

SEVERUS OF MINORCA

*Letter on the Conversion
of the Jews*

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To the most Holy and Blessed Lord Bishops, Presbyters, Deacons and to the Universal Brotherhood of the whole world, Bishop Severus, needful of God's mercy and most unworthy of all men, sends an eternal blessing in Christ our Redeemer.

1. Just as the Archangel Raphael warns that it is honourable to acknowledge and reveal the works of God [Tobit 12: 20], surely it is dangerous to veil in silence or conceal the miracles of Christ. Their proclamation produces greater pleasure, however, if they are recounted in familiar and unadorned language, (2) for the radiant beauty of virtue is somehow obscured if she is rouged and painted with excessive eloquence. Wherefore, it will be with language that is not polished but truthful, that I shall undertake to recount for your Blessedness the miraculous deeds that Christ has performed among us.

2. Minorca is one of the Balearic Islands, whose name has been spread abroad among all peoples, even in the works of pagan writers. (2) It is located in the open sea almost midway between Mauretania and Spain and is confined within rather narrow boundaries, (3) being thirty miles long and ten miles wide. (4) I have mentioned these facts that it may be recognized how the 'lowly things of this world' [1 Cor. 1: 28] are chosen by the Lord not only in the case of people, but places as well. (5) On this island, the most forsaken of all lands due to its tiny size, dryness, and harshness, two small towns were founded opposite one another by the Carthaginians, as is indicated by the names given them: Jamona looks towards the west, Magona towards the east. (6) In these towns, the burden of episcopal office had recently been placed on me, most unworthy of all mortal men.

3. But Jamona retains even now an ancient favour from God,

quarum PWZ: quorum V 16 Mauritaniam PWVG: Maritaniam S: maritimam
 A: Maurituniam C 17 Hispaniam: WVZ: Spaniam P medio PVZ: medium
 W 18-19 longitudine ... latitudine PWC: longitudinem ... latitudinem
 VSAG 19 decem om. V ferme PW': fere W' VZ milia om. W quae
 PVZ: quam W 20 commemoravi PWVGC: memoravi SA 21 a om. W
 23-4 a P(ogenis) PWZ: ophenis V 24 indicio PWZ: indictio V', indictione V'
 25 sunt PWVG: est SAC lamona PWZ: lammona V 28 nunc om. W

namely that Jews are absolutely unable to live there. (2) Ancient tradition hands down that many Jews, if they rashly dared to try, were prevented by sickness and driven out, or laid low by sudden death, or even struck down by a thunderbolt. The tale is so well known that it has made the Jews themselves afraid, so that they no longer dare to attempt it. (3) Nor do we consider this fact unworthy of our faith, that we observe, on the one hand, an absence of wolves, foxes, and all harmful animals, while, on the other hand, there is a great abundance of those wild animals that are good to eat. (4) What is even more marvellous is that vipers and scorpions are indeed very plentiful, but have lost all ability to do violent harm.¹ (5) Although none of the Jews, who are rightly compared with wolves and foxes for fierceness and villainy, dares to approach Jamona, not even for the right of hospitality, (6) Magona seethed with so great a multitude of Jews, as if with vipers and scorpions, that Christ's church was being wounded by them daily.² (7) But that ancient, earthly favour was recently renewed for us in a spiritual sense, so that, as it is written, that generation of vipers [Luke 3: 7], which used to attack with venomous stings, suddenly under the compulsion of divine power has cast aside the lethal poison of unbelief.

4. At about that same period when I, although unworthy, assumed the title of episcopal office, a certain priest, conspicuous for his sanctity, came from Jerusalem and sojourned for a brief time in Magona. After he was unable to cross over to Spain, as he wished to do, he decided to go back to Africa again. (2) Doubtless at the inspiration of the martyr himself, he placed in the church of Magona some relics of St Stephen the martyr, which recently had come to light and which he had intended to transport to Spain.³ (3) When this was done, straightaway the fire of His love was kindled, the fire which the Lord 'came to cast upon the earth' [Luke 12: 49] and which He wishes to blaze forth.⁴ (4) Immediately our complacency heated up, and, as it is written, our hearts were 'burning by the way' [Luke 24: 32]. At one moment, zeal for the faith would fire

29 caritatis PWZ: caritate V ignis P, trans. ante quem Dominus VZ: ignes W
30 siquidem PV: quidem W: quippe z

our hearts; at another moment, the hope of saving a multitude would spur us on.

5. In the end, even the obligation of greeting one another was suddenly broken off, and not only was our old habit of easy acquaintance disrupted, but the sinful appearance of our long-standing affection was transformed into temporary hatred, though for love of eternal salvation. (2) In every public place, battles were waged against the Jews over the Law, in every house struggles over the faith.⁵

6. The Jewish people relied particularly on the influence and knowledge of a certain Theodorus, who was pre-eminent in both wealth and worldly honour not only among the Jews, but also among the Christians of that town [Magona]. (2) Among the Jews he was a teacher of the Law and, if I may use their own phrase, the Father of Fathers.⁶ (3) In the town, on the other hand, he had already fulfilled all the duties of the town council and served as *defensor*, and even now he is considered the *patronus* of his fellow citizens. (4) The Christians, however, humble in heart as well as physical strength, yet superior by the force of truth, prayed for the assistance of Stephen, their patron,⁷ until the two armies separated, after they had agreed upon a day for their debate and concluded a truce for the present moment.

7. The Jews were eager for Theodorus, on whose strength the whole synagogue relied, to return from the island of Majorca, where, by chance, he had gone at the time to inspect an estate. (2) Indeed, as soon as an embassy was sent to him, he returned and frightened many people by his authority, and although he did not extinguish our ardour for the struggle, he did calm it for a little while. Blazing up suddenly with greater ferocity, the flame of faith also engulfed the neighbouring town [of Jamona]. (3) And that the saying of Solomon might be fulfilled, 'A brother helping a brother shall be raised up like a solid and lofty city' [Prov. 18: 19], many of Christ's servants decided to devote all the strength of their spirit to this war, not objecting in the least to the toil of a journey [to Magona].

