass over the Jordan.' Then Elisha threw himself upon his face, and tremblingly took hold of the feet of Saint Elijah, and embraced them, and kissed them, and he shed tears upon them, saying,' Woe is me, my father! wilt thou depart and leave me by myself? O my father, leave me not alone.' When they had crossed over the Jordan, Saint Elijah said to Elisha, 'Ask something that I may do it for thee.' And Elisha wept, saying, 'O my holy father, if it be thy wish, let thy spirit be upon, me twofold.' Saint Elijah said to him, 'If thou seest me when they take me up to heaven, thus shall it be.' Then Saint Elijah began to pray and to supplicate, and straightway there was a great earthquake, and the earth shook to its foundations, and there was smoke and blackness and whirlwind and thunders and lightnings, so that the earth was rent asunder. And behold, there came from heaven chariots of fire and horses of fire, and Saint Elijah went up in them, and |404 they took him and carried him up to heaven.

Then Elisha rent his garments, and cried out with a loud cry, saying, 'My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the horsemen! if thou wilt go away and leave me, let thy spirit be double upon me.' And Saint Elijah took off the mantle with which he was girded, and cast it down upon the head of Elisha, and he went along weeping for his father Elijah until he came to the Jordan. When he had come to the place where Saint Elijah had divided it, he went beyond and cast his glance upon the flood of Jordan, and he wept, saying, 'Woe is me, woe is me, where is now my father Elijah who divided the waters that he might cross over'? And he lifted up his eyes to heaven and said, 'I pray Thee, O God of my father Elijah, that if the spirit of my father Elijah has been doubled upon me, when I smite the waters with his mantle, it may divide them for me to cross over.' Then he took the mantle of Saint Elijah, and smote the waters, saying, 'In the name of the God of my father Elijah'; and the waters divided, and Elisha crossed over. Now the day on which Saint Elijah was taken up to heaven was the sixth day of Tobi.

When Saint Elisha had crossed over, he found all the prophets looking out for him, for they were all brought to nought by reason of the terror and the earthquake which took place when Saint Elijah was taken up to heaven. And they comforted Elisha, and each one said, 'The spirit of Elijah rests upon Elisha twofold'; and let the.....among men who shall not marvel be silent when he hears that a human being was worthy of so great glory and honour. And now, O brethren, that we may know that God loved Saint Elijah, and gave him the great honour to take him up to heaven in chariots of fire, he is now in the body in heaven, and is the |405 champion of the whole race of men. Let us then make him our champion, and let us forsake the evil desires of this vain life, fornication, impurity, uncleanness, thefts, hatred, slander, false swearing, and the like, which things God and Saint Elijah hate. And let us do those works which God and Saint Elijah love, which are these: first of all----prayer, without which no one shall see God, for by the prayer which supported him Saint Elijah was able to ascend

in the chariots of fire until they took him up to heaven to God. Let us, therefore, beloved, keep our souls and our bodies pure from every spot and impurity at which God mocks, and let there be love in us towards each other, for love covers a multitude of sins.

Let us be humble and charitable, for pride and the love for money are the root of all evil. Lot us keep the judgment of upright faith which is alone our hope for cleansing our souls, our bodies, and our feelings. Let us each endeavour to fulfil the holy ministration that we may partake of the holy mystery of the body and precious blood of our God. Let us give alms to the poor to-day, each one according to his ability, in the name of God and of Saint Elijah, that we may make ourselves worthy of the blessing which Saint Elijah spake to the widow of Sarepta, who gave her offering of flour and a little oil willingly, on account of which she obtained a great and imperishable blessing, and that Saint Elijah may be gracious unto us, and that we may find grace and freedom of speech before the terrible throne of our Lord and God our Saviour Jesus Christ, to Whom with the Father and the Holy and Vivifying Spirit be all honour which is meet, now and for evermore. Amen.

The Blessing of Saint Elijah be with us for evermore. Amen. [A small number of the footnotes have been transcribed] 1. * This encomium has little in common even with the spurious homily on Elijah the prophet, printed by Montfaucon in his edition of Chrysostom's works, Paris, 1724, Vol. VI, pp. 600-603, and must be a work of another admirer of Elijah the Tishbite. 2. ++ A.D. 398-407. He died at Comana, in Pontus, on September 14, A.D. 407, aged about 63 years. In the Coptic Church his day is celebrated on the 12th of Pachons, or July 7. I suspect that this is the Abba John referred to in the colophon of the manuscript. 3. § I.e. January I. The Arabs, Greeks, and Latins celebrate his day on July 20, and in the Ethiopic calendar it is December 1. See the Ada Sanctorum, Vol. XXXII, p. 4; and Ludolf, "Comment. in Hist. Aethiop.," p. 389, sq.

4. * For an Arabic version of this discourse, see Assemani, " Bib. Or.," Vol. I, p. 156, No. 53; and for Carshunic, or Arabic in Syriac letters, see British Museum MS. Add. 7209, Rich., fol. 237. Rosen and Forshall, Cat., p. 3, col. 2, No. 18. The Greek version was published in the Oxford edition, edited by Thwaites, and the Latin by G. Vossius, Ephraem Syri., p. 686. See also Tillemont, "Memoires pour servir a l'Histoire Eccles." Paris, 1702. Vol. VIII, p. 759, col. 1. 5. + See Trans. Soc. Bib. Arch., Vol. IX, pp. 1-37. 6. ++ According to tradition, he met the widow in a wood south of the town of Zarephath. 7. * He is said to have become the servant of Elijah, and was afterwards identified with the prophet Jonah. 8. + Here is a proof that Chrysostom is not the author of this encomium, for he held the opinion that Elijah sinned in fleeing before Jezebel.

