PUBLICATIONS OF
THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART
EGYPTIAN EXPEDITION
EDITED BY
ALBERT MORTON LYTHGEOE
CURATOR EMERITUS OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF EGYPTIAN ART
THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART
EGYPTIAN EXPEDITION
—
THE MONASTERIES OF
THE WÂDI 'N NATRÛN
PART II
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES OF NITRIA
AND OF SCETIS
BY
HUGH G. EVELYN WHITE
EDITED BY
WALTER HAUSER

NEW YORK
MCMXXXII
Reprinted by Arno Press • 1973
THE PUBLICATION OF THIS VOLUME HAS BEEN MADE POSSIBLE BY THE GENEROSITY OF EDWARD S. HARKNESS
PREFATORY NOTE

In 1916 the Egyptian Department of the Metropolitan Museum decided to publish the photographs and architectural drawings of the monasteries in the Wâdi 'n Natrûn made by W. J. Palmer-Jones in 1910–1911.\footnote{See Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum, 1911, p. 19, and 1912, p. 87.} Evelyn White was asked to prepare the text necessary to accompany them describing and dating the material pictured, and giving enough of the history of the monasteries to explain their development and the variety in their architecture and ornament. There was no general history from which he could derive the information he required and he found the few articles devoted to the subject wholly inadequate to his purpose. Consequently he began to search all the likely sources, and the extent and thoroughness of this labor during two years can best be measured by the bibliography and the footnotes in this volume. The amount of information uncovered proved far greater than he expected, his notes arranging themselves gradually into a very complete account of the life and the growth of the monastic communities with vivid episodes and amusing and suggestive anecdotes. It was soon evident that this mass of historical material, while it served to bring life to the ancient walls, could not be used in all its richness in the original scheme of publication and that it had a value beyond the illustrative and picturesque.

Scetis, or the Wâdi 'n Natrûn, if not absolutely the earliest, was one of the largest and most successful of the early monastic settlements. It greatly influenced the development of monasticism in the West as well as in the East; it played a leading part in the political and ecclesiastical struggles of the fifth, sixth, and seventh centuries; and from the Arab Conquest down to the middle of the fourteenth century it exercised by far the most potent force in the history of the Coptic Church. The importance of a careful study of its history was, therefore, obvious and Evelyn White decided to supplement his work on the archaeology and architecture with this present volume. He felt that he must also include a study of the communities at the Mount of Nitria and its dependent Cellia. His research had shown him that Nitria was almost universally, though wrongly, identified with the Wâdi
PREFATORY NOTE

'N Natrūn; and it seemed that the distinction between the two centers would be clearer if their stories were carried along together.

With his historical material well in hand, the author made three visits to the Wādi 'N Natrūn in 1920 and 1921 to study the monasteries in the light of this information and to complete his descriptive notes on the architecture and the art on the spot. He soon finished the manuscripts of the two volumes in the series, *The Monasteries of the Wādi 'N Natrūn—The Architecture and Archaeology* and the *History of the Monasteries of Nitria and of Scetis*, the former still more or less according to the original plan with a rather full historical summary, and the latter with the repetitions and inconsistencies inevitable in the compilation of so detailed a work. He put off finally revising these two studies in order to publish the manuscript leaves which he had found on his first visit to the monasteries. When these, in the form of the *New Coptic Texts from the Monastery of Saint Macarius*, had gone to press he turned again to his task of emendation. Unfortunately he had no more than begun it when his death cut short his work and it was left to us, his associates in the Egyptian Department, to finish the revision and see the books through the perplexing process of printing.

As soon as we began to work on this history it became clear that, in addition to a thorough knowledge of the texts of the two manuscripts and the *New Texts*, a fair acquaintance with the subject matter and the principal sources must be acquired. During the author's reworking of his first draft and the retyping of his revisions, the copious footnotes had not always been changed to correspond to the text above them and occasionally they had no connection with it. Also quotations in Arabic, Greek, and Coptic written in by inexperienced copyists were often incorrect. It was, therefore, necessary to check all the footnotes and quotations by the sources to make sure that they were right.

Our main effort has been to simplify and tighten the presentation. We have tried to leave the work as near to the author's original as possible and to make only such changes and deletions as seemed unavoidable. All the cutting down has been done reluctantly, and only after the most careful consideration to be sure that the material removed contained no essential information and added nothing to the flow of the story or that it had been adequately and more properly treated in the volume on the architecture or in the *New Texts*. Repetitions were frequent, particularly in the first part of the book where the numerous sources were fully quoted or paraphrased, and where the same anecdotes served to illustrate several phases of the life of the early monks. In reducing the number of these repetitions we have endeavored to leave the telling in its most forceful position and by cross references in the footnotes to recall the matter to the mind of the reader whenever this seemed desirable. Naturally some rearrangements have been necessary during this part of the work, but they have been few and of no great extent save in the discussion of the name and the origin of the Monastery of Baramūs. References to this volume by section and paragraph number in the *New Texts* have prevented us from making changes that we might
PREFATORY NOTE

otherwise have made. No single fact has been omitted nor has any been added and all the opinions and conclusions are Evelyn White's own, for the most part in his own words.

The great variation in proper names and the lack of a definite system of transliteration for Arabic have occasioned one of our greatest difficulties, and one which has not been wholly overcome. When the author's sources, Greek, Latin, Coptic, and Arabic offered him such an array of forms as Scetis, Scete, Scithium, Shiēt, Shīhēt, Wāḍī Habīb, and Wāḍī 'n Natrūn, which by no means exhausts the variety for this place name, and Pshoi, Pshoi, Bishōi, Bishūi, and Bishāi, to mention only one personal name, it is not surprising if nearly all of them got into his text as well as into his quotations. The temptation to use whatever transcription his source at a given moment presented, with the realization that simplification would be necessary when the manuscript was completed, must have been strong. In attempting this simplification we have tried to choose the most familiar form of the name for the text, but to reproduce the form of the original in direct quotations. For cases like that of Scetis where time and a new language wrought a complete change in a name we have chosen one form for the early period and gradually, as the Arabic sources more and more predominate, changed it for the commonest later name. To achieve even a slight uniformity in the rendering of the Arabic has been difficult. Evelyn White was not an Arabist. He collected most of his information from works in European languages and from translations made especially for him and he found himself in the usual maze of irreconcilable transliterations. It seemed to him scarcely worth while, if not impossible, to search out the exact Arabic writing of the many names, especially the obscure geographical names, and he abandoned any attempt to arrive at a scientific system. As in many cases the Arabic consonants were uncertain, he did not try to differentiate clearly between them. He chose one spelling for each word and marked the long vowels with a circumflex as a key to pronunciation. He did not usually indicate banṭehs even in the middle of words and represented the feminine nisbeb ending by ēh without showing any consonant. In fact, 〈 is in other places, as in Auzīlāl, for example, indicated simply by ī where it would have been better to show the consonant. We have thought it wiser in the absence of the Arabic in so many cases to attempt no more than to be consistent within the author's limitations: to see that each Arabic letter is usually rendered in the same way and that the spellings adopted are recognizable for what they represent. It is, perhaps, regrettable that no more should have been done, but a glance through the indexes and the bibliography will at once show what a formidable task the introduction of the exact modern system would have been.

The delay in bringing out this book may seem to have been an unnecessarily long one, but we can only plead as excuse the difficulty of becoming thoroughly conversant with the texts of the author's three interdependent works and their widely ramifying subjects while carrying on our own work and travelling back and forth to Egypt.

In a draft of a preface to this history Evelyn White said: "My obligations are heavy. It
is difficult adequately to express my debt to B. Evetts, the well-known editor of Abū Sālih’s work; not only did he freely place at my disposal his manuscript version of the unpublished portion of the History of the Patriarchs, a work upon which the account of the Medieval Period here given almost entirely depends, but he most generously translated for me the unpublished Life of Bishōn and the Life of Abrahām and George. In the midst of his own urgent labors, W. E. Crum made time to supply me with notes and suggestions innumerable; above all, it was he who suggested that the colophons and notes in the Syriac and other ‘Nitrian’ codices would furnish valuable historical material. To Professor F. C. Burkitt I am indebted for the renderings of the priceless notes concerning Marutha and the purchase of the Monastery of the Syrians; to Norman McLean of Christ’s College, and the Rev. E. S. Tritton for the translation of many other Syriac notes and passages; and to the Abbé Joseph Ziadeh for his work on the manuscript of the Book of the Chrism. It is with special gratitude that I acknowledge the courtesy of Dr Francis Jenkinson, Librarian to the University of Cambridge, in granting me the freest access to the library which he controls.”

The editor would also like to express his thanks to the Cambridge University Press for its patience and help during the long time the book has been in process of correction, and particularly for permitting us to have the services of W. E. C. Browne, who has aided us so painstakingly in checking the footnotes and quotations.

Walter Hauser.
CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prefatory Note</th>
<th>vii</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Table of Contents</td>
<td>xi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Plates</td>
<td>xxxiii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>xxxv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symbols and Summary Abbreviations</td>
<td>xliii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrigenda</td>
<td>xlv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section I. The Roman Period: 315–451 A.D.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter I. The Origins of Monasticism</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Introductory.
2. The Originality of Christian Monasticism.
6. The First Anchorets. Paul, the first anchoret, third century.
CONTENTS

Chapter II. The Topography of the Mount of Nitria and Scetis

1. The Topographical Problem.


Chapter III. The Foundation of the Monastic Settlement at the Mount of Nitria


2. Amoun, the Founder of Nitrian Monasticism. Amoun’s life according to Palladius and others. Amoun’s chronology. Character of Amoun. Amoun’s place in the history of monasticism. Amoun’s life as a...


CHAPTER IV. THE FOUNDATION AND EARLY HISTORY OF SCETIS

1. Scetis before the Fourth Century. Scetis blessed by the Virgin.


7. Literary Works Attributed to Macarius.

8. The Miracles of Macarius the Great.

CHAPTER V. THE MOUNT OF NITRIA AND SCETIS IN THE ARIAN PERIOD

Monasteries date back to the fourth century. The names of the Four Monasteries. The order of foundation.


4. Foundation of the Monastery of Macarius. The site indicated by the Cherubim. Notice of the site in the History of the Patriarchs, etc. Evidence of the Apophthegmata Patrum. The secret retreat of Macarius. The formation of a brotherhood. Isidorus possibly deputy to Macarius. Date of the retirement of Macarius.


CONTENTS


CHAPTER VIII. THE ORIGENIST AND ANTHROPOMORPHIC STRIFE AT THE MOUNT OF NITRIA AND IN SCETIS


6. The Quarrel between Theophilus and Isidorus. Various accounts of the origin of the quarrel. Eusebius and Euthymius are involved. Theophilus brings a false charge against Isidorus.


# CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter IX. The Mount of Nitria during the First Half of the Fifth Century</th>
<th>145</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Cyril and the Monks of Nitria. Cyril elected Patriarch. Dispute with the Prefect Orestes. Part played by the monks. The murder of Hypatia, 415 A.D.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Visit of Melania the Younger.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Eladius of Cellia. Decline in the importance of Nitria.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter X. Scetis in the First Half of the Fifth Century</th>
<th>150</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3. The Number of Raids. Three raids on Scetis foretold. Macarius’ prophecies concerning two raids.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Chapter XI. The Monastic System during the Fourth and Early Fifth Centuries

1. General Character of the System. Antonian “system” not preconceived.

### Chapter XII. Particular Aspects of Monastic Life during the Fourth and Early Fifth Centuries

3. *The Monastic Habit.* The monastic dress. Its alleged virtue. Its symbolism. The leathern girdle and body robe. The cowl, or hood. The *colobium,* or *lebito.* The *analabi.* The *mazor,* or cape. The *melotes.* Sandals. Staff.


CONTENTS


Chapter II. The Gaianite Heresy and the Rise of the Theotokos Monasteries


Chapter III. Scetis as the Metropolis of the Monophysite Church

2. Evidence for the Transfer of the Patriarchal Seat. The Monastery of S. Macarius as the patriarchal seat. Date of the flight to Scetis.

Chapter IV. The Life and Times of Daniel the Hegumen

1. Sources for the Life of Daniel.
CONTENTS

Chapter V. The Heraclian Persecution (631–641 A.D.) ........................................ 252


Chapter VI. The Mount of Nitria, Cellia, and Scetis in the Byzantine Period ........................................ 257


Section III. The Early Arab Period. 641–880 A.D. ........................................ 263

Chapter I. General Characteristics of the Period ........................................ 265

Attitude of the Copts towards the Arabs. Attitude of the Arabs towards the monasteries. Fall of the “Chalcedonians.” Beginning of ecclesiasticism and decline of monasticism.

Chapter II. The Restoration under Benjamin I (641–660 A.D.) ................. 268

1. The Monks of Scetis and ‘Amr ibn el ’Asi. The monks and ‘Amr ibn el ’Asi. ‘Amr confirms their revenues.
2. The Rebuilding of the Monasteries.
3. The Translation of the Forty-nine Martyrs. Translation of the Forty-nine Martyrs. A body stolen. A second body stolen. The remaining bodies removed from the cave to a place of safety. Benjamin I orders a martyrium to be built. And supervises the translation.
CONTENTS

CHAPTER III. JOHN THE HEGUMEN OF SCETIS AND HIS DISCIPLES


CHAPTER IV. PROGRESS OF EVENTS BETWEEN 661 AND 774 A.D.


CHAPTER V. TRANSLATIONS OF SAINTS TO SCETIS


CHAPTER VI. THE FIFTH SACK OF SCETIS (ABOUT 817 A.D.)

Destruction of the monasteries. Date of the sack.

CHAPTER VII. THE RESTORATION

1. The Work of Abba James. James returns to Wâdi Habîb. He is elected patriarch, 819 A.D. He visits Wâdi Habîb in Lent. He completes the Church of S. Shenûdeh. He rebuilds the sanctuary of Benjamin.

CONTENTS


CHAPTER VIII. JOHN KAMÉ AND HIS MONASTERY

1. Sources.
3. Date of John Kamé and His Monastery.

CHAPTER IX. THE ORIGIN AND EARLY HISTORY OF THE SYRIAN MONASTERY

1. Statement of the Problem.
5. The Previous History of the Monastery Purchased by Marutha. The monastery originally one of the Theotokos monasteries. The evidence of nomenclature. Evidence of tradition. Erroneous statement as to the origin of the Syrian Monastery.
6. Probable Date of the Purchase. Makrizi’s statement. Modern suggestions. Marutha earlier than the ninth century. Marutha belongs to the Arab Period. The purchase probably made after the suppression of the Gaianites, 710 A.D.
CONTENTS

CHAPTER X. THE AGE OF SHENÛDEH I .......................... 322

   Michael II dies in Wâdi Habîb and is buried at the Monastery of S. Macarius. The precedent thus set.


4. *Fresh Incursions of the Barbarians.* Renewal of troubles with the barbarians and the results of this. Easter visit of Shenûdeh I to the desert, 866. Arab marauders plunder the monasteries. Shenûdeh seeks to confront the Arabs. He holds the Easter service. Dangerous position of the monasteries. The monks barricade themselves in the keeps and churches. Grief of Shenûdeh.

5. *Inclosure of the Monastery of Saint Macarius.* The Patriarch Shenûdeh surrounds the Church of S. Macarius with a wall. Consequences of this step. Fortification of the other monasteries.

6. *Close of the Period.* The patriarch is falsely accused by a monk. End of the informer.

SECTION IV. THE MEDIAEVAL PERIOD .......................... 331

CHAPTER I. MAIN FEATURES OF THE PERIOD .................. 333

Ecclesiasticism now prevails.

CHAPTER II. THE TENTH CENTURY ............................. 335


Chapter III. The Eleventh Century (I) . . . . . . 343

1. A New Church of Saint Macarius.

2. Persecution under El Hâkem, 1011–1017 A.D. (?) Cause of El Hâkem’s persecution. The patriarch retires to Wâdi Habîb, where the churches were marvellously preserved. Note written by Joseph the Deacon. The head of S. Mark at the Monastery of S. Macarius. Alleged retirement of the Caliph El Hâkem to Scetis.

Chapter IV. The Eleventh Century (II) . . . . . . 347


appropriates the revenues of certain bishoprics to the Monastery of S. Macarius. James, Bishop of Misr, dies in 1088. Sanhût of the Monastery of Bishôi succeeds to the See of Misr.

CHAPTER V. THE ELEVENTH CENTURY (III) . . . . . . . . 360


CHAPTER VI. THE TWELFTH CENTURY (I) . . . . . . . . . . 371


CHAPTER VII. THE TWELFTH CENTURY (II) . . . . . . . . . . 373

THE MONASTERY OF SAINT MACARIUS AND LITURGICAL MATTERS.


2. The Eucharistic Confession. Discussion with the monks.

3. Translation of Macarius II.


5. Accusations against the Monks. The steward of the revenue from the chrism denounces the monks. He violates the sanctuary of Benjamin.
6. The Book of the Passion.

7. Ritual Peculiarities at the Monastery of Saint Macarius.

Chapter VIII. The Twelfth Century (III)


Chapter IX. The Thirteenth Century

1. The Vacancy of the Patriarchate. Death of John VI.

2. The Monks and Taxation. Monasticism a pretext for the evasion of taxes.

3. El Kâmil's Visit to the Desert Monasteries. The Sultan visits the monasteries in 1228. He grants the monks a charter. Evil effect of the vacancy upon the monasteries. Number of priests at the Monastery of S. Macarius in 1216.


6. End of the Vacancy and Its Results. Cyril III patriarch, 1235–1243. Cyril's visit to the Monastery of S. Macarius. He consecrates chrism for his own profit. He subordinates the Monastery of S. Macarius to the Church of Misr. In addition he imposes certain conditions upon the monks.


1. Introductory.


5. Condition of the Monasteries in the Fourteenth Century.


7. The Fall of the Monasteries. The Black Death. Decline of Christianity in Egypt during the Middle Ages.


## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section V. The Modern Period</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(From the Seventeenth to the Nineteenth Century)</td>
<td>411</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Chapter I. General Character of the Period       | 413  |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter II. The End of the Syrian Community</th>
<th>414</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>III feeling between Copts and Syrians. The Syrians’ title to the monastery challenged. An Egyptian abbot installed. Almost certain that no Syrians were left at the monastery in the eighteenth century. Syrian community ended in obscurity.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter III. The Monasteries in the Seventeenth Century</th>
<th>417</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. <em>El Baramûs.</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter IV. The Eighteenth Century</th>
<th>422</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
CONTENTS


CHAPTER V. THE NINETEENTH CENTURY


| EPILOGUE | ................................. 436 |
| EXCURSUS | ................................ 437 |
| THE LIBRARY OF THE SYRIAN MONASTERY | ................................. 439 |

1. Introductory. The fate of Syriac libraries prior to the ninth century. Periods in the history of the library, ninth to nineteenth century.
5. The Second Period: 1007–1081. Effect of political events upon the library.
Zakhe and John, benefactors 1199 and 1209. The scribe Bacchus, 1248–1257. His address to the brethren. Two mss. of 1254. Wane of the revival. A scholar’s lament on the neglect of the library.


12. *Arabic Manuscripts*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>APPENDICES</th>
<th>APPENDIX I. Abbots of the Monastery of Saint Macarius</th>
<th>APPENDIX II. Abbots of the Syrian Monastery</th>
<th>APPENDIX III. On the Coptic Life of Macarius</th>
<th>APPENDIX IV. The Nitrian Rule</th>
<th>APPENDIX V. Acclamations to the Great Saints of Scetis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>459</td>
<td>461</td>
<td>462</td>
<td>465</td>
<td>469</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDEXES</th>
<th>INDEX OF PERSONS</th>
<th>INDEX OF PLACES</th>
<th>INDEX OF SUBJECTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>473</td>
<td>475</td>
<td>484</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PLATES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>497</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF PLATES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plate I.</th>
<th>Map of Northern Egypt.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>II.</td>
<td>Map of Wâdi 'n Natrün.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III.</td>
<td>Marino Sanuto's Map of the Delta showing the Monasteries and Lakes of Wâdi 'n Natrün (from B.M. Add. 27376, fol. 183a).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV.</td>
<td>A. Saint Macarius (from a wall painting in the Monastery of Apa Jeremias at Sakkâreh).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B. Anba Bishôî (B.M. Add. 14594, fol. 1a).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V.</td>
<td>A. The Tree of Obedience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B. Dêr es Suriân (left) and Dêr Anba Bishôî (right).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI.</td>
<td>Syriac Note recording the purchase of the Syrian Monastery (Paris, B.N., Fonds syr., No. 27).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII.</td>
<td>Syriac Note concerning Moses of Nisibis and the poll tax (B.M. Add. 14531, fol. 157b).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII.</td>
<td>Page from the polyglot <em>Epistles</em> at Milan.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
BIBLIOGRAPHY


—— *Le Calandrier d’Abou’l Barakât* (a portion of the above-named work), ed. E. Tisserant (*P.O.*, x, pp. 247f.).

Abû’l Farag, Gregorius. See Bar-Hebraeus.


*Acta sanctorum*. See under Bolland.

Amélineau, E. *De historia lausica*. Paris, 1887.


Ammonius the Bishop. *Epistola ad Theophilum (Acta SS.*), May iii, Appendix, pp. 63 f."


—— (2) Greek Subject Collection, ed. F. Nau, *R.O.C.*, xii, pp. 43 f., 171 f., 393 f.; xiii, pp. 47 f., 266 f.; xiv, pp. 357 f.; xvii, pp. 204 f., 294 f.; xviii, pp. 137 f.

—— (3) Latin Subject Collections, ed. Rosweyd, *Vitae patrum*, lib. iii–vii, pp. 492 f. (= Migne, P.L., lxxxiii, cols. 851 f.).


XXXV
BIBLIOGRAPHY


ATHANASIUS, SAINT. Life and Conversation of Our Holy Father Antony (Migne, P.G., xxvi, cols. 835 f.).
— Historia de Melchisedec (Migne, P.G., xxviii, cols. 533 f.).

ATHANASIUS. The Conflict of Seterus, Patriarch of Antioch (Ethiopic and Coptic texts), ed. E. J. Goodspeed and W. E. Crum (P.O., iv, pp. 570 f.).

BALESTRI, L. See under Hyversat.


BASSET, R. Le Dialecte de Syouab (Publications de l’ecole des lettres d’Alger, No. v, pp. 6 f.). Algiers, 1890.
See also under Synaxarium.


BAUMSTARK, A. (editor). Orients Christianus: Römische Halbjahrhefte für die Kunde des christlichen Orients, 7 vols. Rome, 1901-7; Neue Serie, 1911-


BOULLAYE LE GOUZ, SIEUR DE LA. Voyages et observations. . . . Paris, 1675.

BOUSQUET, J. See under Pachomius, Life of.


CERIANI, A. M. Translato Syra Pescitto veteris testamenti ex codice Ambrosiano . . . photolithographice edita. Milan, 1876.


Chronicon paschale (Migne, P.G., xcii, cols. 69 f.).


CLÉDAT, J. Le Monastère et la Nécropole de Baoui (Mém. de l’Inst. franç. d’arch. or. du Caire, xi). Cairo, 1904.


CRUM, W. E. Hagiographica from Leipțig Manuscripts (P.S.B.A., xxix, pp. 289 f., 301 f.).

xxxvi
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Delehaye, H. See under Synaxarium.
Epiphanius, Saint. Adversus octoginta Haereses opus quod inscribitur “Panarium” (P.G., xli, xlii).
Evagrius Ponticus. Opera (Migne, P.G., xl, cols. 1219 f.).
Evagrius Scholasticus. Historia ecclesiastica (Migne, P.G., lxxxvi, ii, cols. 2415 f.).
Evett, B. T. A. Le Rite copte de la prise d’habitation . . . (R.O.C., xi, p. 60, No. 130). See also under Abū Sālih and Severus of Ashmunān.

Guidi, I. See under Synaxarium.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


Historia monachorum. (1) Greek Recension, ed. E. Preuschen in Palladius und Rufinus. Giessen, 1897.
— (2) Latin Version of Rufinus (Migne, P.L., cxxi, cols. 391 f.).


Isaiah of Scetis. Works (Migne, P.G., xi, cols. 1105 f.; P.L., cxxx, cols. 427 f.).

Jerome, Saint. Epistolae (Migne, P.L., xxii, cols. 17 f.).
— Vita Pauli (Migne, P.L., xxiii).
— Apologia adversus libros Rufini (Migne, P.L., xxiii).
John Kamli. Life of, ed. and trans. M. H. Davis (P.O., xiv, fasc. 2, pp. 317 f.).

JOHN MOSCHUS. Pratum spirituale (Migne, P.G., lxxxvii, iii).
John Rufus. Plerophoria, ed. F. Nau (P.O., viii, pp. 1 f.).

Kircher, A. Lingua Aegyptiaca restituta. Rome, 1644.

Lane-Poole, S. History of Egypt in the Middle Ages. London, 1901.

— Agapé (Cabrol’s Dict. d’archéol. chrét., i, cols. 775 f.).
Leipoldt, J. See under Vollers.

Leonius of Byzantium. De sectis (Migne, P.G., lxxvi, cols. 1193 f.).
Liberatus of Carthage. Breviarium causae Nestorianorum et Eutychianorum (Migne, P.G., lxviii, cols. 969 f.).
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Macarius the Egyptian. *Works* (Migne, P.G., xxxiv, cols. 449 f.).


Miedema, R. *Der Heilige Menas*. Rotterdam, 1913.


Palladius. *Dialogus... de vita et conversatione beatissimatis Johannis Christosomi episcopi Constantinopolis* (Migne, P.G., xlvii, i).

— *Historia lausiaca*, the Greek Text edited with Introduction and Notes by Dom Cuthbert Butler (Part II of *The Lausiac History of Palladius*). Cambridge, 1904.


Peretele (editor). *Zetie... Arsenia Velekgao*. St. Petersburg, 1899.

1 All these are fragments of Makrizi’s *El Khitat*.
Orthodoxy of Scetis. Situation at the Mount of Nitria, 355 A.D. Letter of Theodore of Tabennesi to the monks of Nitria.

2. *Rufinus and Melania at the Mount of Nitria.* Melania’s visit to the Mount of Nitria, 373 or 374 A.D. Her interview with Pambo. Presence of Melania at the death of Pambo. Alleged visit of Melania to Scetis. The visit of Rufinus.


4. *Another Aspect of the Persecution under Valens.* The traditional account biased. The evidence of imperial edicts. Alleged edict of Valens, 375. The edict probably mythical. The part played by the State in the persecution.

**Chapter VI. The Mount of Nitria during the Last Quarter of the Fourth Century**


5. *The Death of Macarius of Alexandria.* His relations with the Origenists. His last years.


**Chapter VII. The Rise of the Four Monasteries of Scetis and the Close of the Fourth Century**

1. *Summary of the History of Scetis between 356 and 380 A.D.*

2. *The Four Monasteries of Scetis.* The Four Monasteries. The Four
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Peter the Iberian, Life of. See under Raabe.


Preuschen, E. Palladius und Rufinus: ein Beitrag zur Quellen-Kunde des ältesten Mönchtums. Giessen, 1897.


(2) Syriac Version, ed. F. Nau (P.O., v, fasc. 3, pp. 750 f.).


— Recherches critiques et historiques sur la langue et la littérature de l’Égypte. Paris, 1808. See also under Makrizi.


Rosweyde, H. Vitae patrum: de vitis et verbis seniorum, lib. x. Antwerp, 1616.

Rufinus. Historia ecclesiastica (Migne, P.L., xxii, cols. 467 f.).

— Historia monachorum (Migne, P.L., xxii, cols. 391 f.).

— Apologia in Hieronymum (Migne, P.L., xxii, cols. 541 f.).

— Apologia ad Anastasium (Migne, P.L., xxii, cols. 623 f.).


Sachsen, Johann Georg, Herzog zu. Die Fresken an Deir el Surjâni (Oriens Christianus, N.S., iii [1913], pp. 111 f. Rome).


Sarapion (with Paphnutius and the Macarii). Regula ad monachos (P.L., ciii, cols. 433 f.).

Schulz, B. Mschatta 1 (Jahrbr. d. kön. preuss. Kunstsammlungen, xxv [1904], pp. 205 f.).

Severus of Ashmunên and others. History of the Patriarchs of the Coptic Church of Alexandria, ed. and
BIBLIOGRAPHY

trans. B. Evetts (tirage à part from P.O., 1, v, x).1 Paris, 1904. (For the unpublished portion of this work reference is made to the ms., B.N., Fonds arabe, No. 302.)


—_ Thesaurus Syriacus._ Oxford, 1879.


SOZOMEN. Historia ecclesiastica (Migne, P.G., lxvii, cols. 843 f.).


—_ Koptische Kunst (Cat. gen. des ant. égypt. du Musée du Caire)._ Vienna, 1904.

—_ Mschatta, ii (Jahrb. d. kén. preuss. Kunstsammlungen, xxv [1904], pp. 225 f.).


— (3) Ethiopic, ed. I. Guidi (P.O., i, iii, ix). Paris, 1907 et seq.

THEOPHANES. Chronographia (Migne, P.G., cviii, cols. 63 f.).


THOMPSON, SIR HERBERT. Coptic Inscriptions [from the Monastery of Apa Jeremias], Nos. 1–168, in Quibell, Excavations at Saqqara, iii, pp. 27 f.; Nos. 169–400, id., pp. 47 f.


TIMOTHY III OF ALEXANDRIA. Sermo (Migne, P.G., lxxxvi, i, cols. 271 f.).


1 The continuous (bracketed) page numbers of the tirage à part are quoted in all references to this work.

2 References are to the continuous (bracketed) page numbers of the tirage à part.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

VANSLEB, J. B. See under WANSLEBEN.


--- Nouvelle Relation en forme d'un journal d'un voyage fait en Égypte en 1672 et 1673. Paris, 1677


--- Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts...in the University Library at Cambridge, 2 vols. Cambridge, 1901.


ZÖEGA, G. Catalogus codicum Coptorum MSS. qui in Museo Borgiano Velitris asservantur. Rome, 1810.

ZOTENBERG. Catalogue des manuscrits syriaques...de la Bibliothèque Nationale. Paris, 1866 et seq.

xlii
SYMBOLS AND SUMMARY ABBREVIATIONS


Acta SS. = Acta sanctorum. (See Bibliography under BOLLAND.)

A.M.G. = Annales du Musée Guimet.

B.A.V.C. = Bibliothecae apostolicae Vaticanae catalogus. (See Bibliography under ASSEMANI.)

B.M. = British Museum, London.


B.O. = Bibliotheca orientalis. (See Bibliography under ASSEMANI.)

C.S.C.O. = Corpus scriptorum Christianorum orientalium.

Cod. Vat. Copt. = Codices Vaticani Coptici (as catalogued in Mai’s Scriptorum veterum nova collectio, v).

H.E. = Historia ecclesiastica. (Various authors.)

Hist. Laus. = Historia lausiaca. (See Bibliography under PALLADIUS.)

Hist. Mon. = Historia monachorum. (See Bibliography.)

Hist. Patr. = History of the Patriarchs. (See Bibliography under SEVERUS.)

L.H. = Lausiac History of Palladius. (See Bibliography under BUTLER.)


S.V.N.C. = Scriptorum veterum nova collectio. (See Bibliography under MAI.)


SYMBOLS DENOTING ERAS

A.G. or A.G.R. = Anno Graecorum, era commencing 311 B.C.

A.H. = Anno Hegirae, era beginning July 16, 622 A.D.

A.M. = Anno Martyrum, era beginning Aug. 29, 284 A.D.
CORRIGENDA

P. 14, l. 22. For afarât, read ‘afârît

P. 25, note 5. For ibn Khâkêm, read ibn Khâkân

P. 88, l. 6. For Petubastes, read Putubastes as in Hist. Laus.

P. 99, l. 5. For Valentinian I, read Valens

P. 142, l. 29. For Eudocia, read Eudoxia

P. 151, l. 20. niēït cannot, of course, be translated “the west.” The quotation has been incorrectly abridged from ἀναβάσις τοῦ εὐθυγμένου ἄνθρωπον ἐπὶ πιεῦν, negating παρ’ ἐν αὐτῷ, …

P. 153, l. 2. For ‘Imâzîghin, read Imâzîghin

P. 220, note 3. For chapter vii, read pages 129 and 142

P. 245, note 3. For 378–395, read 379–395

P. 290, l. 3. For ‘Omâr, read ‘Omar

P. 312, l. 16; 387, l. 19. For El Macinus, read El Makîn

P. 312, note 1. For Fonds arabe, read Fonds syr.

P. 324, l. 8. For El Mudebbîr, read ibn el Mudebbîr

P. 324, note 3. For Mudebbîr, read Mudebbîr

P. 337, last line. For Ibn Isâ Ibn al-Jarrah, read ibn ‘Isâ ibn el Jarrah

P. 338, l. 3. For Al-Muctadîr-Billâh, read El Mukîtdîr bi’l-lâh

P. 351, note 1. For مَقَارِبُوُس، مَقَارِبُوُسٍ, read مَقَارِبُوُسُ, مَقَارِبُوُسٍ

For the ásâfîf, read ásâfîf
SECTION I

THE ROMAN PERIOD

315–451 A.D.
CHAPTER 1

THE ORIGINS OF MONASTICISM

1. Introductory

Monasticism as a Christian institution came to birth in Egypt; and of the two forms in which it manifested itself almost from the first, that which was initiated by Saint Antony is equal in importance to—and perhaps more characteristically Egyptian than—the system established by Pachomius. Ordinarily the earlier phases only of Egyptian monasticism are regarded as worthy of interest, in so far as they determined or influenced the Christian institution as a whole and its Western development in particular. The full evolution on its native soil of the plant sown by Antony and Pachomius is worthy of study both for its own sake and as inseparable from the history of the Coptic Church. The difficulty which lies in the way of such a study is the general paucity and fragmentary nature of the material available. Until quite recently the remains of Coptic monasteries in Egypt were regarded by archaeologists as negligible, or worse, as so much rubbish to be cleared away as rapidly as possible that earlier and more imposing remains lying beneath might be disclosed. Consequently our knowledge of the monastic buildings raised in Egypt at various periods is very limited; and too often the ruins of monasteries, even when most carefully examined, can yield up little else than their architectural history and some information as to the life of the monks. From documentary sources, again, we can learn little that is consecutive about the history of individual monasteries.

1 Antonian monasticism was established in 305 A.D. Pachomius founded his monastery in Tabennesi (according to Ladeuze, followed by Leipoldt and Butler) about 318.
2 See Somers Clarke, Christian Antiquities, pp. 189 ff.
3 Thus, rich as it proved to be in architectural and artistic remains, the Monastery of Jeremias at Sakkâreh has yielded up but little of its history. Yet when a number of monastic sites have been excavated with equal care, a combination of the data they are likely to afford may be expected to throw as much new light on the spread and decline of monasticism as the study of Roman sites in Gaul, Germany, and Britain has shed upon the provincial life and military organization of the Roman Empire.
4 Much, however, remains to be done in this almost unexplored field.
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

Happily one group of communities is exceptional in this respect. The early history of the monastic settlement at the Mount of Nitria is unusually well documented, while the fortunes of the neighboring colony at Scetis can be traced almost continuously from the date of its planting down to the present day. In their earliest days both these centers enjoyed the direct countenance, or active assistance of Antony himself, and in them therefore we can best study the life history of the Antonian type of monastic community. But the foundation of Mount Nitria and Scetis alike follows so closely after the inauguration of monasticism itself that their early history cannot fully be understood without a summary review of the origin of the institution as a whole.\(^1\)

2. The Originality of Christian Monasticism

The question now before us is this: was Christian monasticism of independent growth, or was it modeled on, or influenced by some similar and earlier movement preceding it in Egypt or elsewhere? Monasticism may be defined as the practical application to social life of the ascetic spirit; and asceticism itself springs from the almost instinctive conception of the universe as dual and consisting in two irreconcilable forces, spirit or good, and matter or evil. Such a conception was, of course, widespread in the East, where it gave rise to such diverse manifestations as Pythagoreanism and Buddhist monasticism. Can the Christian institution, then, have arisen from these or from some similar movement? It may safely be affirmed, at any rate, that it was no alien influence which inspired men like Antony, Amoun, Pachomius, and Macarius; one and all they were of the fellah class, and, if not illiterate, of extremely limited education—men who, until they became monks, had no opportunity for travel. Such men did not study the literature of Pythagoreanism, and can have known as little of Buddhism as of the solar system.\(^2\) If they were influenced at all in the great experiment which they initiated or helped to carry out, that influence must be sought in Egypt itself.

The range of our inquiry is therefore narrowed, and we have to ask whether there existed on Egyptian soil any pre-Christian form of monastic or quasi-monastic life which can have suggested to Antony and Pachomius the establishment of their respective orders? Ascetic communities were certainly to be found in Egypt before either of the great founders of monasticism was born; but how far is it likely that these were the prototypes of the Christian monasteries of Egypt?

3. Pre-Christian Ascetic Communities

The traditional view prior to the nineteenth century was that Christian monasticism was independent in origin. Weingarten was the first to challenge this article of faith by pointing

---

1 On the distinction to be drawn between Nitria and Scetis see Chapter II.
2 The subject is treated by Leclercq in Cabrol's *Did. d'archéol. chrét.*, 11, ii, col. 3047 f., *Cenobitisme*, with full references to ancient and modern authorities. See also Mackean, *Christian Monasticism in Egypt*, pp. 25 f.

3 Traces of Indian influence have been found at Memphis, but there is not the least probability that it permeated Egypt; and it is certain that Christian monasticism sprang not from any of the great towns, but from country villages.
to what he alleged to be a body of recluses housed in the Serapeum at Memphis in the Ptolemaic Period. These persons (he represented) were known as "recluses" (κάτοχοι): they renounced property and lived on bread provided for them by the people of their native villages; they were shut up in cells and could converse only through a narrow window; and they used the terms "father" and "brother" in a spiritual sense, just as did the Christian monks.\(^1\)

The exact status of these κάτοχοι is not wholly clear; but it is certain that they neither renounced intercourse with the world, nor sacrificed personal property, nor were bound by lifelong vows. So much is made clear by the papyri—our only source of information—relating to certain members of this class. From one of these documents\(^2\) we learn that a certain κάτοχος, Hephaestion, had gone to the Serapeum for refuge; his relatives urged him to return home, and some reference is made to his release. In another document,\(^3\) the κάτοχος Ptolemy states that his neighbors at home have taken advantage of his seclusion to seize his house on the death of his father, and petitions for redress. And again, Harmais\(^4\) receives a deposit from a female servant of the temple; losing this, owing to some fraud, he makes a petition for redress, and complains that he dares not venture out of the precincts (apparently as usual) to go down into Memphis.

The examples quoted show that the κάτοχοι were not recluses and in no sense renounced the world: they contemplate return to normal life, they claim to hold property as a natural right, and they mix freely with the world. Their relation to the Serapeum Temple is at least partially revealed by their title κάτοχοι, which indicates some form of supernatural possession\(^5\); and it is probable that they were mediums either for divination by dreams or for healing by incubation.\(^6\) As such, they may have been in the service of the temple itself, or have been introduced there on particular occasions to secure these supernatural benefits for individuals. It is impossible to trace any kinship or connection between such a class and the Christian monks of the fourth century.