8. Now the tract appended to this letter demonstrates the

26 ilico om. PW 27 et om. P ut om. W illa Pz: il W: illud V sententia
om. V 30 animi PW: animae Vz huic bello tradere om. W 31 praeparaverimus PVz: praeparavimus W

kinds of weapons we prepared in advance as the battle loomed. (2) It was certainly not for anyone's edification that we wished this tract to be published (for in *that* we are utterly deficient and hope rather to acquire *it* from your Blessedness), but that it might be noticed that we showed considerable concern, in so far as our abilities allowed, for the struggle that had been engaged.⁸ (3) But, in truth, Christ, whose 'kingdom dwells not in talk but in power' [1 Cor. 4: 20], achieved everything with His own forces and without us even uttering a word. Without any sweat from the struggle, He granted His army this victory which no one dared hope for and which no one could expect. (4) The Jews meanwhile were exhorting one another with examples from the time of the Maccabees, and, in defence of their religion, they desired even death. (5) Thus, they began not only to consult their sacred books, but also to gather stakes, rocks, javelins, and all kinds of weapons into the synagogue, in order to repulse the Christians by physical force, if the situation demanded it, although our battle line was defended by the power of the Holy Spirit.

9. Meanwhile, as these preparations were being made and the future war was being planned on each side with great zeal, both armies were forewarned by countless dreams that were perfectly clear. (2) If I make absolutely no mention of them, I will appear to have concealed no small part of the divine glory. (3) For if Luke, the writer of sacred history, included the dream of the holy Apostle Paul, reporting that a man from Macedonia stood over him in a night vision and prayed that he be helped by him, and forewarned by this vision, the Apostle changed the course of his journey for Macedonia [Acts 16: 9-10], how much greater is the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, who deigned to reveal to his most insignificant and most unworthy servants that which was revealed to the blessed Apostle and which scripture was unwilling to conceal. (4) Therefore, for the sake of brevity and that your Blessedness may not find my account tedious, I will include just two dreams.

10. There was among us a certain devout and very religious woman with the name of Theodora, who, because of her

PWz: voluit V
W: ac SGC, om. PVA

30 ingeratur PW: gignatur Vz

31 devota om. SA et

virginity, her religious way of life, and even the significance of her name ['gift of God'], could rightfully serve as a symbol of the church. (2) She saw in a night vision a certain very noble widow sending a request to me in the form of a letter, in which she humbly offered me all her fields to sow, although I occupy the priesthood not from merit, but from the bounty of divine favor. (3) By a similar dream, Christ also deigned to summon me as well, the last among all sinners, in order that I prepare myself for the sowing: (4) for another very noble widow, who without any doubt symbolized the synagogue, begged me [in the dream] to take over her untilled fields and to cultivate them carefully, since the season for sowing was close at hand. (5) Who then is the noble widow but that widow who, by impiously killing Christ, cruelly widowed herself?¹⁹ (6) The dream is identical in each case. It is well established that I both saw the vision about thirty days before it was fulfilled and, although I knew nothing of its fulfilment, that I recounted it to the brethren.

11. Among the Jews also, by the wondrous ordering of the divine dispensation, the name 'Theodora' and my office were associated and united in one man. (2) Theodorus, the high priest of that faithless people, recounted a dream vision that he had seen not only to Jews, but in particular to a certain kinswoman, a distinguished matriarch of that town, and to many Christians as well. Some time before it was fulfilled, he recounted it with these words, (3) 'As I was going into the synagogue in my usual way,' he said, 'twelve men barred my path with outstretched hands, saying, "Where are you going? There is a lion in there."' (4) Although I had begun to tremble at hearing the word "lion" and was getting ready to flee, none the less I searched out a spot from which I might peer in, and I saw monks inside singing with uncanny sweetness. (5) A greater terror was immediately aroused in me, and if I had not first entered the house of a certain Jew named Reuben, and from there raced headlong to the side of my married kinswoman, I could scarcely have escaped the force of that deadly terror.

18 Theodoraē PVz: Theodori W 23 mihi om. z 24 secundum consuetudinem om. Vz ad synagogam PWA: a synagoga VSG 25 obtulerunt PVz: dederunt W 26 ego PWSAG: ergo VC 27 paro PWz: puto V
29 Iudaei om. VA 31 praepeti PW: praecipiti Vz vim PWz: curam V

(6) She soothed me, breathless, at her bosom, and rescued me from both danger and fear.' (7) His dream is perfectly clear and in need of no interpretation. (8) For who is the lion, but that 'Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David' [Rev. 5: 5]? Who is that kinswoman, if not that one of whom it is written, 'My kinswoman is but one'?¹⁰ (9) Therefore, one point alone seemed obscure, namely that he entered the house of a Jew called Reuben when he was terrified by the Lion. This was indeed explained very plainly to us afterwards by the very Lion who terrified him, in order that he might save him. We will treat this matter later in its proper place.