9. * According to the "Book of the Bee," Enoch and Elijah are the guardians of Paradise. 10. + Fire is the element characteristic of Elijah. Before his birth Sobak his father saw in a vision the birth of a man child who was wrapped in swaddling bands made of fire, and who was fed with fire. He told the dream to the priests at Jerusalem, who said, "Fear not, his words shall be like fire, and shall not fall to the ground." Epiphanius, De Vita Proph.

11. ++ It is in his character of benefactor that Elijah has become so famous and so favourite a saint all over the East. Among the Jews he was thought to be ready and willing to help man, from his birth in this world, throughout his life and death, until he entered heaven. At every circumcision a seat is placed for the prophet Elijah, the "angel of the covenant" (Mal. iii, 1), for he is supposed to see every [Hebrew] with his own eyes; he comforts the afflicted and warns people against danger (Berachoth 3); gives advice to those in trouble (Taanith 21 and 24); wishes lasting happiness to the married pair (Jebamoth 63); he rescued the Rabbi Shela from the hands of the Roman governor (Berachoth 58a); he delivered Nahum from the hands of the robber who attacked him on his return from Rome; he healed Rabbi Sime ben Aschi of the bite of a reptile; he caught Rabbi Kahana, who fell from a house, and saved him from injury; he saved men from death; and appeared at various times as an Arab merchant, a horseman, a nobleman, and even as a harlot (Avodah zarah 18), in order to help or befriend a needy being. He is the establisher of truth and justice; all difficulties are to be solved when he appears; he will come three days before the Messiah; he is one of the four architects who will build up the temple from its ruins; and all secrets will be revealed by him. He leads men into Paradise, and even bears the punishment of some, that they may escape hell; but though so good to man, he once killed a man for not looking towards the synagogue (Berachoth 6). For more on these matters see the passages on Elijah quoted by Eisenmenger, "Entdecktes Judenthum," and a very able article in Frankel's Monatschrift fur Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judenthums, July and August, 1861, Vol. XII, p. 241 sqq.

12. * According to Mohammedan tradition, Elijah lives in Paradise, and sits under the tree of Life, eating its fruit, and drinking from the fountain of Life. He is identified with Phinehas and Saint George, and called [Arabic]. See D'Herbelot, Bibl. Orient., art. Khedher; and. Weil, Bibl. Legenden der Muselmanner, p. 178; Koran, Sur. 21. Another tradition makes him live in the fifth mansion of Paradise, with the Messiah, Whose head he lays upon his bosom, saying, "Be silent, for the end is near." 13. + So in the Talmud (Moed. Katon, 25), "Elijah lives for ever;" also, "he never tasted the bitterness of death." See Midrash Rabba (Moses. Parashah ii). 14. An encomium or homily on Elijah the Tishbite was printed by Montfaucon in his edition of Chrysostom's works, Paris, 1724, vol. vi, pp. 600-603; but it has little in common with the Coptic version here given. 15. I am indebted to Professor Hyvernat for pointing out to me that the date is written xxx and not xxx; hence in Proc. Soc. Bib. Arch., May, 1886, p. 133, line 7, and Trans. Soc. Bib. Arch., Vol. IX, Pt. i, p. 74, line 15, we must read 915 instead of 115, and 1199 instead of 399.

16. In the Coptic Church his day is celebrated on the 12th of Pachons, or July 7. 17. I.e., January 1. The Arabs, Greeks, and Latins celebrate his day on July 20, and in the Ethiopic calendar it is December 1. See the Acta Sanctorum, vol. xxxii, p. 4; and Ludolf, Comment. in Hist. Ethiop., p. 389, sq. 18. For the text and translation of tins discourse, see Proc. Soc. Bib. Arch., June, 1887. 19. For the text and translation of this martyrdom, see Trans. Soc. Bib. Arch., Vol. IX, Pt. 1, pp. 74-111, 1887.

20. Encomiums upon Elijah appear to have been much sought after and esteemed among the Copts, and there can be no doubt but that several existed in the convents of Upper and Lower Egypt. Elijah in the Old, and John the Baptist in the New Testament were the chief saints and ascetics whose example was blindly followed, and whose lives were closely imitated by the hosts of monks, recluses, and solitaries which filled the Thebaid and the deserts on each side of the Nile as far up as Aswan. In the account of the journey of the Coptic monk Paphnuti into the desert recently published by M. E. Amelineau (Recueil de Travaux Relatifs a la Philologie et a l'Archeologie Egypt. et Assyr., vol. vi, p. 175), a fellow monk called Benofer, in telling the story of his life, says, inter alia, 'I was formerly in a convent in the nome of Shmun in Upper Egypt, beyond Ehrit; we were fifty men at one with each other, and we ate at one table; the peace of God was among us, and we lived apart and in purity. Now I was young, and I learned divine things from the God-loving and perfect old men who were like unto the angels of God, and I heard them discourse about Elijah the Tishbite, saying that he was more powerful in God when he was in the desert than at any other time.'

21. The Coptic translator has made Baal a female deity. 22. The sense of the Greek is quite lost in this verse. 23. There is no authority for this sentence in the LXX. 24. There is no authority for this clause in the LXX 25. The meaning of this verse has been misunderstood by the Coptic translator. 26. i.e., Holy Scripture.

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