Porphyry\(^7\) quotes an account left by Chaeremon the philosopher, companion of Aelius Gallus in Egypt, of a quasi-monastic community of priests at Heliopolis. The aim of this fellowship was to achieve continence and endurance (ἐγκράτεια, καρπερία). To this end they renounced all ordinary human occupations, devoting themselves to contemplation of the divine, and were thus enabled to rise superior to all covetousness and ordinary passions. At special seasons of purification they abstained from any association with their fellows, and at all times from intercourse with the generality of mankind. Their fare was extremely simple: bread dipped in hyssop was their ordinary food, but even this was renounced at times of purification; wine was used sparingly or not at all, owing to its disturbing effects; most of them did not even take oil.

---

2. *Cat. of Greek Papyri in B.M.*, No. xlII.
3. Id., No. xlV.
4. Id., No. xxIV.
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

Mutatis mutandis, Chaeremon's account of this society would almost exactly describe the mode of life followed in any of the early Christian monastic communities. Is it then likely that the group at Heliopolis was reproduced at other priestly centers in Egypt, and that certain of these became models which Antony and his followers consciously or unconsciously imitated? The suggestion cannot be admitted. In the first place, the resemblance is to a large extent superficial; for climatic conditions postulate that any number of experiments in asceticism on Egyptian soil will follow the same lines. Secondly, the ascetic society at Heliopolis seems to have been exclusive and, unlike Christian monasticism, the reverse of a popular movement, nor is there any evidence to show that similar societies existed in other Egyptian sanctuaries. And lastly, Strabo when he visited Heliopolis early in the first century A.D., found that these ascetics had vanished, and their experiment had become a thing of the past (ἐκλεισα μὲν τὸ σύστημα καὶ ἡ ἀσκησις).\(^1\) The ascetic society of Heliopolis, therefore, had been dissolved nearly three centuries before Saint Antony's day, and, if at any time it was imitated in the provincial temples of Egypt, these lesser branches are not likely to have survived when the experiment had died at its root.

The real significance for us of the ascetic group at Heliopolis is that the dualistic conception was so strongly at work in Egypt as to have led to the acceptance by an organized community of asceticism as an ideal of life. It is probable that it was the abstract nature of their ideals which doomed these ascetics to failure; but the underlying tendency persisted, only awaiting a new set of circumstances to manifest itself once more.

Philostratus relates\(^2\) (from the earlier memoirs of Damis) a visit paid by Apollonius of Tyana to the Gymnosophists. The place where this community was established is not named, but it appears to have been at no great distance by camel from Thebes. It is described by the author as a “Place of Reflection” (φανταστήριον) and was situated on a hill at a slight distance from the Nile, with a small grove of trees in its vicinity. The members of the community worshipped chiefly the Nile; they went lightly clad and lived in the open air without huts or shelters, though they had a portico for the accommodation of visitors. They had a chief, who was also the oldest of them, but his position appears to have been quite informal. Their ascetic doctrine insisted upon abstinence from the flesh of living creatures, from passionate desires, and from envy which is the teacher of injustice; but its aim was not so much moral or mystic as intellectual. Bread, vegetables, and dried fruit were their food. Noontide is the only hour mentioned for their religious observances. The subjects discussed by these sages with Apollonius were philosophical and intellectual, such as the nature of the soul and justice.

Unless Philostratus has totally misrepresented this community, its culture was mainly Hellenic, and its asceticism was directed solely to intellectual ideals. How long it endured,

---

1 Geographia, p. 866.
2 Life of Apollonius of Tyana, vi, 4 f. Apollonius was born about the beginning of the Christian era and died in the reign of Nerva.
THE ORIGINS OF MONASTICISM

we cannot say; probably, like the society at Heliopolis, it was short-lived, and had passed away long before the inauguration of monasticism. Nevertheless it is of real importance as being another manifestation of that pervading tendency to asceticism which characterizes the early centuries of the Christian era.

In his tract, About the Contemplative Life,¹ Philo gives a full and glowing account of a community of persons known as Therapeutae (Healers). He describes it as widely spread throughout the world, but as being specially strong in Egypt and in the region of Alexandria, where its chief center was established in a healthy locality on Lake Marea (Maryût) and near the sea. The ideal of the society (which included men and women) was to effect the cure of the soul from the diseases, such as pleasures, lusts, pains, and fears, which afflict it in ordinary life.

The members of this society join it under the influence of a certain "heavenly passion," renouncing the world and forsaking both property and relations. They retire to gardens or solitary places outside towns or cities, and live in dwellings which are sufficient to give shelter, but are devoid of luxury: in each dwelling there is a hallowed place (ὀίκημα ἱερὸν ὑπὸ καλεῖται σεμνεῖον καὶ μοναστήριον) "in which they practise in solitude the mysteries of the higher life." They pray at dawn and eve and spend the rest of the day in studying the Scriptures, seeking for the ultimate meaning which underlies the superficial and literal sense. It is their custom to eat only after sunset, using bread, salt, and hyssop. As Philo expresses it, "they appease the mistresses which Nature has set over mankind, Hunger and Thirst, but do not pamper them." Some members of the society become so wrapt in contemplation that they forget to take food for as many as three or even six days.

During the six days of the week they live secluded "in the aforesaid monasteries" (ἐν τοῖς λεχθείσι μοναστηρίοις),² but on the seventh day they all meet together in a common Holy Place (σεμνεῖον) for a festival. This opens with a prayer, followed by a meal of which all partake, women being present. The president of the assembly then expounds some topic from the Scriptures on an allegorical basis (since it is an axiom of the society that the letter of Scripture is to the spirit as the body is to the soul). Next, a hymn is sung and a table is brought in with "the most holy bread," symbolizing the bread on the holy table in the pronaos of the Jewish Temple at Jerusalem. Finally, ritual dancing takes place accompanied by choral song: at first men and women dance in separate groups, but afterwards all together; this custom is in memory of the crossing of the Red Sea.

Such is Philo's description of the Therapeutae; and it is obvious that many features in it—their mode of daily life, their assemblies at the end of the week, the nature of their food, and so forth—strongly recall the accounts we have of early Christian monks. Various

¹ Ed. Conybeare, pp. 58 f.
² "Monastery" is used in its primary sense of a dwelling in which the inhabitant lives alone.
views have been held as to these ascetics. Eusebius,\(^1\) setting out from the tradition that Saint Mark preached the Gospel in Alexandria, and assuming that he must have made many converts, identifies the Therapeutae with these primitive Christians. In confirmation of this view, he pointed to the general body of rulers who governed the community, claiming that they corresponded closely with the ecclesiastical canons of his own day; and further that the mode of life followed by the Therapeutae was practically identical with that of the Christian ascetics of the fourth century. The fact that they observed many Jewish rites and customs could (he thought) be explained on the hypothesis that they were of Jewish origin and did not abandon their national practices when they became Christians. This theory cannot, of course, be maintained. As Philo describes them, the Therapeutae had indeed many Jewish traits, but no single Christian characteristic: they had no sacraments, and they did not observe the first day of the week. Their mode of life was indeed in many points similar to that of Christian ascetics but the resemblance in this instance, as in that of the priests at Heliopolis, may be due to the fact that in the same climate any number of experiments in the ascetic life are sure to follow much the same lines.

More modern critics have argued that Philo's description of the Therapeutae is a Utopian picture only, and that the community on Lake Marea had no more real existence than Plato's ideal state; and they point to the fact that no geographer mentions the alleged settlement on Lake Marea or notices the lesser communities which Philo alleges to have been scattered throughout Egypt and the world.

Such an argument is worthless. The settlement described by Philo can never have been a large one, and it is not likely that its special character would have been advertised. Consequently any stranger would regard it as a mere hamlet occupied by Jews, and, being unaware that there was anything distinctive about it, would pass it by without remark. But it is the nature of the description which is fatal to this view. Its clearness and precision are such as to make it impossible to believe otherwise than that the author is depicting what he has seen with his own eyes: the picture of the site of the settlement on Lake Marea is perhaps the best instance of this quality.

Dr. Lucius has propounded a more revolutionary theory. The so-called work of Philo is a forgery perpetrated at the end of the third century. Its aim was to vindicate Christian monasticism against Jewish and philosophical detraction by representing that the Jews themselves had once possessed a very similar institution, and that it met with the warm approval of such a man as Philo, who was at once Jew and philosopher. But Conybeare in his minute study of this work has shown: (a) that in style, phraseology, and literary character generally the book falls exactly into line with numerous undoubted works of Philo; (b) that a great deal of the material contained in this book is also common to other works of Philo, and therefore cannot be regarded as third-century fiction; (c) that what

are certainly unpremeditated details—such as the references to the show-bread in the Temple at Jerusalem—put Lucius’ late dating quite out of court. Conybeare therefore maintains the Philonic authorship of the tract and argues with some force that it was originally designed to form part of the Jewish Apology before the Emperor Gaius (Caligula). Its date then would be about 33–34 A.D.

If, then, we accept the account of the Therapeuta as genuine, and recognize them as Jewish, may they not have contributed something towards the establishment of Christian monasticism? There is nothing to show for how long the Therapeuta continued to flourish, but their system must have vanished long before the period of Eusebius; for had it still existed, the historian’s theory concerning it would have led to investigation which could not have failed to leave some record in literature.

It is certain therefore that Antony and his fellow-founders of monasticism can have had no contemporary Therapeutic community before their eyes to serve as a model; it is practically as certain that they neither read Philo’s tract, nor knew of any tradition concerning these Jewish ascetics. The Therapeutic movement, then, was but another “manifestation” of the pervading tendency towards asceticism. While it may have done something to strengthen that tendency, and have had an influence through Jewish converts upon Christian pre-monastic asceticism, the fact that Jewish customs and institutions are not readily communicated to those without the pale makes it probable that it did not do even so much.

The dualistic instinct was widespread; and there were historic examples of ascetic life in Jewish history, such as the descendants of Jonadab, the son of Rechab, or Daniel and his companions in Babylon. In Palestine, too, the semi-monastic system of the Essenes was before the eyes of the early Christians. But Christianity built up its own system from the simplest beginnings.

4. Christian Asceticism

From the foregoing review of some forms of pagan and Jewish ascetic institutions three conclusions may be drawn. (1) In the first century before and after Christ there was in Egypt a widespread tendency to see in the exaltation of the spirit over the flesh an ideal of life. (2) This tendency took shape in certain communities in which this ideal could be freely pursued; but these organizations were not permanent and are to be regarded only as transient expressions of an underlying spirit, not as models after which Christian monasticism was fashioned. (3) The failure of such experiments was probably due to the abstract and unsatisfying character of their ideals. Asceticism is indeed instinctive, but it is essentially an intermittent instinct and therefore too weak to constitute an absolute end in itself: to become powerful, it needed to be made subsidiary to some attractive end which

---

2 Nor does Eusebius appeal to any testimony later than Philo’s.
neither paganism nor Hebraism could adequately supply, but which (as we shall see) Christianity offered.

The last part of our second conclusion is confirmed by the traditional history of the beginnings of Christian monasticism. At first asceticism was merely a rule of life to be followed by the individual Christian living amongst his fellows. But experience soon showed that the demands of the ideal and of ordinary social life were irreconcilable. So the ascetic partially cut himself off from society, dwelling first in some lonely place just outside a town or village, and then remote from human kind in the wilderness. Lastly, when the holiness and rumored miraculous power of an individual solitary had attracted a number of imitators, the hermit found himself the spiritual head of a group of disciples or community.

The early Christian conceived of God as a Being glorified indeed, but generically similar to an earthly potentate or emperor, who claimed worship and service, and even adulation from His subjects as His due. As a natural corollary it followed that the greater the devotion and homage offered to this King, and the larger the sacrifices made on His behalf, the greater the subject’s reward after this life. Consequently, there was a strong inducement to sacrifice the joys of this life in order to gain a richer reward in the life to come. Such was the mainspring of Christian asceticism; and the devout Christian would read or hear read a number of passages in which such a life of renunciation was or seemed to be directly prescribed for all whole-hearted believers. Thus the sayings in Mark x : 21, 29 seemed to forbid the possession of wealth and to enjoin the severance of all ties of relationship. Other passages such as Revelation xiv : 4, or 1 Corinthians vii : 1, 8 ff. as distinctly enjoined abstinence from marriage. These and similar precepts probably gave rise in very early times to a class the members of which were bound by no formal vows, but were pledged in their own consciences to a life of renunciation. Such, possibly, were the four daughters of Philip the Evangelist (Acts xxi : 9).

This class obtained recognition by the Church at an early date: Cyprian speaks of virgins as “the more glorious portion of the flock of Christ”; Hippolytus includes ascetics in “the seven divine orders” of the Church; Clement of Alexandria calls them “specially chosen among the chosen.” Origen2 represents those who have chosen this form of life as bound by a vow (probably not formal): “we vow to Him (God) to serve Him in chastity..., we swear to chastise our flesh and to ill-treat it and bring it into subjection, that we may be able to save our souls.” Heretics as well as the orthodox took up the movement: Tatian (about 172 a.d.) initiated the Encratite Heresy; Hieracas or Hierax4 is said to have denied

---

1 In the Life of Bishbi, we are informed that the saint was once visited by the spirit of the Emperor Constantine, who grieved bitterly that he had not in his earthly life earned those rewards which the ascetics enjoyed in heaven.

2 Such passages, when heard in church, were often taken as direct personal messages—as by S. Antony: see p. 13.

3 Hom. in Levit., iii, 4.

4 See Epiphanius, Haer., XLVII, § 1.
THE ORIGINS OF MONASTICISM

a place in paradise to any save ascetics and Encratites; and we hear that "many of the Egyptian ascetics were led away by him." By the beginning of the fourth century, therefore, asceticism had obtained a strong hold in Egypt, and was, if combined with orthodox doctrines, recognized by the Church. The great Athanasius warmly supported it; and a tract on the subject, attributed to him,\(^1\) represents asceticism at an interesting stage, for various passages\(^2\) show that the ascetic profession did not as yet imply complete separation from the world. The devotee is represented as living in the world, though distinctly not of it.

5. Christian Solitaries

Cassian, who wrote early in the fifth century A.D., but who spent a considerable time at Scetis and in the monasteries of northwestern Egypt at the close of the fourth century, deals with the origin of monasticism.\(^3\) In his day there were in Egypt three kinds of monks: cenobites, anchorets, and "Sarabaitae." The cenobites are defined as "those who form one congregation and are governed by the will of one elder (senior)." Their history, he says, really goes back to the Apostolic Age, when believers had all things in common\(^4\) and the whole Church was a coenobium. But the ideal not being generally maintained, "those who were still inspired with the enthusiasm of the Apostles, departed from their cities...and gathered together outside the towns or in more retired spots." In time such persons came to be distinguished from the mass of believers, because they abstained from intercourse with the world, renouncing both marriage and kinship. They were known as μοναχοί, or solitaries, and an association of such solitaries constituted a coenobium. This informal system lasted until the time of Antony and Paul.

Cassian is certainly mistaken in asserting that there were monastic communities of any sort before the age of Antony; probably he is merely reproducing the Eusebian theory that the Therapeutae were a Christian community. But it is a well-established fact that before the definite emergence of monasticism numbers of ascetics lived solitary lives outside towns and villages, though they were united by no common rule and subject to no definite authority. Antony, Amoun, and Macarius each passed through this stage before they became monks in the regular sense. How, then, did the solitary of this type become transformed into the anchoret who retired as far as possible from the inhabited world into the wilderness or desert?

6. The First Anchorets

Cassian\(^5\) agrees with all other ancient authorities in asserting that Paul and Antony were the first to take this step. They did so, he assures us, not out of cowardice nor through disgust for the world, but out of a desire to live in conditions which made it possible to live the higher life and to render the completest service to God. When Dionysius of

---

\(^1\) De virginitate, ed. von der Golz.
\(^2\) E.g., ch. ix, where the devotee is bidden to conceal her ascetic practices even from her kindred.
\(^3\) Coll., xviii, 4 f.
\(^4\) Acts iv: 32 f.
\(^5\) Coll., xviii, 6.
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

Alexandria\(^1\) states that during the Decian Persecution (about 250 A.D.) many Christians fled to the deserts and mountains and lived there in solitude, he does not suggest that theirs was more than a temporary retreat. But it would, \textit{a priori}, be likely that some of these refugees would continue to live in the desert even when all danger was past. In fact, there is satisfactory evidence\(^2\) that one of them, Paul, spent the remainder of his life in the wilderness.

The history of Paul, the first anchoret, was written by Jerome\(^3\) (about 374 A.D.). At the outset the author remarks that the question as to who was the first hermit was much disputed, some advancing the claims of Elijah, others of John the Baptist; but the general opinion was in favor of Saint Antony. Yet this last did not so much originate as popularize the anchoret's life. Amathas and Macarius, Antony's own disciples, asserted that Paul the Theban was earlier in the field, and Antony himself seems to have acknowledged as much.\(^4\)

At the time of the persecutions under Decius and Valerian (about 250 A.D.), Paul was sixteen years old; he was educated in "Greek and Egyptian letters," and was an orphan possessed of a good estate. To escape from danger, he retired first to a remote village; but when his brother-in-law sought to betray him to the authorities in order to obtain the reversion of the youth's property, he fled to the desert, "making a virtue of necessity." Here he settled in a certain cave at the foot of a hill\(^5\) and obtained both food and clothing from the products of a palm tree which grew near by. In this spot the recluse dwelt unknown and unvisited until 341 A.D. when Antony, himself ninety years of age, being divinely informed that there was one greater than he in the desert, searched until he discovered the retreat of Paul (who was then one hundred and ten years old). Paul, conscious that death was near, requested Antony to return to his abode and bring thence the cloak which Athanasius had given him and to bury him in it. While Antony was absent and on the return journey, he saw the soul of Paul being carried up into heaven. On reaching the cave once more, he found the hermit was indeed dead, and buried him with the aid of two lions.

There is no reason to reject the outline of this story: that Paul fled to the desert during the Decian Persecution, that he lived out the remainder of his life there, and that he was visited by Antony just before his death about 341 A.D. But while Paul was the first anchoret, his light was hidden under a bushel, and he gave no opportunity to others to follow his example; it was Antony who first revealed the possibilities of the desert\(^6\) and thereby became the originator of monasticism.

---

2 Its validity is discussed by Butler, \textit{L.H.}, i, pp. 231 f.
4 According to Jerome (\textit{Chronicon}, anno 359): "Antony informed many concerning the life of Paul."
5 The existing Dēr Anba Būla in the Eastern Desert near the Red Sea marks the traditional site; see Pl. 1.
6 See Jerome, \textit{Epist.}, xxii (ad Eustoehium): "huius vitae auctor Paulus, illustrator Antonius."
7. *Antony and the Beginning of Monasticism*

The *Life of Saint Antony*, ascribed to Athanasius the Great, illustrates clearly the purely Christian influences which at this period induced men to lead the ascetic life, and also the gradual stages by which monasticism developed from simple asceticism.

Antony was an Egyptian by birth and sprang from well-to-do parents. He was born apparently in 251 A.D. at Comas in the Heracleote nome. In boyhood he did not go to school owing to his retiring disposition, and so grew up illiterate; at the same time he had strong religious leanings. After the death of his parents, he was left in possession of considerable property; but the thought of the life led by the primitive Christians, as described in *Acts iv: 35 ff.*, disposed him to get rid of his possessions. This inclination was strengthened by hearing in church the words, “If thou wouldst be perfect, go, sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor.” Accordingly he gave away his lands, retaining only enough to support his sister. But once again he received in church what he held to be a direct message, “Take no thought for the morrow,” and disposed of the small remainder of his property.

After placing his sister in a nunnery (παρθενών) he began to live the ascetic life “before his own house, for monasteries were not as yet numerous in Egypt,” and anyone who turned to this form of life lived “not far from his own village.” The young Antony took for his model an ascetic who lived in this manner, and established himself on the outskirts of his village. Here he worked for his living and for alms to give to the poor, fortified himself against all worldly ties, and prayed continually. Following the example of other “monks” (i.e., ascetics), he ate only once a day, after sunset, but often fasted for two or four days together. His food was bread and salt with water; and he abstained altogether from flesh and wine.

So far Antony was but living as other ascetics lived at that time. Doubtless he found that living as he did near the world he was hampered in the pursuit of his ideal. At any rate he decided to make a new departure, and settled in the tombs, where he was greatly troubled by demons who did him serious bodily hurt. At the age of thirty-five (in 285 A.D.) he definitely took to the desert (εἰς τὸ δόρος): he is described as going “across the river,” that is, to the Eastern Desert, and settling in an abandoned fort or watch-tower. Here he lived in the strictest seclusion, meeting no one but the man who from time to time brought him a fresh supply of bread. During the twenty years which followed, a number of admirers

---

1 Migne, P.G., xxvi, col. 835 ff.
4 *Matt.* vi: 34.
5 Female ascetics who left their own homes or had none of their own must necessarily have lived in groups where they would be protected, but they are not likely as yet to have had any formal rule.
6 “Monastery” in its original sense was “a dwelling of a solitary.”

7 I.e., at Pispir, now Dèr el Memûn, midway between Atfih and Beni Suêf.

8 The *Life* remarks that it is the custom in Upper Egypt to lay in a large supply of bread and use this as it is wanted. Precisely the same custom is still followed at the present time. A supply of bread is baked to last for weeks or months, and, as it comes to be used, is soaked in water in order to soften it. Touches like these show that the writer of the *Life* (Athanasius or another) was well acquainted at least with the country in which his story is set.
settled in the neighborhood of his retreat; and the unpremeditated character of the foundation of desert monasticism is clearly shown by the fact that during this period Antony ignored the group of imitators around him, and continued to live as a simple hermit.

In 305 A.D., however, his followers broke down the door of his retreat, forcing him to come out. Antony accepted the situation, and his miracles and exhortations induced many to become monks. "And so there came to be monasteries in the mountains as well [as round about the villages] after this; and the desert was inhabited by monks." The change brought about was not merely a change of scene, from the inhabited lands to the desert; it brought with it organization of a rudimentary sort. In the narrative which follows Antony is described as "guiding his imitators as a father" (πάντων αὐτῶν ὡς πατὴρ καθηγεῖτο) and as travelling about for the visitation of the brethren (ὑπὸ τῶν ἀδελφῶν ἐπίσκεψις). Thus, Antony's followers formed an order or family of which he was the head. So it was by accident and not by design, and certainly not in imitation of pre-existing models, that Christian monasticism as an organized force developed out of the asceticism of individuals.

At this point something must be said as to the object of the earliest monks in seeking a desert life. Largely, of course, it was to secure detachment from the world. Cassian,1 however, in his discussion of the beginnings of monasticism strongly insists that their motive was neither disgust with the world nor cowardly fear of dangers temporal or spiritual, but desire to lead a higher life. The dweller in the desert is not content with overcoming the devil in the world, but goes out into the wilderness to wage open warfare with him. It is a fact ignored by many writers that for the Egyptian peasant the desert was not merely the desert, but the home of demons, or, as the modern fellah would say, of the afarât. This is explicitly stated in the Historia monachorum: "they said there were many demons and monsters in the desert, whose crafts and assaults the untrained multitude could not endure."

In the same way "Sarapion" in the Life of Saint Macarius represents the demons as complaining bitterly of the saint's intrusion into Scetis, their natural home, and devotes considerable space to their efforts to dislodge him. Antony, himself, instructed his disciples in the methods followed by these beings and explained how they appear in various forms, as of women, beasts, creeping things, or companies of soldiers.2 If we are to read the monastic history of Egypt aright, we must realize that these were matters of sincere belief with the early monks; and allowance for this and for the psychological state induced by fasting, solitude, and sleeplessness in minds permeated by such beliefs, must be made in judging the bona fides of narratives in which the demons and other supernatural elements are prominent.

1 Coll., xviii, 6.
2 Latin version, ch. xxix.
3 Ed. Amélineau, in A.M.G., xxv, pp. 81 f.
4 Athanasius, Life of S. Antony, § 23.
5 The Scottish Covenanters were subject to the same illusions: see Scott, Heart of Midlothian, ch. xv. The narratives of the conflicts of Antony or Macarius with the devil himself or with demons are exactly parallel. On this subject of the hallucinations to which the early hermits and monks were subject, see Draper, Intellectual Development of Europe, ch. xiv (York Library edition, vol. i, pp. 427 f.).
The desert monk conceived, therefore, that he was carrying war into the enemy’s country. He was not fit to do so, however, until he had been trained to meet the enemy whom he expected to find there. Consequently a period of probation or training formed an integral part of Antonian monasticism. This explains what Cassian means when he speaks from his Scetiotic experience of cenobites and anchorets: the former live together as members of one society (though not necessarily in one building) because they are either not yet fully trained, or are naturally unfit for the sterner life of the anchoret; the latter are veterans, skilled in this spiritual warfare and able to go forth to challenge the enemy on his own ground.

This distinction between quasi-cenobites and anchorets is, perhaps, not clearly recognized as a characteristic of the Antonian system. Yet it originates with Antony himself. Paul the Simple, after joining Antony, lived for a number of months under the saint’s supervision (as a quasi-cenobite), and when found to be “perfect” was assigned a cell three or four miles distant from Pispir, where he was to “make trial of the demons” as an anchoret. Further, Palladius learned from Cronius, the disciple of Antony, that the saint himself dwelt at one period “between Babylon and Heracleopolis in the utter desert which leads to the Red Sea, some thirty miles (Roman) from the River” (i.e., as an anchoret), while his “Monastery by the river,” Pispir, was administered as a coenobium (as the context shows) by his disciples Macarius and Amathas. That Antony deliberately adopted this gradation as part of his system is further illustrated by the part he took in the foundation of Cellia as a home for anchorets who wished to leave the congested quasi-cenobitic center at the Mount of Nitria.

Antony had been forced by circumstances to become the founder of a monastic system, but in the latter part of his life he resolved to seek once more that solitude which he had desired when he first settled at Pispir. His plan was to retire to the Upper Thebaid, but a supernatural command bade him go into the “inner desert.” Setting out eastwards, therefore, under the guidance of certain Saracens, he journeyed for three days and three nights until he reached a mountain where there was a spring of water and a few palm trees. In this spot, where the monastery called by his name still stands, the saint passed the

---

1 Coll., xviii, 4–6. Cassian’s third class of monks, the Sarabaitae—Jerome’s Remoith—at had no discipline or organization, and were of low repute; probably they were the unworthy successors of the earlier ascetics who dwelt outside towns and villages. As to the names given to these monks by Cassian and Jerome, the former surely equals the Coptic καρακωτε, “man of Alexandria,” i.e., “rogue,” the “b” being a corruption of τ; the latter might perhaps represent a Coptic compound ρεμοίηστε, “man of abomination.”

2 A clear and concrete example of these two sides of Antonian monasticism is afforded by the Laura of Gerasimus on the Jordan. Gerasimus established a laura with a coenobium in the midst of it. In the latter dwelt the beginners (οἱ εἰσειρήμοροι τῶν μοναχῶν); those who had experience in monastic life were settled in the cells (ἡ τοῖς καλομένοις κέλαιοι), i.e., they lived as anchorets, in solitude during the week, but assembling on the Sabbath and Sunday to attend the church and to draw supplies for the following week: see Cyril of Scythopolis, Life of Euthymius, ch. lxxxix.

5 See p. 49.
6 I.e., the part remote from the Nile. The Arabic use of Dakhleh and Kharghe (the “Inner” and “Outer” Oases) is exactly parallel.
7 See Pl. I.
remainder of his life, cultivating a plot of ground to furnish himself with food. This final retirement (to be distinguished from his retreat to a spot thirty miles from Pispip) by no means meant that Antony forsook the movement he had initiated. Saint Athanasius\(^1\) speaks of him as still coming to visit or overlook (ἐπισκέψασθαι) the monks at their own request, and gives a report of the charge which he delivered to them. They are to have faith in the Lord and to love Him; to keep themselves from evil thoughts and pleasures; not to be led astray by the appetites of the belly; to avoid vainglory; and to pray continually, singing psalms before and after sleep, and carrying in their hearts the precepts of the Scriptures and the triumphs of holy men as models for their emulation. The monk should never let the sun go down upon his wrath nor upon any unpunished sin; it is his duty strictly to examine himself and to regulate his thoughts and actions as though these were not secret. Such seems to have been the only “rule” delivered by Antony to his followers; the duty of manual labor seems to have been taken for granted.

The main features of the Antonian system as devised by the founder himself may be summed up as follows. (1) The order comprised two grades: the quasi-cenobitic, in which postulants were initiated into the lore of monasticism; and the anachoretic. (2) The organization was of the simplest: there was a “father” (Antony himself) who exercised an undefined but peremptory control over the community as a whole, and subordinate “fathers” who guided and instructed newcomers. (3) Routine and formal rules there were none.

How this rudimentary system developed can best be studied not in Antony’s own foundation at Pispip, but in a more famous group of settlements in the northwestern desert of Egypt, at the Mount of Nitria, Cellia, and Scetis—all of which owed much directly to Antony himself.

\(^1\) Life of S. Antony, §§ 54 ff.
CHAPTER II

THE TOPOGRAPHY OF THE MOUNT OF NITRIA AND SCETIS

1. The Topographical Problem

The aim of this study is to trace from the earliest times the history of the monastic establishment at the Mount of Nitria, and in Scetis, the modern Wâdi 'n Natrûn. The apparent equivalence of the ancient name for the first to the modern name for the second, and the somewhat close connection between these settlements in their early history, has not unnaturally led some ancient and most modern writers to identify the two, and has prevented even the more careful of the latter from clearly distinguishing them. Yet a mass of ancient evidence exists to show that the Mount of Nitria and the Wâdi 'n Natrûn were the seats of entirely independent monastic colonies and were separated from one another by a considerable distance. Some space must be devoted to making good this statement and to defining as closely as possible the whereabouts of the two places.

2. The Mount of Nitria

All well-informed Greek authorities call the main settlement τὸ δρόσος τῆς Νυπρίας, “the Mount of Nitria”; and this usage is preserved even in so late a work as the Life of Abba Daniel: the less precise ἡ Νυπρία (which properly denotes the place from which the “Mount” was named) and even αἱ Νυπρίαι are found in the Greek recension of the Historia mona-

---

1 The judicious and clear-sighted Tillemont, however, was quite alive to the distinction between the two places. See his Mémoires, viii, 806.
2 Thus in Palladius, Hist. Laus. (Butler’s text), there appears to be only one exception to this rule, and one in the Apophth. Patr.—both in the phrase πρεσβύτερος τῆς Νυπρίας (probably to avoid a double genitive). In Ammonius’ Letter to Theophilus and Palladius’ Dial. de vita Job.
3 Chrys. there are no exceptions. Socrates regularly uses the full name (once τὸ δρόσος τῆς καλουμάνης Νυπρίας); in H.E., vi. 7, he uses the form ἡ Νυπρία but is there indicating the district in which the monasteries lay.
4 Nitria, originally a common noun (νυπρία, “a place where nitrum is found”), is certainly used in this phrase as a place name; cf. the English Wells or Bath.
5 Ed. Clugnet, p. 14, with the spelling Νυπρία.
and in Latin "Nitria" is commonly used; though the correct equivalent "mons Nitiae" for the full Greek name also occurs.

In Egypt most places of consequence bore two names, the one native, the other Graeco-Roman. Thus the cities of Alexandria and Damānḫûr were known to the cultured as Ἀλεξάνδρεια and Ἐρμούπολις, but to the indigenous population as pâkô, "Rakoti," and Ṭâmârâp, "The Town of Horus." The Mount of Nitria was no exception; and for the Greek τὸ ὄρος τῆς Νυτρίας, translators using the Bohairic or Northern dialect of Coptic always substitute πτούντυ ἱμέροντας, "the Mount of Pernoudj" (Pernoudj being the native name for the town or village known in Greek as Nitria); in Arabic "the Mount of Pernoudj" is directly rendered "the Gebel Barnûg" (الجبل برونج). In the Sahidic (Southern dialect), however, the Greek name is translated "the Mount of the Natron" (πτούντυ μνυσομ) clearly because the southern translators, unfamiliar with the topography of Northern Egypt, did not know the name Pernoudj.

Where then was the Mount of Nitria or of Pernoudj situated? Palladius represents Abba Pambo as speaking of it as "this desert place." Yet in some sense the spot was not utterly in the desert; for Cellia, some ten miles distant, is described as in the "inner" or "innermost" desert. Evagrius is even spoken of as living at the Mount of Nitria for two years before he entered the "desert" (Cellia). In some sense, therefore, the Mount was not completely in the desert.

An explanation may be elicited from the phrase τὸ ὄρος τῆς Νυτρίας which implies a town or village called Nitria, just as τὸ ὄρος τῆς λυκῶν implies a place called Lycopolis after which the "mountain" or desert was named. Rufinus indeed says as much in his Latin version of the Historia monachorum: "we will come to the place of Nitria which...takes its name from the adjoining village where the natron is collected." There is, in fact, abundant evidence to show that there was a village in the neighborhood of Mount Nitria.

---

1 Chs. xxii and xxix in Preuschen's Palladius and Rufinus, pp. 83, 90.
2 See Cassian, Coll., vi. 1, 3; Rufinus, H.E., ii, 8; Jerome, Epist., xxii, § 33.
3 Compare the Coptic in A.M.G., xxv, pp. 211, 218, 239, and in Zoégâ, Cat., No. lxxxi, p. 131, with the corresponding Greek in Apophth. Patr., Macarius, ii, xxxiv, xxxix, and Palladius, Hist. Laus., ed. Butler, chs. ix and xviii. See also Quatremère, Mémoires, t, pp. 281 f. In a mediaeval copy of the Thetokia recovered in 1921 from a rubbish heap at Dër Abû Makâr, Macarius the Priest, of Alexandria, who is associated with the Mount of Nitria and Cellia, is acclaimed as φα πτούντυ ἱμέροντας, "thou of the mountain (desert) of Pernoudj."
4 Hist. Patr., p. 242. Note that this part of the work is a close translation of a Coptic document.
5 Zœgâ, Cat., No. lxxix, p. 346. This is a version of Apophth. Patr., Macarius, ii, of which the Bohairic version has, as we have seen, πτούντυ ἱμέροντας. Note that the Sahidic translation is not quite accurate, for μνυσομ = vîropv (the substance), not νυσομ (the place where natron is found). Cf. also Crum, Coptic Ostraca, No. 250.
6 Bohairic writers do indeed use the name πτούντυ μνυσομ: see A.M.G., xxv, pp. 56, 263; but, as the context shows, and as Quatremère (Mémoires, t, pp. 458 f.) has pointed out, this indicates the desert region in which Shéît or Scetis lay, or the desert bordering Shëît on the north. It is at least once positively distinguished from Pernoudj: see A.M.G., xxv, p. 311. In the Hist. Patr., p. 242, it is rendered (from the Coptic original) the الجبل النطرون and there denotes the desert north of Shëît.
7 Hist. Laus., ch. x.
8 Id., ch. viii; Hist. Mon. (Latin), ch. xxii.
9 Palladius, Hist. Laus., ch. xxxviii.
10 See Socrates, H.E., iv, 23.
11 Palladius, op. cit., ch. xxxv.
12 Ch. xxi.
THE TOPOGRAPHY OF THE MOUNT OF NITRIA AND SCETIS

For example, Palladius informs us that in his day the cell of Nathanael, one of the early monks at Mount Nitria, was unoccupied “because it was too near the inhabited world” (διὰ τὸ ἐγγυτέρω αὐτὴν εἶναι τῆς οἰκουμένης) and adds that this father was once induced by the devil to build a new cell “nearer the village” (πλησιότερον κώμης); and it is related that Paphnutius (probably the disciple of Macarius of Alexandria) once lost his way in the mist when on a journey and ultimately found himself “near the village.”

It is no less clear that this village of Nitria or Pernoudj lay in the Delta. Palladius once refers to the Mount as “the Mount of Nitria which is in Egypt” (τὸ ὅρος τῆς Νιτρίας τὸ ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ), where “Egypt” (the Coptic Αἴγυπτος) denotes the Delta as distinguished from the desert region and places in it such as Scetis. Further evidence for this conclusion is to be found in three considerations which have been generally overlooked. (1) The story is told that Macarius, journeying from Scetis, met a pagan priest carrying a load of wood near the Mount of Nitria, and converted him, whereupon many Hellenes, or pagans, became Christians; we can only infer that the Mount of Nitria lay close to the region where heathen priests and pagans were to be found, that is, to the Delta. (2) The pilgrims whose travels are described in the Historia monachorum seem to have reached Nitria by water; for the author begins his account of the visit to this place with the words “we touched (or put in) also at Nitria,” where the verb used (κατῆχομεν) describes a nautical operation. That the town or village of Nitria did indeed lie beside a waterway is made yet more probable by the fact that the geographer Strabo mentions certain “sources of natron” (νατρία) in the vicinity of Naucratis which he describes as situated upon the river, and by the prominence given in the story of Amoun, the founder of Nitrian monasticism, to the river Lycus which Palladius calls “a canal (διώρυξ) of the great Nile.” Quatremerè may well be right in his conjecture that this canal passed into Lake Mareotis (Maryût), and if the position of Mount Nitria presently to be suggested is approximately correct, the line of the river Lycus may have corresponded generally to that of the modern Er Riyashât Canal. But however this may be, the apparent fact that the place was near a canal or branch of the Nile indicates that the village of Nitria was in the Delta. (3) We have already established the equation Mount of Nitria = Mount of Pernoudj = Gebel Barnûg, and have seen that the “mount” or “gebel” takes its name from a village or town nearby. Now a fourteenth-century revenue list, enumerating the towns in the Delta Province of Bohaireh, includes a place named Barnûg which was returned at 658 feddâns of land, and rated at

1 Hist. Lauz., ch. xvi.
2 Apoâbth. Patr., Paphnutius, i. See also Hist. Mon. (Greek), ch. xxix, where visitors come to Amoun from a village, clearly at no great distance from the ascetic's abode.
3 Hist. Lauz., ch. xxxvii.
4 See Apoâbth. Patr. (Greek), Macarius, i, xxiv, xxix; Paphnutius, iv; Poemam, iv; Achillas, 111; Moses, v, viii; R.O.C., xiv, p. 363, No. 242.
5 Apoâbth. Patr., Macarius, xxxix. In the Coptic version of this incident (A.M.G., xxv, p. 212) the priest is called a priest of Padalas.
7 See p. 22.
8 See Athanasius, Life of S. Antony, § 60; Palladius, Hist. Lauz., ch. viii; Hist. Mon. (Greek), ch. xxix, 7.
9 Mémoires, 1, pp. 479 f. Amélineau (Geographie, p. 452) absurdly suggests that it ran east and west, "without doubt to the Wâdi 'n Natrun."
2200 dinars. Barnūg = Pernoudj = Nitria was therefore in the Delta, and the "mount" or "gebel" named after this place can have been situated only on the edge of the western desert bordering the Province of Bohaireh.