12. Now, however, to proceed with my narrative, a throng of Christ's servants, greater than was thought to reside in that town, gathered together and prepared for the departure from Jamona. (2) Although it was a very arduous journey, they completed it with such speed that they flew over the thirty miles more light-heartedly than if they were being invited to a banquet at some beauty spot outside the town. (3) And so we arrived at Magona.¹¹ Immediately, I dispatched some clerics to announce my arrival to the Jews and requested that they do us the honour of entering the church. (4) They, however, sent back to us an unexpected message, announcing that it was inappropriate for them to enter a church on that day, lest, I suppose, they be polluted, since it was the Sabbath. If they should corrupt its observance by any actions, they would be committing a very serious, criminal transgression. (5) Again I made a request, to the effect that they should wait for me at the synagogue if they preferred, since entry into the church seemed a source of pollution, and in any case they were not being forced by us into any menial labour on the Sabbath. (6) On the contrary, the dispute concerning the Law was to be thoroughly calm, and there should be no stirring up quarrels, but rather a sharing of views in discussion. If, on the other hand, they were not avoiding the debate through a ruse, but were offering a genuine excuse, then let them show us the rule by which it was prohibited for them to engage in discussion on a holy day.¹² (7) Although they replied by stubbornly contradicting me on every point, they were in the end driven by terror of that Lion to

¹⁰ excitandas PVz: exercitandas W ¹¹ sed PWz: et V excusationem PVz:
accusationem W ¹² quo Wz: quod PV in om. P festo om. V his om.
W ¹³ retulissent WVz: pertulissent P

gather at the house where I was being lodged. (8) There I said, 'I ask you, brothers, why, particularly in a city subject to Roman laws, you have gathered together heaps of stones and all sorts of arms as if you faced brigands? (9) We brought books in order to instruct; you brought swords and clubs to commit murder. (10) We wish to increase; you desire to destroy. In my judgement, our struggle is not on an equal footing and our conflict is very different on the two sides. As I see it, you thirst for our blood, while we thirst for your salvation.' (11) They were a little frightened at these words and denied the fact of the matter, and when we affirmed that this was the case, they even began to resist with an oath.¹³ (12) Then, to cut the knot of contention, I said, 'When the matter can be proved with one's eyes, what need is there for an oath? (13) Let's go to the synagogue, and it will be confirmed with yourselves as witnesses whether your assertion rests on perjury or truth.'

13. Then we set out for the synagogue, and along the way we began to sing a hymn to Christ in our abundance of joy. (2) Moreover, the psalm was 'Their memory has perished with a crash and the Lord endures forever' [Ps. 9: 7-8], and the throng of Jews also began to sing it with a wondrous sweetness.¹⁴ (3) But before we reached the synagogue, certain Jewish women (by God's arrangement, I suppose) acted recklessly, and, doubtless to rouse our people from their gentleness, began to throw huge stones down on us from a higher spot. (4) Although the stones, marvellous to relate, fell like hail over a closely packed crowd, not only was none of our people harmed by a direct hit, but not one was even touched. (5) At this point, that terrible Lion took away for a short while the mildness from his lambs. (6) While I protested in vain, they all snatched up stones, and neglecting their shepherd's warning, since they were united in a plan suggested more by zeal for Christ than by anger, they decided that the wolves had to be attacked with horns, although no one could doubt that this was done with the approval of Him who alone is the true and good shepherd. (7) Finally, lest it seem that He had granted His flock a bloody

24 iactare V₂: iacere PW

PWA: nostrorum VSG

28 siquidem V₂: quidem PW

26 deciderent PW₂: descenderent V

nostrum

27 hic PWV: his z

27-8 mansuetudinem om. W

frustra om. V₂

32 verus om. V

victory, not one of the Jews pretended even to have been touched, not even to stir up ill will, as usually happens. (8) Admittedly, since we must in every way avoid deceit, one man out of the entire number of Christians was discovered who desired to be like that Achan who, under Joshua son of Nun, coveted spoils from the forbidden things [Josh. 7: 1]. (9) For the slave of a certain Christian, as he himself was later forced to confess, had come to that place, drawn not by love of Christ, but by love of plunder. (10) He alone was greedy to steal something from the synagogue, and he was struck by a stone for his offence. In fact, someone from our group threw the stone, though he was aiming at a Jew, but it struck the slave on the head and admonished him to recall his true head, namely Christ. (11) Although the wound was not dangerous, it both forced him to confess his greedy desire for theft, and, by its obvious retribution, it put fear in everyone else lest they lapse in a similar way. (12) Therefore, after the Jews had retreated and we had gained control of the synagogue, no one, I won't say, 'stole' anything, but no one even considered 'looting' anything! (13) Fire consumed the synagogue itself and all of its decorations, with the exception of the books and silver.¹⁵ We removed the sacred books so that they wouldn't suffer harm among the Jews, but the silver we returned to them so that there would be no complaining either about us taking spoils or about them suffering losses.¹⁶

14. And so, while all the Jews stood stupified at the destruction of the synagogue, we set out for the church to the accompaniment of hymns and, giving thanks to the author of our victory, we poured forth our tears and beseeched the Lord to lay siege to the true dens of their unbelief and to expose to the light the faithlessness of their dark hearts.

15. Nor was there any delay in the accomplishment, for on the following day, a certain Jew called Reuben was chosen by the Lord (that appropriate names be preserved in all matters) to be made the first-born of them all. (2) For he delighted the hearts of all with a most holy cry, praying that he be released from the chains of Jewish superstition. (3) And without delay he became the 'first-born of Jacob' [Gen. 35: 23] and received the sign of salvation. From that moment he remained close to our sides

and our counsels, and along with us reviled the stubborn hard-heartedness of all [the Jews].