Some indication of the whereabouts of this place may be gathered from the account given by Palladius of his own journey thither from Alexandria: μεταξὺ δὲ τοῦ ὄρους τούτου καὶ τῆς Ἀλεξάνδρειας λίμνη κεῖται ἡ καλουμένη Μαρία, σημείων ἐβδομήκοντα: ἡ διαπλέωσα διὰ μιᾶς καὶ ἡμισίας ἡμέρας, ἧλθον εἰς τὸ ὄρος ἐπὶ τὸ μέρος τῆς μεσημβρίας: ὃ ὤρε παράκειται ἡ παν-έρημος παρατείνουσα ἐν δαίδοντος καὶ τῶν Μαζίκων καὶ τῆς Μαουρετανίας ("Between this mountain [of Nitria] and Alexandria lies a lake—that called Maria [Maryūt] seventy miles [sic] in extent. Having sailed across this in a day and a half, I came to the mountain in a southerly direction. Alongside this mountain [of Nitria] lies the sheer desert extending to Ethiopia, the Mazices, and Mauritania"). In this passage much is obscure. Seventy (Roman) miles is of course an enormous exaggeration of the real extent of Lake Maryūt. Are we to suppose that Palladius really made this gross blunder, or did he write "seventy stades" (about thirteen kilometers, which would be approximately accurate), or did he mean to say that the whole journey was one of seventy (Roman) miles? If we accept the last alternative, can we place the comma after διαπλέωσα and understand the day and a half to have been occupied in the remainder of the journey after crossing the lake; or did the whole journey take a day and a half? Finally, when Palladius had crossed the lake, did he proceed by land or by water, along that canal which, as we have seen reason to believe, ran near the village of Nitria? To these questions it is impossible to give definite answers, though it is likely enough that Palladius did mean that his whole journey was one of seventy miles, that it took a day and a half (thirty-six hours), and that he sailed up a canal from the lake to Nitria. But the passage does give us two definite pieces of information. (1) The Mount of Nitria clearly lay southwards from Alexandria. (2) It was so situated as to have desert to the south (Ethiopia), the southwest (the Mazices) and the west (Mauretania), but—inferentially—not to the north or east of it. These conditions can only be fulfilled if we locate the Mount somewhere upon the rounded northeastern angle of the Libyan Desert.

With this indication we must combine the positive statement of Rufinus, that the Mount of Nitria was forty (Roman) miles distant from Alexandria. If a circle be described having Alexandria for its center and a radius of forty Roman miles (about sixty-five

---

1 État de l'Égypte, ed., Silvestre de Sacy, in Relation de l'Égypte par Abd-Allatif, p. 662. The date of the document is 1376 A.D.
2 Hist. Laus., ch. vii. The punctuation is Butler's.
3 This does not mean that the Mount of Nitria was 70 miles from Alexandria, but that Palladius' route, largely, as we suppose, by canal, was considerably longer than the point-to-point distance (for which see below) between the two places.
4 And not far to the south—as would be the case were the Mountain of Nitria in the Wādi 'n Natrūn. Cf. Sozomen, H.E., i, 14, 3, who states that Amoun retired from the world to "a desert place to the south of Lake Mareia" (Maryūt), in the region of Scetis and what is called the Mount of Nitria.
5 For the whereabouts of the Mazices see pp. 152 f.
6 Hist. Mon. (Latin), ch. xxi.
THE TOPOGRAPHY OF THE MOUNT OF NITRIA AND SCETIS

kilometers or thirty-seven English miles), its southeastern arc will cut the desert edge in its northwestern trend at a point some twenty-eight kilometers (or nineteen modern miles) W.S.W. of Teh el Barûd on the Cairo-Alexandria railway, and about twenty-five kilometers S.S.W. of Damanhûr. Hereabouts the site of the monasteries on the Mount of Nitria is to be sought.

Here we must pause to meet what at first sight appears to be a serious obstacle to this identification. How, it will be asked, can the Mount of Nitria have been situated in this region, where, in fact, there are not even hills, far less mountains? To answer this we must examine more closely the original terms, the Greek ὑπόσ, the Coptic τῦως, and the Arabic جبل, which are ordinarily translated by the English “mount” or “mountain.” By the word ὑπόσ indeed, we ordinarily understand a considerable and usually an abrupt eminence; but in Egyptian monastic literature the word sometimes seems to mean no more than a desolate, uncultivated place, differing therefore in its connotation from ἡ ἔρημος, which is desolate, uninhabited country. It is almost certain that ὑπόσ in the phrase τὸ ὑπόσ τῆς Νιτρίας is used in this weakened sense. This probability becomes yet stronger when we consider some of the uses of the Coptic equivalent τῦως. Here again the primary meaning is a “mountain” in the ordinary English sense; but in certain combinations, such as τῦως ἧς μνήμη (the Mount of Shiêt), it is apparent that the word bears a secondary and conventionalized meaning, denoting the desert edge (which in the Nile valley is ordinarily abrupt and clifflike) and perhaps including the strip of barren desert which usually intervenes between this escarpment and the alluvial soil of the valley floor. This is quite borne out by the double sense of the Arabic equivalent, gebel. This word also primarily denotes a hill or mountain; but its secondary meaning is any barren ground which cannot be cultivated.

Thus Sonnini, after describing this very desert to the west of the Delta which he crossed on his way to the Wâdi 'n Natrûn, remarks: “the Arabic name of these bare tracts, in which not a particle of vegetable mould exists, all being sand or stone, is ḏṣjebel, which signifies a mountain. In fact, the ground rises with a gentle slope, which forms, first eminences, then hills, and at length mountains.” And the modern Egyptian peasant, after penetrating alluvial soil or debris to rock or solid gravel deposit, pronounces that he has reached “gebel.” Finally, it is very significant that in all the literature relating to the Mount of Nitria there is never a hint or suggestion that we have to do with abrupt or rocky

1 See Ἀποφθ. Pat., Sisoes, XLVIII, where τὸ ἔδαφος τῆς ῶπαλίσσες seems to be used in a vague, general sense; or better, id., Arsenius, XL, where Arsenius says to his disciples: “Do you not know how to tie a rope to my foot and drag me (i.e., my dead body) to the mountain” (ὑπόσ), which here certainly means desert ground and not “mountain” in the ordinary sense.

2 See Zôega, Cat., No. LVI. The phrase “holo Mount of Shiêt” is common in Coptic and Copto-Arabic documents. Yet Shiêt, as we shall see, is not a mountain, not even a hill, but a desert valley. But the conventional sense of τῦως is practically settled by an inscription from Sakkâreh which mentions πιστοτηρίμων Παύλου Θεομασίου τῦως: Thompson, Coptic Inscriptions, No. 202, in Quibell, Saggara, IV.

3 So, surely, in Hist. Pat., p. 363: “the Holy Mountain of Wasm, in the Monastery of Nahyâ, which stands on the bank of El Ghæh to the west of Mist.”

THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

country. In speaking of the Mount of Nitria, therefore, we must be understood to mean merely the desert waste or "gebel" adjoining the town or village of Nitria.

We have seen reason to believe that the so-called Mount was situated in a certain locality on the edge of the western desert at no great distance to the S.S.W. of the modern Damanhûr. Evidence which amounts to complete confirmation of this view must now be brought forward. Once more we must recall the equation Nitria = Pernoudj = Barnûg and remember that Barnûg is located in a mediaeval revenue list in the Province of Bohairieh. Now there still exists a village called El Barnûgî in the Province of Bohairieh about fourteen kilometers to the S.W. of Damanhûr and eleven kilometers due north of the very point on the desert edge at which we have proposed to locate the "Mount" of Nitria (Pl. I). There can be no reasonable doubt that here indeed is the site of the town Nitria or Pernoudj, and that the desert to the south of it is the "Gebel Barnûg" or the Mount of Nitria.

Contributory proof may be derived from another source. Rufinus states that the village (civitas) which gave its name to the Mount of Nitria was a place where natron was gathered (colligitur)—a passage which has contributed to the prevalent confusion of Nitria with the Wâdi 'n Natrûn. Natron was certainly obtained in large quantities in the Delta. Thus Strabo, whose Geographia was completed about 23 A.D., in giving an account of the western edge of the Delta in relation to the Canopic branch of the Nile up which he sailed from north to south, notes that, after passing Hermopolis (Damanhûr), Gynaeopolis, the unidentified center of a nome, was reached and then Momemphis. "But," he continues, "above Momemphis are two sources of natron (purpia) containing abundance of natron, and the Nubriote name." "Near by this place also," he resumes, "is the city Menelaus (unknown); but on the left hand, in the Delta, is Naucratis lying upon the river." Natron was therefore worked in the Delta near Momemphis and in the neighborhood of Naucratis. With this the evidence of Pliny tallies very closely: nitraiae Aegypti circa Naucratin et Memphi sunt tantum solet esse: circa Memphi deteriores ("The only sources of natron in Egypt were once in the neighborhood of Naucratis and [Mo]memphis: those near Memphis are inferior"). The identification of Momemphis is uncertain; but the site of Naucratis has been definitely fixed by Flinders Petrie close by the village of El Gaief.

1 E.g., the monks at the Mount of Nitria are never spoken of as dwelling in caves, but always in constructed cells.
2 See the Survey Dept. Map of Lower Egypt, 1:100,000, Sheet C 8. A. R. Guest (in his edition of El Kindi’s Governors and Judges of Egypt) communicates the following information: "Barnûg. This name, so vocalized, is given by Ibn Jiân (p. 123) as that of a village of Bohaireh, with land amounting to 658 fiddans and connected with Arabs, and therefore presumably not far from the desert. It seems most likely that it is identical with El Barnûgî of Markaz Damanhûr; indeed it is almost certain the two must be the same. El Barnûgî is southwest of Damanhûr and has mounds close to the west of it."
3 Hist. Mon. (Latin), ch. xxii; cf. Sozomen, H.E., vi, 31, 1. The verb colligitur might mean only that natron was "brought in" to the place (as a depot). But there is the best evidence for natron deposits hereabouts.
4 Geographia, xvii, i, 23 f., p. 803.
6 Probably [Mo]memphis should be read, as in Strabo.
7 Here again [Mo]memphis may be meant.
8 = the modern Menûf; cf. Amelineau, Geographie, p. 250.
9 Distant 7 kilometers to the northwest of Teh el Barûd. Concerning this site see Petrie, Naucratis, 1, pp. 1 f.

22
and eighteen kilometers to the N.E. of our site for the Mount of Nitria. Thus though we cannot positively identify the Népríoï of the Historia monachorum with those of Strabo or Pliny, we have at least assurance that in ancient times natron was extensively worked in the region with which we are dealing. Further, the eighteenth-century traveller and missionary, Père Sicard, mentions a natron lake “called in Arabic Nehilé,” three leagues long by half as much wide, extending “at the foot of the mountain ( = gebel) to the west and twelve or fifteen miles from the ancient Hermopolis Parva, now Damanhûr . . . , fairly near Mareotis and one day’s journey from Alexandria.”¹ D’Anville,² indeed, is inclined to regard this lake with suspicion; but there can be no doubt of Sicard’s good faith, for he also mentions his discovery of this lake “to the west of Damanhûr” in an informal letter to M. Guis.³

Finally—and this point is most important—natron is still found and worked at or near the modern El Barnûgi,⁴ to the S.S.W. of which is a lake named Mallahet Terrâneh and to the S.W. another named Terrânêt Harâreh (Terrâneh means “a natron lake”).⁵

The spot which we identify as the site of the Mount of Nitria was therefore adjacent to a region which is known to have produced, and still to produce, natron; and there is consequently no room for objection on the score that we are locating Nitria in a district where no natron is to be found.

We can test our identification by reference to the distance between the Mount of Nitria and Scetis. All ancient authorities agree in stating that between the two places lay a wide expanse of dangerous and trackless desert. According to the Historia monachorum⁶ this took a day and a night to traverse, and Palladius,⁷ riding from Cellia, reached Scetis (apparently) in one day, the distance being forty (Roman) miles. The journey from the Mount of Nitria to Scetis was therefore one of forty (Roman) miles plus the distance between the Mount and Cellia, which is variously stated as five, ten, and twelve (Roman) miles. If we accept the two latter figures as most nearly right, we may reckon the whole distance at fifty or fifty-two (Roman) miles = roughly seventy-four or seventy-seven kilometers by the track. The point-to-point distance between the suggested site of the Mount of Nitria and the Monastery of Baramûs in the Wâdi ’n Natrûn (in early times the “center”

¹ Lettres édifiantes et curieuses, t. v, p. 423.
² Mémoires, pp. 73 f.; and cf. the map facing p. 218.
³ D’Anville (ib.) quotes Sicard’s map as showing in the vicinity of this lake a place called “Ephraïm,” which Sicard identified with the Paphresis of Herodotus. Can this be the same as Kôm el Afnîn (on which see Petrie, Naukratis,I, pp. 94 f.)? If so, this would suggest that Sicard has placed his Menûf, the lake, and “Ephraïm” much too far to the north. Petrie’s “Kom Afnîn,” be it noted, is no more than 19 kilometers from the site of the Mount of Nitria above advocated.
⁵ Ancient notices of the distance between the Mount of Nitria and other points
⁶ “Pour comble de rareté, je déterr’ai, à l’Ouest de Damanhour, un joli lac de Natroun, aussi grand que celui de S. Macaire, inconnu jusqu’ici des Européens.”
⁷ I have to thank Dr. W. F. Hume, Director of the Geological Survey of Egypt, for this information. Mr. Patterson, lately Works Manager of the Egyptian Salt and Soda Co., informs me that his company formerly worked natron in the neighborhood of El Barnûgi.
⁸ See the Survey Dept. Map of Lower Egypt, 1:100,000, Sheet C8.
⁹ Greek version, ch. xxix, ed. Preuschen, p. 90.
⁰ Hist. Laus., ch. xxvi.
of Scetis) is thirty-seven English or forty Roman miles—nearly fifty kilometers. The proportion 5:4 is a moderate estimate for the relation of desert tracks to point-to-point distance. So far as we can judge, then, the spot we have identified as the Mount of Nitria is also at the right distance from Scetis (the Wādi ‘n Natrūn).

The foregoing evidence may be summed up as follows. (1) Casual allusions show that the Mount of Nitria was on the edge of the desert bordering the Delta: in its vicinity were such features as a canal, a pagan temple, a village, which are natural enough in the Delta, but quite incompatible with a situation in the Wādi ‘n Natrūn. (2) Palladius and Rufinus show that the place lay to the south of Alexandria at a distance of forty miles, that is, at a point in the curving N.E. angle of the Western Desert to the S.S.W. of Damanhūr. (3) Close by this site there is an Arab village, El Barnūgi, certainly to be identified with the mediaeval Barnūg, the Coptic Pernoudj, and so with the Graeco-Roman Nitria. (4) Ancient and modern authorities show that Nitria might well be here, for the district is natron-producing. (5) The distance between our site and the Wādi ‘n Natrūn corresponds with the known distance between the Mount of Nitria and Scetis.

3. Cellia

The settlement called Cellia was founded, as we shall see, by Amoun as a home for anchorites who could not find at the Mount of Nitria that peace which was essential to the solitary life. As a site purely monastic in origin, its name presents no problems: to the Greeks it was known as τὰ κελλία, “the Cells,” to Roman writers as Cellae or Cellia. The descriptive title, “the inner (or innermost) desert” (desertum interius,ἡ ἐστίμης ἡ ἐνδοτέρα—or ἡ ἐνδοτάτη), is also used. In Coptic versions of Greek documents τὰ κελλία is not trans-literated but translated, μῖτρ, “the cells”; thus Palladius’ phrase τὰ λεγόμενα Κελλία is rendered πίτυος εστιμοιτερ τερεμ βαλ σε μιρ. There is, however, some reason to believe that the place was also known among the Copts (perhaps in popular idiom) as πιμονί, “the Dwellings” or “Monasteries,” and is to be identified with the Arabic El Muna. This subject will be discussed after we have reviewed what evidence there is for the whereabouts of Cellia.

Cassian defines Cellae (Cellia) as “a place lying between Nitria and Scetium (Scetis), five miles distant from the monasteries of Nitria and separated from the desert of Scetium by eighty miles of wilderness.” This author appears to have had little or no personal knowledge of the Mount of Nitria and Cellia, and perhaps never visited these places; consequently his low estimate (five miles) of the distance between them cannot be maintained against the higher estimate of better-informed authorities. The anecdote which

1 See p. 34.
2 Hist. Mon. (Latin), ch. xxii.
3 Palladius, Dial. de vita Job. Chrys., § vi.
5 Id., ch. xviii.
6 A.M.G., xxv, p. 239.
7 Coll., vi, 1.
8 This figure is hopelessly exaggerated; see p. 31.
records the foundation of Cellia gives the interval between this place and Amoun’s settlement (at the Mount of Nitria) as twelve (Roman) miles, or about nineteen kilometers and a third; the Historia monachorum\(^1\) figures it at ten (Roman) miles (about sixteen kilometers and a third); and Sozomen’s\(^2\) seventy stades seem to reproduce the same distance. In default of any statement by Palladius, we may accept the first-hand evidence of the apophthegm and Rufinus, finding an explanation for the divergence in the known fact that in course of time the Mount of Nitria settlement receded further and further into the desert. That the two places were separated by an appreciable distance is made clear in an anecdote related by Ammoeüs, or Amoi.\(^3\) This monk had journeyed with Betimes or Pijimi from Cellia to Scetis to visit Achillas; and on being asked by their host whence they came, the two “fearing to say, ‘From Cellia,’ replied, ‘From the Mount of Nitria.’ And he (Achillas) said, ‘What can I do for you? For you are come from afar.’” Cellia, then, lay sixteen or nineteen kilometers beyond the Mount of Nitria, on the road to Scetis and therefore, presumably, to the S.W. (or possibly W.S.W.) of the former place.

The direction of Cellia in relation to the Mount would become more clear could we confidently identify the former with the place known in Arabic as El Muna. The grounds for suspecting that Cellia and El Muna are one and the same are the following. When the Patriarch Benjamin journeyed to the Wāḍi ’n Natrūn to consecrate the Church of Saint Macarius,\(^4\) the first place he reached (probably after crossing Lake Maryût by boat) was the town of Tarūgeh, almost certainly the modern Tel Trūgaih.\(^5\) “Then,” continues the record of this journey, “we reached the desert of El Muna, which is that of Abba Isaac, near the Gebel Barnûg; and the brethren who were there rejoiced greatly over us. . . . Some of them accompanied us to show us the way leading to the desert and the mountain (sc. of Scetis). . . . So they brought us to the extremity of the Gebel en Natrūn.\(^6\) Then we turned to the Monastery of Baramûs.” Now if Tarūgeh is the modern Trūgaih, and if Benjamin went from thence straight towards the desert (as he naturally would do), he must have reached the desert edge some nineteen kilometers west of the Gebel Barnûg or the Mount Province of Bohaireh. Further, it was on a road which ran from Cairo to Alexandria cutting off the northeastern angle of the Western Desert. Thus in 867 A.D. Muzāhīm ibn Khâkêm after putting down a revolt in the Hawf went to Gizeh and thence marched to Tarūgeh which he reduced (Makrizī, Khīlat, Part 1, 313, trans. Casanova, p. 202); and the army of El Mo’izz, the Fatimid, halted at Tarūgeh on its way from Alexandria to Fustāt. So too in 1262–63 the Sultan Beybars went to Tarūgeh, and after staying several days, went on to Alexandria. In the following year Beybars journeyed from Cairo to Terrānē (Tere-nuthis), thence to the Monasteries of Wādi ’n Natrūn and finally to Tarūgeh. Tarūgeh is now represented by Kūm Trūghi, a station on the Delta Light Railways.

\(1\) Latin version, ch. xxii.
\(2\) H.E., vii. 31.
\(3\) Apophth. Patr., Achillas, v.
\(4\) Hist. Patr., pp. 241 f.
\(5\) For the position of Tel Trūgaih see the Survey Department map. Tarūgeh is located in the same place by Guest: see map of Lower Egypt in his edition of El Kindī’s Governors and Judges of Egypt. Tarūgeh was clearly not remote from Dāmanhūr, since Makrizī (Khīlat, Part ii, ch. 16, trans. Bouriant, p. 487) mentions it with certain other places as irrigated by the Bahr Dāmanhūr. It was clearly a place of considerable importance, being rated with its dependent hamlets at 72,000 dinars: see État de l’Égypte in Silvestre de Sacy’s Relation de l’Égypte par Abd-Allatif, p. 663, which also shows that it was in the

\(6\) I.e., to the northeastern edge of the Wādi ’n Natrūn.
of Nitria; on penetrating some distance (probably short since no guides were yet needed) into the desert, he reached El Muna.\(^1\) It is therefore a most extraordinary coincidence if Cellia and El Muna were \((a)\) both about nineteen kilometers from the Mount of Nitria or Gebel Barnûg, \((b)\) both monastic centers of importance,\(^8\) \((c)\) both connected with an Abba Isaac—obviously a famous personage—\(^8\) and yet are not identical.\(^4\)

But the Greek τὰ κέλλια is translated in Coptic documents, as we have seen, by μονή, which is certainly not reproduced in El Muna, though that name is apparently of Coptic origin. Can this difficulty be surmounted? El Muna, μονή, is the plural of a word el munyeh, which Evetts regards as derived from the Coptic μονή, primarily a "port" or "harbor," but also used loosely for a village of any kind.\(^8\) The same scholar admits as equally possible derivation from the Coptic μονή. This, a loan-word from the Greek, sometimes denotes a "monastery,"\(^7\) but more often a "cell." For examples of the latter use we may refer to the Life of Saint Macarius, where the cell of the anchoret consulted by the saint is called μονή,\(^8\) as also is the cell occupied by Macarius before his retirement to Scetis.\(^9\) It should be carefully noted that for the word μονή used in the latter instance, the corresponding Coptic apophthegm substitutes μή\(^{10}\) while the Greek apophthegm\(^{11}\) has κέλλιον. It appears therefore that the three words, μονή, μή, and κέλλιον, were practically synonymous. We suggest, then, that the Arabic El Muna reproduces a Coptic name, μίμονη (exactly as the Arabic place-name, El Muna 'l Amir, is rendered by the Coptic μίμονη [sic, μίμονη μισμερε],\(^{12}\) and that μίμονη is but another—perhaps a popular and later—alternative for μή or Cellia. If this hypothesis that Cellia was also known in Coptic as μίμονη can be admitted, then the identity of Cellia and El Muna becomes practically certain. Assuming this identity, and

\(^1\) For the fact that El Muna was in the desert see El Bekri quoted below.


\(^3\) For Isaac of Cellia see the Apophth. Patr., s.v. Isaac, where he is called the Priest (i.e., Superior) of Cellia. That he was highly esteemed by the Coptic Church is shown by the fact that he is commemorated in the Synaxarium (ed. Basset, Bashans 19, pp. 1038f.). He was a disciple of Cronius and was ejected by Theophilus as an Origenist, but apparently reinstated after 403 A.D.

\(^4\) Kaufmann, however, identifies El Muna with his own discovery, the shrine of S. Menas at Boumna or Karm Abu'm (Aussgrabung d. Menas-Heiligtum, p. 18). He is followed by Cauwenbergh (Étude sur les moines d'Égypte, pp. 58 f., 128f.) who also equates the Isaac mentioned in the account of Benjamin's journey with the Apa Isaac whose name appears on a lintel from Kaufmann's Shrine of S. Menas (ibid. 1904 p. III: p. 10: ptolemaic: see Miedema, De heilige Menas, p. 33). But El Muna (إلف مون) is not the same as Abbâ Ménâ (إلف مين): the two places are clearly distinguished by El Bekri (1866 A.D.) in his account of the route from Egypt into Barca: "From Terennout (Tere- nuthis) one comes to El Mena, a place which contains three deserted towns whose buildings are still standing. Here are to be seen several splendid castles, situated in a sandy desert...some are inhabited by Christian monks.... From these one comes to Abbâ Mina, a great Church which contains images and sculptures including a great figure of S. Menas": see de Slane's translation, Journal asiatique, V° Série, t. xii (1858), p. 415. So too Ya'kûbî (died 891 A.D.) gives the stages in the journey from Egypt to the west as Tarnût—El Muna—Deir Bû Mind—Dât el Humâm: see Bibl. geogr. Arab., vili, p. 342. El Muna and Abbû Mina were therefore entirely distinct, being a day's journey apart.

\(^5\) See Abbû Sâlih, Churches and Monasteries of Egypt, ed. Evetts, pp. 47, 115, 180, and accompanying notes.

\(^6\) In a private communication.

\(^7\) As in the Coptic Life of Abba Daniel, ed. Guidi, in Clugnet, Vie de l'Abbé Daniel, pp. 92 f. In A.M.G., xxv, p. 33, μονή renders κωνόβιον of the Greek original (Apophth. Patr., Antony. xxi), and in Zöega, Cat., No. lxxi, μονή is the same as Μονή or Μοναστηρία of Palladius (Hist. Lass., ch. x).

\(^8\) A.M.G., xxv, p. 62.

\(^9\) Id., pp. 65, 69, 72.

\(^10\) Id., p. 203.

\(^11\) Apophth. Patr., Macarius, i.

\(^12\) See Abbû Sâlih, Churches and Monasteries of Egypt, fol. 60 b and editor's note, ed. Evetts, p. 180, note 1.
recalling that El Muna was "near the Gebel Barnûg" (our Mount of Nitria), that it was on the route—presumably direct—from Tarûgeh to Wâdi 'n Natrûn, and that it lay some, but no great, distance within the desert (say ten kilometers), we may tentatively place the site of Cellia to the W.S.W. of that assigned to the Mount of Nitria or Pernoudj.

4. Sceitis, Shibt, or Shibtê

The form Sceitis\(^1\) (with variations such as Scytis, Scythis) is common in Latin, but Scitium (with similar variations in mss.) is generally used by Cassian\(^2\) and once (Scithium) by Rufinus in the Historia monachorum\(^3\): the former also has the adjectival form Scitiota (eremus).

The best-attested form in Greek is Σκητής but a variety of other spellings occur in mss., as Σκητής, Σκεθής, Σκηθής, Σκητής; the form Σκητῆς is found in a ms. of the Historia monachorum.\(^4\) The Σκηθῆς of Ptolemy should probably be added to the list.\(^5\) An adjectival form, Σκητιώτης, "man of Sceitis," is occasionally found; and Ptolemy has the form Σκηθική (κόρα).

It is sometimes supposed that Sceitis is derived from the Greek ἀσκητής; and an Arabic synonym for Sceitis, El Askît (الاسكبات),\(^7\) is thought to furnish evidence of this. But the bilingual text of Abû'l Barakât's great work equates ἀσκητής with ṣektîris (sic)\(^8\) suggesting that El Askît is a mere transcription of the Greek form Σκητής, like the Syriac Eskitê.\(^9\) Sceitis is but the Hellenized form of an Egyptian name, Shibt,\(^10\) which is occasionally rendered ṣibnut\(^11\); but in the vast majority of instances ṣibnut or ṣibnet (once ṣibonett).\(^12\) Quatremère\(^13\) points out that of these two forms ṣibnut is consistently used in all earlier mss., while ṣibnet is used only by later scribes, as in the thirteenth-century ms. of the Life of John Kamê. It should be added that in mss. of later date both forms are used indifferently.\(^14\)

But it is probable that the ṣ had been introduced into the pronunciation long before it appeared in writing; for documents which preserve the form ṣibnut, yet offer various attempts at derivation which agree in equating the second syllable with ṣibnet, "heart."

The most popular of these derivations finds the origin of the name in the verb ṣib (properly "to measure," but used ad hoc in the sense of "to weigh"), and ṣibnet, "heart": thus John the Little is bidden to go "to the mountain (desert) of the natrun (ποταμός λιμηρος) which is Shibt, the place where they weigh the hearts (ἐγκατέλαβαν ἵππα) and thoughts with true

---

\(^1\) Rufinus, H.E., ii, 8 (Scythis).
\(^2\) See Index to Petschenig's edition of Coll.
\(^3\) Latin version, ch. xxix.
\(^4\) See Preuschen, Palladius und Rufinus, p. 92 (critical note).
\(^5\) Geographia, iv, 5, 15. On Scithias, see p. 35.
\(^6\) John Moschus, Pratum spirituale, cliv; Clugnet, Vie de l'Abbé Daniel, p. 52; and Aphthith. Patr., passim.
\(^7\) See Synax., ed. Basset, p. 123.
\(^8\) B.N., Fonds arabe, No. 203, fol. 148.
\(^10\) Mingarelli (Aeg. cod. rel., p. 277) and Jablonski (Opus-
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

Coptic etymology of Shīt or Shīḥet

judgment. The Arabic Mizän el Kulūb (مزن القلب) or “Balance of the Hearts,” another name for Scetis, directly reproduces this etymology. Elsewhere Shīt is derived from ین in its true sense of “to measure,” and ین. The origin of this (and possibly of yet another etymology) is given in the following anecdote: “They say of Abba Macarius that . . . the Lord of Glory sent to him a Cherubim . . . And when the Cherubim had placed his hands as a measure (ون) upon his heart (ین), Abba Macarius said to him, ‘What is this?’ The Cherubim answered, ‘I am measuring your heart (مَن يَسَأَلُ حِلَال).’ Abba Macarius said to him, ‘What is the meaning of this saying?’ The Cherubim said to him, ‘They will call this mountain . . . after your heart (ین); but he (sc. Christ) will seek (مَن يَسَأَلُ حِلَال) the fruits.’” This secondary derivation from ین and ین is apparently favored by “Pshoi,” the biographer of Maximus and Domitius, who explains that “the interpretation of Shīt (ن) is the place of the meeting of those who seek after (ن) God with all their heart (ین)”⁴; where etymology is equivalent to etymology.

The fact that, despite alleged connection with ین, the form ین is preferred in the earlier documents, seems to justify Amélineau⁸ in regarding the latter as more correct. It is perhaps significant that Sahidic writers, who might have been tempted to see in the second syllable the word ین, “north,” keep the form ین.⁹ In Arabic the name is commonly rendered شيت (usually transliterated Shihät, but better Shīḥet—a form which is adopted in the following pages when quoting from the Arabic), though once at least the spelling شيت, Shīḥet, is found, the “h” being (apparently) never omitted. This suggests that the genius of the Arabic language necessitated the introduction of “h.” If this is the case, the Arabic use would seem to have influenced Coptic pronunciation, thus giving rise to the derivation set forth above, and ultimately to have vitiated the Coptic orthography also.

The real etymology of Shīt (for the solutions offered by the Copts are obviously fanciful) is uncertain. While Quatremère⁶ accepts the monastic explanation ین + ین, Amélineau⁷ suggests a connection with the verb ین, “to extend” (cf. the noun ین, “length”), and understands the name to be descriptive of the extent of the desert. But the fact that Shīt is rather a place which gives its name to the “desert of Shīt” will not square with this solution.

Another name for Shīt, or more exactly for the desert including Shīt, is نَعْوَّر المَيْروصِم, ١٠ W. E. Crum points out that interior ﯧ commonly reproduces the Greek or Coptic ن and ن, as in حزقٌ (Ezekiel), ارسبنوس (Arsenius).

⁴ See Assemani, B.A.V.C., No. cxxiv, t. iii, p. 151—an Arabic note in a ms. from the Monastery of the Syrians.

⁷ Mémoires, 1, pp. 464 f.

⁸ Loc. cit.; cf. Champollion (L’Égypte sous les Pharaons, 11, p. 297) who interprets the name as descriptive of the long narrow ٍ.
THE TOPOGRAPHY OF THE MOUNT OF NITRIA AND S.CETIS

"the Mount of the Natron," translated in Arabic جبل الطور، the Arabic gebel and its Coptic equivalent being used in the more general sense of "desert," as in the name Gebel Barnûg.2

Very closely connected with the foregoing designation is the Arabic وادي النطرون, the familiar Wādi 'n Natrûn3 or "Valley of the Natron." Though practically equivalent, it is not strictly synonymous with Shiêt, which is rather the name of a place (incidentally lying in a valley)4 or of a region, but which never seems to convey the special geographical significance of the term wādi.

Makrizî5 is the earliest literary authority to use this name; and though it probably did not originate with him, the name Wādi 'n Natrûn is certainly late, originating in a fusion of "Gebel en Natrûn" with yet another Arabic designation, "Wādi Habīb" (also recorded by Makrizî), which is consistently used in the History of the Patriarchs,6 in Abû Sâlih's Churches and Monasteries of Egypt,7 and in the État de l'Égypte of 1376.8 This latter name commemorates the Arab chief Habīb, who settled in the valley in the latter half of the seventh century.9 Its orthography is disputed. Yakût (twelfth—thirteenth century)10 renders it محبب, "Hubaib," and it is so vocalized in the État de l'Égypte.11 This form is strongly recommended by Guest,12 though Evetts claims that Habīb is a purer form than Hubaib, just as Zawileh than Zuwaileh.13 Whichever of these opposed views is right, the spelling Habīb is hereafter retained as having the sanction of long usage, and as being less singular to the ordinary western eye or ear.

Abbot Butler14 has pointed out that a distinction is to be drawn between a desert of Scetis and Scetis as a (more or less) definite place. This is apparent from the opening words

---

1 See Abû'l Barakât (B.N., Fonds arabe, No. 203, fol. 147 b), who has: محمد... Dante mouseover لتعتبر حيث يتموم به the Arabic equivalent شيات النطرون of جبل الطور with the Coptic equivalent. Cf. A.M.G., xxv, p. 203, where جيل المطر is चिँट and चिँट नदिया are equated.
2 See p. 21.
3 Huntington in the late XVII century notices that it was called Wadi-al Latrun (Huntingtoni Epistolae, ed. Smith, Epist. xxxix), no doubt owing to the not uncommon confusion of lam and nun in Egyptian Arabic. This is probably to be identified with the form चिँट नदी of common inscriptions in mss. from the XVI to XVIII century, e.g., in a copy of the Gospels from the Monastery of Bishûi (Göttingen Royal Lib., Or. 129): see [Horner], Coptic Version of the New Testament, i, pp. cxiii. It is even found in official documents, e.g., the appointment of Abû'l Farag el Barmawi as Abbot of the Syrian Monastery: B.N., Fonds arabe, No. 320. The wādi was also known by a variety of other names such as चिँट नदी, चिँट नदी (Wādi of Terrâneh), चिँट नदी (Wādi of El Askît), as we learn from further notes in the same mss. The earlier Arabic name Wādi Habīb will be discussed immediately.
4 The Coptic चिँट, but there appears to be no instance of चिँट नदी नदी ।
5 Kbitat, Part ii, 5086, 20. A. R. Guest informs me that he knows of no earlier literary mention of the name.
6 Ed. Evetts, passim. The text is unwoveled.
7 Ed. Evetts and Butler.
8 Ed. Silvestre de Sacy, in Relation de l'Égypte par Abd-Allâtî, p. 668.
9 See p. 274.
11 Ed. and loc. cit.; though a final ० is written for the correct प. For the form "Hubaib" see also the authorities quoted by Wright, Cat. Syr. MSS. in B.M., Preface, p. ii.
12 Journal Royal Asiatic Society, p. 843 (review of Evetts' edition of the Hist. Patr.). I am informed that Hubaib is a regular diminutive form of Habīb; but on this and other matters involving Oriental languages, I am quite unqualified to form any reasoned opinion of my own.
13 See Evetts' note in Abû Sâlih, Churches and Monasteries of Egypt, p. 3, note 6. It may be added that the form Habīb is strongly supported by its Coptic transcription चिँट in a note, dated 1068 A.D., in Cod. Vat. Copt., No. lxvi, fol. 184 b.
14 L.H., ii, p. 188.
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

in the story of Anastasia: εὐνοοῦχος τις ἔμενεν εἷς τὴν ἐσωτέραν ἔρημον τῆς Σκίτεως: εἶχεν δὲ τὸ κελλίου ὲς ἀπὸ μιλιῶν δέκα ὑκτὸ τῆς αὐτῆς Σκίτεως.¹ The same distinction clearly appears in the Coptic ἤσε ἤσε ἤσε or in the Arabic “Gebel Shihêt,” ² بريه الشيت or جبل شيتا, which is the region in which Scetis lies.³ Scetis and its equivalents, however, are sometimes loosely used in the wider sense; as when Anastasia is said to have had a cell “outside Scetis” (ἐξω τῆς Σκίτεως) and yet (three lines below) to have dwelt for twenty-eight years “in Scetis” (ἐν τῇ Σκίτῃ).⁴ Still more loose is the practice of certain writers, such as Sozomen, who use “Scetis” to cover both Cellia and the Mount of Nitria: Evagrius Ponticus in particular, when addressing Anatolius,⁵ speaks of himself as “settled in Scetis” (ἐν τῇ Σκίτῃ (sic) καθεξόμενος), though he is known to have dwelt at Cellia. In its loosest or widest sense, then, the “desert of Scetis” was a tract of desert which included Cellia and even the Mount of Nitria; in its more restricted sense—that usually understood by the monastic writers—it was that part of the desert which environed the place Shięt or Scetis.

Thus we are brought to the question, where was Shięt or Scetis situated? Amélineau, vaguely locating the Mount of Nitria between Shięt and Mareotis “to the north and perhaps a little to the northeast,”⁶ is hardly less obscure when he identifies “Mount Nitria” as the northern and Shięt as the southern half of the modern Wādi ‘n Natrûn.⁷ Abbot Butler believes that the desert of Scetis is that part of the Libyan Desert lying between the Delta and Wādi ‘n Natrûn (identified by him as the Mount of Nitria), that Cellia was in this desert six or seven miles to the north of “Nitria,” and that the monastic settlement of Scetis lay “still further to the north or northwest in the heart of the Setic desert.”⁸

In the following paragraphs we shall attempt to show that Scetis (the place) certainly lay in the Wādi ‘n Natrûn and, as a fixed point, is to be located at or near the existing Monastery of Baramûs.

The Greek Historia monachorum⁹ thus describes Scetis: “the place is desert, a night and a day’s journey distant from Nitria over the desert, and offers great dangers to those who go out (to it); for, if a man makes a slight mistake (in the road), he wanders about the desert in peril.” The Latin version of Rufinus¹⁰ emphasizes the difficulties of the journey: “it is situated in a most desolate wilderness¹¹ a day and a night’s journey from the Monasteries of Nitria. The route is traced or indicated by no landmarks, but is followed by the tokens and courses of the stars.” Palladius¹² tells us of a monk who lost his way and died.

¹ Clugnet, Vie de l’Abbé Daniel, p. 2.
² Note in Gospels, Göttingen Royal Library, Or. 1254; see [Horner], Coptic Version of the New Testament, 1, p. xxii.
⁴ Clugnet, op. cit., p. 7.
⁵ Capita practica ad Anatolium (Migne, P.G., XL, col. 1220).
⁶ Geographicæ, p. 321.
⁷ Id., p. 447.
⁸ L.H., ii, pp. 188 f.
⁹ Ch. xxx (ed. Preuschen, p. 92): ἐστὶ δὲ καὶ ὁ τόπος ἔρημος, νυκτός ημους τῆς Νιτρίας ἀπὸ τῆς διαστήματος ἐπὶ τὴν ἔρημον και κάινυμοι μέγας ἐστὶ τοῖς ἀποικισάντων: ἐν γάρ μικρόν σφαλη τις, πλάεται κατὰ τὴν ἔρημον καὶ νυκτόνων.
¹⁰ Ch. xxix: “Est autem in eremo vastissima positus, diei et noctis iter habens de Nitriae monasteriis; et hoc nulla semita neque terrenis aliquisbus colligitur vel monstratur indiciiis, sed stellarum signis et cursibus peregitur.”
¹¹ No doubt Rufinus was thinking of the epithet παν- ἔρημος by which Palladius frequently designates Scetis.
¹² Hist. Laos., ch. XLVII.
THE TOPOGRAPHY OF THE MOUNT OF NITRIA AND SCETIS

on the journey for lack of water; and even an habitué like John the Little used a guide, whose experience did not prevent him from losing the way.¹ The distance between Scetis and the Mount of Nitria was therefore considerable.

Now Palladius gives a circumstantial account of a journey which he made from Cellia to Scetis in company with Albanius and Hero of Alexandria.² Speaking of the latter he writes³: “I had experience of him while travelling with the blessed Albanius to Scetis. *Now Scetis was forty miles distant from us* (i.e., from Cellia). In these forty miles we ate twice and thrice drank water; but he (Hero), tasting nothing and walking afoot,⁴ repeated from memory fifteen Psalms, etc. . . And with all this we could not come up with him as he walked.” The distance between Cellia and Scetis was therefore forty (Roman) miles, of course by the track and not “as the crow flies.” Adding ten or twelve miles—the interval between Cellia and the Mount of Nitria⁵—we learn that Scetis was a journey of fifty or fifty-two Roman miles (about seventy-two or seventy-four kilometers) from the Mount of Nitria. This distance could, in fact, be covered in “a day and a night” by camels.