16. A span of three days passed, if I am not mistaken, in which our people persevered in prayers and the Jews persevered in faithlessness. (2) After that, Theodorus, hedged round with a contingent of his followers, came to the spot where only the walls of the synagogue, which were later pulled down by Jewish converts, could be seen to survive. In that spot a throng of Christians also gathered along with me. (3) There Theodorus debated boldly about the Law, and after he had mocked and twisted all of our objections, the Christian throng, seeing that he could not be vanquished by human arguments, prayed for assistance from heaven. (4) They all shouted together and cried in thunderous unison, 'Theodorus, believe in Christ!' (5) From our most indulgent Lord's marvellous mercy, small favours were still being sought, and He had already granted greater ones. (6) But no! A miracle from the Omnipotent is no 'miraculous' thing! He Himself transformed the import of this shouting in the ears of the Jews, He who once brought it about that four lepers should seize the camp of the King of Syria, who had laid siege to Samaria [2 Kgs. 7], and He who routed through Gideon the battle lines of the Midianites, and who granted a great, effortless victory to three hundred of his men, bringing it about through terror that a multitude of the enemy should kill one another with self-inflicted wounds [Judg. 7: 19-22]. (7) Similarly in the present instance, the Jewish bystanders misinterpreted the phrase spoken by our people, for they all thought they had heard, 'Theodorus has believed in Christ!' As a result, since they all thought that the leader of their faithlessness had been converted to faith in Christ, they were all equally afraid, and where there was no cause for fear, they were terrified. (8) Racing together with dishevelled hair and wild howling, their women assailed Theodorus with repeated cries, 'Theodorus, what have you done?' (9) As for the men, however, some fled to pathless groves and mountain ravines, while others scattered through the streets of the town in their desire to discover a place where they could hide. (10) Theodorus himself

mantes Vz 26 fuisse om. W 28 concurrentes PWz: occurrentes V
 30 fissuras PWSGC: fixuras VA 31 montium WVz: petrarum P confugere
 PWVGC: fugere SA autem ante per add. W 31-2 discurrebant PVz: concurrebant W

was stunned and shocked, and he perceived that among his people the divine judgement was being fulfilled: 'The wicked man runs away with no one in pursuit' [Prov. 28: 1]. But wait, it was not 'no one'! That terrible Lion was pursuing them, who from the site of the synagogue, as had been revealed to Theodorus, had unleashed through the monks the roar by which He put fear in our resisting enemies. (11) Thus, Theodorus was standing on the very same spot where previously in his dream he had been smitten with terror of the Lion, and although he searched for the source of his great anxiety and heard only the name of our Lion, he saw nothing fierce there, as he feared he would. All he saw was monks singing psalms. And since he had been abandoned by the whole multitude of his people and he too was preparing to slip away, he began to look for an escape route on foot. (12) Now when Reuben, that most holy man, had caught sight of Theodorus, gripped with terrible fear, and not only pale but unable even to speak, he quickly approached him, addressing the trembling man with coaxing words and encouraging him toward faith in Christ. And by offering him the example of his own faith as a refuge from fear, he seemed somehow to open up the house of his faith, to which Theodorus was fleeing from fear of the Lion. (13) Still, in order that we may recount every detail faithfully and that you may listen eagerly, you who seek not rhetorical adornment, but the truth, I will include the words of Reuben himself and suppress none of the frankness of his speech. (14) Reuben said, 'What do you fear, Lord Theodorus? If you truly wish to be safe and honoured and wealthy, believe in Christ, just as I too have believed. (15) Right now you are standing, and I am seated with bishops; if you should believe, you will be seated, and I will be standing before you.' (16) After pondering these words deep in his mind, Theodorus replied to us, 'I shall do what you wish,' he said, 'Accept this promise, but allow me first to address my people, so that I may reap a greater reward for my conversion by the conversion of the others as well.' (17) His pledge was received by everyone with incalculable joy. (18) Some ran to him affectionately and caressed his face and neck with kisses, others

ipsum *PSG*: eius *C* colla mulcebant *Vz*: collum mulcebant *W*: mollibus amplexibus demulcebant *P* eum *om. P*

embraced him in gentle arms, while still others longed to join right hands with him or to engage him in conversation. (19) And so Theodorus set out for his own home, happy at every sign of affection from our people, but nevertheless not completely free of anxiety, for although he seemed by now to have come to the house of Reuben by making his promise, none the less he was still at that point frightened, since he had not yet come to his kinswoman, who after three days took him to her maternal bosom and freed him from all confusion and fear. (20) We, on the other hand, set out for the church to the usual accompaniment of hymns, chanting and singing: 'Blessed is the Father of Mercies and the God of all Consolation' [2 Cor. 1: 3], who granted water for our heads and a font of tears for our eyes, in order that we might lament the wounded among our people [Jer. 9: 1].

17. After the completion of our holy rites, we left the church and observed that a good-sized crowd of Jews had gathered to meet us. (2) All of them with singleness of spirit pleaded that they might receive the symbol of Christ from me, unworthy shepherd that I am. (3) So we went back into the church, gave thanks to our merciful God, and there on the spot marked the sign of salvation on their foreheads.

18. Now what tongue can speak forth the things which, by the power of Christ, befell those who fled into forests or caves? Especially since each one of them has his own personal history of conversion. (2) However, just as it is impossible for me to say everything, so too will it be ungratifying for me to pass over everything. (3) Therefore, with the aid of your prayers, I shall unfold one of Christ's miracles, which we learned from men who are very trustworthy and of proven character. (4) Two leading men among the Jews were Meletius, the brother of Theodorus, and Innocentius, who had recently fled from the slaughter in Spain and had come to this island accompanied by his servants.¹⁷ As they themselves will still confirm today with an awe-inspiring oath, they arrived at a cave, or rather a rocky outcrop, with two Jews of humble birth who joined up with

fugiens *PWA*: effugiens *VSGC* 30 famulis *WVAC*: familiis *PSG* sicut *PVZ*:
 sicuti *W* 32 convenerunt *PVZ*: convenerant *W* 33 duobus *om. W*
 ortis *PVZ*: hostis *W*