The combined testimony of Palladius and the *Historia monachorum* is borne out by certain of the *Apopthegmata* which unmistakably indicate that Cellia was a journey of about forty and the Mount of Nitria—of about fifty-two (Roman) miles from Scetis. Of Chaeremon, for example, it is related that his “cave” or cell was forty miles from the church and twelve from the “marsh” and the water,⁶ the central point (as we shall see) of Scetis. Yet another, and apparently later, apophthegm speaks of “the churches” of Scetis as being situated near this selfsame “marsh” and “the springs of water.”⁷ The anecdote concerning Chaeremon, then, is a very early one, relating to a period when there was no church in Scetis, and the church in question is no doubt that at the place where the story was told. Is it likely that this place, fifty-two (Roman) miles from Scetis, can have been other than the Mount of Nitria?

Literary sources, then, directly or indirectly indicate that Cellia was forty, and the Mount of Nitria fifty-two (Roman) miles from the center of Scetis. These figures, of course, do not represent the distances “on the map” or from point to point, but “by the route,” which would be determined by avoidance of obstacles and choice of favorable ground: that the Scetis-Nitria route almost certainly passed through Cellia may have involved a further and considerable detour. If we estimate the proportion of route distance to direct distance as five to four, then the direct distance between the Mount of Nitria and Scetis would

---

¹ *Apopth. Patr.*, John Colobos, xvii (quoted, p. 110).
² Both were monks of Cellia, which is thereby shown to have been the starting point.
³ *Hist. Laus.*, ch. xxvi.
⁴ It is clearly implied that Palladius and Albanius were mounted.
⁵ Cassian (Coll., vi, 1) gives the distance between Cellia and Scetis as 80 miles, which is obviously wrong—for it could not have been traversed in a day and a half; and even Hero could not have held out so long without food or drink. Possibly Cassian heard that the places were eight schoinoi apart, and wrongly took the length of the schoinos to be 10 miles instead of 6½ miles, thus giving 80 miles instead of 52—which is exactly our distance from Scetis to the Mount of Nitria (not Cellia).
⁶ *Apopth. Patr.*, Chaeremon.
⁷ Id., Kario, ii.
be forty Roman miles, or nearly sixty kilometers.\(^1\) Now the circumference of a circle with
a radius of some sixty kilometers and its center at the site where we have placed the Mount
of Nitria, would, to the S.S.W., pass through the Monastery of Baramūs or its immediate
neighborhood—the very spot indicated by tradition as the center of Scetis\(^2\) [Pls. I, II].

There is indeed ample and overwhelming evidence to show that Scetis was in the Wādi ’n
Natrūn.

1. The study of nomenclature at the beginning of this section shows that the names
Scetis, El Askīt, Shiēt, Mīzān el Kulūb, Gebel en Natrūn (and its Coptic equivalent),
Wādi ’n Natrūn, and Wādi Habīb are inseparably connected.\(^3\)

2. The four primary monasteries in the Wādi ’n Natrūn are named after the great fourth-
century saints of Scetis, Macarius the Great, John the Little,\(^4\) Bishōī, and the “Roman
Fathers” (Maximus and Domitius) of Baramūs.

3. The mass of historical and legendary matter relating to these saints and other
worthies of Scetis, such as Arsenius, Moses the Robber, the Forty-nine Martyrs and others,
is definitely localized in the Wādi ’n Natrūn. In short: in order to accept Abbot Butler’s
view that Scetis was not in the Wādi ’n Natrūn but in the heart of the desert to the north
of it, we must make the incredible assumption that at some unknown date (certainly not
later than the sixth century) the monastic settlement, together with its name and its
traditions, was transplanted southwards into the Wādi ’n Natrūn, where a number of
fictitious sites were selected and associated with events in the lives of Macarius and the
rest. And we must believe that all this took place without leaving a trace of so momentous
a change.

4. Moreover, the natural features of fourth-century Scetis are precisely those which
distinguish the Wādi ’n Natrūn, but are utterly incompatible with a situation in the heart
of the desert. The *Apophthegmata*, for example, often speak of a “marsh” (ἐλῶς) in Scetis:
Amélineau\(^5\) indeed points out that the Coptic equivalent (ⲧⲓⲧⲟⲥ) is rendered by the Arabic
wādī, thus suggesting that by ἐλῶς the whole Wādi ’n Natrūn is to be understood. But the
Greek word at any rate never means a “desert valley,” but a “swampy place”; and the Coptic
ⲧⲓⲧⲟⲥ usually has the same sense. Thus in the *Life of Maximus and Domitius*\(^6\) we read, “we
found ourselves on the Rock of Shiēt, and when we had looked over the mountain (or
desert, τὸ ὄρος), we saw the marsh of water (ⲧⲓⲧⲟⲥ ὁ ὄρος), some little groves of palm trees,
and all the prospect of the mountain (desert).” And that the ἐλῶς τῆς Σκῆψεως was
marshy is clear from the anecdote of the self-inflicted penance of Macarius of Alexandria,\(^7\)

\(^1\) It must be remembered that though the approximate position of the Mount of Nitria appears to be
well-nigh certain, its exact situation cannot be as yet determined.
\(^2\) See p. 34.
\(^3\) Compare also the equation afforded by the colophon
in Nicoll, *Bibl. Bodl. Cod. MSS. Cat.*, Pars. ii, No. 37:

“...the holy monastery of John Kama in the desert of El
Askīt, Mīzān el Kulūb, known as Wādi Habīb.”

\(^4\) This monastery no longer survives, but its ruins are
in the Wādi ’n Natrūn.

\(^5\) *Géographie*, p. 447.

\(^6\) *A.M.G.*, xxv, p. 293.

\(^7\) *Apophib*. *Patr.*., Macarius, xxii.

32
who retired thither to endure the tormenting of the mosquitoes—only to be found near pools of water. At the same time this example shows that ἑλὸς and ἐκλάω had a reasonably wide application; for when Macarius of Alexandria "fled into the marsh," we are not to understand that he plunged into a quagmire, but that he betook himself to the neighborhood of the mosquito-breeding lakes; and when we read that the wife of Abba Kario came to Scetis and "sat in the marsh,"¹ we cannot doubt that the "marsh" was a marshy region and not a morass. Now our Greek and Coptic authorities give some further particulars concerning the "marsh": the Apophthegm of Abba Kario already cited states that "a marsh extends itself in Scetis, where also the churches are built and the springs of water are"²; and the Life of Saint Macarius describes the marsh as being "on the west"—or, as another ms. more accurately states—"on the north of the valley" (ἀναβάτης).³ These particulars seem to render inevitable the identification of the ἑλὸς τῆς Ἑκλάως with the low-lying area of the lakes in the Wādi 'n Natrūn, which are strung out (cf. παρακεῖα) along the northeastern side of that valley, and beside which the existing monasteries (direct descendants of the fourth-century "churches") are situated (Pl. II).

Again, we are informed that Zacharias, the son of Kario, voluntarily disfigured himself by soaking his body in "the lake of natron" (ἡ λιμὴ τοῦ νιτρού).⁴ This lake may be identified with the "Anaballous" mentioned in the Life of Saint Macarius where it is closely connected with the "marsh."⁵

There are also frequent references in the Apophthegmata to palm trees in Scetis which furnish the monks with the raw material for their basket making. Macarius, for example, once encountered the devil while carrying palm leaves from the "marsh" to his cell;⁶ and the brethren once tried to distract John the Little from his usual state of abstraction by telling him that "it has rained much this year and the palm trees have been watered and are putting forth buds; and the brethren are finding (material for) their handicraft."⁷

All these natural features of Scetis, a marshy region, a lake of natron, palm trees, are to be found in the Wādi 'n Natrūn but nowhere else in its vicinity—least of all in the heart of the desert to the north of it. We may therefore sum up the whole matter by saying that not only does the distance, stated or roughly indicated, between Scetis and the Mount of Nitria or Cellia strongly suggest that the former was in the Wādi 'n Natrūn, but nomen-

¹ Apophthegmata, Pari., Kario, ii. See also "Phosai," Life of Maximus and Domitius (Syriac version in P.O., v, pp. 764 f.), where a wild calf is described as being bogged in "the salt marsh which is called Ἀναβάτης." W. L. Hewitt, the present Works Manager of the Egyptian Salt and Soda Co., tells me that it is not uncommon thing for a kamūs (buffalo) to be swallowed up at the present day when feeding on the grassgrown patches near the Natrūn Lakes, where the outbreak of fresh-water springs has turned the soil into a quagmire; and that he himself has been partially bogged while out

² Apophthegmata, Pari., Kario, ii: ἑλὸς γὰρ παρόκειται εἰς τῇ Ἑκλάδα, ἅπα καὶ αἱ ἐκτείνουσα ψυχόμενα, καὶ αἱ πηγαί τῶν νεάτων εἰσι.

³ A.M.G., xxv, p. 57 and critical note ad loc.

⁴ Apophthegmata, Pari., Kario, ii.

⁵ See p. 34.

⁶ Apophthegmata, Pari., Macarius, v.

⁷ Id., John Colobos, x.
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

culture, historical facts, recorded tradition, and physical aspects put the identification beyond doubt.

In what part of the Wādi 'in Natrūn, then, was Scetis (in its most limited sense) situated? When Palladius speaks of Scetis as forty miles from Cellia,1 he is certainly thinking of the distance between two tolerably definite points; and when he reckons the distance of Climax as eighteen miles "from the well of the brethren,"2 he partly reveals how this point was marked in Scetis. Close by the well there was a church, as we infer from Cassian's account of Paphnutius, the successor of Isidorus, Priest of Scetis, who, when returning from the church after the celebration of Sabbath and Sunday, used to carry out a week's supply of water to his cell five miles away;3 similarly in the anecdote relating to Kario the "Churches" and "springs of water" are located near the marsh—a topographical indication confirmed by the statement that Chaeremon, an ascetic of Scetis, lived twelve miles from "the marsh and the water."4 Scetis, then, as a definite spot was marked by a well or spring and by a church situated near the "marsh"; and we shall not err in adding that this was the center of the original monastic settlement in the valley founded by Macarius and for a while directed by him.

This locality can be approximately determined. For we are told that Macarius first settled within reach of drinking-water "at the beginning of the marsh, near the place of the Anaballous"; and though he soon withdrew to a rock further south and in the desert area5 (i.e., beyond the limits of the marsh), he does not seem to have retired to any great distance from his earliest abode. Now the abode of Macarius (prior to his final retreat into the eastern part of the valley where his monastery still stands) was in the neighborhood of the place where Maximus and Domitius lived and died, that is, of the actual Monastery of Baramūs. This is clear not only from the Coptic Life of Maximus and Domitius,6 but also from an anecdote peculiar to the Syriac version in which the author alleges that he met the two saints while on their way to the well to draw water, and that accompanying them he drew near to "the salty marsh which is called Anabolis."7 It may be added that the site of Macarius' earlier abode is still pointed out in the vicinity of Dēr el Baramūs.8

This series of connections is a somewhat tortuous statement but the conclusion is clear. Scetis (the place) is to be identified with the settlement founded by Macarius before he retired to the eastern part of the valley, and this settlement was in the neighborhood of

---

1 Hist. Lanth., ch. xxvi.
2 Id., ch. xxvii.
3 Cassian, Coll., iii, 1.
4 Apophth. Patr., Chaeremon.
5 Later, of course, there were four churches.
6 Τινα καταλαλλησε ηπεριποιησε ηπεριποιησε ηπεριποιησε (A.M.G., xxv, p. 76). The Scala magna (Kircher, Lingua Alg. red., p. 214) gives as the equivalent of ἡπεριποιησε, which may therefore be identical with the ἱπερη τοῦ νηπερου of Apophth. Patr., Kario, ii.
7 Apophth. Patr., Kario, ii. This "rock" is the modern Kāret el Mulūk: see below, note 9.
8 See A.M.G., xxv, pp. 293 f., passim.
9 Légende de Maxime et Domée, ed. Nau, § 16 (P.O., v, p. 764). The Anaböllos or Anaballous must be the Little Salt Lake lying three or four kilometers N. of E. from the Monastery of Baramūs, and close by the remarkable Kāret el Mulūk or Hill of the Princes, the ancient "Rock of Shiēt" (Pl. II).
10 See Falls, Three Years in the Libyan Desert, p. 104.
THE TOPOGRAPHY OF THE MOUNT OF NITRIA AND SCETIS

the present Monastery of Baramûs. Something must here be added as to the looser uses of the name Scetis. Primarily denoting the original monastic settlement in the Wâdi 'n Natrûn, it seems to have expanded as the area occupied by the monks grew wider until it covered the whole district in which the monasteries were situated, from the Monastery of Baramûs on the west to the Monastery of Saint Macarius on the east. From this extended use the application of the name to the Wâdi 'n Natrûn generally was but a step.

Hitherto no reference has been made to the evidence of Ptolemy as to the geographical position of Nitria and Scetis which leads Abbot Butler to take the view combated in the preceding pages. In his survey of the Mareotic nome the geographer makes the following statement\(^1\): “Of the Mareotic nome the seaboard is called Taenia, while the inland parts are occupied by the Goniatae and Prosoditae. Next to these is the Scathic region (Σκαθική) \(^2\) ἀφαρ) and the Mastitae; the more southerly parts are inhabited by the Nitriotae and Oasitae, whose position is 39° 30' long. [26° 55' lat.].” Further on\(^3\) Ptolemy adds some details to these broad topographical divisions: in the Scathiæ region is Scathis (Σκαθῆ) at 60° 40' long. and 30° 20' lat. In the neighborhood of Lake Moeris are Bacchis at 60° 30' long. and 29° 40' lat., and Dionysias\(^4\) at 60° 30' long. and 29° lat. In the country of the Oasitae are the Lesser Oasis at 60° 15', 28° 45' and the Greater Oasis\(^5\) at 59° 30', 26° 55'.

In the first of these passages Ptolemy most distinctly places the Nitriotae to the south of Scathis and the “Scathiæ region,” and thereby seems to stultify the whole of the foregoing argument which would place the Mount of Nitria (Pernoudj) at the northeast corner of the Libyan Desert and Scetis in the Wâdi 'n Natrûn. But the second passage is explanatory of the first and should therefore be set side by side with it. Doing so, we get the following result:

(Ptolemy iv, 5, 12)  
1. Scathiæ region and Mastitae  
2. Nitriotae  
3. Oasitae

(Ptolemy iv, 5, 15)  
1. Scathis  
2. Bacchis \(\} \) near Lake Moeris  
3. Lesser Oasis  
Greater Oasis

Ptolemy's Nitriotae, therefore, were not in the Wâdi 'n Natrûn at all, not even in the Nitriotae nome of Strabo, but in the Fayyûm, where they occupied two towns. Whatever may be the explanation\(^7\) of this fact, it is not relevant to the matter in hand: it is sufficient for us to know that Ptolemy gives no warrant for placing the Mount of Nitria of monastic writers either in the Wâdi 'n Natrûn or to the south of Scetis.

---

1 Geographia, ed. Müller, iv, 5, 12.  
2 The mss. give the variant spellings Σκαθίας, Σκαθίας,  
Σκαθίας and Σκαθίας: see Müller's Apparatus criticus.  
4 Presumably the mss. show similar variants.  
5 For the relative positions of these places see Petrie's reconstruction of Ptolemy's map of this area, Naukratis, 1,  
Pl. XXXIX.  
6 Perhaps Bahriye and Farafra.  
7 It may be noted that natron is or was to be found near  
Lake Moeris: see Wilkinson, Modern Egypt and Thebes,  
1, p. 386.
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

What, then, of Ptolemy's Sciathis? The name must be identical with the Scetis of monastic writers; and this being so, the probability is very strong that the two designate one and the same place. The small element of uncertainty is reduced by a marked feature in Ptolemy's statement; for whereas this writer commonly refers to a district by the ethnological name of its inhabitants (e.g., Gonitaeae, Prosoditae), he here calls the region Σκιαθύκη χώρα after its center, Sciathis. Does not this suggest that the region was desert and without inhabitants? If this is admitted, the identity in all senses of Sciathis with Scetis approaches certainty; and we may reasonably conjecture that Ptolemy judged it worthy of mention as a watering-place on the route between Egypt and the Oasis of Siwah. The "region of Sciathis" would then be a vague designation covering the whole northeastern corner of the Libyan Desert.

How far the latitude and longitude given by Ptolemy agree or disagree with this view I shall not attempt to decide. The experts come to different conclusions—with themselves and with each other. But the verdict on this particular is in a sense immaterial: if Ptolemy places his Sciathis outside the Wâdi 'n Natrôn, he is either guilty of an error or is designating some other place. The evidence for locating the monastic Scetis in the valley is so various and so consistent as not to be overthrown.

5. Minor Localities Associated with Scetis

One of the characters described by Palladius in the Lausiac History is a certain Paul, whose sole occupation was continuous prayer, and who dwelt at Pherme. The place is thus described: "There is a mountain in Egypt, on the way out (ἀπάγων) to Scetis the utter desert, which is called Pherme. In this mountain are settled about five hundred men leading ascetic lives."

Three points in this notice deserve to be marked. (1) The settlement (a considerable one) was existing at the time when Palladius wrote (i.e., about 420 A.D.), as his use of the present tense implies. (2) It was in "Egypt," that is to say, in the Delta. (3) It lay on one of the routes leading from the Delta to Scetis. Unfortunately there is nothing in this to suggest the direction in which Pherme lay; and there are routes radiating from Scetis to the east,

---

1 The Mastitae do not seem to occupy the "region of Sciathis" but an area to the west of it. They may possibly be the Mazices or Mastiki (on whom see pp. 152 f.); but the latter people are rather associated with the oases to the southwest.
2 This is the route via Maghareh and Gara followed by Horneman in 1798.
3 This would account for the occasional and abnormal use of Scetis to cover Cellia and even the Mount of Nitria. Thus Evagrius Ponticus, who dwelt at Cellia, speaks of himself as "dwelling in Scetis" (Capita pratica ad Anato- tum, Migne, P.G., xl, col. 1220)—unless indeed he wrote when on a visit to Scetis. Sozomen is notoriously lax in his use of the name Scetis.
4 Müller (Claudii Ptolemaei geographia: Tabulae) reconstructs Ptolemy's map (Tab. 25) showing "Scathica" to the north of the Nitriotae, and (in inset) places "Sciathis" some 30 miles southwest of Naucratis; in Tab. 26 he places the Nitriotae to the north and "Sciathica" to the south of Wâdi 'n Natrôn. Petrie, in his reconstruction of Ptolemy's map of the Delta (Naucratid, 1, Pl. XXXIX), seems to place Scathis considerably nearer to Naucratis (but no scale is given), while the Nitriotae are banished far away to the W.S.W. of Scathis.
5 Palladius, Hist. Laos., ch. xx.
6 Or perhaps when he was at Cellia.
THE TOPOGRAPHY OF THE MOUNT OF NITRIA AND SCETIS

northeast, and north. But a clue is perhaps supplied by an anecdote which relates that
a monk of Cellia once went to consult Theodore of Pherme,¹ who (by implication) dwelt
at no excessive distance from Cellia and consequently on the northern side of the desert.
That Theodore was at Pherme on this occasion is highly probable, for he had then been
a monk for seventy years (a fact which suggests that his age was about ninety); and we
know that he fled from Scetis to Pherme when the former was sacked before he reached
old age.²

D’Anville³ identified Pherme with the Monastery of Baramûs—a view which Quatremère⁴
rightly rejects, but only to substitute the “Hill of the Eaglestones” mentioned in Sicard’s
notice of the Wâdi ‘n Natrûn. Both these are equally impossible; for (a) Palladius shows
that Pherme was in the Delta, and (b) when Theodore fled from Scetis to escape the bar-
barians, it is clear that he retired to a safe distance—not merely to another point in the
same district.⁵

Nothing further seems to be known as to the history of this settlement.

The Apophthegmata mention a place called Petra, obviously named after some prominent
rock or crag. It is chiefly associated with Moses the Robber. Why he settled in this place
is explained in the following anecdote⁶: “Abba Moses said to Abba Macarius in Scetis,
‘I desire to live in peace; but the brethren do not suffer me.’ And Abba Macarius said to
him: ‘I perceive that yours is a yielding nature... But if you wish to be at peace, go to
the desert, inwards, to Petra, and there you will be at peace.’” Peace, however, Moses did
not find; for another apophthegm⁷ relates that “Abba Moses, who used to dwell in the
place called Petra, was once beset by the demon of fornication so that he could not remain
in his cell, but departed and went to the holy Abba Isidorus and told him of the violence
of the attack upon him.”

Another anecdote concerning Moses tells us that “when he was going to Petra, he was
wearied on the way”⁸; and this with the saying of Macarius quoted above shows that
Petra was at some distance from Scetis (the center). At the same time the connection
between Moses and Isidorus the Priest, who is closely associated with Baramûs,⁹ suggests
that it was in the general region of which that monastery is the center.

This rock is surely identical with “the Great Rock” whereon the angel placed Maximus
and Domitius and which is described as “up above (?) the water to the south; for on this
Rock took place a sign of God, the ‘servant of God Abba Macarius having called it the
Rock ἱστορικόν πέτρις (meaning obscure) unto this day.’”¹⁰ Further on this rock is called the

¹ Apophth. Patr., Theodore of Pherme, ii.
² Id., xxxvi. ³ Mémoires, i, p. 75.
⁴ Id., p. 469.
⁵ The modern Børnâ or Bomâ lies too far from the desert edge to be a possible candidate.
⁷ Rosweyde, Vitæ patrum, iii, p. 494, No. 10 (Latin); cf. Apophth. Patr., Moses, 1 (Greek), where however some
mss. omit the descriptive “he of Petra.”
⁹ See pp. 101 and 155.
¹⁰ A.M.G., xxv, p. 292.
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

Rock of Shiêt (στεπά σεν γιατ) and described as commanding a view over the "marsh" and other features of the Wâdi 'n Natrûn. It is the same as the "Rock up above the valley" on which the youthful Macarius and the natron-gatherers encamped, and whence he could see "the beginning of the marsh which is to the west (or north) of the valley, and the other mountain which bounds it." The rock with which these legends are connected is to be identified with the present Kâret el Mulûk ("Hill of the Princes"), about four kilometers north of the Monastery of Baramûs and by far the most striking eminence in the whole valley (Pl. II).

Quite distinct from the above was the "Rock of Saint Macarius" where the saint ended his life. This was at the eastern extremity of the valley and, though not as yet positively identified, was in the vicinity of the existing Monastery of Macarius. In a ninth-century document an incident is described as occurring "near the road of the Cherubim on the top of the rock"; but the rock there mentioned seems to be the broad spur separating the Wâdi Abû Makâr from the Wâdi 'n Natrûn proper (Pl. II).

Another remote spot was known as Climax ("the Stair"). Here in the fourth century lived the hermit Ptolemy, of whom Palladius writes: "He dwelt beyond Scetis (the place) in a spot called Climax. The place so called is one where nobody can live, because it is eighteen miles distant from the well of the brethren." Here Ptolemy lived for fifteen years—carrying his water thither in gourds and supplementing this supply with dew mopped up from the rocks with a sponge—until he took to bad courses. Apparently no one repeated Ptolemy's experiment, and Climax is nowhere else mentioned. In what direction from Scetis (the place) it lay is consequently unknown—Amélineau remarks that there are many rocks with stepped formation which might be called Climax: such a rock about eighteen miles from the Monastery of Baramûs may yet be identified.

In the story of the Forty-nine Martyrs we are informed that the bodies of the slaughtered monks were buried by the survivors "in a holy cave near the great tower which they call that of Piamoun." The cave is subsequently defined as being "at Piamoun." A doxology in a Paris ms. speaks of the martyrs as being slain near "the place of Piamoun" (τιμᾶται Πιαμούν); while a doxology to Macarius and all the saints locates the tragedy "upon the Rock of Piamoun." We have to deal therefore with a place in which there was a tower, a rock, and a cave.

Quatremère at first identified Piamoun with the Peamu of the Notitia dignitatum, where the eleventh cohort of Chamavi was quartered, but subsequently withdrew this view.

1 A.M.G., xxv, p. 293 (quoted p. 32). 2 Id., pp. 36 f. 3 Id., pp. 76, 89, 186. It is different therefore from the rock of Macarius' earlier habitation (see pp. 99 and 105). 4 Hist. Patr., p. 595. 5 If indeed (as seems probable) the "Road of the Cherubim" is the same as the "Path of the Angels" mentioned by modern travellers (see pp. 418, 420, and 424). 6 Géographie, p. 451. (I failed to find any such feature in the valley.) 7 Notices et extraits, xxxix, pp. 330, 336. 8 See Jablonski, Opuscula, i, 163. 9 Curzon ms. No. 131, fol. 112 b. Cf. Appendix v, p. 470 and my New Texts, No. xxiii, 8, Ode ii (cf. xxiv, 5). 10 Mémoires, i, pp. 27 f. 11 Id., p. 512.
THE TOPOGRAPHY OF THE MOUNT OF NITRIA AND SCETIS

Champollion located it to the east of Scetis and near Terenuthis. Amélineau rightly places it near the Monastery of Saint Macarius, but wrongly conjectures that it was a village near the natron and adopts Quatremère’s discarded hypothesis that it was the garrisoned post Peamu. That there was no garrison at Piamoun is proved by the actual story of the Forty-nine; and the Coptic narrative shows so definitely that Piamoun was in Scetis that it is hard to see how the matter can ever have been regarded as doubtful. And both the Depositio and the Arabic Synaxarium—to say nothing of still living tradition—so closely connect the history of the relics of the saints with the Monastery of Saint Macarius, as to leave no doubt that the Place of Piamoun was in the near vicinity of that monastery. Further reference may be made to the statement in the Life of Bishôi by “John the Little” that “the holy seniors of Shihêt” were slain by the barbarians “near the tower which is called the eastern.” The place was no doubt named after some famous hermit called Piamoun or Amoun, and the tower was certainly one of the “towers of refuge” for the monks which characterized the monasteries of Scetis prior to their fortification in the ninth century. The cave may be the same as the “cave of the Fathers,” a place of pilgrimage in the fourteenth century; if so, it lay a short distance S.S.W. of the present Monastery of Macarius.

In a list of prominent Egyptian monks seen by him, Rufinus names “Scyrion et Heuas et Paulus in Apeliote.” Abbot Butler has rightly pointed out that “Scyrion” is certainly the Ischyron of the Apophthegmata patrum, and that in some mss. of the Greek alphabetic collection, in the Coptic, and in two Latin recensions Ischyron is described as a monk of Scetis. It appears therefore that Apeliotes, where Ischyron dwelt, is to be sought in or near the desert of Scetis. The place-name itself is a mere transliteration of the Greek ἀπηλιώτης or ἀφηλιώτης, “Eastern.” Apeliotes, then, was presumably a place or region in the eastern portion of the desert of Scetis or Wâdi ’n Natrûn. Now relatively to the original monastic settlement in this desert, the region in which the present Monastery of Macarius lies would naturally be described as “the Eastern”; and we have just seen that the “Tower of Piamoun,” situated in this very district, was actually known as “the Eastern.” Apeliotes—with πύργος or τόπος understood—may then be no other than an alternative designation for the building or settlement named after Piamoun.

1 L’Égypte sous les Pharaons, ii, p. 301.
2 Géographie, pp. 343 f.
3 See especially fol. 2 b (Notices et extraits, xxxix, p. 334) where it is stated that Abraham of Phelbes had a vision in “the cave of these saints,” and immediately communicated it to John the Hegumen of Scetis and others.
4 Ed. Basset, pp. 668 f.
5 ms., B.N., Fonds arabe, No. 4796, fol. 162b.
6 Both are well known as personal names.
7 H.E., ii, 8.
8 L.H., i, p. 200 (see the references there quoted).
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

6. The Influence of Geographical Situation upon the History of the Mount of Nitria and Sceitis

The geographical situation of the Mount of Nitria and Sceitis in some degree determined the course of their history.

The Mount of Nitria was the first monastic settlement to be established in the northeastern quarter of the Libyan Desert. For the first century of its history, therefore, it enjoyed a natural prestige; but its great fame and prosperity were equally due to its situation. Standing on the desert edge where the desert border of the Delta describes a sweeping curve from its original northwestern trend to take a west-southwesterly direction, it “commanded” at once the plains of the northern Delta and Alexandria itself. The resultant advantage was double. First, devotees from this wide and populous region who wished to “renounce the world” would naturally make their way to the Mount of Nitria; and the army of monks thus recruited could readily be provisioned from the same area. Its situation, then, made practicable a large settlement at the Mount of Nitria. Secondly, a monastic community at this spot was necessarily in close touch with and able seriously to influence ecclesiastical affairs in the Delta, which formed the body, and in Alexandria, the heart and head of the Christian Church in Egypt. In illustration of this we need only refer to the history of the Arian controversy in Egypt or of the dispute concerning Anthropomorphism. Further, in the days when monasticism was, if no longer an experiment, at least a novelty, the stranger who visited Egypt and landed at Alexandria naturally went to the Mount of Nitria, the one desert center which was both famous and readily accessible, to study the system in its practical working. Such visitors—of whom Rufinus, Melania, Jerome, Paula, Palladius, and Evagrius are but the most eminent—partly by their writings and partly by their conversation must have contributed enormously to change the high local repute in which the Mount of Nitria was held into world-wide fame.

Yet the situation was not wholly advantageous. If in some sense it commanded the Delta, it was also open to attack from the same side, and was easily raided by the Arian Lucius and by the Patriarch Theophilus; certainly it was exposed to all the troubles which from 451 A.D. onwards afflicted ecclesiastical Egypt, and it may possibly have been devastated in the Persian Invasion or in the Heraclian Persecution. Nay more, the very fame of the place seems to have contributed to its undoing. Its great repute attracted to it and to its annex, Cellia, a very considerable foreign element and thereby introduced the seeds of disunion; it was the sophisticated, Hellenized element as opposed to the simple and unschooled native party¹ which gave rise to the Origenistic quarrel and followed the decrees of the Council of Chalcedon rather than the Monophysite doctrine. It is very noteworthy

¹ For the solidarity of Egyptian monks in opposing the Council of Chalcedon (as opposed to the foreign element) see Hist. Patr., p. 234.
that after the first and still more after the second of these crises the Mount of Nitria fades into insignificance. Advantageous as its situation was in the early years of monasticism, it proved fatal in various ways when ecclesiasticism had dulled the keenness of spiritual enthusiasm.

Geographical conditions determined otherwise the history of Scetis. The more resolute ascetics must soon have realized that this place offered a solitude far more perfect than the Mount of Nitria could afford. The foundation of Saint Macarius lay some forty miles from Terenuthis, the nearest point in the Delta; whereas that of Amoun lay on the edge of the "inhabited world" with its distractions and temptations. In Scetis, too, a settlement on a large scale was possible: water was to be found; and the distance from the Delta was not so great as to prohibit the transport of provisions thither, either by special convoys or by arrangement with those who came to work the natron.¹

As soon as the settlement in Scetis had become firmly established, it began to sap the resources of the monastic colony at the Mount of Nitria²; by the end of the fifth century this process must have been very far advanced, judging by the few and meager references to the Mount of Nitria after the fifth century. But it was in the sixth century that the peculiar geographical advantages of Scetis first became apparent, for when the Monophysites were denied access to the time-honored city of Saint Mark the persecuted Church established its Patriarchal Seat at the Monastery of Saint Macarius in Scetis. The reasons for this step are tolerably clear. Scetis was, next to Alexandria, the most sacred site in northern Egypt, and lying as it did at a respectable distance from the Delta in difficult desert country, it was not likely to be surprised if at any time the Byzantine authorities attempted a raid. At the same time it was not so remote as to make relations between the Jacobite Church in the Delta and its new ecclesiastical center difficult or intermittent.

The same paradoxical combination of remoteness and accessibility explains the importance of Scetis in the Middle Ages. Under Arab rule the political capital of Egypt was transferred from Alexandria to Misr (Cairo); and with the machinery of government the most important and influential section of the Coptic Church—the class of wealthy government officials—was removed from Alexandria to the southern apex of the Delta. In course of time, therefore, Cairo became the real center of the Coptic Church as opposed to Alexandria, its nominal capital. The effect of this change upon Scetis, the one great historic site in the vicinity of Cairo, and no serious distance from it, will become apparent in the later chapters of this study.

At the same time Scetis was comfortably distant from the Delta in times of persecution; when the more accessible churches and monasteries in "Egypt" were destroyed, the long

¹ See Apophth. Patr., Macarius, xxxiii; where Macarius bids the Little Strangers exchange the baskets they have made with the guards (of the natron) for bread.

² See A.M.C., xxv, p. 311, where it is stated that Scetis was populated by monks drawn from the Mount of Pernoudj (i.e., of Nitria) and from Egypt (the Delta).
and hazardous journey seems to have deterred fanaticism from carrying its ravages further afield into the Western Desert. As a consequence, Scetis became a camp of refuge for the Coptic Church in times of unusual stress. In the tenth century the Patriarch Gabriel dwelt there when Egypt was in a state of anarchy; in the eleventh, not only the Patriarch Zacharias, but the whole hierarchy of the Coptic Church found shelter in the monasteries during the persecution of El Hâkem; and in the fourteenth century it served thus again.

But advantageous as the position of Scetis was in certain respects, the blessing was by no means unmixed. It was largely at the mercy of the nomads of the wilderness; in the first five centuries of its history it is known to have been sacked five times, and the monks were perpetually exposed to molestation until they were concentrated in impregnable fortified monasteries. And that comparative proximity to Cairo which at first so profited Scetis turned ultimately to its disadvantage. For just as Scetis in its rise had sapped the strength of the settlement at the Mount of Nitria, so Cairo, as it came more and more to be regarded as the ecclesiastical center of Egypt, undermined the importance of Scetis.
CHAPTER III

THE FOUNDATION OF THE MONASTIC SETTLEMENT
AT THE MOUNT OF NITRIA

1. The Alleged Settlement of Frontonius

In current notices\(^1\) the first monastic settlement established in “Nitria” is alleged to have been founded by a certain Fronto or Frontonius who flourished in the second century A.D.

Information concerning this personage is mainly derived from a *Life*\(^2\) which is represented as the work of a contemporary.\(^3\) The narrative is preceded by an anonymous Prologue, the author of which professes his desire to edify his hearers (who were monks); with this aim he declares that he “will relate what has now taken place at Nitria.”\(^4\) Then the story opens abruptly by stating that Frontonius, “thoroughly abhorring common and public life,” called together the “brethren” (nearly seventy in number) and induced them to follow him out into the desert. Whence they set out and whither they went the *Life* proper, as distinct from the Prologue, does not state. The community settled in the desert, and presently began to suffer from the shortage of food, when the brethren murmured against their leader, who had some difficulty in stilling their complaints.

But the needs of the community were not forgotten: an angel appeared to a certain rich man by night and bade him relieve the wants of the “servants of God.” The rich man, at a loss to know who these might be, or where they were to be found, took counsel with his friends, and, by their advice, loaded seventy camels with provisions and turned them loose to find their own way. Supernaturally guided, the beasts took the road “skirting the edge of the mountain,”\(^5\) and after four days’ journey reached the Monastery of Frontonius.


\(^2\) See *Acta SS.*, loc. cit. (References to other *Lives of Fronto* are given in the Bollandist *Bibl. hagiogr. Lat.*, v. 478.)

\(^3\) See the *Life*, ch. 9, “sicut quidam postea retulit nobis”—implying that one of Frontonius’ companions related the story.

\(^4\) “quid nunc apud Nitriam gestum sit, referam.”

\(^5\) “iuxta praecinctum montis.”
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

It so happened that the camels arrived “at the ninth hour, while the brethren were engaged in the work of God”—chanting hymns or psalms in the church. Consequently it was only Frontonius, the abbot, who was aware of their arrival “since he was near the door.” When the service was ended, the saint, after rebuking his followers for their lack of faith, told them of the relief which had arrived, but insisted on unloading only half the supplies sent; the remainder was sent back with the camels which (of course) returned safely to their owner. Every year the same convoy reappeared at the “monastery” until the death of Frontonius. The Life concludes with the statement that these things occurred in the thirteenth year of Antoninus.

What is the date of this miracle? Of the various emperors who bore the name Antoninus, three reigned for thirteen years or more. The date will therefore be either 150 A.D. (under Antoninus Pius), or 173 (under Marcus Aurelius Antoninus), or 192 (under Commodus, who was assassinated in the thirteenth year of his reign). Since the last date is improbable, our choice lies between 150 and 173. It is perhaps in favor of the second of these dates that the Florarium sanctorum places the death of Frontonius in 173; but the Life rather implies that the “thirteenth year of Antoninus” was the date of the first occurrence of the miracle. Possibly, then, we are to take it that Frontonius went out into the desert in 150 and died twenty-three years later in 173; in any case he is assigned to the second half of the second century A.D.

Did Frontonius really settle in “Nitria”? The assertion is found in the Prologue and in certain martyrologies alone. In the text of the Life Nitria is never mentioned, and the only topographical hints (the road along the edge of the mountain by which the camels set out, and the four days’ journey) give no help.

The evidence of the martyrologies is as follows: (1) Rabanus records under April fourteenth, “On the same day in Nitria (the commemoration) of Fronto the monk” and adds a summary of the Life as narrated above. (2) Ado and Usuardus both have the entry: “at Alexandria (the commemoration) of Saint Fronto the abbot whose life was glorified by his holiness and miracles.” (3) Notker records “at Alexandria (the commemoration) of the blessed Fronto, the monk of Nitria.” These martyrologists are surely not independent witnesses, but go back only to the Prologue, which stands out therefore as the sole authority for the association of Frontonius with Nitria. This association becomes open to grave doubt when we refer to another and slightly different version of the story where the Prologuist declares that he will relate “what lately took place in Cappadocia.” The suspicion arises that the story is mere fiction intended to inculcate faith in Providence, and that the place and perhaps the time of the narrative were altered according to circumstances.

---

1 “completo hymnorum ordine.”
2 Migne’s P.L., cx, col. 1130 (= 1139, err. typ.).
3 Id., cxxiii, cols. 247, 934.
4 Id., cxxxi, col. 1065.
5 See the text in Faillon, Monuments inédits, ii, 428 (“quid nuper in Cappadocis gum est (sic) referam”).
6 In the version edited by Faillon no indication as to the date of the narrative is given.
THE MONASTIC SETTLEMENT AT THE MOUNT OF NITRIA

Internal evidence also puts it beyond doubt that the story of Frontonius as we have it is comparatively late, and that a second-century date is quite impossible. According to the Life a community of seventy monks was established in the desert about the middle of the second century A.D. The monks are represented as dwelling in a walled monastery (since the camels are said to have halted at the narrow entrance); they are ruled by an abbot who possesses at least one external mark of his rank—a seat near the door of the church; and they assemble in the church to celebrate one at least of the canonical hours—nones. When we recall that Paul and Antony were the first to “take to the desert,” and that neither commenced his desert life before the second half of the third century; that Antony was the first to establish any form of monastic community in the desert early in the fourth century; that Pachomius was the first to organize a strict coenobium or inclosed monastery, also early in the fourth century; and that at Nitria at any rate the monks observed none in their own cells (not in church)¹ even at the close of the fourth century—there can be no doubt that the Life (apart from the dubious Prologue) is utterly anachronistic. There were no desert monasteries in the second or in the third century A.D., and Frontonius cannot therefore have established one in Nitria.