them and had chosen them as leaders in the general flight. (5) After they had sat in that spot for a little while, trembling and out of breath, they sent the other two men, who were young and ready for action, back to the town to explore. They were left there alone. (6) Then Meletius began, 'Why is it, brother, that I can't expel from my heart a phrase which, as our religion teaches, is blasphemy? From the moment when the crowd of Christians cried out that my brother had been converted, nothing has arisen in my heart but this phrase which was completely unknown to me until today: "Christ, in your name". And the more I struggle to drive it from my spirit, the more fiercely and stubbornly it sticks there.' (7) Innocentius replied, 'It is not without purpose that this phrase has been, as you claim, so forcibly implanted in your mind at this particular time, even though your heart—a very reliable one in all people's opinion—has never thought of it nor your mouth ever uttered it. I consider it to be from God. None the less, exert yourself, I beg of you, and setting aside this idle talk, drive out the intruding, hateful thought.' (8) Then Meletius began to shriek and utter garbled cries in such a way that Innocentius perceived that he was struggling within his mind, not only from the shaking of his head but from the appearance of his whole body. (9) But when he realized that this was absolutely no help, he also added that Meletius should utter certain vile profanities. At one moment, he would wrinkle his nostrils, suck in some air, then force the air out with indecent noises. At another moment, he would cackle with disgusting laughter. (10) But this madness was unable to extinguish the name of Christ from his mind, since already the fire of good health had penetrated to the depth of his marrow. (11) 'What am I doing, brother Innocentius? Those remedies are being twisted contrariwise. I can't banish Christ's name with profanity, nor can I expel it with foul-sounding blasphemies. Indeed, I am conscious, trust me, of another sound, which does not stop forcing Christ's name with its relentless clamour on the ears of my heart, though I try in vain to block them.' (12) To the words of Meletius, Innocentius spoke as follows, 'The Christian thron

scenis P¹ W: obsceno P²

PWz: quod V meci om. z

alia P

30 crede C: credis PWSAG: credi V

32 desinit PVz: desistit W

31 qui

33 talia WVz:

bore witness, and I heard it with my own ears, that your brother, Theodorus, who is greater than you in learning, honour and years, converted to faith in Christ. (13) Isn't it likely that you too, constrained by the example of your own blood brother, will desert the Jewish religion? Why then should we waste time any longer in this horrible solitude? How long will we be able to struggle on, overwhelmed by a lack of provisions, especially since those two young men whom we sent back are delayed and this place to which we have come is completely unknown to our servants? For what reward, moreover, are we exposing ourselves to the punishment of so painful a death? Why should we waste away from hunger, be parched with thirst, stiffen with cold, and last of all, be terrified by the dreadful silence of this vast emptiness, which we are already suffering? (14) Are we fleeing the fetters of brigands? the swords of barbarians? Do the Christians, whom we saw weeping for our sakes, do so merciful a people desire our blood? Let us recall, I beg of you, any whom they ever harmed, any whom they so much as dealt a verbal blow. Let us return to those blameless people, whom we perceive to be in no way our enemies, and let God's will be done.' (15) Meletius said in response, 'Brother Innocentius, you are learned not only in Latin literature, but in Greek literature as well, and you meditate constantly on the Law, but I think you have forgotten what the Lord says through the prophet Ezekiel: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" [Ezek. 18: 20]. (16) Now, if you have read this, why do you suppose that I can be drawn to faith in Christ by the example of my brother Theodorus? Just as he has his own soul, so too does he have his own sin, a sin that will not harm me if I do not abandon the Lord God of my fathers. (17) Moreover, I call to witness Him who led our fathers out of the land of Egypt that I wish to emigrate, alone, to any land whatsoever by whatever voyage possible, if only winter storms did not hinder me. Neither does love of property nor the warmth of my personal attachments hold me back, the loss of which is easy for me, provided only that I am not compelled to deny the God of my fathers. (18) But you offer the useless advice that we should return to the city. I am amazed that you, though a very wise

29 velle *om. P* migrare *WVSGC*: migrasse *P*: navigare *A* 29-30 affectuum
PWV: affectionum *z* 30 est *om. W* 31 nostrorum *PVz*: meorum *W*

man, do not in your mind foresee what you should judge will happen to us if Theodorus, the pillar of our synagogue, in whom we placed all our trust, has been coerced into apostasy. (19) Consequently, this is the safer plan, that we go instead to my farm and not expose ourselves further to the eyes of the Christians. We can hide out there for a while until, at an appropriate moment, we can emigrate abroad, since hatred against our religion has increased to such an extent among all people on this island that whoever does not abandon his fatherland will be unable to retain his fathers' faith.²⁸ Why then don't we accept a voluntary exile, since the facts indicate that we are going to be driven into exile by the hatred of the citizens even if we're unwilling?' (20) With this plan they strengthened their resolve and embarked on their laborious journey. (21) But as they were making their way along a very narrow path, the darkness of their thoughts obscured the light from their eyes. They lost the path that they were following in their ignorance, and they ended up in rugged, pathless terrain, all the while scratched by brambles or obstructed by rocky outcrops. (22) Their bodies were now scarred with long cuts, and they were reduced first to such a state of anxiety, then to such a state of fearful desperation, that they were forced to confess that they were suffering this by the righteous judgement of God on account of their failure to believe. (23) Therefore, with their legs now all torn, they invoked the name of Christ, which they previously rejected when it forced itself upon them, and they took a path which led them back to town against their will and against their plan. (24) But when they had arrived at the town, reluctant and frightened, and were investigating everything rather carefully, they heard that Theodorus was still now a Jew, nor had he suffered any violence from the Christian multitude, as they had presumed. (25) Dumbfounded and not believing what had happened to them, they guided their steps toward Theodorus' house, where he received them when lunch was nearly finished, and he immediately asked them the reason why they had abandoned both him and the town. And he learned the whole narrative of events, more with a smile than with amazement.