The editor of the Acta sanctorum,² conscious of anachronisms and recognizing the claims of Amoun to be the first monastic inhabitant of the Mount of Nitria, has attempted to rescue the story of Frontonius by heroic emendation of the dating clause with which the Life concludes. This, he suggests, should read: “These things occurred in the time of Ammonius (sc. Amoun), <superior and first founder of the Nitrian Monasteries, and of Constantius> the Emperor, in the thirteenth year of his reign” (350 A.D.). This is to beg the question; but apart from that, the “restoration” is open to three objections: (1) Amoun was almost certainly dead considerably before 350 A.D. (2) The Life remains almost as anachronistic as ever—at least so far as Nitria is concerned. (3) Neither the Coptic Church nor the Greek Church has any record of Frontonius in its Calendar of Synaxaria.

Whatever the real history of Frontonius (if he ever existed), or however his Life may have been recast, it is certain that he did not found a monastery in Nitria or elsewhere in the second century and equally certain that he could have founded none such as the Life describes—even in the fourth century.

2. Amoun, the Founder of Nitrian Monasticism

The real founder of the monastic settlement in the Mount of Nitria (Pernoudj) was Amoun.³ The main authority for the life of this ascetic is Palladius,⁴ who heard his story from Arsisius and other monks at the Mount of Nitria who had known the saint.

¹ Palladius, Hist. Laus., ch. vii.
² May iii, p. 296.
³ On the orthography of this name see Butler, L.H., ii, p. 190. To the authorities there cited add the Synax.
⁴ Hist. Laus., ch. viii.
Amoun’s life according to Palladius and others

Amoun’s chronology

Amoun, being an orphan, was brought up by his uncle who forced him to marry when twenty-two years of age. The youth went through the bridal ceremony, but persuaded his wife to allow their union to be purely nominal. Henceforward the pair lived in the same house, but were virtually separated. Amoun worked all day in his garden and balsam plantation, and returned in the evening only to pray and to share a meal with his wife. At night, after praying once more, he retired to sleep outside the house.

After eighteen years Amoun’s wife urged her husband to hide his light under a bushel no longer, but to live in open separation from her. Amoun then left his house to his wife, and found a retreat for himself in “the inner part of the Mount of Nitria”; for as yet there were no monasteries there.” In this place he built two domed cells, in which he lived for twenty-two years before he died, or rather, “fell asleep.” He used (says Palladius) to go to visit his wife twice every year.

Socrates gives a slightly different account of Amoun’s wedded life. Husband and wife both retired to “the Mount of what is called Nitria” immediately after their marriage, and dwelt together for a short time in a hut with an oratory attached. It was in Nitria that they separated, living thereafter apart and eating only dry bread without wine or oil, and fasting one, two, or more days together. Sozomen follows Palladius more closely.

According to Palladius, Amoun was twenty-two years old when he married, lived with his wife for eighteen years and dwelt in the “Mount of Nitria” for twenty-two more years, living in all sixty-two years. An incident related by Athanasius in his Life of Antony shows that Amoun died before Antony (i.e., before 356 A.D.). While Antony was sitting in the open one day, he looked up and saw some person ascending up into heaven and met by welcoming thongs. When he wished to know who this might be, he was supernaturally informed that it was Amoun. His disciples, observing his astonishment, asked to know the cause, and were informed that Amoun—well known to them from his frequent visits to Antony—was dead. Thirty days later, brethren from Nitria brought news that Amoun was indeed dead, having passed away on the day and at the hour of Antony’s vision.

This provides only a very general terminus ante quem, and more precise information must be sought elsewhere. Tillemont considers that Sozomen regarded Amoun as flourishing before the Council of Nicaea, and suggests that he died between 340 and 345 A.D. But if it is to be trusted, the Menologium Sirletianum obliques us to accept a somewhat earlier date; for it is there stated that Amoun married in the reign of Maximian and lived on until the time of the “contests of Antony the Great” and the days of Constantine. Whatever be

1 τὸ ἁπλότερον τοῦ τῆς Νιτρίας δρόσου. Sozomen (H.E., 1, 14, 3) defines his abode as ἄμφι τῆς Ξείτην (loosely used) καὶ τὸ καλύβης τῆς Νιτρίας δροσ.
2 θάλασσας κελλιῶν.
3 H.E., iv, 23.
4 καλύβης.
5 διακονικίων.
6 H.E., 1, 14, 1 f.

7 § 60 (Migne, P.G., xxvi, col. 930).
8 Mémoires, vii, 158.
9 See Acta SS., Oct. ii, pp. 413 f.
10 The Basilian Menologium asserts that Amoun “retired” in the days of Maximian (i.e., before 310 A.D.) and lived until the period of Antony’s contests. This would put back the series of dates here advocated at least five years.
the source of this chronology, there is nothing in it to excite suspicion, and we may therefore date Amoun’s birth in 275, his marriage in 297, his retirement to the Mount of Nitria in 315, and his death in 337 at latest (since he seems to have predeceased Constantine); possibly the whole series should be moved two, or even five, years further back. The early date thus assigned to Amoun is supported by the facts that when Macarius the Great retired to Scetis, the settlement at the Mount of Nitria, or Pernoudj, had already made great progress,¹ and that Abba Pambo had apparently spent a considerable time at the Mount of Nitria and had become a priest before 340.²

A few anecdotes illustrate something of the character of Amoun. His personal shyness is emphasized by Athanasius.³ Having occasion to cross the river Lycus, he requested his disciple Theodore to withdraw while he stripped and swam across; but when he was left alone, self-consciousness seized him and again prevented him from stripping. Finally the ascetic was delivered from his painful dilemma by being supernaturally wafted across the stream.

Two other incidents witness to a certain shrewd sense of humor. A boy who had been bitten by a mad dog was brought to the ascetic for healing. Amoun disclaimed miraculous powers, but recommended the anxious parents to recompense a certain widow for her ox which they had secretly killed.⁴ On another occasion, wishing to test the sincerity of two men who had visited him, he requested them to bring him a large water jar. They agreed to do so; but the one, declaring that he would not kill his camel with so heavy a burden, neglected his promise; the other, who had only donkeys, accomplished the task, and was informed by Amoun that the churlish man’s camel had been devoured by wolves.⁵

Amoun was highly esteemed by his contemporaries. Antony, according to the Historia monachorum,⁶ had the highest admiration for his uprightness and virtues. Yet he made no such impression upon the world of his day as did Antony—a fact which Amoun himself recognized. He once asked Antony: “I have labored more than you; why then is your name magnified above mine among men?” To which Antony replied: “Because I love God more than you do.”⁷ Perhaps this comparative obscurity was owing to lack of individuality or to positive dislike of self-assertion; the latter is rather implied in a remark made by Athanasius the Great recorded in the Letter of Ammonius the Bishop to Theophilos⁸: “And so I believe that many men well pleasing to God among the monks keep themselves altogether inconspicuous. For they (Theodore of Tabennesi and Pammo of

¹ No meeting of Amoun and Macarius seems to be on record, doubtless because Amoun died before Macarius had attained to eminence.
² See p. 53. Pambo was clearly a priest long before Macarius (ordained in that year).
³ Life of Antony, § 60. The story is repeated by Socrates, H.E., iv, 23; Palladius, Hist. Laus., ch. viii; Hist. Mon. (Greek), ch. xxix, 7; etc.
⁴ Hist. Mon. (Greek), ch. xxix, 3 f.
⁵ Id., 5 f.
⁷ Ἀποφθ. Ρατρ., Amoun Nitriotes, 1.
Antinoe) were obscure, as also the blessed Amoun and the holy Theodore in the Mount of Nitria. Amoun is commemorated by the Greek Church on October fourth; but by the Coptic Church he seems to have been utterly forgotten—unless he is to be identified with Ammonius the Solitary, commemorated on Bashans twentieth (= May fifteenth).

In Amoun we have an example of the transition from asceticism to monasticism even more striking than in Antony himself. Antony did not marry and passed from normal life into the ranks of professed “village ascetics” before he took to the desert. Amoun, as we have seen, lived an ascetic life for eighteen years while living in normal surroundings—and this though he was married—before he retired to the Mount of Nitria as a solitary. If we compare Amoun’s chronology with that of Antony, there can be little doubt but that he must have been largely influenced by the latter. In personal asceticism, indeed, Amoun need have owed nothing to Antony, since ascetic practices were already widely prevalent and professed ascetics common. To some extent also he shows originality, for he combined the married and the ascetic life, states which were ordinarily regarded as incompatible. But we cannot doubt that when Amoun took the decisive step of separating from his wife and retiring to the desert in or before 315 A.D. he was directly imitating Antony’s example, which by that time must have become famous all over Christian Egypt.

Amoun was certainly the first monk in the desert of Nitria. Palladius, as we have seen, stated on excellent authority that when the ascetic settled in “the inner part of the desert of Nitria, there were as yet no monasteries there”; and the author of the Historia monachorum was informed that “he was the first of the monks to occupy the nitriae.” Like Antony he began his monastic life as a mere solitary. It was “while he was alone in the nitriae” that the hydrophobia was brought to him for healing; and from the anecdote of the water jar we gather that he was visited, apparently as a holy man, by people from the village (Nitria or Pernoudj)—indeed, Amoun himself declared that he needed the water jar to supply “those who came” to him. Residence in the desert gradually won for the solitary fame as a holy man, and this reputation attracted visitors, the devout, the curious, and so forth. In a country like Egypt there is but a step between the holy man and the miracle-worker; and so we find the afflicted brought to Amoun for cure. Nor can it have been long before admiring imitators began to settle round about Amoun’s dwelling and to submit themselves to his direction. Socrates, our sole authority, summarizes the whole early history of the Mount in the sentence, “very many imitated the

1 μακάριος, i.e., “departed.”
2 Synax. Constant., ed. Delahaye, col. 107 f. On Dec. 7 an Amoun, Bishop (sic) of Nitria, is commemorated (op. cit., col. 284): probably both commemorations refer to one person and the title is a mere slip for “Father” or some equivalent. The only other reference to Nitria as an episcopal see is in the “Patriarch’s Map” quoted by

Pococke, Description of the East, i, p. 279; but probably no such see ever existed.
3 Page 46.
5 H.E., iv, 23.
life of Amoun, and gradually the Mount of Nitria (and that of Scetis) was filled with the multitude of the monks."

Whatever the details, a community developed in the Mount of Nitria, and Amoun was acknowledged as its head. The latter fact is established by the description of the saint in the Life of Pachomius¹ as “director (ἀρχιμονάζων) of the brethren in the Mount of Nitria,” while Sozomen² speaks of him as the “leader (ἀρχηγός) of the monasteries in those parts.” We shall see also that in the foundation of Cellia Amoun appears definitely as the director of the monks at the Mount of Nitria; and his authoritative position seems to have been recognized by the great Saint Athanasius himself who, when consulted by the saint respecting a question of moral purity which had disturbed the monks, replied in a short treatise which is still extant.³

If Amoun retired to the desert in or about 315 A.D., it is tolerably certain that he was imitating the example of Antony; but there is nothing to show that the two were previously acquainted. Possibly the relations between them commenced when Amoun, forced by circumstances to assume the headship of a community, turned for guidance to the experienced “Father of Monasticism.” The Historia monachorum,⁴ indeed, represents Antony as having sent for Amoun in consequence of a revelation from God, and as biddng him dwell in a remote spot from which he should not go far until the time of his death. This seems to limit the intercourse between the two to a single interview, and cannot be accepted; for Saint Athanasius speaks of Amoun as frequently visiting Antony.⁵

We may infer that Antony exercised a strong moulding influence over the nascent community. Fortunately a definite instance of this is on record.⁶ “Abba Antonius once came to the Mount of Nitria to visit Abba Amoun; and after they were met together Abba Amoun said to him: ‘Since through your prayers the brethren are multiplied, and some of them wish to build cells⁷ afar off in order that they may be at peace; at what distance from those which are here do you advise that the cells should be built?’ Antony answered: ‘Let us take food at the ninth hour and then go forth and pass through the desert and consider the place.’ And when they had journeyed through the desert until the sun began to go down, Abba Antonius said to him: ‘Let us pray, and raise up the cross in this place, that those who wish to do so may build here, and that the monks who come thence, when they visit the monks here, may eat their little morsel at the ninth hour, and so visit them; and who set out from here may do likewise and so remain undistracted while they visit one another.’ Now the distance⁸ is twelve miles.” The settlement thus founded is

---

¹ Ch. 1 (Ada SS., May iii, Appendix, p. 26*). In the corresponding Coptic (Zoëga, Cat., No. xlv) Amoun is called “the Father of the brethren in the Mount of Pernoudj.”
² H.E., 1, 14.
³ Migne, P.G., xxvi, col. 1169 f. The treatise is De nocturnis emissionibus. It is, however, not certain that the Amoun to whom this work is addressed is he of Nitria.
⁴ Greek version, ch. xxix, 7 f.
⁵ Life of Antony, § 60.
⁶ Ἀγορθ. Patr., Antony, xxxiv.
⁷ κολλία.
⁸ I.e., between the Mount of Nitria and Cellia.
undoubtedly Cellia—which owed its origin therefore to both Amoun and Antony. This passage is important, not merely as showing how greatly the community at the Mount of Nitria had grown even in Amoun’s lifetime, but as witnessing to Antony’s direct interest in the new monastic center and to the authority which (it is implied) Amoun exercised over the monks, who could not found a new colony without Amoun’s consent. How far Amoun’s authority extended we cannot say; but it is noteworthy that a monk, sent by his “father” from Scetis, appealed to Amoun for advice—as though Scetis also in its early days acknowledged the sovereignty of the great settlement at the Mount of Nitria.

3. Associates of Amoun at the Mount of Nitria

Our information concerning Amoun is scanty, though not unimportant; and we can learn little as to the mode of life and organization at this early period in the history of the Mount of Nitria. Something, however, may be added to the picture by reference to certain of the chief monks who were contemporary with or directly followed Amoun.

The first place is naturally due to Theodore, the only personal disciple of Amoun known to us. He is mentioned in the Life of Pachomius as “Theodore whom Amoun had as the companion of his life,” and was still alive in 355 when Ammonius, the future bishop, was sent by Theodore of Tabennesi to the Mount of Nitria. Saint Athanasius, as we have seen, distinguishes him as the “holy” (or “chaste”), and speaks of him with Amoun as one of the less-known saints of God; and since Amoun alone is there spoken of as the “departed” (παραξύνομος), Theodore was presumably still alive in 363. He is probably identical with the Theodore, the companion of Abba Or, concerning whom the following anecdote is related: “They used tell of Abba Or and Abba Theodore that while they were using clay for their cell, they said to one another: ‘If God should visit us now, what should we do?’ And they wept, and leaving the clay, retired each to his cell.”

Agatho, many of whose sayings are recorded, is once closely associated with Amoun, the two being in the habit of selling their vessels (?baskets) and making their purchases without an unnecessary word.

Palladius devotes a chapter to another monk, Nathanael, whose story throws a little light on the early history of the Mount of Nitria. This monk had lived more than thirty-seven years at the Mount and died fifteen years before the arrival of Palladius in 390. Consequently he must have joined the community before 338, perhaps during the lifetime of Amoun himself. Palladius saw his cell, but says that it was then uninhabited, being

---

1 See also Tillemont, Mémoires, vii, 157.
2 Apophth. Patr., Amoun Nitriotes, iii.
3 On the early dependence of Scetis on the Mount of Nitria, see p. 66.
4 § 21 (Ada SS., May iii, Appendix, p. 70*).
5 § 21 (id., p. 355).
6 Apophth. Patr., Or. 1 (cf. viii).
7 Lit. “casting clay into their cell”—i.e., using mud
8 (as commonly in Egypt) for mortar. For the variant Latin version of Pelagius see Migne, P.G., lxxv, col. 438, note 28.
THE MONASTIC SETTLEMENT AT THE MOUNT OF NITRIA

"too near the world," for it was built at a period when "the anchorets were few." He relates that Nathanael was tempted by the devil to leave this cell and to build another "nearer the village" in which he dwelt for some months. But when the devil appeared, boasting of his success, Nathanael returned to his original dwelling and for the remaining thirty-seven years of his life could never be induced to cross the threshold.

Pior¹ must be ranked as one of the earliest settlers at the Mount of Nitria, though our authorities are not consistent in the chronological data they afford. According to the Latin Verba seniorum² he left home at an early age to join Antony with whom he lived for a "few years." At the age of twenty-five, he determined, with Antony's approval, to become a solitary, and settled at a spot between Nitria and the desert of Scetis (probably in the neighborhood of Cellia). Here he dug a well, resolving that of whatever quality the water might prove to be, he would use no other. In fact, the water was found to be so bitter that Pior's visitors used to bring their own water with them rather than share their host's supply; yet the anchoret lived for thirty years in the same place, using his own well, and living on a morsel of bread and five olives a day.

When he left home, Pior had vowed never to behold any of his kindred again, but thirty years or more after that time his sister heard that he was still alive and would not be content until she had seen him. Having vainly sent her children to beg her brother to visit her, she invoked the aid of Antony, who directed Pior to grant his sister's request. Pior, being forced to obey, went only as far as the door of his sister's house—and kept his eyes closed throughout the interview which followed.

Palladius³ does not connect Pior with Antony in any way, and, in the story of the interview between brother and sister, alleges that it was the bishop (? of Hermopolis Parva) whose aid was invoked and who caused the seniors at the Mount of Nitria to send Pior to his sister. Moreover, this was fifty years after Pior had left home. Palladius gives essentially the same account of Pior's well (adding that after his death none of the monks who sought to rival his achievement by dwelling in the same place were able to hold out for longer than six months), and relates that on one occasion the ascetic by his prayers caused water to flow in a well which was being dug by Moses the Libyan and his companions. We read also that Pior used to walk about while he ate, and that, when asked why he did so, he explained that he wished to avoid any feeling of corporeal satisfaction.⁴

As Tillemont⁵ has pointed out, Palladius and the Verba seniorum disagree as to the time which passed between Pior's departure from home and his meeting with his sister. It is possible (as the historian suggests) that Palladius has made a serious slip and that his

¹ Coptic, Pior (like so many Egyptian monastic names, is of purely pagan origin) = "the (man) of Horus"; just as Piamoun = "the (man) of Amoun"; Petubastes = "he who (is) of Bast"; or Pachomius = "he who is of Khnum."
² Rosweyd, Vilae patrum, iii, p. 503, No. 31.
³ Hist. Laus., ch. xxxix.
⁵ Mémoires, viii, 804 f.
"fifty years" really represent Pior's age at the time of the meeting; since such a correction would bring the two versions into virtual agreement. Nevertheless Tillemont prefers to accept Palladius' statement as it stands together with the two references to Antony in the *Verba seniorum*, thus making Pior become Antony's disciple in 305 and placing the interview between brother and sister in 355—the latest date possible, if Antony really intervened in the matter.

This view is open to serious criticism. For Pior seems to have settled at the Mount of Nitria directly after leaving Antony, when he had been a monk for "a few years" only, and if Pior became a monk in about 305, his retirement to Nitria would have to be dated about 310—before Amoun himself had taken to the desert. Consequently it seems safer to accept the clear and detailed statement of the *Verba seniorum*, and, dating the famous interview slightly before about 355, to make Pior become Antony's disciple in about 325 and a monk of Nitria before about 330.

Ammonius in his important *Letter to Theophilus* mentions Pior with Pambo, as one of the priests or seniors (πρεσβύτεροι) of the Mount at the time (355 A.D.) of his own arrival at the place, and describes him as having received the "grace of healing from the Lord." In the same document (written apparently between 390 and 393) the monk is termed "sainted" or "departed"—the epithet showing that he was dead before that period. But two pieces of evidence suggest that his decease had taken place considerably earlier: (1) the *Verba seniorum* asserts that he lived for thirty years until his death in the place where he had dug his well, indicating 360 as the approximate date of his death; (2) the absence of his name from Palladius' account of Melania's visit to Nitria and from his list of notable monks banished in the Lucian Persecution of 374 A.D. shows that he was no longer alive at that crisis.

Or and Pambo

Not less characteristic than Pior among the early monks of the Mount are the Fathers Or and Pambo. Palladius notices both immediately after Amoun, perhaps implying that they were amongst the earliest "imitators of the life of Amoun."

Abba Or

Little is known of the life of Or, save that he died at some date between the visit of Melania in 373-374 and the arrival of Palladius at Mount Nitria in 390. In the *Apophthegmata patrum* he is associated with Abba Theodore—probably Amoun's disciple—and with Abba Sisoes. Since the latter consults him as a senior and is known to have retired from Scetis to the eastern desert about 356, Or must have been in Nitria many years before that date. A disciple also of his, named Paul, is twice mentioned. Palladius heard a warm
account of his excellence, both from the brethren at the Mount of Nitria and from Melania, who had seen him; the former asserted "in their discourses" that this paragon "never told a lie, never swore, never cursed anyone, and never spoke without necessity." 1 A characteristic saying of his was that "the crown of a monk is humility." 2 Another recommends a practical application of this precept: "in every temptation do not blame anyone, but thyself alone, saying, 'Because of my transgressions this befalls me.'" 3 His teaching on slander is worthy of quotation: "If thou hast spoken against thy brother and thy conscience pricketh thee, go and make repentance to him and say: 'I have slandered thee'; and give him assurance no longer to offend against him. For slander is the death of the soul." 4

Pambo (Coptic, Pamo) 5 died at the age of seventy in 373–374, as Melania informed Palladius, 6 and was therefore born at the beginning of the fourth century. Everything points to his having retired to the Mount of Nitria at a very early period; and he may be regarded as one of the first to join Amoun there. He is indeed classed by Rufinus 7 with other "Nitrian" monks as a disciple of Antony; but this need not mean more than that Pambo (like Amoun or Macarius the Great) was influenced by Antony. As much is implied by two of the Apophthegmata 8 which bear witness to the acquaintance between the two.

A striking incident preserved by Socrates 9 belongs to the beginning of his monastic career. Being illiterate, he arranged with one of the brethren to teach him the Psalms. The lesson began with Psalm xxxix; but as soon as Pambo had heard the first verse ("I said: I will take heed to my ways that I offend not with my tongue"), he exclaimed that before he learned more he would go away and put that verse into practice. Six months later the teacher, meeting Pambo, asked why he had not revisited him? Pambo replied: "Because I have not yet learned to act up to that verse." Silence, one of the recognized monastic virtues, 10 was indeed characteristic of Pambo: an anecdote 11 which may be anachronistic, but which is certainly otherwise genuine, relates that when the Archbishop Theophilus 12 visited Scetis (sic), the brethren urged Pambo to say something to the visitor. Pambo replied: "If he is not profited by my silence, neither can he be profited by my speech."

Illiterate though he was at the beginning of his career, Pambo seems to have been ordained priest before 340 A.D. 13—a striking testimony to the early date of his settlement that Agatho carried a stone in his mouth for three years until he had learned to be silent. 11 Id., Theophilus, ii.

12 Since Pambo died in 373–374 and Theophilus became Patriarch in 385, the mention of Theophilus must be spurious.

13 Macarius the Great, himself ordained priest in 340, once "went up from Scetis to the Mount of Nitria to the Offering (Mass) of Abba Pambo" (Apophth. Patr., Macarius Aegyptius, ii); i.e., Pambo was ordained earlier than Macarius.
at Mount Nitria. As we have seen, he is mentioned along with Pior as "a servant of God who had received the grace of healing from the Lord," and as one of the more prominent priests or seniors at the Mount of Nitria (this was in 355): Rufinus\(^1\) classes him with the Macarii and Isidorus as one of the "masters of the desert"; and Jerome, writing to Eustochium,\(^3\) names him with Macarius and Isidorus as constituting a supreme council which pronounced dread sentence upon an avaricious monk.

His influence extended beyond the borders of the desert. Athanasius singled him out for special commendation, and even invited him down to Alexandria—doubtless to use his influence, as he used Antony's, to check the rising Arian heresy. Socrates\(^4\) relates that on this occasion the monk chanced to see an actress or dancer, and straightway burst into tears. Asked the cause, he replied, "Two things moved me: first, the lost state of that woman; and second, that I have no such zeal towards pleasing God as she has to please wicked men."

Such a man must have done much to consolidate the new-built system of monasticism and to establish a body of custom which would serve as an informal rule for the community; thus a Coptic version of the Lausiac History alleges that he "introduced a custom among the brethren in Egypt and Pernoudj, that each of them should contribute an ardeb of wheat every year for the relief of the needy."\(^4\) Probably his example and mode of life were more effectual than formal regulations. He insisted on monastic poverty: "A monk's clothing," he once said, "ought to be such that if he should cast it out of his cell for three days, no one would take it away"—a precept which was recalled in reproof of the monks of a later generation by Abba Isaac, Priest of Cellia.\(^5\) Like Abba Or, he was remarkable for his humility. Of him it is said that for three years he continued praying God not to glorify him upon the earth, "and God so glorified him that no one could look upon his countenance because of the glory which shone there."\(^7\) Antony is reported by Abba Poemen to have said of him that "through the fear of God he caused the spirit of God to dwell in him"; and the same Abba Poemen observed three outward virtues in him specially deserving commendation, fasting every day until evening, silence, and much manual labor.\(^9\)

Palladius derived his information concerning Amoun from Arsisius and "many seniors besides" who had known the ascetic.\(^9\) Arsisius, as Palladius' context almost certainly implies, was the chief of the college of eight priests at the time of the author's sojourn at the Mount of Nitria; probably the unnamed seniors are those associated with Arsisius.

---

1 Apologia ad Anastasium, 11, 12; cf. H.E., 11, 4, 8.
3 H.E., iv, 23.
4 Zöega, Cat., No. lxxi; Amélineau, De hist. laus., p. 96.
5 Apophth. Patr., Pambo, vi.
6 Id., Isaac Presbyter, vii.
7 Id., Pambo, i.
8 Id., Poemen, lxxv.
9 Id., Poemen, cl.
10 Hist. Laus., ch. vii.
the Great higher up in the same chapter, Petubastes, Asion, Cronius, and Sarapion. Of most of these little is known, though Arsiusius and Sarapion are also mentioned in connection with Melania’s visit, and some facts concerning Cronius are available.

Cronius (otherwise Cronides) was one hundred and ten years old at the time of the tour described in the Historia monachorum (about 394–395 A.D.), and was therefore born about 285. He told Palladius that when comparatively young he fled from the monastery to which he belonged and joined Antony at Pispir (early in the fourth century), where he acted as Antony’s Greek interpreter. After dwelling a while with Antony, he went north to “the Monasteries of Alexandria,” by which possibly the Mount of Nitria is meant. If he is identical with Chronius, some curious information about his settlement at the Mount of Nitria may be added. He was, says Palladius, a native of a village called Phoenicé, near by the desert, and starting from this point he measured off fifteen thousand steps with his right foot, and at the spot thus reached dug a well and there settled. After a few years “he was accounted worthy of the priesthood of the brethren who had gathered round him, being about two hundred men.” During the sixty years of his priesthood he never left the desert, and never ate bread which he had not earned by his own labor.

Cronius is chiefly important for our purpose as an instance of the strong Antonian influence to which Amoun’s settlement was subject; not only did Antony himself encourage and advise, but many of his disciples actually made their way to the new center. Saint Athanasius, too, records the visit of brethren from Nitria to Antony immediately after Amoun’s death.

A famous disciple of Cronius, Isaac, the Priest of Cellia, will be noticed in a future chapter.

No notice of the early monks of Nitria can be adequate without mention of Macarius of Alexandria, though indeed the fame of this saint is out of all proportion to the concrete facts known concerning him.

Macarius the Alexandrian, or Politicus, was a native of Alexandria and possibly of Greek origin. He lived for three years after the arrival of Palladius in the desert and was then nearly one hundred years of age. Since Palladius retired to Cellia (where the saint dwelt) in 390–391, Macarius died in 393–394, and if we reckon his age at death as ninety-seven years, the accounts of him given by Palladius (Hist. Laus., ch. xxvii) and in the Hist. Mon. (Greek), ch. xxx = (Latin), ch. xxix, are mostly miraculous anecdotes useful only as showing the high repute in which he was held. In the Apophth. Patr. many anecdotes concerning him are wrongly credited to his namesake, the Egyptian.

1 Hist. Laus., ch. xlvii.
2 Greek version, ch. xxvi.
3 Hist. Laus., ch. xxi.
4 On this question see Butler, L.H., ii, p. 224.
5 Hist. Laus., ch. xlvii.
6 Photius, as we have seen, was reputed a disciple of Antony. Others were Jacob (Palladius, Hist. Laus., ch. xlvii), and the elder Hierax (id., Dial. de vita Job. Chrys., § xvii).
7 Life of Antony, § 60.
8 Ch. viii, § 8.
9 "Sarapion" in the Life of Macarius (A.M.G., xxv, p. 105) assigns this age to Macarius the Great, though Palladius distinctly says he died at the age of 90. No doubt the Coptic author has conflated the two saints (cf. Appendix iii, p. 466).
his birth may be dated about 296–297. One of the *Apopthegmata patrum*\(^1\) records an incident of his boyhood: “Abba Paphnutius, the disciple of Abba Macarius, related that the old man used to say, ‘When I was a boy, I used to feed cattle with the other boys; and they went off to steal figs. And as they were running away, they dropped one; and I took it and ate it. And when I remember this, I sit and weep.’”

Beyond this very boyish anecdote we hear nothing of Macarius’ early life save that he was a tradesman, a seller of sweetmeats (*παγιγιμαρά*),\(^2\) or, according to the Syriac version, “one of those who sold dried fruits and wine”; nor do we know how he came to adopt the monastic life. On the whole, the evidence seems to show that it was not he, but Macarius the Great of Scetis,\(^3\) who was regarded as Antony’s disciple, and we may therefore presume that his first essay in monasticism was at the Mount of Nitria.

There is nothing definite to fix the date of his retirement to the desert. Butler\(^4\) suggests about 335; but an earlier date is by no means improbable, in view of his adventure at Tabennesi recorded by Palladius.\(^5\) Having heard a high account of the fasting of the Tabennesiotes, Macarius went thither in disguise and sought admission to the monastery. Pachomius at first refused to admit him on the score of his age, but withdrew his objection when the saint remained for seven days outside the gate without touching food. When Lent began, the Tabennesiotes commenced to fast each according to his ability, but Macarius would take neither food nor water during the whole season, living only on a few cabbage leaves enjoyed on Sundays, while he remained standing through the whole Forty Days in a corner.\(^6\) This achievement betrayed his identity to Pachomius\(^7\) who dismissed him with compliments. Since Pachomius died (according to Ladeuze) about 346, the visit to Tabennesi must have taken place before that date. But it is also clear that the fame of Macarius was already widespread—fame which can hardly have been built up in ten years. Consequently a date about 330, or even earlier, for his retirement to the desert is probable.

Macarius, at any rate in earlier life, fell into a good deal of extravagance in asceticism, prompted in part by a desire to “break the records” of others.\(^8\) Besides the Lenten contest with the Tabennesiotes above recorded, Palladius says that this ascetic, learning that the monks of the rival order ate nothing cooked throughout Lent, abstained from all food

---

1 *Macarius Aegyptius*, x. The mention of Paphnutius as disciple of Macarius makes it practically certain that this anecdote belongs to the Alexandrian (who may easily have tended cattle on the outskirts of the city). Tillemont (*Mémoires*, viii, 576f.) attributes the incident to Macarius the Homicide, who was a cowherd near Lake Marea (Maryót) before he fled to the desert (Palladius, *Hist. Laus.*, ch. xiv); but this Macarius is not known to have been connected with Paphnutius.

2 Palladius, *Hist. Laus.*, ch. xvii. The Coptic Life (*A.M.G.*, xxv, p. 256) circumstantially describes him as an actor (*mêcôl*) in his youth, but this assertion seems to be quite unsupported.

3 On this subject see pp. 67f.

4 *L.H.*, II, p. cl.

5 *Hist. Laus.*, ch. xviii.

6 Makrizi (ed. Wüstenfeld, *Gesch. d. Copt.*, ch. viii, §67, p. 110) distorts this account of Macarius’ Lenten observance (adding old shoes to his diet) and credits the whole performance to Macarius the Great.

7 Further evidence for acquaintance between Macarius and Pachomius is furnished by *Apopth. Patr.*, Macarius Politicus, ii.

8 For the examples which follow see Palladius, *Hist. Laus.*, ch. xviii.
preparing for fire for seven years. At another time he sought to conquer sleep, and with this end in view remained for twenty days in the open without sleep until he nearly went mad. The best-known example of this tendency, however, remains to be told. Having killed a mosquito which had bitten him, he spent six months naked by way of penance in the “marsh” of Scetis, where the mosquitoes “pierce the hides even of wild pigs.”

A more attractive feature is that love for the desert with which the Historia monachorum credits him. It was this, no doubt, which led him to go out to find the mortuary garden of Jannes and Jambres, the wizards who contended with Moses. As Palladius tells the story, these magicians in the days of their power had built a tomb, buried a great treasure, and planted trees there. Macarius did not know the way to the spot, but traversed the desert, guiding himself by the stars. At the end of each mile, he set up a reed to guide him on his way back; but when near his journey’s end after nine days of travelling, he found that the devil had collected all the reeds and placed them under his head while he slept. Undaunted, he pushed on and reached the garden which he entered despite the protests of seventy demons in the form of ravens. Having satisfied his curiosity (he found nothing more interesting than a well with a bronze bucket and iron chain, and some shrivelled pomegranates) he returned home, nourished when his provisions failed by a buffalo cow which was miraculously sent to relieve him.

Perhaps it was the same love of the desert which prompted Macarius to provide himself with four different cells in various parts of the desert, at the Mount of Nitria, at Cellia, at Scetis, and “towards the southwest.” One of these, in which he received visitors, was comparatively spacious, but another was so small that he could not stretch out his legs in it, while the remaining cells were without windows: in these he used to pass Lent in darkness.

His character, moreover, was not lacking in humanity. A famous anecdote records that a bunch of grapes was once given him. Unwilling to enjoy them himself, he sent them to a sick brother, who in turn sent them to another solitary; in this way they passed from hand to hand until they reached Macarius once more. Again, having visited a certain anchoret and finding him sick, Macarius inquired what he wished to eat. The hermit unreasonably demanded a roll of fine bread, yet the saint did not hesitate to journey to Alexandria to find means to satisfy him. It may be presumed to have some foundation in fact. It is noteworthy that trees were used by ancient Egyptians to embellish sepulchral monuments—as has been demonstrated by the Egyptian Expedition of The Metropolitan Museum of Art at Dér el Bahri.

1 The penance was to punish his outburst of anger, and not dictated by remorse for taking life; for shortly after we are told that when bitten by an asp, he tore the creature in two, but not that any penance followed.
2 Latin version, ch. xxix.
3 Loc. cit. The Hist. Mon. (Greek) also relates this episode (ch. xxviii, 5), but conflates it with the adventure of Macarius the Egyptian of Scetis with the two naked monks found by him in an oasis (Apophth. Patr., Macarius Aegyptius, 11).
4 Palladius heard this story from Macarius himself, and
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

Socrates assures us that in dealing with those he met he showed himself bright and cheerful, leading the young by pleasant paths to follow the disciplined life.¹ When asked by Pachomius whether he should punish unruly and disorderly monks, he replied: "Chastise them and judge them justly, but do not judge those who are without." He seems, in fact, to have laid stress on the sinfulness of judging others; for when his disciple Paphnutius demanded a word of instruction, he gave him the precept, "Hurt no man, and condemn no man. Do this, and thou shalt be saved."²

These varied anecdotes enable us to form some idea of the manner of man Macarius was. His excessive austerities suggest that enthusiasm and impetuosity were salient features in his character; if so, his endurance and constancy were no less well marked. On one occasion he excommunicated two offending monks in Scetis,³ and on being reprimanded by Macarius the Great, made haste to show his penitence. He was liable, therefore, to act impulsively, but not reluctant to confess himself in the wrong. With the faults and virtues of a generous character, he combined cheerfulness, justice, and charity which go far to justify the esteem in which he was held.

Sozomen⁴ states that he was ordained priest "some time after" his namesake, the Egyptian (i.e., after 340 A.D.). We do not know, therefore, when he became priest and superior of Cellia, except that he seems to have attained that rank before the Arian Persecution of 374 and after 355, when Ammonius⁵ shows him to have been at the Mount of Nitria, and refers to Isidorus⁶ (perhaps the Hospitaller) as "priest of the anchorites," that is, of Cellia.

Palladius attributes to his master a great number of miracles. The most famous is the healing of the blind hyena cub of which Palladius heard from Paphnutius, the disciple of Macarius.⁷ One day a hyena beat on the door of the saint's cell with her head until he opened, and then laid her blind cub at his feet. Perceiving what ailed the creature, Macarius spat upon its eyes and prayed over it; whereupon it received sight. On the next day the grateful hyena brought to the cell a large sheepskin which the saint afterwards presented to Melania. Palladius also reports many miracles of healing⁸ of persons who were possessed, a paralyzed maiden of Thessalonica, and even a village priest who was immoral and punished with cancer. These latter two were performed while Palladius was in the desert and the historian therefore practically vouches for them. There is no reason, however,}

¹ H.E., iv, 23.
² Apophth. Patr., Macarius Aegyptius, xxviii. The mention of Paphnutius again suggests that this should be assigned to Macarius of Alexandria. A notable application of this saying is found in Apophth. Patr., Paphnutius, i. Paphnutius, having lost his way, passed near the village (probably of Pernoudj) and there saw certain persons engaged in sin. Instead of cursing them he stood still and prayed, whereupon an angel appeared with a sword and declared that by that sword all they who judged their brethren should perish. But because Paphnutius had refrained from judging and had prayed for his own sins his name should be written in the book of the living.
³ Id., Macarius Aegyptius, xxii.
⁴ H.E., iii, 14, 3.
⁵ Letter to Theophilus, § 24 (Acta SS., May iii, Appendix, p. 71*).
⁶ But this may be Isidorus, Priest of Scetis, on whom see p. 101.
⁷ Hist. Laus., ch. xviii.
⁸ Id., ch. xviii.
to doubt the good faith of Palladius. He does not claim universal success for Macarius who, he admits, could not overcome the delusions of Valens¹ who was only cured by being put in chains for a year; nor does he report all miracles indiscriminately—he mentions a case of raising the dead² merely as a rumor. A belief in miracles was then almost universal and Palladius probably mistook (as any of his contemporaries would have done) the real nature of the diseases and considered miracles what we would now attribute to natural causes.

We shall come in due course to the part played by Macarius in the Arian controversy, and the close of his life.

It would be possible considerably to prolong this account of the earlier worthies at the Mount of Nitria, but the personages selected above for description illustrate adequately what manner of men were they who aided or carried on the work begun by Amoun.

¹ Hist. Laus., ch. xxv. ² Id., ch. xvii.
CHAPTER IV

THE FOUNDATION AND EARLY HISTORY OF SCETIS

1. Scetis before the Fourth Century

According to the Arabic Synaxarium, Scetis was not unnoticed during the sojourn of the Holy Family in Egypt. Under the date Bashans twenty-fourth, it is stated that the wanderers after leaving Samannûd and Bikha Iyesus, "came to the River of the West" and beheld the Gebel en Natrûn from afar. And the Lady (Mary) blessed it, for she knew what there should be there of angelic service. Thence they proceeded to El Ashmunên. . . ." Another narrative postulates a more intimate association. "Then they journeyed till they reached Gebel en Natrûn; and the Lord blessed its four corners and said: 'In this gebel there shall be many a monastery and church, populous with monks and all that desire to serve the Lord, and there shall be there a people pleasing unto me, and there shall come men from all distances to be blessed there. There will I not suffer any beasts to dwell; but it shall be blessed, and a place for my holiness forever; and it shall be called Wâdi Habib or "Balance of Hearts."""

It is alleged that during the Diocletianic Persecution, some of the Christians fled to "the desert of Shiêt." But probably this is a mere anachronism.

The only other reference to Scetis earlier than the fourth century is the bare allusion to the place and district in the geographical work of Ptolemy which has already been considered.

2. The Early Life of Macarius the Great

The true history of Scetis begins in the fourth century, and is inseparable from the life of Macarius the Great (Pl. IV, A).

1 Ed. Basset, p. 1091. I have not been able to find any other authority for this legend, though such probably exists.
2 i.e., the Rosetta Branch of the Nile.
3 Synonymous with the "desert of Scetis" (see p. 29).
4 Zacharias, Bishop of Sakhâ, On the Flight into Egypt (in Kitâb Miṣyâmar wa'agâb es saidâb el 'Adra Mi'âram, Cairo, 1902, p. 49). I owe both these references to the kindness of W. E. Crum.
5 Martyrdom of Apa Kradjôn, p. 2: see my New Texts, No. xx, Frag. i, verso, "Now when the holy Bishop heard the news of the persecution, he fled with all those who were with him to the desert of Shiêt."
THE FOUNDATION AND EARLY HISTORY OF SCETIS

The documents available for a reconstruction of this life are more numerous than helpful. Palladius gives an invaluable chronology, but little else; Rufinus contributes an account of the part played by him in the Arian Persecution of Lucius, but helps us little further; the *Historia monachorum* merely darkens counsel, alleging that Macarius Politicus (the Alexandrian) founded Scetis and that Macarius the Great lived at Cellia. Of Graeco-Roman documents the *Apopthegmata patrum* is certainly the most valuable, though in the alphabetical recension the redactor has probably attributed to Macarius the Great many anecdotes which relate to his namesake the Alexandrian.

The Coptic documents dealing with Saint Macarius are three: first, the *Virtues of Saint Macarius*—a series of edifying anecdotes and sayings akin to and partly identical with the *Apopthegmata*, but hardly of early date; second, *Apopthegms on Saint Macarius*, most of which are common to the Greek recension; third, a *Life of Saint Macarius*, attributed to Sarapion, Bishop of Thmuis. The real date and authorship of the last-named work remain obscure, but the *Life* is certainly not to be regarded as a primary or even an authentic work; its real value lies chiefly in the matter derived from local tradition or perhaps earlier works, and secondly in the picture which it affords of the saint as he appeared to later ages. Possibly both the first and third of these documents are in a literary sense dependent upon a lost Coptic work, *The Paradise of Shīt*, perhaps identical with *The Paradise of the Fathers* used by Zacharias of Sakhā in compiling the life of another worthy of Scetis, John the Little.

Palladius gives us a chronology of the life of Macarius, stating that he lived for ninety years and died just before the historian’s arrival in the desert, that is in 390 A.D. The saint was therefore born about the year 300.

The Coptic *Life*, the only document which gives any account of the saint’s earlier years, informs us that Macarius was the child of pious parents, his father being the priest of an unnamed village in the Delta. From this place they fled in consequence of certain false accusations which resulted in the confiscation of their property; “for at that time there was no government in their country.” Admonished by Abraham, who appeared in a vision, the priest settled at Jījbēr where by his industry he repaired his shattered fortunes. One night the old man, while sleeping in the church whither he had been carried in hope of recovery from a sickness, was visited by an angel who promised that a son should be

---

1 See Appendix III.
3 *Hist. Lasa*, ch. xvii, ad init. et ad fin.
4 Or possibly in 389. The slight uncertainty is negligible, and the round number is the more convenient.
5 *Apopth. Patr.*, Macarius Aegyptius, xxxvii, really belongs (as we have seen) to Macarius of Alexandria.

6 *A.M.G.*, xxv, pp. 49 f. The reference may well be to the revolts of Achilles (295–297); if so, the migration of the parents to Jījbēr appears to be a piece of genuine tradition.
7 Now Shabshir in the Province of Menyfyeh: see Anmelineau, *Geographie*, p. 188.
8 Possibly a survival of the pagan custom of healing by incubation. In Scetis the sick were sometimes brought into the church, but whether to secure attention for them, or to profit by the sanctity of the place, is not clear. See pp. 155 and 187.
born. This promise was fulfilled, the child being Macarius the Great. So exemplary was the boyhood of the saint, and so marked his devotion, that the clergy of the village caused him to be ordained *anagnostes* (reader); his parents, however, forced him into marriage. Like Amoun, the young ascetic would not (we are assured) associate with his wife, but took every opportunity to avoid her. In particular, having been ordained deacon soon after the marriage ceremony, he obtained his father’s leave to go with his laborers and camels to the desert of the natron (νηστεία λιμενος). It was, the biographer observes, customary for all the men of all the towns near Shiēt to go out with their camels to fetch the natron which they needed, in a single body, for fear of the barbarians who dwelt in the distant “mountain” (i.e., desert) but overran the country to the west of the river, kidnapping all whom they could overpower. Thus it was (says “Sarapion”) that Macarius came to be nicknamed the camel man.¹

On one occasion this convoy encamped for the night on “the summit of the rock up above the wādi.”² While Macarius was sleeping, an angel appeared in a vision, bade him look out over the valley spread below, and promised that his spiritual sons should possess that land. On his return home three days later the saint found his nominal wife stricken with a fever from which she died shortly after.

When his parents also died, Macarius was free to follow his own purpose in life and consulted an anchoret, who dwelt on the outskirts of the village, as to what steps he should take; for “no one yet lived in the inner desert except Antony.” On the advice of this recluse he decided to leave his native place and to settle as an anchoret near another village. As a preliminary, he gave away all his possessions.

The Coptic *Life* stands alone in this account of the exemplary boyhood and nominal marriage. But though we cannot check it, we may fairly look with suspicion on this narrative. Macarius was evidently of the hardy fellah type, and a robust, sturdy physique² is not usually accompanied by a holy and devout youth or by asceticism.

Our Greek sources do not say what caused this camel driver to betake himself to the ascetic life, but they confirm the Coptic *Life* in representing him as having lived for a time as a “village anchoret.” Two anecdotes in the *Apothegmata patrum* relate to this period. In the first³ we read that while Macarius was in Egypt he found a man plundering his goods, but instead of denouncing the robber, he aided him to load his beast, and consoled himself with the text: “We brought nothing into the world and it is certain that we can carry nothing out of it.” The second⁴ is of great importance. “Abba Macarius related concerning himself that, ‘when I was comparatively young and dwelt in a cell in Egypt, they seized me and made me a cleric in the village. But being unwilling to accept, I fled to

---

¹ *A.M.G.*, xxv, p. 56. On this matter see p. 64, and Appendix iii, p. 467.
² See p. 38.
³ In the VII century Macarius was pictured as “a tall old man with a light beard descending over his breast.” See *Hist. Patr.*, p. 253.
⁴ *Macarius Aegyptius*, xviii.
⁵ Id., 1 (the source of “Sarapion’s” narrative quoted above).
another place.’’ Macarius here says that he was ordained a ‘‘cleric’’; the Coptic Life asserts that he was ordained priest, having represented him as receiving the diaconate immediately after his alleged marriage. Here ‘‘Sarapion’’ is at fault. Palladius¹ shows clearly that Macarius became priest ten years after he had entered the desert, and the Apophthegmata confirm his statement.² Consequently the saint was ordained deacon at this unnamed village, and the Coptic Life is shown to be less authentic than some have supposed it.

Macarius continues his narrative as follows, detailing the circumstances of his retirement to Scetis: ‘‘There came to me a pious layman who used to receive my handiwork and minister to me. But it befell that through temptation a certain maiden in the village went astray. And being with child, she was asked who it was who had done this, and answered, ‘The anchoret.’ Then they went forth and took me with them into the village and hanged about my neck sooty pots and handles of pans, and led me round about through the village, beating me and saying: ‘This monk seduced our daughter. At him! At him!’ And they beat me until I was nearly killed. But there came one of the elders and said: ‘How long will you beat the strange monk?’ Now he who used to serve me followed behind me, ashamed. For they greatly mocked him, saying: ‘See the anchoret of whom you bare witness and what he has done!’ And the parents of the girl said: ‘We will not let him go until he has given a surety for her nurture.’ And they spake to my attendant, and he made himself surety for me. So I departed to my cell and gave him all the baskets I had in my cell, saying: ‘Sell them, and give my wife to eat.’ And I said in my heart: ‘Macarius, lo thou hast found for thyself a wife: thou must work a little more to nourish her.’ So I kept on working night and day and sending (the produce) to her. And when the time came for the unhappy one to give birth, she remained for many days tormented and did not bring forth. They said, therefore, to her: ‘What is this?’ And she said: ‘I know: it is because I falsely accused the anchoret and made a lying charge against him. For he is not to blame, but such and such a youth.’ Then he who ministered to me came rejoicing and said: ‘That maid was not able to bring forth until she confessed saying, ‘‘The anchoret is not to blame, but I lied concerning him.’’ And lo, the whole village seeks to come hither with praises to make repentance to thee.’ But when I heard this, lest the men should vex me, I rose up and fled hither to Scetis. This is the origin and the cause of my coming hither.’’

This vital episode is reproduced with some additions, immaterial for the most part, in the Coptic Life.³ But in one particular there is an important difference: in the Greek version Macarius flees directly from the village to Scetis to escape the praise of men, while in the Coptic he leaves the village only to settle in another until the ‘‘Cherubim with six wings’’ appears to him reproaching him with having forgotten the revelation made

¹ Hist. Laus., ch. xvii, ad init.
² See p. 66.
³ It is clear that directly or indirectly the Life borrowed this incident from the Apophthegmata.
to him in his youth, reminds him of his destiny, and assures him that the recent trial had been imposed as a punishment for his forgetfulness. The next night therefore the saint sets out and guided by the “Cherubim” reaches the Wādi ’n Natrūn in two days. No one can doubt that the explanation offered by the Greek is the more simple and natural.

From the foregoing outline it will be clear that “Sarapion,” the author of the Coptic Life, is obsessed by one dominant idea—that the foundation of Scetis was divinely preordained, and that all obstacles which threatened to thwart this purpose were removed. The story of Macarius is made parallel to that of Abraham: the birth of the saint is supernaturally foretold to the father as that of Isaac to Abraham; Scetis is revealed to him as Canaan was to Abraham; and like Abraham, Macarius left his own country at a divine behest to win a promised inheritance; and the desert valley is destined for the spiritual sons of the saint just as the “Promised Land” was to the offspring of the patriarch. Apart from other considerations, this parallelism creates some doubt as to the historical value of this part of the Life.

“Sarapion” is also at pains to explain why Macarius was known as the camel driver; but ingenious as his explanation is, it is clear that he is trying to smooth over a difficulty. The following anecdote shows what this difficulty was: “They used to say concerning Abba Macarius that if a brother approached him with fear, as a holy and great old man, he would say nothing to him. But if any of the brethren spoke to him as though making light of him, ‘Abba, when you were a camel driver and used to steal the natron and sell it, did not the guards beat you?’—If anyone spoke so to him, he would answer him gladly whatever he asked him.” The natural inference from this anecdote is that Macarius (like the Prophet Mohammed) was once a camel driver, and perhaps none too scrupulous.

“Sarapion,” with his preconception that Macarius was the foreordained founder of Scetis, felt bound to explain away so indecorous an episode in his hero’s career.

The Apophthegmata, therefore, are more trustworthy than the Coptic Life as a source for the early history of Macarius, the historical facts of which may be summarized as follows: Macarius was born in or about 300 A.D. and was the son of refugees settled at Jjbēr. He became a camel driver (probably when a youth) and visited the Wādi ’n Natrūn as a carrier of natron. For reasons unknown, he determined to follow the ascetic life and became a “village anchoret” as Antony had been before him. Here he was ordained deacon; but being unwilling to accept clerical duties he fled to the desert of Scetis.

---

1 Apophth. Patr., Macarius Aegyptius, xxxxi. Tillemont, Mémoires, viii, 575, improbably assigns this anecdote to Macarius the Homicide, an obscure personage.
2 In support of this see Apophth. Patr., Macarius Aegyptius, xi, where the saint kicks the camel to make it get up: this is the regular practice with Egyptian camel drivers at the present day.
3 There is nothing surprising in this. Not to mention Moses the Robber and others, Abba Apollo, variously located at Cellia and at Scetis, became a monk after committing a hideous outrage (Apophth. Patr., Apollo, ii). Thefts of natron seem to have been common at all times, and the “guards” are again mentioned in Apophth. Patr., Macarius Aegyptius, xxxiii, and A.M.G., xxv, p. 296. Writing from the Wādi ’n Natrūn, Feb. 22, 1910, Palmer-Jones says, “A few nights back our garrison of three mounted police captured fifteen camels belonging to the Bedawin who had been stealing salt from the Soda Company.”
3. The Foundation and Development of Scetis

In his chronology of the life of Macarius, Palladius\(^1\) says that the saint retired to the desert at the age of thirty, was ordained priest after ten years, and lived there for sixty years (until 390 A.D.). Consequently the date of the first occupation of Scetis may be definitely fixed at 330.

The right of Macarius to be regarded as the pioneer of the settlement has probably never been disputed, but it may be as well to quote the evidence. Cassian\(^2\) speaks of Macarius as he “who first found a means of inhabiting the wilderness of Scetis”; the Historia monachorum indeed confused him with Macarius of Alexandria, but adds that he was “the first who established a monastery in Scetis”;\(^3\) and later writers universally acknowledge the saint’s claims.\(^4\)

Greek sources tell us nothing concerning Macarius’ earliest days in Scetis; but the Coptic Life, which in this instance certainly reproduces ancient and probably trustworthy local tradition, partly fills the gap. “When,” we read, “Abba Macarius had spent a number of days in examining the desert while journeying through it, he came to the beginning of the ‘marsh,’ near the place of the ‘Anaballous.’”\(^5\) Here he settled in order to be within reach of water, and hollowed out a cave in the rock in which he dwelt for “some days.” “Sarapion” adds that it was in the region “where the barbarians killed the soldiers,” that is, where Moses the Robber and his companion monks were slain.\(^6\)

There is nothing to show how long Macarius dwelt in this spot, but its proximity to the place where the “merchants” extracted the natron caused him sooner or later to abandon his dwelling and to retire for the sake of peace to the “desert parts.”\(^7\) Here on the summit of a rock “situated to the south” he hollowed out two caves, one of which served him as an oratory.\(^8\) His days were spent in prayer and in weaving baskets which he bartered with the “merchants” for the necessaries of life.

In this second place of abode (apparently at no great distance from the first) Macarius seems to have dwelt for many years, and in the neighborhood the first monastic community grew up. There is no evidence as to the manner in which the brotherhood was formed; but analogy makes it probable that the nucleus was constituted by a group of admirers and imitators who gathered round Macarius, just as others had done round Antony.

\(^1\) Hist. Laus., ch. xvii.
\(^2\) Coll., xv, 3, 1 (“qui habitacionem Scythiotaicæ solituidinis primum invenit”).
\(^3\) Greek version, ch. xxx, ὁς ἐν τῷ Σκῆτῳ πρῶτοι μοναχοὶ ἐπηγεν.
\(^4\) E.g., “Pshoi” in the Life of Maximus and Domitius (A.M.G., xxv, p. 263) calls him “the first shoot of this vine... that is Shiēt.”
\(^5\) A.M.G., xxv, p. 76. On the “marsh” and the “Anaballous” see p. 34.
\(^6\) A.M.G., xxv, p. 76. For the equivalence of “soldiers” and monks see id., pp. 65, 136. On the historical event referred to see p. 156.
\(^7\) I.e., in the more arid part of the Wādī ’n Natrūn, at some little distance from the “marsh.”
\(^8\) A.M.G., xxv, p. 76. Was this “rock” the scene of the portent told of by Abba Pamo (Pambo) in the Virtues of Saint Macarius (Id., xxv, pp. 185 f.)? It is most probably identical with the Rock of Shiēt (Kāret el Mulāk).
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

The Life of Maximus and Domitius asserts that Scetis was populated by monks drawn from “the Mount of Pernoudj and the solitary habitations scattered over Egypt.” The authority is dubious, but the assertion in itself not improbable; for from the first, Macarius was closely associated with the settlement at the Mount of Nitria (Pernoudj). Palladius unmistakably implies that Macarius came by his sobriquet of παύδαρωγέρων during the ten years which passed between his retreat to the desert and his ordination as priest; and the title can only have been bestowed by the monks at the Mount of Nitria, the only great monastic settlement within reach. Moreover, we learn that on one occasion “Macarius the Egyptian came from Scetis to the Mount of Nitria to the Offering (sc. the Mass) of Abba Pambo.” The presumption is that Macarius, not yet being a priest, used to go to the Mount of Nitria to partake of the Communion, and so became acquainted with the monks of that place, some of whom may well have joined him in Scetis.

However this may be, positive evidence shows that before 340 a community was already in existence. Thus a certain brother, being sent on a mission from Scetis by his superior (παύρης), and being conscious of his own moral weakness, consulted Amoun of Nitria as to what he should do. If Amoun died about 337, it follows that the community in Scetis had already made real progress before that date. And again, “Abba Macarius once visited Abba Antonius; and when he had spoken with him, he returned to Scetis. And the fathers came to meet him. And as they were speaking, the old man said to them: ‘I told Abba Antonius that we have no Offering in our topos (monastery).’” The date of this incident is shown to be earlier than 340 by the obvious implication that Macarius was not yet a priest; and yet we find that there were fathers in Scetis.

Sixteen years later the monks had so far multiplied that lovers of solitude felt the place to be overcrowded. Abba Sisoes, when asked why he left Scetis and retired to the eastern deserts, replied: “When Scetis began to be filled with multitudes, and when I heard that Abba Antonius was fallen asleep (356), I rose up and came hither to the mount (? Pispír). And when I found this place peaceful, I settled here for a little time.” By 356, therefore, the community of Scetis was well established.

1 A.M.G., xxv, p. 311.
2 Hist. Larg., ch. xvii.
3 Roughly, one who had “an old head on young shoulders.”
4 Apophth. Patr., Macarius Aegyptius, ii. The corresponding Latin (Migne, P.L., lxxxiii, col. 1006), “venit aliquando abbas Macarius ille Aegyptius de Scythi in montem Nitriæ in diœ oblationis, ad monasterium abbatis Pambo,” shows that the visit was not undertaken to partake in an oblate or commemorative Mass for Pambo.
5 The Coptic Life (A.M.G., xxv, p. 76) represents him as celebrating the Communion for himself. But we are distinctly informed that for some time after the establishment of a community in Scetis the Communion was not celebrated (see below).
6 We have no knowledge of Macarius’ earliest followers; but it is probable that Ammóês (Coptic, Amoi), “father” of John the Little and Bishõi, was one of them though indeed he is called a disciple of Abba Pithou (A.M.G., xxv, p. 98); Isidorus, the Priest of Scetis, is almost certainly another, and probably Sisoes should be added. Macarius of Alexandria had a cell in Scetis and while dwelling there submitted to his namesake as a superior (see Apophth. Patr., Macarius Aegyptius, xx). We read also of visits to Scetis by Pambo, Fior, and other Nitrian monks (A.M.G., xxv, pp. 185 f., 311), but the chronology is difficult and the authority dubious.
7 Apophth. Patr., Amoun, iii.
8 Id., Macarius Aegyptius, xxvi.
9 Id., Sisoes, xxviii.
4. Macarius and Antony

The apophthegms last quoted bring us to the oft-repeated assertion that Macarius was the disciple of Antony. According to "Sarapion," Macarius, being disheartened after a severe conflict with the demons who infested Scetis, remembered to have heard that Antony had long dwelt in the "inner desert" and went to obtain a rule of life from him. Antony received the suppliant and instructed him in the lore of monastic life before sending him back to Scetis. Subsequently Macarius went again to Antony for support and consolation and was invested by him with the monastic habit and presented with a staff which Antony had long possessed: "and that," declares "Sarapion," "is why they call Macarius the disciple of Antony." Learning that Antony's death was near at hand, Macarius sought to remain with him to the end and so shared with the soi-disant author, Sarapion or Sarapamon, the honor of burying the saint. So in the Virtues of Saint Macarius the devil mournfully admits that Macarius was Antony's disciple and had received the habit from him; and Makrizi in the fifteenth century writes that "Abba Macarius received the monastic rule from Antony......He met Antony on the eastern mountain range, where the Monastery of El 'Arabeh is, and remained for some time with him, and then Antony clothed him with the monastic habit and bade him go to the Wâdi 'n Natrûn and take up his abode there."

The narrative of "Sarapion" at any rate is open to the deepest suspicion; for he commits the error of identifying Macarius of Scetis with Macarius of Pispir who actually buried Antony, and dates the beginning of a community in Scetis only from this investiture of Macarius with the monastic habit; that is, after 356 A.D.

We turn therefore to the earlier authorities. Of these, Ammonius in his Letter to Theophilus mentions only one Macarius, but makes no reference to the discipleship; Palladius also is silent on the subject in the Lausiac History, but elsewhere speaks of one of the Macarii as a disciple of Antony. In a list of monks prominent in his own day Rufinus names the two Macarii, Isidorus, Heraclides, and Pambo, applying the title "disciples of Antony" to them all indiscriminately; in another work, however, the same writer restricts the qualification to one of the two namesakes without saying which. But the Historia monachorum asserts that the only point of difference between the two Macarii was that the Egyptian was heir to the virtues and grace of Antony. Yet since this work

---

1 Butler (L.H., 11, p. 193) accepts the discipleship in the sense that Macarius "passed some time under St. Anthony."
2 A.M.G., xxv, pp. 77 f.
3 Id., pp. 85 f.
4 Id., p. 121.
6 A.M.G., xxv, p. 86.
7 § 24 (Acta SS., May III, Appendix, p. 71*).
8 Dial. de vita Job. Chrys., § xvii. We are left to conjecture which Macarius is intended; but the fact that Palladius never makes the claim for his master, Macarius of Alexandria, suggests that he regarded the title as belonging to Macarius the Egyptian.
9 H.E., 11, 4.
10 Apologia ad Anastasium, 11, 12. Rufinus only once attempts to distinguish between the two men, placing one in the "upper" desert and one in the "lower" (H.E., 11, 8).
11 Latin version, ch. xxviii. In the Greek (ch. xxviii, 2), Antony himself declares that Macarius shall be the heir to his virtues.
confuses the two men, placing Macarius Politicus in Scetis and the Egyptian in Cellia, its evidence on the point at issue is uncertain.

The question is decided in favor of the Egyptian by two anecdotes in the *Apopthegmata patrum*. The first of these\(^1\) tells the story of the meeting between Antony and Macarius: "Abba Macarius the Great (i.e., the Egyptian) went to visit Abba Antony in the desert; and when he had knocked at the door, Antony came forth to him, and said unto him: 'Who art thou?'... And Antony shut the door, went in, and left him. And when he saw his patience he (Antony) opened to him, and spoke pleasantly with him, saying: 'Of a long time I have desired to see thee, having heard concerning thee.'..." From the second anecdote (quoted above)\(^2\) we learn that Macarius visited Antony and informed him that there was no celebration of the Offering in Scetis. Three points are to be noticed: first, the *Apopthegmata* record only two visits to Antony; second, previously to the former visit, the two saints had never met; third, the second anecdote strongly suggests that the conversation with Antony led directly to the ordination of Macarius.

Both these anecdotes can be accepted as historical, and their importance is great. They show not only that Antony exercised an influence over the community at Scetis through its founder,\(^3\) but also in what sense Macarius could be called Antony’s disciple. Macarius had profited by the guidance and advice of Antony; but there is no reason to believe that he had lived under the direction of Antony; he was a disciple in the same sense that Rufinus was the disciple of the Macarii.\(^4\) In fact, there is no room in his life for a period spent as a disciple under Antony’s personal direction.

What then of "Sarapion’s" account of the alleged discipleship? Like the *Apopthegmata* he records two visits, the former of which was the first meeting between the two men. But here the resemblance ends, the accounts of either visit being totally different in the two sources. It is not difficult to see what has happened: "Sarapion" knew that there were two visits; he rejected the account of the first given in the *Apopthegmata*, probably because Antony’s initial abruptness shocked him, and substituted something which better suited his scheme—Macarius’ reception of the monastic rule from Antony. Similarly the authentic account of the second visit has been thrown overboard in order to make Macarius receive the habit from Antony, and incidentally to trace the origin of the "staff of Macarius"\(^5\) back to the father of monasticism. Rejecting, therefore, the Coptic account, we conclude that Macarius the Egyptian was Antony’s disciple only in the sense that he enjoyed the advice and encouragement of the older and more experienced saint.

---

1 *Apopth. Patr.*, Macarius Aegyptius, iv.  
2 See p. 66.  
3 In *Apopth. Patr.*, Antonius, xviii, we read of “brethren from Scetis” who visited Antony: the influence of Antony was not therefore confined to Macarius.  
4 See Rufinus, *Apologia ad Anastasium*, ii, 12. The same view of the “discipleship” is taken by the editor of *Acta SS.* (Jan. 1, p. 1005).  
5 This would make Macarius a strictly legitimate “son” of Antony. On the staff of Macarius see Tischendorf, *Travels in the East*, p. 51 (see p. 197).
THE FOUNDATION AND EARLY HISTORY OF SCETIS

5. Continued Life of Macarius in Scetis

Macarius, as we have seen, complained to Antony that there was no priest to celebrate the Offering in Scetis; it is a plausible conjecture that Antony may have urged Macarius himself (already a deacon) to accept priest’s orders, and that Macarius consented. The chronology given by Palladius shows that Macarius was ordained in 340, by which time he had attained to “the grace of healing against spirits, and of prophecy.”

Before we leave the early monastic life of Macarius we may refer to a curious episode of which some use has already been made. When Macarius went to the Mount of Nitria “to the Offering of Abba Pambo,” the old men requested him to speak a word to the brethren. “And he said: ‘I am not yet become a monk,’ but I have seen monks. For as I sat one day in my cell in Scetis, my thoughts troubled me suggesting: ‘Go out into the desert and see what you behold there.’ But I remained fighting with that thought for five years, saying: ‘Perchance it comes from the demons.’ But as the thought remained with me, I set out into the desert and found there a lake of water with an island in the midst of it; and the beasts of the desert came to drink of it. And I saw in the midst of them two naked men; and my body trembled through fear, for I thought that they were spirits. But when they saw me fearful, they said to me: ‘Fear not; for we also are men.’ And I said: ‘Whence are ye, and how came ye into this desert?’ And they said: ‘We are from a coenobium; and we made an agreement and came to this place forty years ago.’ ... And I also asked them: ‘How can I become a monk?’ And they said: ‘Unless a man renounce all the things of the world, he cannot become a monk.’ Then said I: ‘I am weak and have not power as ye have.’ But they said to me: ‘If thou hast not power as we have, go, sit in thy cell and weep for thy sins.’ And I asked them: ‘When it is winter, are ye not cold; and when it is summer, are not your bodies burned?’ But they answered: ‘God hath made this dispensation for us that in winter we feel no cold and in summer the heat doth us no hurt.’ This is the cause for which I said unto you that I am not yet become a monk, but that I have seen monks. Pardon me, brethren.’

The life of a monk in Scetis was ordinarily barren of incident, and years would pass with little or nothing to vary the ordinary routine. So it was with the life of Macarius; after his community had become definitely established, many years were to pass before any striking event occurred.

1 Hist. Laus., ch. xvii.
3 This may explain why “Sarapion” was so eager to make Macarius receive the habit from Antony; Macarius means, of course, “a thorough monk.” The episode belongs apparently to the period of solitary habitation in Scetis.
4 A conventional expression of humility current among the monks.
6. Character and Personality of Macarius

Here, rather than elsewhere, we may attempt to outline the character and personality of Macarius. Socrates\(^1\) describes him as somewhat harsh in manner towards those he met. Perhaps this verdict is rather superficial. He did indeed dislike to be approached with awe as a great and holy man and would repulse any who did so; but this seems to have been a mere shield assumed to protect himself from adulation. A curious anecdote\(^2\) shows that early in his career he incurred some censure for his freedom in mixing with the brethren under him. “He (Abba Peter) said again that when Abba Macarius in his simplicity of heart conversed graciously with all the brethren, some of them said to him, ‘Why makest thou thyself so?’ But he answered, ‘For twelve years have I served my Lord that he might grant me this grace, and do ye all counsel me to lay it aside?’” If this anecdote really belongs to Macarius the Egyptian,\(^3\) it may be dated 342 (twelve years after his retirement to Scetis). Another saying\(^4\) should be decisive in establishing his character for charity: “They used to say concerning Abba Macarius the Great that he became, as it is written, a God upon earth. For even as it is God who covers the world, so became Abba Macarius in cloaking transgression, as though seeing not what he saw, and hearing not what he heard.” This seems to mean that he possessed the tact essential for the government of any great community.

The same gift is exemplified in other anecdotes. We read\(^5\) that when he visited the brethren at moments of relaxation, he used to drink wine, if offered, “for the sake of the brethren” (that is, to avoid slighting their good intentions by thrusting his own objections to wine upon them); yet it was his rule to abate for every cup so drunk by spending a whole day without drinking water. Again, when Macarius\(^6\) met the devil and learned that the enemy of man had but one friend in the desert, a monk named Theopemptus, he visited the monk and instead of reproving him for his transgressions, represented that he himself was liable to the very failings of which he knew the monk to be guilty. By so doing, he made it easy for the sinner to confess, and was able to give him such advice as would meet his need, summing all up in the words, “If temptation ariseth in thee, never look downwards, but always look upwards; and straightway the Lord will help thee.” In consequence, when he next met Satan, Macarius learned that the devil had been deserted by his one friend who was now more hostile than all the rest of the brethren.

His lack of bigotry and prejudice is a surprising feature in an age when Christians held the pagans to be literally worshippers of devils. Once more the *Aphthibegmata* provide an illustration.\(^7\) While journeying from Scetis to the Mount of Nitria, Macarius sent his

---

1 *H.E.*, iv, 23.
2 *Aphthib. Patr.*, Macarius Aegyptius, ix.
3 The companion saying (viii) recorded on the authority of Peter is to be attributed to Macarius of Alexandria: see p. 57.
4 *Aphthib. Patr.*, Macarius Aegyptius, xxxii.
5 *Ibid.*, x.
disciple on ahead. The disciple encountered “a priest of the Hellenes” (i.e., of the pagans) carrying a log of wood, and cried out: “Ah, ah, you devil, where are you hurrying?” Thereupon the priest struck him down, left him senseless by the way, and hurrying on, met Macarius, who greeted him with the words, “Hail to you, hail to you!” Surprised at this courtesy, the priest asked why he was so addressed? Macarius replied: “Because I see you toiling and you know not that you are toiling to no purpose.” The priest then declared that he would not let Macarius go until he agreed to make him a monk. So the two together carried the injured disciple to the church at the Mount of Nitria, the priest was made a monk, and many pagans were converted in consequence. Macarius pointed the moral by saying: “A bad word makes even the good bad, but a good word makes even the bad good.”

Moreover, professed monk as he was, Macarius could recognize that those who lived normal lives in the world might be as holy as the best of monks. This was impressed upon him in the following way. It was revealed to him one day that two women in a certain town surpassed him in virtue. Hearing this, he arose and went to the town where the women dwelt and was received by them with great honor. But when he inquired of them what was the manner of their life that their virtues were so highly reported of, they informed him that they lived the ordinary life of married women, yet refrained from quarrelling, though they were not akin. They had besought their husbands to allow them to retire into a convent of nuns, and when their request had been refused, made an agreement never to let a worldly word proceed out of their mouths. Thereupon Macarius exclaimed that of a truth there was no difference between the virgin and the wedded, the monk and the man of the world: God gave the breath of life to all, and asks only for their good intentions.

As a teacher Macarius had the gift of enforcing a lesson in a striking way. We see how he impressed on his monks the virtue of silence. “Abba Macarius the Great said to the brethren in Scetis when he was dismissing the assembly (i.e., ending the celebration of Mass): ‘Flee, brethren!’ And one of the old men said to him: ‘Whither can we flee beyond this desert?’ But he put his finger to his mouth and said: ‘Flee from this.’ And he went into his cell and shut the door and sat down.” On another occasion a brother asked him for “a word of salvation.” Macarius bade him go to the burial place and revile the dead. The monk went and did so, casting stones at the graves, but returned reporting that there was no result. Macarius then bade him go back and praise and flatter the dead. The

---

1 Yet in Apophth. Patr., Macarius Aegyptius, xiii, the pagan dead are apparently demons. Id., xxxviii also represents a dead pagan priest as being naturally in hell, though the charitable prayers of Macarius secure him some alleviation. This apophthegm, however, should perhaps be transferred to Macarius of Alexandria, since mention is made of “the idols and the Hellenes who dwell in this place,” and such were to be found near the Mount of Nitria (see p. 19), but not in Scetis.

2 Rosweyd, Vitae patrum, iii, 97; vi. 3. 17.
3 Apophth. Patr., Macarius Aegyptius, xvi.
4 Id., xxiii.
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

brother obeyed, but returned once more to say that nothing had occurred. Thereupon the saint recommended him to become as one of the dead—indifferent to both the praise and blame of the world.

We find him also engaged in manual work. On one occasion he greatly impressed Antony by his industry and skill in plaiting palm leaves for baskets or mats.¹ At other times he is pictured gathering and carrying palm leaves for this work from the marsh of Scetis to his cell,² or carrying away the baskets he had made for sale.³ Or again, Abba Sisoes (who, be it noted, left Scetis soon after the death of Antony in 356) relates⁴: “When I was in Scetis with Macarius, we went up with him to reap the harvest,⁵ being seven persons.”

7. Literary Works Attributed to Macarius

Macarius is credited with a considerable volume of literary work, fifty homilies, seven tracts upon Christian virtues, and some minor pieces.⁶ Though it is claimed that the spirit of charity which animates them supports the attribution, these works have not yet been critically examined; and the fact that Macarius is nowhere mentioned by his contemporaries as a man of letters, or even as being literate, makes the alleged authorship rather dubious.

8. The Miracles of Macarius the Great

Probably Macarius owed his fame almost as much to his reputed miracles as to his actions and personal qualities, and these wonders cannot therefore be wholly ignored in any study of the saint’s life. We have no first-hand accounts of them; but we may feel confident that there is often a nucleus of hard fact in the available reports. The most interesting is the cure (recorded by Palladius)⁷ of a woman who had been “changed” by magic into a mare, and was “restored” by Macarius through the medium of prayer and holy water. As Palladius reports it, the husband, the “priests of the village” whose aid had been invoked, and even the brethren with Macarius were convinced of the metamorphosis. But not so the saint, who brusquely remarked: “Horses yourselves with the eyes of horses! For that woman is not transformed save to the eyes of dupes.” After banishing the spell, Macarius cautioned the husband that this disconcerting experience had been inflicted upon him because of his laxity in religious observance. Palladius also informs us that Macarius was reputed to have raised a dead man to life in order to refute a heretic who denied the Resurrection, but the reserved tone in which he alludes to this shows that he disbelieved the story despite the wide currency which it enjoyed.⁸

¹ Apophth. Patr., Macarius Aegyptius, iv.
² Id., xn.
³ Id., xiv. Terenuthis was the “market town” for Scetis: cf. id., xiii.
⁴ Id., vii.
⁵ Harvesting was a recognized means of earning money for their support among the monks: cf. Apophth. Patr., Flor., i; and below, p. 184.
⁶ See Migne, P.G., XLVI.
⁷ Hist. Laus., ch. xvii.
⁸ The story is told in detail in a passage interpolated in the Lusiaca History (for text see Preuschen, Palladius und Rufinus, pp. 124 f.). Another version is in Hist. Mon. (Latin), ch. xxviii, where also is the story of another dead man raised to life in order to clear the innocent of a charge of murder.

72
CHAPTER V

THE MOUNT OF NITRIA AND SCETIS IN THE ARIAN PERIOD

1. The Attitude of the Monks towards Arianism

Monastic life is of its nature ordinarily uneventful; and after the two settlements which we are considering were definitely established, comparative obscurity closes round them. But this monotony of life was disturbed by the struggle for supremacy between the orthodox and the Arians, and in the later phases of the strife the monks at the Mount of Nitria and Scetis were in the thick of the battle.

Little is definitely known about the attitude of the monks to Arianism in its earlier phases; but the intimacy of Athanasius, the champion of the Homoousian party, with many of the early fathers of the Mount of Nitria warrants the belief that the settlement generally was orthodox. As we have already seen, the great archbishop highly commended Amoun of Nitria, Theodore his disciple, and Pambo; the last named was even invited to Alexandria, probably to use his influence against Arianism. Ammonius the Tall, disciple of Pambo, is said to have accompanied Athanasius to Rome in 340 A.D., and Isidorus the Hospitaller, who in earlier life was a monk at the Mount of Nitria, was ordained by Athanasius. The fact that Antony, a zealous partisan of Athanasius, was so intimate with the monks of Nitria also points in the same direction. It is even surmised that during his third exile (356–362) Athanasius may have found refuge for a time in Nitria; and his friendship with the monks above named adds color to the conjecture. But this is mere conjecture; Palladius and others give no hint of such a visit.

1 See p. 47.
2 Acta SS., May III, Appendix p. 71*.
4 Socrates, H.E., iv, 23. For the chronological difficulty involved by this statement see p. 130.
5 Palladius, Hist. Laus., ch. 1.
6 Id., Dial. de vita Joh. Chrys., § vi (Migne, P.G., xlvii, 1, i, col. 22).
7 Antony also went down to Alexandria to preach against the Arians (Athanasius, Life of S. Antony, §§ 69 f.; Socrates, H.E., iv, 25).
8 See e.g., Bright, Age of the Fathers, 1, 243 f.
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

The orthodoxy of the monks of Scetis in the earlier stages of the controversy would have to be inferred from their subsequent attitude were it not for a single recorded instance.1 "Some Arians," we are told, "once came to the mount of Abba Antony (sc. to Pispir) to Abba Sisoes and began to speak against the orthodox. And the old man answered them nothing, but called his own disciple and said: 'Abraham, bring me the book of the holy Athanasius and read it.' And as they kept silence, their heresy was made known." Sisoes is known to have left Scetis shortly after the death of Antony (356 A.D.),2 and his doctrinal position was doubtless generally shared by the earlier generation of monks.