²⁸ suam *post* voluntatem *add.* P
 mavcrant PWz: existimaverant V

²⁶ etiam nunc WVZ: adhuc P

²⁷ aesti-

²⁹ gressus PW: iter VC, *om.* SAG

19. After the third day, while Theodorus was making arrangements to address the assembled people and call them to faith in Christ, he suffered a revolt from Jews who were going to offer themselves for conversion of their own accord. (2) For there was almost no one who did not testify that he had openly felt the power of Christ. (3) In fact, in their first public meeting, a certain youth, a cousin of Theodorus himself, by the name of Galilaeus (that the mystery of events, as has often been said already, may be revealed to the end with appropriate names) began to proclaim with great indignation, (4) 'I call you all to witness that I cannot be a Jew. For on my estate I have Christian partners by whose hatred I may be killed if I wish to persevere in Judaism.'¹⁹ (5) Therefore, I will heed the danger to my life and will set out right now for the church to escape the death being prepared for me.' Although Galilaeus thought he was devising these remarks for the present moment, inasmuch as he seemed to have explained the reasons for his conversion, and although he then gave no thought to the eventual end of the present age, he was unwittingly speaking the truth. (6) Caecilianus, a worthy man, and so eminent not only among the Jews but also in the town that even now he has been elected *defensor*, all but snatched Galilaeus' speech away from him, affirming that Galilaeus spoke the truth and that he himself had a similar motive and feared a similar fate. (7) With these words he instilled such great confidence in the youth that before everyone's eyes, with a quick dash, as if to carry off the prize of faith [1 Cor. 9: 24], he flew to the aid of our Galilaeus [Christ], and from my own humbleness requested that henceforth he be enrolled under His name. (8) Caecilianus, however, since he was a Father of the Jews, after holding a rather hurried consultation with his brother Florianus, who was likewise a Father of the Jews,²⁰ addressed the synagogue, as we learned, with words of this sort, 'Since in the synagogue I am second only to Theodorus in honour, I am not advising you and making an appeal, all aflutter, as it were, like the young Galilaeus, rather I exhort you and warn you and proclaim that all of us together

PVz: fiduciam *W* 24 ad om. *W* 25 convolare *PWz*: convolarent *V*
 26 deinceps *PWz*: deinde *V* 28 maturiore om. *PW* huiusmodi *PVz*:
 huiusmodi *W* 29 adorsus *PVGC*: exorsus *SA* 31-2 contestorque *PVz*:
 et contestor *W*

must abandon the error of our misguided way, if it can be done, and unite together in the faith of the church. (9) But even if His great power does not draw you to Christ, my brother, Florianus, and I, while we cannot use force against you in your rejection of such great salvation, none the less we, with our entire households, will abandon the mockery of this religion, which we lack the strength to defend, and we will join in alliance with the faithful ranks of the Christians. They certainly could never vanquish, with their countless citations from the Scriptures, not only you, brother Theodorus, who are thought to be more learned than the others, but everyone else as well, if they were not pursuing the truth, which cannot be defeated.' (10) With such reasoning, we learned, Caecilianus addressed his people, and on that day we received with ineffable joy many Jews who came running with him to faith in Christ.

20. Although I lack the ability to speak eloquently about the prodigies which occurred in the sky at that time, I do not dare to be silent. (2) At about the seventh hour, we began solemnly to celebrate the Lord's Mass. (3) The greater part of the day passed, while we were either offering encouragement to or putting on record (for we copied down their names) Jews who were arriving to confess faith in Christ, and the people were spiritually sated with such a banquet of joy that they gave no thought to earthly food. (4) The whole congregation was waiting for Mass with me in the church, which is located a short distance from the town in a secluded spot and in which repose the relics of the blessed martyr Stephen, which were recently deposited there. Meanwhile two monks, whom the Lord chose as witnesses to his miracles, were lying in the grassy field that stretched out in front of the church doors. (5) There was as well a man of rank by the name of Julius seeking the church with another man from the town. When they had started to pass by, suddenly one of the monks, distracted by the sight of a miraculous sign, uttered a garbled cry and, when they turned around toward him, pointed with an outstretched hand, since he could not describe in words what he saw. (6) There was a ball of very brilliant light, approximately the size of a man in height and

respondente uno V₂ 30 conversisque PV₂: conversusque W protenta PW₂:
portenta V quia PW₂: quae V 31 quid videret V₂: quod viderat P, om. W
32 autem om. V proccritate sua PV₂: proccritatis suae W 33 quasi om. P

with the shape of the jugs commonly called *orcae*. (7) The vision was of such clarity and brilliance that it appeared to the brother who noticed it first, as we learned from his own account, that the sun was sinking. (8) It appeared to them to be sinking in a slow descent over the church where the entire congregation remained with me. (9) Indeed, they thought it was so close that that same brother, after being jolted out of his stupor, set out at a run, since he thought that it had sunk behind the church, but he checked his step, held back by his fellow monk. (10) The latter added that it had also appeared to him but that it was further away, though he was not positive and only guessing. (11) However, certain women who were still Jews at the time, among whom was the wife of the Meletius mentioned above, confirmed that, as they were looking out of an upper storey, the same thing appeared to them as if it had descended over the church. (12) But it is still today unclear whether this thing was an angel or St Stephen himself or what it really appeared to be. (13) At around the fourth hour on that same day, that is, slightly before this sign was revealed, there fell a light dusting of very fine hail, which the island's inhabitants in their local dialect call *argistinum*.²¹ (14) After the air began to grow fragrant with the smell of honey, it was tasted by many who had been struck by it on the road and it was found to be sweeter than honey. (15) When many people tasted it and saw that on that same day the sons of Israel [viz. the Jews of Minorca] departed from the Egypt of their unbelief and from slavery, they compared what had happened to those wonders we read about in Exodus. They believed that the manna had been renewed for this people who, by their contemplation of God with a heart ready to believe, now merited the name of the true Israel [Exod. 16]. (16) They also judged that the column of fire, which preceded the Fathers in the desert, had been revealed in order to furnish spiritual guidance for the sons who had departed from the true Egypt and, as it is written, from the iron furnace [Deut. 4: 20]. (17) And in truth, as a reading of Exodus confirms, the similarity of the signs was very close. For what we believe to have been hail corresponded to the tiny coriander