It is the Letter of Ammonius to Theophilus which throws the clearest light on the situation at the Mount of Nitria. Ammonius had become a monk under Theodore at Tabennesi; but family reasons made it desirable that he should be removed to some monastery in the north of Egypt. Theodore therefore counselled him to go to the Mount of Nitria "for there are in that place especially holy men well pleasing to God. He meant Theodore, who was with the holy Amoun (for he was still sojourning in the flesh), and Elurion, and Ammonius"3 (who all fell asleep not long after), and Pambo, and Pior the servant of God, who received grace of healing from the Lord and the holy men with them whose names I pass over in silence..."4 Ammonius then relates that, having seen the fathers named, he dwelt thenceforward at the Mount of Nitria; and that, when the Arian Persecution broke out six months after his arrival (355) he "declared to those who were with the holy Pior and Pambo and the rest of the seniors (πρεσβύτεροι) in the Mount of Nitria what the man of God, Theodore [of Tabennesi], had said concerning this persecution, namely that it would be bitter, but would end in due time. And while the Arians were prospering in their mischief, there arrived in the Mount of Nitria four monks sent by Theodore with a letter to the monks in the mountain. These men, obeying the directions of Theodore, sought me out and found me and gave me the letter late on the Sabbath. And the following day being Sunday, I first read it privately to the seniors, and then by their command to the whole company of the monks [in church]. It was as follows. 'Theodore to the beloved brethren who are in the Mount of Nitria, priests, deacons, and monks, greeting in the Lord. I would have you to know that the presumption of the Arians is gone up to God. And God has looked upon his people and beheld the afflictions which they endure...and has promised to pity and deliver his own Church from these afflictions. The time shall come, then, in which the Church shall be delivered from this persecution... . Having these promises, therefore, brethren, comfort those who are oppressed by them in your part, lest the faith of some of them should waver... . The brethren who are with me salute you... ." And when

1 Apophth. Pat., Sisoes, xxv. Note, however, that in the Letter to Theophilus, Athanasius is described as inquiring concerning "the holy anchorets in Scetis" who were therefore certainly orthodox. But this was at a date later than 363. See p. 95.
2 Apophth. Pat., Sisoes, XXVIII.
3 Can this Ammonius be the monk who accompanied Athanasius to Rome and have been confounded by Socrates with his namesake the Tall, or One-eared? See p. 190.
I read this, all the brethren glorified God. One of the seniors, a man named Hagius, said to me smiling: ‘We also tell you this. We do not know it only by what you declare.’ And Isaac, also called Chrysogonus, then a monk of the Mount of Nitria, took this letter from me at the direction of Heraclides the priest."

This document leaves no doubt but that the whole body of brethren were solidly anti-Arian; their attitude was so generally recognized that the Abbot of Tabennesi, far to the south, writes to encourage them to persist in exercising their admitted influence on the side of orthodoxy in supporting the weak. But though Ammonius speaks of monks as suffering in the persecution, no definite attack seems to have been made upon the monks of the Mount of Nitria or Scetis; either the Arian party underestimated their influence or feared them. The time of trial was to come after the death of Athanasius. But before we deal with this episode the visit of Rufinus and Melania to the Mount of Nitria must be noticed.

2. Rufinus and Melania at the Mount of Nitria

Melania, the granddaughter of Marcellinus, a man of consular rank, was of Spanish origin. After a brief married life she was left a widow about 371–372, and resolved to retire from the world. With this purpose, she left her son in the guardianship of the praetor urbanus at Rome, and sailed for the East.

Palladius, who had met and conversed with this lady, gives the following general account of her stay in the desert which extended over six months in 373 or 374. “She sold off her property and after changing it into money, set out from that place (Alexandria) and entered into the Mount of Nitria, where she met the fathers who accompanied Pambo and Arsissius and Sarapion the Great and Paphnutius of Scetis and Isidorus the Confessor, Bishop of Hermopolis, and Dioscorus. She stayed amongst them for half a year going round about the desert and questioning all the saints.”

The same author relates some particular episodes, the most famous being her meeting with Abba Pambo, as told by herself.4 “The blessed Melania related to me as follows: ‘At the first when I arrived in Alexandria from Rome I heard of the excellence of this man (Pambo) from the blessed Isidorus, who informed me and led me into the desert to him. I brought him a money-bag containing three hundred pounds of silver and begged him to take some share of my wealth. But as he sat weaving palm leaves, he merely blessed me and said: “God give thee thy reward.” And he said to his steward, Origenes: “Take and distribute it to all the brethren in Libya and in the islands; for these monasteries are more in need”;—bidding him give to none of the monasteries in Egypt, because the country was better furnished. But I (she said) stood expecting to be honored or glorified by him for the gift; and when he said nothing to me, I said: “That you may know, sir, the amount

1 Loc. cit.
2 Hist. Laus., ch. xlvi.
3 Successor of Dracontius and predecessor of Dioscorus in that see.
4 Hist. Laus., ch. x.
of the money, there are three hundred pounds.” He, however, made no motion at all but answered me: “He to whom you brought it, hath no need of a measure. For He who weigheth the mountains, much more knoweth the amount of the money. For if thou hadst given it to me, thou hadst well spoken; but since thou gavest it to God, Who did not scorn the two farthings, keep silence.” Such (she said) was the disposition of this worthy when I entered into the Mount. But no long time after, the man of God went to his rest, aged seventy years, without fever and without sickness but stitching his basket (to the last). He sent for me, and in his final pangs, just before he breathed his last, said to me: “Receive this basket from my hands, that thou mayest remember me. For I have naught else to bequeath thee!”’ He prepared for burial and laid to rest after wrapping him in linen bands. And so she departed from the desert and kept the basket with her to her death.”

Palladius\(^1\) records that Origenes “the priest and steward” and Ammonius, both disciples of Pambo, were also present at their master’s death and reported to him that in his last moments the saint had said: “Since I came to this place in the desert and built my cell and dwelt therein I never remember to have eaten bread without cost, save by my labor; I repent not for any word I have spoken unto this hour. And yet I go hence unto God as one who has not even begun to be devout.”

Rufinus alludes to Pambo as dwelling at Cellia at this period.\(^2\) Probably, then, he was priest and superior of the settlement, and was succeeded by Macarius of Alexandria who definitely appears at a later date in that capacity.

Amongst the other fathers whom Melania told Palladius she had visited were Abba Or\(^3\) and Abba Macarius of Alexandria\(^4\); the latter presented her with that sheepskin which had been brought to him by the grateful hyena.\(^5\)

A fragment of the Coptic recension of the Lausiac History\(^6\) alleges that from the Mount of Pernoudj (Nitria) she went on “to the great desert of Shiêt, and built a church for Abba Isidorus the Priest.” But this statement is quite unsupported and should be treated with reserve.

The circumstances in which Melania departed from the Mount of Nitria after the death of Pambo will be detailed presently.

The visit of Rufinus must be treated separately though he possibly escorted Melania to the Mount and certainly was there at the same time.

Jerome\(^7\) writes to Rufinus in 373: “I hear that you are penetrating the secret recesses of Egypt, visiting the companies of monks and paying a round of visits to the heavenly family upon earth.” Farther on in the same letter he says that a later report assures him that Rufinus has at length reached the home of the blessed Macarius.\(^8\) This journey to

---

1 *Hist. Laur.*, ch. x.
2 *H.E.*, ii, 8.
3 *Hist. Laur.*, ch. ix.
4 Id., ch. xviii.
5 See p. 58.
6 Zoëga, Cat., No. lxxi; Amelineau, *De Hist. Laur.*, p. 96.
7 Epist., iii (Migne, P.L., xxii, col. 332).
8 It is impossible to say whether or no this may be understood to imply that Rufinus penetrated to Scetis.
the desert seems to have been prompted by desire for instruction; for Rufinus himself states that he put himself under the guidance of "the masters of the desert, Macarius the disciple of Antony, the other Macarius, Isidorus, and Pambo, all friends of God, who taught me what they themselves had learned from God."¹ This course of study was interrupted by the outbreak of persecution and the invasion of the Mount of Nitria by the Arian archbishop, Lucius.

3. The Arian Persecution

On the death of Athanasius in 373, Peter II, who had been nominated by his predecessor, was consecrated patriarch. The Emperor Valens, however, was induced by Euzoïus to reimpose the Arian patriarch, Lucius, upon the Church of Alexandria. Instructions were given to the prefect to support the new prelate (who was accompanied by Magnus, the imperial finance minister) by military force, if necessary.² Peter was thrown into prison, but managed to escape and fled to Rome; Lucius and the Arians seized all the churches in Alexandria, expelling the Homooeans with the aid of the prefect’s troops and a mob of pagans and Jews. The wild scenes which resulted are described by the ejected Peter, in an encyclical letter preserved by Theodoret.³ In reprisal (as it appears) the Homooeans attempted a counter-revolution, for which the orthodox clergy, monks and even nuns were held responsible. The Arians backed by the Imperial Government retaliated with persecution disguised under the form of legal proceedings. What evils were done, says Socrates, both in the courts and outside them, how some persons were overwhelmed with tortures and others after torture were banished, can best be read in the encyclical of Peter.

Not long after this, Valens issued an edict (? 374 A.D.) for the expulsion of the Homooeans from Egypt, and the prefect was ordered to employ his troops against all persons indicated by Lucius.⁴ So supported, the Arian archbishop took action against the monasteries, more especially those at the Mount of Nitria; according to Sozomen,⁵ he calculated that the peace-loving monks would submit if force were applied, and that so he would win over the Christians in the cities. The heads of the monasteries (Sozomen adds) rejected the doctrine of Arius, and were followed by the mass of the people; Lucius felt, therefore, that the permanent triumph of his party depended on the submission of the monks; and, since persuasion was useless, he decided to use force.

In the military operation which followed it is important to observe that the Government and the ecclesiastical faction headed by Lucius were in accord.⁶ Rufinus declares that he speaks "of things which he had seen with his own eyes" and that he describes the deeds of men "in whose sufferings he was counted worthy to be a fellow"; yet it must be confessed that he made poor use of his opportunity. For the account which he gives of the

¹ Apologia ad Anastasium, II, 12.
² For these events see Socrates, H.E., iv, 20 f.
³ E.V., iv, 19.
⁴ Socrates, H.E., iv, 22.
⁵ Sozomen, H.E., vi, 20.
⁶ Socrates, H.E., iv, 24. For the significance of this see p. 82.
expedition\(^1\) is vague in the extreme. Lucius "ravaged the desert and declared war upon them who were dwelling at peace. He attacked three thousand men or more\(^2\) who were scattered throughout the desert in remote and lonely dwellings. He brought against them horse and foot; he detailed tribunes and captains, as though about to fight against the barbarians. But these, when they arrived, beheld a new form of warfare, for the enemy offered their necks to the sword, merely saying: 'Friend, wherefore art thou come?" Further on, Rufinus declares that while the Macarii were in their "tabernacles" praying and awaiting their murderers,\(^4\) a man whose limbs "and particularly his feet" were withered was healed by them. Yet in spite of this and of other miracles wrought by the saints, Lucius did not hesitate to persecute them.

Socrates is hardly more explicit. After declaring that Lucius was even more outrageous than the soldiers, he continues\(^4\): "But when they came to the place, they found the worthy men engaged in their customary pursuits, praying, healing disease, driving out devils. But they took small account of the wonders of God, and would not even permit them to finish their prayers in their oratories, dragging them even thence. And they did not stop at this alone, but even went so far as to use their weapons against them."

Vague and rhetorical as these notices are, the concluding sentence from Socrates distinctly suggests that the monks suffered severely, and is supported by another passage from the same historian\(^8\) to the effect that "they despoiled and harassed and cruelly warred against the monasteries in the desert. For they came with weapons in their hands against men unarmed, who did not choose to stretch out so much as a hand to ward off a blow. And they so pitifully ravaged them that the sufferings they endured pass description." Jerome\(^6\) explicitly says that "many of the monks of Nitria were slain by the tribunes and soldiers," while Orosius\(^7\) records that "many hosts of the saints were slain" in the Egyptian deserts. Paulus in his supplement to the Roman History of Eutropius\(^8\) seems to combine the two statements. Jerome and Orosius may exaggerate (Rufinus says nothing of fatal casualties), but there can be little doubt that the monks were roughly handled.

After "devastating the desert" Lucius found himself no nearer his object, for the monks still refused to submit. He therefore faltered, and recommended the prefect to banish "the Fathers of the monks, and they were Macarius the Egyptian and his namesake the Alexandrian."\(^9\)

The interrelations of what followed is not clear. Rufinus and Socrates mention only the Macarii as being banished to an island in the Delta; but Palladius most strangely ignores

---

1 Rufinus, H.E., ii, 3 f.
2 Probably this was the total number of monks at the Mount of Nitria and Cellia, but Sceitis is possibly included.
3 Macarius the Great had perhaps come up from Sceitis.
4 Socrates, H.E., iv, 24.
5 Id., iv, 22.
6 Chronicon, anno 379 sic. (Migne, P.L., xxvii, col. 697 f.).
7 Historia adversus paganos, vii, 33 [p. 551].
8 Eutropius, xii, 8, ed. Droysen, Monumenta Germaniae historiae. These notices will be further considered below.
9 Socrates, H.E., iv, 24.
the exile of these fathers, and makes no direct reference to the persecution, only incidentally observing that Melania accompanied a number of other exiles to Palestine. Is it possible that there were two acts of banishment, the Macarii being exiled first, and subsequently (this presumably having no effect) other prominent monks?

It will be convenient to deal with the second group of exiles first. Palladius,¹ without a word of allusion to the doings of Lucius, makes the bald statement that “after this (sc. Melania’s stay in the desert), the Augustalius of Alexandria having banished Isidorus, Pisimius, Adelphius, Paphnutius and Pambo,² together with Ammonius the One-eared and twelve bishops and priests to Palestine, to the district of Dioecesarea, she (Melania) followed them and ministered to them out of her funds.” For this act of charity, he adds, Melania was brought before the Governor of Palestine, and it was “after the recall of these men” that she founded her monastery at Jerusalem. In another work³ Palladius mentions that the other three Tall Brothers “wore the wooden collar (κλωσιφορήσαντες) and were banished under Valens” together with Ammonius.

It was presumably with this group of exiles that Rufinus suffered that persecution of which he speaks so complacently. We have already seen that he claims to have shared in the sufferings which he describes; elsewhere he boasts that “my faith has been tested in exiles and in imprisonments which were inflicted upon me for the Faith’s sake when I was living in the holy Church of Alexandria, at the time of the persecution by the heretics.”⁴ Rufinus is again vague as to details, and Jerome bluntly dismisses this claim to the title of Confessor as a “bare-faced lie,” declaring that Rufinus had never been sentenced to imprisonment or exile.⁵ The truth may be that Rufinus tried to assume the rôle of a persecuted confessor by voluntarily accompanying the exiles and sharing their lot, and was perhaps subjected to some restraint and surveillance by the accompanying escort. Even before the quarrel between the two broke out, Jerome merely speaks of Rufinus as having “come with the holy Melania from Egypt to Jerusalem.”⁶

The two Macarii were consigned to a different place of banishment, and for their adventures we have only the narrative of Rufinus⁷ (reproduced by Socrates and Sozomen). The saints were removed from their flocks—nay, stealthily snatched away—and sent to an island in the swamps of the Delta. So soon as the vessel in which they were carried touched the shore, the daughter of the priest of the temple (for the people were pagans) became possessed by a demon. After rushing madly about the island, this girl fell down before the monks, while the demon cried out: “Why are you come to drive us out even from this place?” The sequel is obvious: the demon was cast out, the girl restored to her father, who was promptly converted together with all the inhabitants, and the temple was transformed

¹ Hist. Laus., ch. XLVI.
² Pambo, however, was already dead and buried.
⁴ Apologia ad Anastasium, ii, 3.
⁵ Apologia, ii, 3.
⁷ H.E., 11, 4 (= Sozomen, H.E., vi, 20; Socrates, H.E., iv, 24).
into a Christian church. Lucius, much impressed by these marvels, and fearing that his own followers might turn against him, "ordered them (the Macarii) to be secretly recalled and sent back into the desert."

Socrates, as we have just seen, states that the Macarii were recalled by Lucius as a concession to popular feeling, and since Lucius himself was ejected in 377 or 378, after Valens had left Antioch for the last time, the date of their return was probably 376 or 377. It was after the death of the Arian Euzoios (376) that Valens, having the menace of war with the Goths hanging over him, abated the persecution of the orthodox, and no doubt this partial withdrawal of imperial support alarmed Lucius as to his own security and forced him to recall the two fathers.

The other group of exiles would seem to have been recalled at the same time. For Palladius expressly states that it was after their return that Melania founded her monastery in Jerusalem—an event which Butler dates loosely at about 375–376.

Though the Coptic Life of Saint Macarius does not mention the exile, the Coptic Church was by no means unmindful of it, but celebrated the return of the saints on Barenhât thirteenth ( = March ninth). The account of this event given at great length in the Arabic Synaxarium represents the two Macarii as exiled in the Island (El Gezireh) where they converted the people and "they performed for them, by God's will and His presence, their festival, in their church, He (being present) with His pure Disciples and the Cherubims and Seraphims and the rest of the angels of light. And when the saints celebrated the liturgy, after their (the people's) baptism, the Disciples assisted them and Paul read a lesson from his Epistles and John read the Catholic Epistle, and Luke read the Acts, David the Prophet read the Psalm and the Lord God, the Saviour...read the Gospel, and Abû Makâr the Great officiated at the sacrament, by God's will, and his fellow officiated with him as deacon and the Disciples assisted them in the 'Offering' of the people thus, during seven days. Thereafter Abû Makâr besought the Lord that He would set over them a patriarch." This was granted and the saints were miraculously returned to Shihêt. "And there came forth to meet him fifty thousand (sic) monks, elders, bearing their staves. And they rejoiced as it were on this same day and it was a festival unto them. And for this exile there is a short book, wherein is set out all that befell the saints in El Gezireh. May their prayers and their blessings be with us and may their intercession redeem us forever. Amen."

---

1 Socrates, H.E., iv, 37.
2 Id., H.E., iv, 35.
3 Hist. LXX., ch. xlvi.
4 See Butler, L.H., 11, p. 226.
5 Ed. Basset, pp. 862f. There is also extant at Paris (B.N., Fonds arabe, No. 213, fol. 20) a fuller narrative attributed to Socrates, the slave of the martyrlogist Julius of Akhafs.
6 Apparently this is the work of Socrates above mentioned.

7 Since a patriarch is appointed, the "Gezirêh" of this narrative is regarded as outside Egypt. It cannot be identified with El Gezirêh near Mûsul on the Tigris, but is probably El Gezirêh, the tract of country between the White and Blue Niles. If so, the story is a legendary (or fictitious) account of the circumstances in which the dignity of the Metropolitan of Abyssinia was instituted, and is intended to establish a connection between it and the Monastery of S. Macarius, and to demonstrate its dependence upon the See of S. Mark.
4. Another Aspect of the Persecution under Valens

The story of the persecution given above is based upon the evidence of ecclesiastical writers and those anti-Arian. Such a version is likely to be doubly biased, and there is positive evidence to show that this was actually the case.

By an edict\(^1\) of 319 A.D. it had been enacted that those who followed a sacred calling, that is, those “who are called clergy” (clerici), should be exempt from public duties (such as service as municipal officials, taxpaying, corvée, or military service). This concession was so obviously liable to abuse that in the following year it was directed that persons qualified to serve as decurions\(^2\) should not become clerics, but that vacancies in the sacred profession should be filled up from classes too poor to serve as municipal officers.\(^3\) In these enactments no mention is made of monks\(^4\) (of whom comparatively few were clergy), but it is certain\(^5\) that tacitly at least the same privilege was extended to them.

Later in the fourth century we learn that many who were qualified to act as curiales evaded their obligations by leaving the towns and settling in the country, where they may possibly have passed as monks. An edict of Valentinian and Valens promulgated in 367\(^6\) directed Tatian, Prefect of Egypt, to check this manoeuvre which was evidently becoming common in Egypt. This edict seems to have been met by a new mode of evasion. To escape their statutory obligations citizens either became monks or passed themselves off as such. In 370 or 373 therefore the same two emperors directed (with special reference to Egypt) that those who through indolence shirked their civil duties and took to the deserts, where under guise of religion they joined the communities of monks, should be dragged from their hiding-places and forced to perform their duties under pain of sequesterance of their property.\(^7\)

Rufinus (our primary authority) is therefore distinctly guilty of suppressio veri, in omitting all reference to this edict which goes far to explain the share of the Government in the persecution. But certain authorities mention yet another edict: Jerome\(^8\) alleges that in the twelfth year of his reign (375) “Valens, having decreed that monks should ‘serve’ (militarent), ordered that those who refused should be beaten to death” and that

---

1 Codex Theodosianus, ed. Mommsen-Meyer, xvi, 2, 2.
2 Members of municipal councils who were responsible for payment of the quota of taxation imposed upon their district.
3 Codex Theodosianus, ed. Mommsen-Meyer, xvi, 2, 3.
4 Monasticism of course was in its infancy in 319.
5 Cf. the decree of 373 quoted below. A letter addressed by Basil the Great (Epist., ch. ii, No. 284; Migne’s P.G., xxxvi, col. 1020) to a censitor is extant in which the former asks exemption for the monks of his diocese, on the ground that those who renounce the world (and property) and who mortify their bodies cannot serve the State with money or in person. From this it appears that monks were not legally exempt, but were excused by consent, the law probably being stretched in their favor. This letter is later than 370 (when Basil became Bishop of Caesarea).
6 Codex Theodosianus, ed. Mommsen-Meyer, xii, 18, 1.
7 Id., xii, 1, 63. “Quidam ignaviae sectatores, desertis civitatum muneribus, captant solitudines ac secreta et specie religionis cum corribus monachonton congregantur. Hos igitur atque huissmodi intra Aegyptum deprehensos per comitem Orientis erui e latebris consulta praecipitam man- davimus atque ad munia patriarum subeunda revocari, aut pro tenore nostrae sanctionis familiarum rerum carere in- lecebris quas per eos censuimus vindicandas qui publicarum essent subituri munera functionum.”
8 Chronicon, anno 379 sic. (Migne, P.L., xcvii, col. 697 f.).
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

“many of the monks at Nitria were slain by tribunes and soldiers.” So too Orosius\(^1\) affirms that after the death of Valentinian (November seventeenth, 373) Valens issued an edict that monks should be forced to serve (\textit{ad militiam cogerentur}), and that “tribunes and soldiers” were sent to the Egyptian deserts to drag out the monks, and that “hosts of the saints were slain there.”

Is this edict historical, or is it a perversion of the edict of 373\(^2\)? Probably it is the latter. (1) Rufinus, Socrates, and Sozomen say nothing of an invasion of Nitria to force the monks to “join up”\(^3\) (which they could easily have execrated as sacrilege, just as Paulus does), nor do they allege that a single monk was killed in the raid of Lucius. (2) It is not credible that such a step would have been taken just before or just after the recall of the exiled monks which took place about 375–377. (3) The dating of Jerome and Orosius looks like the result of an attempt to exculpate the “pious” Valentinian and saddle the “impious” Valens alone with the blame for the Nitrian raid. (4) Though Jerome and Orosius probably believed that the monks were pressed for military service,\(^4\) they may well have been misled by the ambiguous use in the fourth century of the words \textit{militia, militare}, which need imply no more than the performance of civil functions of any official kind—such as those contemplated in the decree of 373.

If these objections carry their apparent weight, we must decide that the decree of Valens of 375 is mythical, and fall back upon the real decree of 373 which provides an adequate explanation of the part played in this affair by the Government. For the rise of monasticism had so seriously affected the politico-economic situation in Egypt, that the Government was bound to take action\(^5\); if it was impossible to reduce the number of \textit{bona fide} monks, it was the more urgent that persons pretending to be monks should be sternly dealt with.

It is suggested, then, that the aim of the Government in its action against the monks was essentially to arrest citizens who had become monks or who pretended to be monks in order to evade their obligations. In this connection the fact that Lucius, when journeying to Alexandria to assume the patriarchate, was accompanied by Magnus, the \textit{comes largitionum},\(^6\) is surely significant. This is not to deny the established fact that Valens was both an Arian and a persecutor; like many another he found means to yoke policy and religion together. It was essential that the Government should stop the drain upon its resources due to monasticism, yet to do so was to bring about a conflict with the orthodox party

\(^1\) \textit{Historia adversus paganos}, vii, 33. Paulus (in the continuation of Eutropius’ \textit{Roman History}, xi, 8) seems to conflate the notices of Jerome and Orosius.

\(^2\) Almost certainly Jerome and Orosius mean that the monks were pressed for military service in the literal sense. On this cf. p. 81, note 5.

\(^3\) From \textit{Hist. Mon.} (Greek), ch. viii, 10 f. we learn that under Julian monks were pressed for military service, for an enterprising tribune, having caught one monk, managed to secure Abba Apollo and the whole community who had come to condole with the recruit. \textit{Apophth. Patr.}, Ammonathas tells of a magistrate who collected poll tax from the monks until Ammonathas miraculously obtained a certificate of exemption from the emperor.

\(^4\) As in Ausonius, \textit{Parentalia}, xviii, 7.

\(^5\) Twenty years later there were at Oxyrhynchus alone (according to the \textit{Hist. Mon.}) 20,000 nuns and 10,000 monks: so the Latin (ch. v); the Greek (ch. v) gives the more credible but still enormous number of 5,000 monks.

to which the monks generally belonged. In such a situation the obvious course was for
the State to ally itself with the Arian minority, lending it support and leaving it to bear
one half of the odium which interference with the monks would surely excite. May it not
also be that by the intrusion of Lucius as archbishop one of two desirable results was to
be obtained? The order to expel pretended monks from the monastic settlements would
naturally be conveyed from the Government to the superiors through the constituted
ecclesiastical authority—the Arian Lucius: if the monks obeyed a command so trans-
mitted, it would be a recognition of Lucius as archbishop and a triumph for Arianism,
while the State would recover defaulters; and if they ignored the command, the secular
authorities would have ground for proceeding against them as rebels, and Lucius could
by excommunication annul their privileged status as genuine monks and hand over the
whole body of monks to the State as liable to ordinary civil obligations.

So viewed, then, the Lucian Persecution has a twofold aspect. Religious intolerance
and political necessity were working together to attain their respective ends. The Arian
party had a legal plea and the necessary means for breaking up a Homoousian stronghold,
and the State was able partially to veil its unpopular measure under the pretext of eccle-
siastical sanction. As for the monks, having no alternative which they could adopt, they
resisted and suffered the consequence.
CHAPTER VI
THE MOUNT OF NITRIA DURING THE LAST QUARTER
OF THE FOURTH CENTURY

THE monasteries of the Mount of Nitria emerged from the period of the Arian Persecution with an enhanced reputation for orthodoxy and steadfastness. Rufinus in 374 A.D. gives the number of the monks at the Mount of Nitria and Cellia (possibly those of Scetis also are included) as three thousand; by 390, as we shall see, this figure had risen to five thousand. The quarter of a century which followed the return of the exiles from Palestine was therefore a time of great expansion and development. The visits of certain foreigners of repute witness to the spread of the fame of the Mount far beyond the borders of Egypt, but save in one instance these years seem to have passed unmarked by any striking episode.

1. Evagrius at the Mount of Nitria and Cellia

Evagrius is more than individually important in the history of the desert monasteries. He is typical of a remarkable though brief epoch which gave some hope that an intellectual element would be infused into the monastic life of Egypt, but which actually ended in an acute crisis and the practical close of the history of the Mount of Nitria. Hitherto Egyptian monasticism had remained distinctly national in character, and men like Or, Pior, and Pambo were most typical of the system; in the latter part of the fourth century, though the native Egyptian element remained at full strength and ultimately reasserted itself, the center of the stage (so to speak) is occupied by a foreign element,¹ which had brought with it into the desert something of the daring and intellectual speculation of Hellenic culture which sorted strangely with the naiveté of the indigenous monks.

Perhaps the most brilliant and most remarkable member of this group was Evagrius.

¹ The names of the leading men in this group (Ammonius, Dioscorus, Euthymius, Eusebius, Albanius, Hierax — the younger and older — Cronius, Palladius, Evagrius) all bespeak foreign or at least Alexandrine origin. They stood to the native monks in much the same relation as the modern Levantine to the Egyptian fellah at the present day.
NITRIA DURING THE LAST QUARTER OF THE FOURTH CENTURY

He was a native of Ibora in Pontus, born (since he died at the age of fifty-four in 399 or 400) in 345 or 346. He was made anagnostes (reader) by Basil, Bishop of Caesarea, and after the death of Basil (379 A.D.) was ordained deacon by Gregory of Nazianzen. In 381 he accompanied Gregory to the Great Synod of Constantinople, and was left there to aid Nectarius by his skill in refuting heresies.

While dwelling in the city he was dangerously attracted by a married lady of high rank who perversely began to reciprocate his passion just when he had succeeded in overcoming his attachment. A vivid dream showed him the danger of his position so clearly that (in his vision) he vowed to flee from the city and “take thought for his own soul.” On waking, he took ship and escaped to Jerusalem where he was received by Melania, probably in 382. Being stricken by a fever, he was nursed by Melania, who, recognizing that his sickness was unduly prolonged, questioned him and learned of the vow which he had taken in his vision and of its non-fulfilment. By her influence Evagrius was induced to renew his oath, and on doing so quickly recovered his health.

In 383 he went to Egypt and (no doubt at the suggestion of Melania) became a monk at the Mount of Nitria. After passing two years in learning the lore of the monastic life, he proceeded in the third year to Cellia, where the remaining fifteen years of his life were spent. At Cellia he became the disciple of Macarius the Alexandrian, and, if we may believe the Historia monachorum, continued under instruction for a considerable time; Socrates is, no doubt, inexact in describing him as the disciple of (both) the Macarii, even though Evagrius once speaks of himself as dwelling in Scetis.

He lived a life of great austerity, taking for food only twelve ounces of bread per day with a pint of oil every three months; he abstained not only from meat but also from vegetables, fruit, and grapes. Bathing also was an interdicted luxury. Besides all this, he used to offer up “one hundred prayers” every day and worked as a copyist sufficiently to provide for his maintenance. To overcome temptations, he was capable of the severest self-inflictions, at one time standing all night in winter in a water cistern, at another living for forty days without coming under a roof.

After fifteen years of such a life he was “accounted worthy of the grace of knowledge and wisdom and discernment of spirits”; possibly it was at this period that he wrote his treatises on various aspects of asceticism. During his sixteenth year in the desert, his health began to fail, and the weakness of his stomach forced him to turn to a vegetable diet. In this state he lived on through two years, dying in 399 or 400 A.D. after having received

1 For this and the facts narrated below see Palladius, Hist. Laus., ch. xxxviii.
2 See Butler, L.H., 1, p. 181; 11, p. 237.
3 The Mount of Nitria therefore was already becoming a mere training school from which novices went on to Cellia after learning the monastic lore.
4 Latin version, ch. xxvii.
5 H.E., iv, 23.
6 See p. 30. Yet he may well have made a relatively short stay in Scetis.
7 For his literary remains see Migne, P.G., xl, col. 1219 f. Ancient notices of his writings are in Palladius, Hist. Laus., ch. xxxviii (see Butler’s note, L.H., 11, p. 218); Socrates, H.E., iv, 23; and Jerome, Epist., cxxxiii (Migne, P.L., xxii, col. 1151). The last named is bitterly hostile.
communion at Epiphany. His life in the desert covered seventeen years, two being spent at the Mount of Nitria and fifteen at Cellia.

Some further events in his monastic life are recorded, but cannot be dated precisely. The *Historia monachorum*¹ tells us that he often went down to Alexandria, there to “stop the mouths of the philosophers of the Hellenes.” He, too, like the four Tall Brothers enjoyed the April sunshine of Theophilus’ favor, for the archbishop tried to raise him to the episcopate.² According to the Coptic redaction of the *Lausiac History*³ Thmuis was the see for which he was destined, but he escaped the unwelcome dignity by flight into Palestine.

Evagrius, *felix opportunitate mortis*, died just before the Origenist crisis came to a head, but there is no doubt that he was the intellectual center of the Origenist party.⁴ John of Lycopolis speaks of him as head of a fellowship or company (*συνοδία, ἐταυρεία*),⁵ and Palladius himself lets drop an allusion to “the followers of Ammonius and Evagrius.”⁶ That the teaching of Evagrius was regarded with something more than suspicion by a party of the monks is proved by Hero’s taunt that all those who followed the doctrine of Evagrius were led astray⁷—though Palladius is careful to explain that Hero repudiated all human instruction and came to a bad end. Towards the close of the sixth century Evagrius was still remembered at Cellia as a heretic and his cell was believed to be haunted by the demon who had perverted him.⁸

---

2. *Saint Jerome and Paula at the Mount of Nitria*

Paula, a Roman lady of the highest rank, came under the influence of Saint Jerome after the death of her husband Toxotius and, like Melania, decided to retire from “the world.” Committing her son (also named Toxotius) to the care of the *praetor urbanus* at Rome, and leaving behind her a daughter of marriageable age, she took ship for the East. At Cyprus she visited the celebrated Epiphanius, Bishop of Constantia, and then made her way to Antioch, where she was rejoined by Saint Jerome. From Antioch the party travelled southwards to Jerusalem, and thence into Egypt.

Only a short stay seems to have been made at Alexandria. For though Saint Jerome⁹ claims to have been the disciple of the celebrated Didymus while staying in the city, Rufinus¹⁰ ridicules this pretension declaring that in all his life he had spent no more than thirty days in Alexandria where Didymus taught.

From Alexandria the two proceeded (about 385) to the Mount of Nitria. Jerome does not enlarge upon his own impressions, though like a modern politician he claims to have foreseen coming events. “Thence” (i.e., from Jerusalem), he writes,¹¹ “I pressed on

---

¹ Greek version, ch. xxix.
² Socrates, loc. cit.
⁴ On the Origenist crisis see ch. viii.
⁶ Id., ch. xxiv.
⁷ Id., ch. xxvi.
⁹ Epist., lxxxiii, § 3 (P.L., xxii, col. 745).
¹⁰ *Apologia ad Anastasium*, 11, 12.
¹¹ *Apologia*, iii, 22 (P.L., xxiii, col. 473).
to Egypt: I surveyed the Monasteries of Nitria, and marked out the serpents lurking amid
the companies of the saints." But in a letter1 to Eustochium, Paula's daughter, he en-
larges on the raptures of the lady and the enthusiasm with which she contemplated the
life of the monks: "I will pass on to the city of No which was afterwards transformed into
Alexandria and the city of the Lord, Nitria, wherein, day by day, the pollutions of very
many are washed away with the purest nitre [i.e., soap] of virtue. When she beheld it, and
when the holy and venerable bishop, Isidorus the Confessor, and countless throngs of
monks (many of whom had attained to the dignity of priests and Levites) hastened to
meet her, she rejoiced for the glory of the Lord, but avowed herself unworthy of so great
an honor. Why then should I mention the Macarii, the Arsisii,2 the Sarapions, and other
persons, the columns of Christ? Whose cell did she not enter? At whose feet did she not
prostrate herself? In each saint she felt that she beheld Christ, and whatever she bestowed
upon them, she rejoiced to think that she had bestowed upon God. Her enthusiasm was
wonderful and her endurance scarcely believable in a woman. Forgetful of her sex
and of her natural frailty, in the midst of so many thousands of monks, she desired to
dwell there with her handmaidens, and perchance all would have welcomed her and
granted her request, had not the greater strength of her longing for the Holy Places held
her back."

The episode throws but little light on the actual conditions of life at the Mount of
Nitria, yet it is not without its historical value, since it shows that from its humble begin-
nings Amoun's settlement had developed into a world-wide force influential not only in
Egypt and the East but in the western half of the Empire as well.

3. Palladius at the Mount of Nitria and Cellia

Here we must deal with the general and monastic life of Palladius, author of the Lausiac
History. For not only do the monasteries of the Mount of Nitria owe their fame pre-
eminently to him, but he was closely associated with Evagrius and that group of foreign
"intellectuals," already mentioned, which was destined to come into such painful prominence
at the end of the fourth century.

Palladius was born in Galatia in 363–364 A.D. In 386 he became a monk under Innocent
with whom he spent three years in a monastery on the Mount of Olives.3 In 388 he went
to Alexandria, where he came under the influence of Isidorus the Hospitaller,4 and was
placed by him under the direction of a recluse, Dorotheus the Theban, who dwelt in a cave
five miles outside the city.5 It was proposed that after three years of preliminary training
Palladius should return to Isidorus for spiritual instruction, but the rigorous mode of life

2 The MSS. have "Arsenios," but Arsenius did not come to the desert until 394 and settled in Scetis, not at the Mount of Nitria.
3 Hist. Laus., ch. xliv.
4 On Isidorus see ch. viii.
5 Hist. Laus., ch. ii.
imposed by the hermit proved too much for Palladius, who retired early in 390 to the Mount of Nitria.\(^1\)

From the first Palladius seems to have interested himself in the community which he thus joined, learning all that he could from its older members concerning the early monks who had founded and established the settlement. Amongst his informants he mentions by name Arsiesius the Great, Petubastes,\(^5\) Asion, Cronius, and Sarapion, contemporaries of Antony and acquainted with Amoun the founder of Nitria.\(^3\)

After undergoing instruction for one year at the Mount of Nitria, Palladius retired early in 391 to the "innermost desert" of Cellia.\(^4\) At first he became the disciple of Macarius of Alexandria—or at any rate was admitted to some degree of intimacy with him\(^8\)—but after the death of this father (probably in January, 394), he came under the direction of Evagrius.\(^6\) Palladius tells us that he lived for nine years at Cellia,\(^7\) from 391 to 399,\(^8\) but has little to say on what passed during that period. From scattered notices we gather that he was in close touch with Origenes, the steward of Pambo,\(^9\) Ammonius the Tall\(^10\) and his brother Dioscorus,\(^11\) and other members of the "intellectual" group; that he went at least once to Scetis in company with Albanius and Hero of Alexandria\(^12\); and that he travelled to Lycopolis (Assiût) to see the famous recluse John.\(^13\)

Palladius distinctly implies that he was present at the death of Evagrius in 399.\(^14\) Later in that year he was sent to Alexandria; apparently he had been suffering from a disorder of the stomach and spleen for some time and the brethren feared that he might become dropsical.\(^15\)

The remainder of his life does not strictly concern us and may be briefly summarized. Acting on medical advice, he left Alexandria and retired to Palestine, where he lived for a year (399-400) with Posidonius at Bethlehem. In 400 he was consecrated Bishop of Helenopolis in Bithynia—a dignity which John of Lycopolis had foretold for him. During the next five years he was closely associated with Saint John Chrysostom, whose cause he upheld, and for whose sake he was banished (406 A.D.) to Syene (Aswân). From 406 to 412 he remained in exile in Upper Egypt, partly at Syene and partly at Antinoê. In 412-413 he returned to Galatia, and was subsequently (about 417) translated to the See of Aspuna in that province. The Lausiac History was written in 419-420\(^16\) perhaps not long before his death, which certainly took place at some date between 420 and 430.

\(^1\) *Hist. Lus.*, chs. ii, vii.  
\(^2\) Petubastes would be more correct, a survival from ancient Egyptian.  
\(^3\) *Hist. Lus.*, ch. vii.  
\(^4\) Ib.  
\(^5\) Ib., ch. xviii passim.  
\(^6\) Ib., chs. xxiii, xxxv.  
\(^7\) Ib., ch. xviii.  
\(^8\) See Butler, *L.H.*, ii, p. 245. In this section Butler's chronology is followed, save that Palladius' retirement to Cellia is dated 391 instead of 390-391.  
\(^9\) *Hist. Lus.*, ch. x.  
\(^10\) Id., chs. xxiv, xlvi.  
\(^11\) Id., ch. xii.  
\(^12\) Id., ch. xxvi.  
\(^13\) Id., ch. xxxv.  
\(^14\) Id., ch. xxxviii.  
\(^15\) Id., ch. xxxv.  
\(^16\) *Hist. Lus.*, Prologue (ed. Butler, pp. 9 f.).
4. The Destruction of the Serapeum at Alexandria

Since the period of the Arian Persecution the monks of the Mount of Nitria do not seem to have been involved in any of the movements of the contemporary world. But in 391 they appear once more playing a part—though apparently only a minor part—in the destruction of pagan temples in Alexandria.