add. P 25 iam PWZ: etiam V meruit WVZ: promeruit P 26 renovatum PW: innovatum Vz 27 et WSAG: a W, om. PC 28 sicut PVZ: ut W 29 fuisse WVZ: esse P aestimabant P: aestimarent WVZ

seed and recalled honey with its taste, and it is clear that what had appeared [in the sky over the church] was like a fiery column. (18) Moreover, we have learned that both wonders were also revealed to the brethren who remained in Jamona. (19) For many people, who had been granted the ability and disposition to enquire into this matter, attested the rain of honey, and that column of very brilliant light revealed itself to the gaze of many people whom the Lord judged worthy. (20) From which it may be inferred that Jews throughout the whole world are to be visited with the light of faith, (21) since indeed so great a splendour of heavenly grace has shone upon us, who live on this island and, if I may use the phrase, in 'this little world', so that the revelation of signs should extend to the utmost boundaries of our world.

21. Accordingly, on the following day, everyone reminded Theodorus with great anticipation that he should make good his pledge. (2) He believed, for what seemed to him justifiable reasons, that the vows of all the Jews should be postponed, saying that first he wanted to bring his wife here, whom he had left on the island of Majorca. His concern was that she might, if she learned that her husband had converted without her agreement, remain firm in her faithlessness, as usually happens. Further, she might become confused in her judgement and, at the instigation of her mother in particular, who was still alive, abandon both the marriage and her husband's religion. (3) When Theodorus had made these pleas, the Christians were amenable, but the Jews who had converted persisted in a bitter disturbance.²² The delay was cut short and Theodorus himself flew swiftly to the bosom of his kinswoman, as he had seen [in the dream]. (4) After him, the whole synagogue, as if a stumbling block had been removed, flowed together to the church. (5) Marvellous to relate, aged teachers of the Law began to believe, without any verbal wrangling, without any dispute over the Scriptures. (6) After debating for so long whether they were willing to accept faith in Christ, they professed that they believed in Christ and desired to be made Christians without delay.

23 iam om. P perorasset PWz: properasset V 24 co(m)motione PWV: com-
 monitione z consistentibus WVz: insistentibus P 25 in somniis ante viderat
 add. V 26 tamquam PWV: quasi z 27 synagoga PVSA: synagogae WC,
 om. G 30 Christum PVz: Christo W

22. One man, so they say, was one hundred and two years in age and in faithlessness. Although decrepit, he was nimble in his hope for the future life, and without exchanging three words, he proclaimed that he hoped to return at the end of his days to a spiritual infancy through faith in Christ, and he presented to us his limbs, by now feeble with decay, that he might be renewed through baptism as quickly as possible.

23. There were certain Jews who, as they sailed past, were driven to the island and were waiting for an appropriate moment and favourable winds. Even though the freedom to set sail was granted them, they preferred to believe.

24. Consequently, only three women, although very noble women among the Jews,²³ did Christ permit to hold out a little longer, in order to extend the glory of his power amidst the hardheartedness of their unbelief. (2) Artemisia, the daughter of Litorius, who recently governed this province and who is now said to be a Count,²⁴ was distraught at the conversion of her husband Meletius. Without any thought for feminine frailty and with just one friend, a nurse, and a few servant girls, she deserted her husband's house and escaped to a cave, which, though located in a vineyard, was none the less in quite a remote spot. (3) In the vineyard, there was a small, new winepress, and a newly-made vat, which seemed somehow to serve as a symbol of a faithful people. (4) For we either believe or can see that the Jews have received the 'must' of the New Testament not like 'old wineskins', but like 'new winevats' [Luke 5: 37]. (5) This woman had passed two days in that spot, implacable and angry with her husband. As soon as the third day dawned, she ordered a maidservant to draw water for her so that she could wash her face in her usual way. The water came from the winevat, which was full from a rainshower. When she realized that the water resembled honey in the sweetness of its taste and smell, at first she began to grow angry with the servant and asked indignantly why she had put honey in the pitcher. (6) Afterwards, however, as if to disprove the servant's denials, she went to the vat, drew forth a little water with cupped hands, and found that the water she had been

aqua PW lacu PW: loco Vz 27 dulcedinem PVz: dulcedine W
 28 succensere ministræ c(o)epit Vz: succensa recepit P: irasci in eam cepit W
 29 postea PWC: postquam VSAG 30 pergit WVz: perrexit P 31 de om.
 V qua PVz: aqua W

using for two days was changed into the sweetest, most delightful honey. (7) Then she called over all the women present and told them to taste the water, lest by chance a falsely sweet taste was deceiving her throat alone. (8) All of them tasted it and were stirred with such marvellous delight that they decided it was not water infused with honey, but the purest honey with only a resemblance to water. (9) Struck with wonder, they investigated more carefully while they were preparing to return to town and discovered that the dew, which was on much of the grass, also had a similar taste. (10) Accordingly, the previously mentioned lady set out for the town, reported these things to her husband, and through him made them known to everyone, and immediately, without resistance, she assented to faith in Christ. (11) However, on the same day when Meletius' wife was compelled by the honey to cast away the bitterness of her unbelief, on the same day, I say, when this daughter of Israel was placed as if in a desert, and perceived that ancient lake of Marah grow sweet when the 'log of the cross' was thrown into it [Exod. 15: 23-5], the entire church grew fragrant with such a marvellous and truly heavenly odour that nearly all the brethren sensed the presence of the Holy Spirit, which we had also sensed sometimes in the past, but only a few of us.

25. It was also counted a marvel in everyone's mind that, although the sky was for the most part clear during those days, quite frequent showers did occur. (2) And the rain would precede by a short interval Jews who were coming to confess faith in Christ. We actually noticed it and would say to one another half-jokingly, 'Look, it's raining now. Mark my words, some Jews are sure to accept faith in Christ!' Miraculously, often while we were saying such things, there would be a knock on the church door by some Jews. (3) And not in vain did those most joyful showers announce that a people would believe, since, as it is written, 'The Lord sets apart a plentiful rain for his inheritance' [Ps. 67: 10].

26. There still remained two women who refused to race to the fragrance of Christ's unguents: the wife of that Innocentius whom we mentioned above, along with her sister, a widow of excellent reputation. (2) Yet the moment she learned that her

90 duae adhuc (super)erant PWz: desuper erant V odorem PWSAG: odore VC
93 est om. W

sister's husband, Innocentius, had been converted, she boarded ship. We not only permitted her to do this, we even encouraged her, because she could not be turned to faith in Christ by either words or miracles.

27. Moreover, Innocentius' wife for nearly four days rejected with deaf ears the word of salvation that we were administering. (2) Since she was overwhelmed by the incurable sickness of her unbelief and refused all our medicine, (3) and could not be swayed by Innocentius' threats nor his prayers nor his tears, the whole crowd of the brethren, at Innocentius' request, gathered together at the house where he lived, feeling great pain in their spirits because so great an abundance of happiness was being opposed by a single woman (since her sister was thought already to have set sail). (4) After we had forced vain words on deaf ears for a long time and had accomplished nothing, we hastened to the known assistance of prayer and turned toward heavenly mercy the prayers which mortal impiety rejected. (5) And so our army sweated until nearly the third hour in contests of hymns and prayers against Amalec, the enemy of our leader Jesus [Exod. 17: 8-17]. (6) When we had become (it must be confessed) nearly desperate and were preparing our departure, we ordered everyone to regather their strength and to pray. Stretched out on the floor, we wept for a long time. (7) And when the people had exclaimed 'Amen' at the end of the prayer, that woman added that she believed and that she wanted to be made a Christian. Thereupon, we returned to our houses, delighted that this woman too had been freed from the snares of the devil.

28. On the following day, that is, the eighth day after we had come, we decided to return to Jamona, carrying back the rich spoils of our joy from our splendid victory. (2) But when we had made ourselves ready and were already leaving the city, the Lord added for his people as a kind of travelling allowance the one joy that appeared to be lacking. (3) For that widowed kinswoman of Innocentius was carried back from the open sea. (4) Suddenly, she wrapped herself about my knees and begged with tears for the assistance of our faith. (5) 'Why woman', I

demum die *W*: octava demum qua die veneramus *Vz* 27 Iamonam *z*: Iamona
PV: iam nona *W* 28 iam om. *W* 30 solum deesse om. *P* 32 reducta
WVz: adducta *P* 33 deprecabatur *WVz*: precabatur *P*

asked, 'did you wish to desert your brothers in such foolhardiness?' To which she replied, 'Even the prophet Jonah wished to flee from the countenance of God, and yet he fulfilled, although unwillingly, the will of God [Jonah 1: 1-4]. (6) Therefore, receive not just myself, but these orphans too, and nourish them in Christ.' (7) While she was making this pitiful plea, she led her two little daughters to me. (8) Who did not weep for joy? From whom did this abundance of happiness not wring tears? (9) To be sure, I accepted the sheep (the only one from the whole flock we knew to have wandered off) and I recalled her with her twin offspring to the fold of Christ.

29. Although the eight days in which these events occurred were before the beginning of Lent, they were celebrated by us as if it were Easter. (2) For it is confirmed that 540 souls were added to the church. (3) Moreover, I do not think it frivolous or superfluous (though I will have omitted many things due to my endless supply) to recollect in closing that of the great multitude of people from Jamona who had come so many days before on a journey of thirty miles, not one placed concern for his house, or plans for his daily sustenance, or personal affections before this task.

30. All the more joy should be felt at the following marvel, namely that we see the land of the Jewish people, barren for so long, producing manifold fruits of righteousness, now that the thorns of unbelief have been cut down and the seed of the Word implanted, so that we rejoice for ourselves in the hope of new crops. (2) Where we uprooted an infamous forest of unbelief, the most fertile works of faith have flourished. For not only are the Jews bearing the expense, first, for levelling the very foundations of the synagogue, and then, for constructing a new basilica, but they even carry the stones on their own shoulders.²⁵

31. May your Blessedness know that these things were begun on the fourth day before the Nones of February by the power of our Lord Jesus Christ and were completed on the eighth day hence,²⁶ in the year after the eleventh consulship of the Emperor Honorius and the second consulship of Constantius,

31 *arrep̄ta PVG: incepta W: arrecta SA* 32 *cognoscat PVz: cognoscit W*
 32-3 *Domini om. PW* 33 *Constantii PW: Constantio Vz iterum om. P viri*
clarissimi PW: victoriae V: victore z

a man of *clarissimus* rank.²⁷ (2) Wherefore, if you accept respectfully the word of an unworthy sinner, take up Christ's zeal against the Jews, but do so for the sake of their eternal salvation. (3) Perhaps that time predicted by the Apostle has indeed now come when the fullness of the Gentiles will have come in and all Israel shall be saved [Rom. 11: 25-6]. (4) And perhaps the Lord wished to kindle this spark from the ends of the earth, so that the whole breadth of the earth might be ablaze with the flame of love in order to burn down the forest of unbelief.

6 excitari *WVZ*: excitare *P* 7 flagraret *WZ*: fraglaret *P*: flagret *V* 7-8 ad
 exurendam infidelitatis silvam *om. WVZ* 8 explicit *add. W* explicit epistola
 Severi episcopi *add. VS*