The narrative of Rufinus\(^1\) stands nearest in date to the actual event. According to this writer, the conflict between pagans and Christians was quite unpremeditated. An area in the city on which stood an old and ruinous "basilica" had been granted by Constantius to a former Archbishop of Alexandria.\(^2\) Theophilus (of whose passion for building we shall hear more) decided to build a church on the spot. While the ground was being cleared, a Mithraeum was disclosed, and it was the violation of this sanctuary which provoked the pagans to attack the Christians. The former, when they were worsted, took refuge in the Serapeum under the command of a philosopher, Olympius. Here they held out successfully for some time, taking many prisoners whom they compelled to choose between sacrifice to Serapis and martyrdom.

The local authorities were too weak or too timid to intervene, and contented themselves with reporting to the emperor and asking for instructions. Theodosius in reply directed that the garrison of the Serapeum should be given their lives on surrender, adding with a touch of humor that the Christians who had suffered death during the affair were amply compensated by gaining the crown of martyrdom; the pagan temples, however, were to be destroyed. In accordance with these orders the Serapeum, which Rufinus describes,\(^3\) was demolished together with the colossal cult figure of Serapis. Apparently the temple of Cronos, the scene of many scandals, was destroyed at the same time.\(^4\)

Socrates differs materially from Rufinus in representing that Theophilus had secured the imperial edict for the destruction of the temples, before he made a public show of the pagan ritual objects, and that it was this which provoked the pagan attack upon the Christians; nor is any mention made of the defense of the Serapeum.\(^5\) Probably the two accounts\(^4\) should be partially combined. For we know that in 391 Theodosius, Arcadius, and Honorius issued an edict to Evagrius, the *augustalis*, and Romanus, the Count of Egypt, ordering the suppression of pagan worship (but not the destruction of the temples).\(^7\) This may be identified with the edict of Socrates, and we may regard the edict for the demolition of the temples mentioned by Rufinus as a supplementary measure provoked by the pagan

---

1 *H.E.*, ii, 22 f.
2 The archbishop was the Arian George (see Socrates, *H.E.*, iii, 2).
3 *H.E.*, ii, 23.
4 Id., 25. John Moschus (*Pratum spirituale*, LXXII) mentions the ruins of this temple as visible in his day (close of the VI century).
5 *H.E.*, v, 16.
6 Rufinus gives the purely Christian version; Socrates (loc. cit.) was influenced by the report of his former teachers, the scholars Helladius and Ammonius, the former of whom dispatched nine Christians in the fighting.
7 *Codex Theodosianus*, ed. Mommsen-Meyer, xvi, 10, 11.
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

resistance to the earlier decree. That an edict for the destruction of temples was actually issued there can be no doubt, though it is not preserved in the Codex Theodosianus. In the first place a decree of 399,\(^1\) forbidding the destruction of temples which ranked as public monuments, calls in for inspection permits which had previously been granted authorizing demolition of such buildings. The second edict may have been of this character. In the second place such an edict is mentioned in an entirely independent source—the Apophthegmata patrum.\(^2\) There Abba Dulas relates that his master Bisarion, while visiting John of Lycopolis, suddenly declared that "a decree has been issued for the temples to be destroyed." And so it came to pass; and they were destroyed."

Our only authority for assigning a share in the destruction of the temples to the monks of the desert is another apophthegm which tells us that "the Fathers once came to Alexandria summoned by Theophilus the Archbishop that he might pray and overthrow the temples," and that they were entertained by the artful prelate, who was already alive to the possible uses to which he might turn monasticism. Though the Mount of Nitria is not actually named in this anecdote, the situation of the place at no undue distance from Alexandria, the great number of monks to be found there, and the analogy of subsequent events makes the identification of some, if not all, of these "Fathers" as belonging to the Mount of Nitria inevitable.

For the history of the Mount of Nitria the episode is important because it in all probability taught the monks for the first time their power, and the influence they could bring to bear upon the authorities, ecclesiastical or secular, at Alexandria.

5. The Death of Macarius of Alexandria

Little is known of the latter part of the life of Macarius. Possibly his collision with Macarius the Egyptian\(^3\) may have occurred during this period. He possessed, as we have already noticed, cells in various parts of the desert, and amongst them a cell in Scetis. It was presumably while residing there that Macarius "cut off," that is, excommunicated, two brethren who were said to have sinned. This was reported to Macarius the Egyptian, who reversed the sentence\(^4\) and declared that it was not the two brethren who were "cut off," but Macarius the Alexandrian. When the younger Macarius heard this, he fled to the marsh of Scetis, where his namesake found him suffering torments from the mosquitoes, and after praising his submission, pointed out that he had acted hastily in pronouncing sentence on the two monks whom he himself had questioned and found to be

1 Codex Theodosianus, ed. Mommsen-Meyer, xvi, 10, 15.
2 Bisarion, iv. Another apophthegm (Epiphanius, ii) states that a chariot race had just ended in the victory of a "son of Mary" when "the news concerning the temple of Serapis spread among the people, that the great Theophilus had returned, overthrown the image of Serapis, and had taken possession of the temple." It was then, no doubt, that the rioting started.
4 Macarius of Alexandria as superior of Cellia presumably had no right to intervene in matters of discipline at Scetis, where he himself was subordinate to Macarius the Great and subject to disciplinary action.
innocent. The incident ended with the imposition as a penance of a fast for three weeks, to be broken only once a week.

Here we may raise the interesting question of Macarius' relation to the "intellectual group" of which Evagrius was the ornament: had Macarius of Alexandria lived longer, might he not have been stigmatized as an Origenist and a heretic? Unfortunately we know nothing about the doctrinal teaching of Macarius; yet we know that he was intimate with many of the so-called Origenists. Evagrius and Palladius, for example, were his disciples. That he was tolerant of the Origenists, if not in complete sympathy with them, is certain, for he was Superior of Cellia, where the leaders of the party mainly dwelt, from about 374 down to the date of his death, scarcely five years before the Origenist crisis arrived. He must therefore have been aware of the views held by Evagrius, Ammonius, and their fellows, and have either shared them or regarded them as innocuous, since he certainly made no effort to repress them.

Palladius, who retired to Cellia in 391, gives us a few fragments of information concerning the last three years of the saint's life. Macarius still held the office of Priest-Superior of Cellia, and despite his age still exercised the functions of his office and even performed three miracles of healing during this period. The most interesting chronologically of these notices is one in which Palladius relates that in his veneration for the saint, he once spied upon him to see what he was saying or doing and overheard him deriding himself and rebuking the devil. Macarius, he says, was then in "extreme old age," had completed "nearly a hundred years," and had lost all his teeth. Fortunately Palladius also gives us a fairly adequate, though brief, description of the saint's personal appearance at this time. He was somewhat undersized and meager, with hair only on his upper lip and the point of his chin, his great asceticism preventing the growth of a full beard.

Possibly his feeling of veneration forbade Palladius to dwell upon the actual death of Macarius, though he states indirectly that it occurred three years after his own arrival at Cellia, that is, in 393 or 394. According to the Coptic Calendar the day of the saint's death was Bashans sixth (May first); the Roman Church observes January second as the day of his birth, the Greek Church commemorates him (together with Macarius the Egyptian) on January nineteenth.

Macarius is credited with the authorship of a code of monastic rules and with the partial authorship (in collaboration with Macarius the Great, Sarapion and Paphnutius) of a second code. These documents, neither of which can be assigned to so early a date as the fourth century, are discussed elsewhere.
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

6. The Visit Described in the Historia Monachorum

Repeated reference has been made in the foregoing pages to the Historia monachorum which in Latin dress has long been familiar to historians and universally regarded as the work of Rufinus. Modern scholarship, however, has recognized that a Greek version of this work exists embedded in the “long text” of the Lausiac History, and the various sections have now been disengaged and reunited to form a distinct work.1

The author of the Historia monachorum was a monk from the monastery founded by Rufinus on the Mount of Olives at Jerusalem,2 and may perhaps be Timothy, who was Archdeacon of Alexandria in 412 A.D.3 The work itself is a series of notices on the more remarkable monks and hermits seen or heard of by the writer and his companions in the course of a journey from Lycopolis (Assiût) northwards.4 The date of this journey can be determined closely. It began in September, 394, for John of Lycopolis is represented as prophesying the overthrow of Eugenius by Theodosius,5 and when the travellers reached the Nitrian desert, Macarius of Alexandria had died “quite recently,”6 Dioscorus the Tall was already a bishop,7 Evagrius was still alive,8 and the Anthropomorphic troubles were not yet threatening. Nitria and Cellia were reached therefore in the autumn or winter of 394 or at latest early in 395.

The last places mentioned in the narrative before Nitria was reached are Memphis and Babylon, roughly corresponding to the modern Cairo,9 and as there is some reason to believe that the party arrived at Nitria (the secular village) by water,10 we may perhaps assume that they took boat at Babylon and after descending the Rosetta branch of the Nile turned aside into the canal which seems to have passed close by Nitria.11

The author describes the Mount of Nitria as the most famous monastic center in Egypt, situated nearly forty miles from Alexandria, and taking its name from the village nearby where the natron is collected. Here were fifty “tabernacles”12 or thereabouts lying close together, in which the monks dwelt singly and in larger or smaller groups, under the supreme authority of one “father,” or superior. “When therefore we were drawing near this place, they were aware that foreign brethren were approaching, and straightway

1 This of course was the work of later compilers who threw the two works into one.
2 Preuschen, Palladius und Rufinus, pp. 135 f.
3 Hist. Mon. (Greek), Prologue, § 2.
4 See Butler, L.H., 1, pp. 276 f.
5 Probably the party had sailed up to Assiût (the north wind being that which normally prevails on the Nile), and returned northwards (mainly) by land to avoid the slow journey by water.
6 Hist. Mon. (Greek), ch. 1, 64. Eugenius was defeated and slain Sept. 6, 394 (Socrates, H.E., v, 25).
7 Id., ch. xxvii.
8 Id., (Latin), ch. xxiii, 2. Dioscorus was not yet consecrated when Palladius reached Nitria in 390 (see Palladius, Hist. Laus., ch. xiii), but was already Bishop of Hermopolis in 394, when he attended the Synod of Constantinople (see Le Quien, Oriens Christ., 11, 515; Hardouin, Acta conciliorum, 1, 956).
9 Id., ch. xxvii.
10 Id., ch. xx, 3.
11 See p. 19.
12 Ib.
13 I.e., rude monastic dwellings of any size. The Greek of Sozomen (H.E., vi, 31, 1) is μουσειρίπα which is not to be equated with “monastery” in its modern sense, though we know that there were communities of 150 and 200 monks, dwelling presumably in solid groups, at the Mount of Nitria. See p. 172.
poured forth one and all from their cells like a swarm of bees. With joyful speed and glad haste they hastened to meet us: very many of them brought with them pitchers of water and loaves of bread. . . . Then, when they had welcomed us, they first brought us to the church with singing of psalms and washed our feet, each one wiping us with the linen garments which he was wearing, as though merely relieving the fatigue of our journey, but really purging away the cares of human life by this traditional symbolism. What then shall I now say of their courtesy? What of their kindness? What of their charity? Each of them sought to bring us into his own cell.”

From the Mount of Nitria the travellers proceeded into the “inner desert” to Cellia, about ten miles distant. “To this place retire those who have first been trained yonder [at the Mount of Nitria] and, having cast their sloughs, wish to lead a more private life. For it is an utter desert, and the cells are situated at such distances that they are neither within sight nor call of one another. Each monk remains alone in his respective cell, and there is a great silence and great peace amongst them.”

The list of monks seen by the travellers at Cellia betrays the author’s sympathy with the Origenist party. Ammonius with his brothers receives first mention: of these Eusebius and Euthymius had not yet attracted the favor of Theophilus, but Dioscorus was already a bishop. The elder brother is described as living in a “monastery” or cell furnished with all things necessary and surrounded by a wall of (sun) baked bricks within which was a well. The author relates that on one occasion this father relinquished his own cell to accommodate a monk who was newly arrived, and at other times would set to work with the brethren and in a single day build “monasteries” for a party of new arrivals. Nay more, he would entice the strangers into the church to partake of refreshment, and while they were thus occupied, would furnish the new-built cells with necessary equipment.

Another worthy seen at Cellia was Didymus, who used to trample unharmed upon scorpions, horned vipers, and asps. No father of this name is mentioned elsewhere, and it is possible that he should be identified with Isaac, the disciple of Macarius, whom Palladius describes as enjoying similar immunity. Here too were Cronius, who could boast the double distinction of having been a companion of Saint Antony and of having attained the great age of one hundred and ten years, and Origes, also a disciple of Antony. Evagrius also was deemed worthy of notice as one who had been long under the instruction of Macarius. He gave the travellers salutary advice as to moderation in water drinking, and

---

1 *Hist. Mon.* (Latin), ch. xxi.
2 *Id.* (Latin), ch. xxiii.
3 Certainly not a fortified wall, but merely one to insure seclusion.
4 This well illustrates the unambitious connotation of the term “monastery” in the IV century.
5 *Id.* (Greek), ch. xxv.
6 *Dial. de viia* *Job.* *Chrys.*, § xxvii.
7 *Hist. Mon.* (Latin) ch. xxv; in the Greek (ch. xxvi) he is called Cronius. On his history see p. 55.
8 *Id.* (Latin), ch. xxvi (he is omitted in the Greek, doubtless because of his name). He was a priest and steward of Pambo at the time of Melania's visit.
9 *Id.* (Latin), ch. xxvii.
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

gave proof of his own asceticism in abstaining almost wholly from bread while the other monks made bread and salt their staple diet.

The author was less interested in the earlier monks who had passed away. Macarius of Alexandria, however, is accorded a notice of some length,¹ though he is partially confused with his namesake. Amoun, as founder of the Mount of Nitria and Cellia, is also spoken of with respect in a chapter containing some valuable pieces of information.²

There is no indication that the author and his friends went on from Cellia to Scetis. No monks living there at the time of the visit are named, and Macarius alone is mentioned for his historic interest as founder of the place,

¹ Hist. Mon. (Latin), ch. xxix. ² Id. (Latin), ch. xxx; (Greek), ch. xxix.
CHAPTER VII

THE RISE OF THE FOUR MONASTERIES OF SCETIS
AND THE CLOSE OF THE FOURTH CENTURY

1. Summary of the History of Scetis between 356 and 380 A.D.

We have heard but little of Scetis since the date (about 356) when the monastic settlement founded there by Macarius began definitely to flourish, and that little may be summed up here.

In his Letter to Theophilus1 Ammonius the Bishop tells us of Athanasius (at a date later than 363) that “he asked me concerning the holy anchorets in Scetis, Paësius and Paul and Psoosi (Ψοσις) his brethren, and Isaias and Pesyrus and Isaac and Paul...” This list of anchorets in Scetis is important for more than one reason; but for the present its value consists in this, that Athanasius took a keen, real interest in the ascetics there—a practical guarantee that they were of the orthodox party. Sisoes, too, who left Scetis about 356, was an uncompromising foe of Arianism.2

Whether Lucius and his forces raided Scetis as well as the Mount of Nitria in 374 we do not know; Macarius the Great, the “Father of Scetis,” was of course banished, and Paphnutius the Scetiote was apparently3 one of the monks banished to Dioacaesarea. They may have come up to the Mount of Nitria to give moral support to the brethren there, or have been arrested in their own fastness. In any case the storm was soon over, and the exiles returned to their abodes before 380; for it was in or near 378 that Porphyry of Gaza,4 a native of Thessalonica, came to Scetis where after a few days he was “accounted worthy of the venerable habit,” and where he spent the next five years with the holy fathers. It is clear that normal conditions had been restored before Porphyry’s arrival.

1 § 24 (Ada SS., May iii, Appendix, p. 71*).
2 See p. 74.
3 This statement depends upon the identification (which is hardly doubtful) of Paphnutius the Exile with Paphnutius the Scetiote seen by Melania: see Palladius, Hist. Laus., ch. xlvi.
4 On Porphyry of Gaza see his Life by Mark the Deacon (P.G., lxxv, col. 1213), and Tillemont, Mémoires, x, 703 f.
The period which follows was marked by the most important developments in the monastic colony of Scetis. We are fortunate in possessing a good deal of information on this subject; and though much of it is shrouded in the mists of a legendary atmosphere, the nucleus of solid fact can often be partially disengaged.

2. The Four Monasteries of Scetis

This development is the foundation, or, to speak more accurately, the unpremeditated formation of the four monasteries of Saints Macarius, John the Little, Bishōi, and Maximus and Domitius (Baramûs). Until the middle of the ninth century these were so famous as to be generally known as the "Four Monasteries." A writer of unknown date who assumes the name of John the Little (Colobos), after enumerating the four, continues as follows: "Thus these Four Monasteries are the stars, my beloved, which shine on the holy mountain of Shihîth like jewels and precious stones in a dark place. They are like the Four Holy Gospels which shine over all the world." 2

Clugnet confidently asserts that so late as the period of Abba Daniel and the second half of the sixth century "there was no monastery in the desert of Scetis." If the term monastery is to be confined to its mere modern sense, this statement may be accepted. But if we understand by the word a distinct association of monks dwelling in a loosely defined area round a common center, Clugnet's pronouncement must be utterly rejected. We are able to trace back the Four Monasteries to the fourth century.

We begin to work backwards from the seventh century. In the narrative of the visit paid by Benjamin the Patriarch to Scetis the first monastery reached was that of Baramûs or Maximus and Domitius, and the context makes it clear that the name was then established. The Monastery of Macarius is, of course, also mentioned, since Benjamin consecrated a new church there. From other sources we learn that the Monastery of Bishōi was restored by the same patriarch. The fourth monastery—that of John the Little—is not mentioned by name in connection with Benjamin's visit, but is alluded to in the Coptic Life of Samuel of Kalamûn at an earlier period in the same century, and again as the monastery in which the Patriarch Damian lived as a monk about the middle of the sixth century. 8

In the sixth century the sack of the Four Monasteries occurred in the patriarchate of the same Damian, and John Moschus in relating an anecdote of the same general period refers to the "Four Laurea of Scetis." Earlier still, the Four Monasteries are mentioned in connection with the Gaianite heresy (about 535 A.D.). 11

---

1 Of these three exist to the present day; the Monastery of John the Little alone has perished, and its place been taken by the Syrian Monastery.

2 "John the Little," Life of Bishōi (B.N., Fonds arabe, No. 4796, fol. 162*).


4 See p. 272.

5 See p. 269.

6 It was doubtless one of the "rest of the monasteries" which were visited: see p. 272.

7 See Cauwenbergh, Étude sur les moines d'Égypte, p. 90.

8 See p. 248.

9 See p. 249.

10 Pratum spirituale, cxiii.

11 See p. 229.
THE RISE OF THE FOUR MONASTERIES OF SCETIS

We have little detailed information on the history of Scetis in the first third of the sixth and the last two thirds of the fifth century, but we know that in the first sack of Scetis (about 408) four churches were destroyed. Passing back a few years more, we find that at the very end of the fourth century and on the eve of the Origenist crisis, there were four “congregations” in Scetis each with its church and its priest-superior; and these congregations with their churches seem to have been long established at that date (399).

As a result we may claim that, except for one lacuna which is due to our imperfect information, the four monasteries, or topoi, or laurae, definitely named in the seventh century can be traced back from point to point to the fourth. We have now to decide whether or no the eponymous saints of these monasteries were really their founders.

Our fourth-century authorities, when referring to the four “Churches” or four “Congregations” of Scetis, never distinguish them by name. The earliest instances of the use of names are to be found in the Life of Apollinaria, where the Laura of Macarius is mentioned, and in the History of the Patriarchs, whence we learn that the sixth-century Patriarch Damian was a monk in the Monastery of Saint John (the Little). John Moschus (sixth-seventh century) refers only generally to the “Four Laurae of Scetis,” but distinguishes one of them as the “Laura of Abba Sisoes”; but whether Sisoes is to be regarded as a sixth-century superior of a laura, or whether the name is a corruption of Bishoi (in Coptic Pishoi), is matter for conjecture. It must not be supposed that the four communities or monasteries received distinguishing names only in the sixth century. While Macarius and John the Little, famous in legend and story, and not merely as founders of monasteries, might conceivably have been adopted by a later age as “patrons” of two of the communities in Scetis, the same cannot be true of the Monasteries of Bishoi and Baramus. Bishoi and the “Roman Saints” of Baramus are almost or entirely unknown save as the originators of the monasteries which bear their names. That they were arbitrarily selected in or about the sixth century as the patron saints of the two remaining monasteries is therefore incredible. In short, we regard the names of the four monasteries as original in the sense that they really preserve the memory of their founders or originators.

Before we detail the circumstances in which the several monasteries came to be founded, we must pause to consider the order of precedence assigned to them by Coptic writers. “Sarapion’s” Life of Saint Macarius distinctly gives first place to the Monastery of Baramus, the second to the Monastery of Macarius himself, and the third and fourth to the Monasteries of John the Little and Bishoi. On the other hand, the Arabic Life of Bishoi by “John the Little” represents the Monastery of Macarius as the first to be founded, followed

---

1 See p. 157.
2 Cassian, Coll., 2. See p. 133.
3 See the Bollandist Bibl. Hagior. Graeca (ed. 2), p. 22 (the date of this Life, however, seems to be undetermined).
4 Ed. Evetts, p. 209: the compilers are certainly using early, perhaps contemporary, sources.
5 Pratum spirituale, clxix.
6 A.M.G., xxv, pp. 87 f.
7 That is, the permanent Monastery of Macarius, as distinguished from the initial settlement in Scetis mentioned above (p. 63).
8 ms. cit., fol. 161b.
by those of John the Little and Bishôi, while Baramûs is placed fourth. There is, therefore, a distinct conflict between our authorities. But probability is in favor of the order given by “Sarapion”; for the alternative has all the appearance of an attempt to give precedence first to the Monastery of Macarius, and then to the foundations of the purely indigenous worthies, John and Bishôi.

3. The Foundation of Baramûs

The Arabic name Baramûs (بَرَامُوس) is a transliteration of the Coptic Pa-Romeos (Ῥαμωμος), the "(Monastery) of the Romans." The latter part of the compound is certainly of great antiquity, for the tenth century mss. of the Life of Saint Macarius\(^1\) name the monastery the "Cell of the Romans" (Ῥαμωμος), and the title was certainly ancient at that period. There is no need to seek any other derivation, though Quatremère\(^8\) somewhat strangely suggests that περιπλακος (i.e., the "Desert Monastery") is the original, and the title is sometimes supposed to be a corruption of the name Mûsa (Moses) and to commemorate Moses the Robber, or the Black.\(^3\)

The story of the foundation of Baramûs is related in the Coptic Life of Maximus and Domitius.\(^4\) The title of this work is as follows: "The life of the Roman Saints, Maximus and Domitius, sons of Valentinian (οὐλαγεντινος) ... It has been told by Pshoi, the man of Constantinople and deacon,\(^6\) who inhabited Shiêt near Abba Macarius, the man of God, and Abba Isidorus. This man\(^7\) went to his rest a deacon; and they put in his place Moses the Black. And Abba Pshoi\(^7\) has written the lives of these two saints for a memorial of them, and placed it in the church..."

According to this document Maximus and Domitius were the children of Valentinian, "the son of Jovian, who destroyed all the temples of the idols." Piously brought up, the youths resolved to become monks, and as a preliminary made a pilgrimage to Nicaea, whence they were sent to Agabus, a famous ascetic of Palestine, who dwelt on a rock near the sea.\(^4\) They were received by the ascetic, and initiated into the monastic life.

After the youths had dwelt with him for six years, Agabus saw by night a vision of Macarius—described as a tall man clad in black-striped (?) garments, wearing a cowl on

---

1 A.M.G., xxv, p. 87; 2 Mémories, i, p. 471.
3 Moses was indeed connected with the Monastery of Baramûs (cf. Makrizi, ed. Wüstenfeld, Gesch. d. Cop., ch. vii, § 77, pp. 111 f.), and in later times there arose a monastery bearing his name.
4 Ed. Amélain, A.M.G., xxv, pp. 262 f. A Syriac recension has been published by Nau (P.O., v, pp. 752 f.).
5 So the Coptic text printed by Amélain (loc. cit.), who nevertheless gives "archdeacon" in his translation.
6 I.e., Pshoi. Amélain apparently takes the demonstrative pronoun ϕαῖ as indicating Isidorus, though Isidorus is well known as Priest of Scetis, and indeed is stated in this document (A.M.G., xxv, p. 311) to have become priest of the Church of Maximus and Domitius.

7 Pshoi, the "man of Constantinople," is not to be identified with the famous Egyptian solitary, Pshoi (as Nau does, P.O., v, p. 698). Since Maximus and Domitius are confused with Arcadius and Honorius (see p. 101), I suspect that Pshoi is a mere pseudonym for Arsenius, who is sometimes alleged to have been a deacon and who might be described (loosely) as a "man of Constantinople." The name Arsenius was perhaps suppressed because that saint was a Melkite possession (see Abû Sahlîh, Churches and Monasteries of Egypt, fol. 49 a f.). Course the work is not really by Arsenius, but of far later date.
8 Hist. Patr., p. 408, identifies this place as Dér Mût, the Monastery of Abba Harmanus.
THE RISE OF THE FOUR MONASTERIES OF SCETIS

which were crosses, and bearing a staff and a cross—who bade him inform the brothers
that when he (Agabus) was dead, they were to retire to Scetis.

Despite this injunction, the two saints seem to have remained in Palestine for some time,
performing such remarkable miracles that they were at length discovered by Theodosius
(who had succeeded Valentinian I in January, 379). It was not until the people of Con-
stantinople sought to have Maximus as successor to their deceased patriarch that the
brothers retired to Egypt to join Macarius.¹ After suffering great hardships by the way,
they were at length transported by an angel to Scetis and left “on the great rock which
is up above (?) the water to the south.”²

Having found Macarius they desired to be made monks. Macarius, seeing that they
were delicately bred, tried to dissuade them, as being unfit for the hard life of the desert,
but finding them resolved, he showed them where and how to make their cell, how to set
about the regular monastic employment of basket making, and how they might exchange
their baskets for the bread they needed with the watchman who guarded the natron.³

Three years passed, and Macarius returned to the part of the desert in which the brothers
were settled, learning in the course of his visit that the elder had already attained to per-
fection, while the younger had not yet reached the same pitch. A few days after, Maximus
died and his soul was carried up to heaven, where the whole company of saints awaited
him; three days later, the younger brother, Domitius, also died and was buried with
Maximus near the cave in which they had dwelt.⁴ The dates of their deaths are given as
Tūbeh fourteenth and seventeenth.⁵

The actual foundation of Baramús is thus recorded⁶: “For the rest, a year of days after
the decease of these saints, when the desert was thickly populated with monks, both from
the Mount of Pernoudj and from the solitary dwellings scattered about Egypt—they built
for them a great church and made Abba Isidorus priest (of it), and me (Pshoi) also, the
unworthy, deacon. After that the great Abba Macarius gave a name to the church,
directing and saying: ‘Call this topos the Cell of the Romans.’” Three seniors from the
Mount of Pernoudj, Pamo (Pambo), Pilor (Pior), and Athre, thereupon demanded of
Macarius whether he knew the names of the saints. To this Macarius replied that he knew
them, but that the topos was to be called “the Romans” (νησματας), lest one individual

¹ No patriarch appears to have died during the reign of Theodosius I. Demophilus the Arian was deposed in
380 by Gregory Nazianzen who instantly renounced the
dignity. Nectarius was elected in 381 and survived the
emperor. If the refusal of Gregory is the occasion referred
to, the flight to Egypt would be in 381.

² A.M.G., xxv, p. 292 (cf. p. 65).

³ Further on in the Life (A.M.G., xxv, p. 301) this
guard is identified as a man of Jebromesin in the diocese
of Arbat. This detail suggests that the Life in its present
shape is a work of the VII century (since John the Hegumen
of Scetis was also a native of the same place). But essential
features of the story are certainly far older than that
period.

⁴ See A.M.G., xxv, pp. 305 f.

⁵ They are regularly commemorated on Tūbeh 17th.
Abū Sāliḥ (Churches and Monasteries of Egypt, fol. 53)
states that their festival was held on this day at the
Monastery of Dahshūr, adding that the Copts made
pilgrimages (to Scetis?) thrice a year in their honor, on
the Feast of the Holy Cross (Tūt 17th), on the Feast
of the Bathing (Epiphany, Tūbeh 11th), and on Easter
Monday.

⁶ A.M.G., xxv, p. 311.
name should come to be attached to it. Our author adds that “Abba Paphnutius the
disciple of Abba Macarius, he who was Father of Shiêt after him,” was satisfied that
Macarius took this course at the bidding of the “Cherubim of light.” This story from the
Coptic Life would determine the legendary date of the founding of Baramūs within very
close limits. They fled to Scetis about 381 a.d. after they had been discovered by Theodosius
in Palestine, they lived there three years, and died about 383–384. “A year of days” would
bring the founding of the monastery.

Elsewhere the formation of a definite settlement near the tombs of the two brothers is
more clearly stated. "When these holy youths were gone to their rest, they buried them
near the cave; and when some monks dwelt in this part (of the desert) near the cave, they
called all the place the Cell (or Laura) of the Romans unto this day."

Such is the story of the origin of the monastery known as Baramūs. It is certainly not
primary; on the contrary, elements of varying dates may be distinguished in it. That
section which deals with the arrival of the two saints in Scetis, their life there, the visit
paid them by Macarius, and their death is borrowed with only the slightest modifica-
tions from the Greek Ἀποδιδόματα πατρίων, the only differences of note being that in
the original the brothers are called “strangers” (or “foreigners”) and not “Romans,”
and that no mention is made of the “great church” built in their honor. Macarius is
represented as merely inviting his visitors to “come and see the martyrium of the Little
Strangers,” and the martyrium is nothing more ambitious than the cell in which the
brothers had dwelt.

It is remarkable that though the Greek apophthegm leaves the brothers nameless, and
though the Coptic Life asserts that Macarius refused to reveal who they were, the latter
document quotes their names. This creates a strong suspicion that the whole earlier part
of the Coptic narrative was originally distinct and has been imperfectly fused on to the
Greek story of the “Little Strangers” received by Macarius. And since the personal names
are hardly such as would occur to the monks of Scetis in weaving pure romance, we may
perhaps accept Maximus and Domitius as the names of actual persons who came from
Syria and, being traditionally associated with the monastery afterwards known as Baramūs,
were identified with the “Little Strangers.” Indeed it is practically certain that this part
of the story is Syrian and imported from Syria. In support of this we should notice that
Maximus and Domitius are, as names, familiar in Syria; that the brothers were disciples
of Agabus and sojourned in Palestine; that their miracles are connected with places like
Ascalon, Iconium, Magdala in Pisidia, Gabala, Seleucia in Isauria, in northwestern Syria
or in eastern Asia Minor.

1 “Sarapion,” Life of Saint Macarius (A.M.G., xxv, p. 87).
2 Macarius, xxxiii. The anecdote was communicated by a disciple of Macarius to Betimes (Pijimi), a hermit
of the early 5th century.
3 See the Index to Wright’s Cat. of Syr. MSS. in
B.M.
4 See A.M.G., xxv, pp. 270 f.
THE RISE OF THE FOUR MONASTERIES OF SCETIS

Now Valentinian I had no sons (unless they were natural): how, then, did this element find its way into the developed narrative? The monks of Scetis did know of two Roman princes, Arcadius and Honorius, the sons of Theodosius, for Arsenius, their tutor, fled to Scetis in 394 and became one of the most famous ascetics there. This Arsenius seems (rightly or wrongly) to have been identified with that “Abba Romaeus,” or Roman Father \(\muοναχός τις \ Ρωμαίος\), who settled in Scetis “somewhat near the church,” and owing to his delicacy was provided with comforts unusual in the desert. ¹ If we can admit this, the obscurity surrounding the name Baramûs begins to disperse, for the connection of Arsenius (“Romaeus”), tutor of two princes, with the Church of Baramûs² would bring the royal element into the atmosphere (so to speak), while the Oriental tendency to weave romance would do the rest, identifying these princes with the “Little Strangers” on the one hand, and with the historical (?) but less exalted Maximus and Domitius on the other. That this is the true explanation of the “royal” element³ in the story is made yet more probable by Makrizi’s story ⁴ of the origin of Baramûs, where Arsenius is represented as the tutor, not of Arcadius and Honorius, but of Maximus and Domitius themselves. It is Arsenius, then, who is responsible for the introduction of the “Roman” and the “royal” element into the story, and we may conjecture that the names of the Syrians Maximus and Domitius were substituted for Arcadius and Honorius, because it could not be denied that the sons of Theodosius became emperors and not monks.

What, then, was the Monastery of Baramûs before Arsenius threw the glamor of his romantic history upon it? The lemma prefixed to the Life of Maximus and Domitius, already quoted,⁵ states that Isidorus was appointed priest of the memorial church,⁶ while “Pshoi” (Arsenius) became deacon, and was succeeded by Moses the Robber. The essential part of this assertion—the association of Isidorus with Baramûs—looks like a piece of genuine local tradition and if it can be accepted as such, then Baramûs was one of the “Four Congregations” of Scetis already discussed. For Isidorus is frequently mentioned as “Priest of Scetis,”⁷ was almost certainly one of the earliest companions of Macarius, and is named by Cassian⁸ as priest of the same community over which Paphnutius subsequently presided—a community which is elsewhere⁹ identified as one of the four congregations existing in Scetis before the close of the fourth century. But if the monastery

¹ Compare Apophth. Patr., Romaeus, 1 (where one ms. describes the monk as \(\muέγας \ γενόμενος \ τοῦ \ παλαιὸν\) with id., Arsenius, xxxvi.
² For the connection of Arsenius with the Monastery of Baramûs see Sicard’s notes in Lettres édifiantes et curieuses, t. v, p. 42.
³ There is apparently a natural tendency to identify mysterious monks whose history is unknown with exalted personages. Thus, to quote a quite modern instance, the hermit Theodore Kuzmilich at Tomsk, who was known as “the bondservant of God” and died in 1864, was generally believed to be the vanished Czar Alexander I (see J. F. Fraser, The Real Siberia, pp. 65 f.). The legends of Apollinaria and Hilaria (pp. 117 and 224) are but variant manifestations of the same tendency.
⁵ See p. 98.
⁶ Whether or no this church is identical with the church alleged to have been built for Isidorus by Melania is conjectural. See p. 76.
⁷ E.g., Apophth. Patr., Isidorus, 1 and Palladius, Hist. Lau., ch. xix.
⁸ Coll., xviii, 15.
⁹ Id., x, 2.
known as Baramús was, as we believe with “Sarapion,” the original monastic settlement in Scetis, the date of its foundation is extremely early, for it has been shown that a “congregation” had gathered round Macarius in Scetis before he was ordained priest—that is, before 340.

This does not involve rejection of the Greek apophthegm concerning the “Little Strangers.” The anecdote, as we believe, is at once early and explanatory of the way in which a “holy place” in Scetis came to exist. This “holy place” was in the neighborhood of the existing settlement and became its dominant attraction. Consequently the real origin of the settlement dropped out of sight, and the two mysterious youths received and honored by Macarius were alone remembered.

There is nothing in the apophthegm which suggests a date for the episode. There was, indeed, already a church in Scetis and (it is implied) other monks when the “Little Strangers” dwelt there, but this does not help us to determine whether the anecdote should be placed comparatively early or late in the career of Macarius. The Coptic story shows what may be guiding lights or mere will-o’-the-wisps. Isidorus, the Priest of Scetis, is mentioned in connection with the saints, and we are assured that Pambo, Pior, and Athre sought to learn of Macarius the names of the brothers. All these persons belong to the older generation of fourth-century monks and therefore create the impression that the “Little Strangers” came to Scetis at a comparatively early period. But the mention of Pambo is, if genuine, all important. This father died, as we have seen, in 373, and if he really visited Scetis after the death of the “Little Strangers,” these youths lived and died at some period previous to the date named. It seems impossible to go farther than this; indeed, even in going so far we are treading on slippery ground. The mention of Pambo, Pior, and Athre may well be spurious; and if that be the case, we have no evidence at all with which to establish the date of the “Little Strangers.”

We may now sum up the whole matter. Baramús was the original settlement “founded” by Macarius before 340—a church surrounded by cells for the monks scattered about the neighboring desert—but its beginnings were obscured (a) by the fact that Macarius subsequently founded another settlement, which was particularly associated with him, and (b) by the growing reputation of the two saintly strangers honored by Macarius. In the late fifth or the early sixth century these saints were confused with the royal pupils of the apophthegm and in the Coptic Life(A.M.G., xxv, pp. 296ff.) that there was already a church in Scetis which the saints attended.

1 Cf. A.M.G., xxv, p. 315: “for our fathers have placed near them the little dwelling (μανιμί) of these saints, as it were a church.” Sichard in the early XVIII century saw near Baramus the ruins of a “church” of Maximus and Domitius (Lettres édifiantes et curieuses, t. v, p. 44), and Sonnini (Travels, trans. Hunter, ii, p. 142) saw “a small house... in which the Copts say a saint was born (sic)... They call him Maximus.”

2 The existence of a settlement before the two saints reached Scetis rests upon the statement found in the Greek apophthegm and in the Coptic Life(A.M.G., xxv, pp. 296ff.) that there was already a church in Scetis which the saints attended.

3 On Isidorus see Tillemon, Mémoires, viii, 440f., 787f.

4 A.M.G., xxv, p. 311.

5 Pambo is frequently the victim of anachronism: see e.g., Apophth. Patr., Theophilus, 11; and the Coptic Virtus of Saint Macarius (A.M.G., xxv, p. 185), where he is described as meeting Evagrius.
Roman Arsenius, emerging as Roman princes who (to evade awkward historical facts) were identified as sons of Valentinian I. At about the same time, or possibly later, the story of the north-Palestinian Maximus and Domitius (probably real persons) was absorbed into the growing legend, with the result that the nameless youths who joined Macarius, now duly equipped with names and rank, stood forth as “Our Fathers the Romans, Maximus and Domitius,” patron saints though not truly originators of the Monastery of Baramūs.

At what period, then, did the legend in the Coptic Life take shape? Fortunately we have a terminus ante quem to limit inquiry into the age of the developed legend. When the Patriarch Benjamin I visited Shiēt about 655 A.D., the first place he reached was “near Baramūs and Maximus and Domitius, where we alighted at the Church of the holy Isidorus.” There can be no doubt, then, that the legend had attained its full development by or before the middle of the seventh century.

The terminus post quem is less definitely marked. But if the influence of Arsenius upon the form of the story be admitted, the identification of the two brothers as “Roman” princes must be later than the death of Arsenius (444 A.D.). Again, within a few years of Arsenius’ death the great crisis following the Council of Chalcedon came upon Egypt, and the monks (we may well believe) were too much absorbed in the controversy of the day to be weaving legends about their departed worthies. Therefore it is not likely that the development of the existing story can have commenced until a decade or two after 451; and if this is so, we can understand why Maximus and Domitius appear in the Jacobite Calendar alone: they were saints only in the eyes of the Monophysites.

At the same time it is probable that the main outlines of the story were fixed either before or soon after the close of the fifth century; otherwise, we might expect to find far wilder historical distortions than we do. The whole story had probably become stereotyped by 600 A.D.

An alternative to the foregoing conclusion on the origin of Baramūs must be mentioned. Sonnini states that the Monastery of Baramūs was originally inhabited by Greek monks who had given place to the Copts. Probably this assertion is based on nothing more solid than Sonnini’s fragmentary information concerning the supposed Greek saints, Maximus and Domitius.

But it is possible that as there was a quarter in Cairo known in Arabic as Hāret er Rūm (Coptic, τράχην ἱπρομεος) and inhabited by Greeks, and as there was (later) in Scetis itself a Dēr es Suriān occupied by Syrians, so Baramūs, or Dēr er Rūm, was a monastery for monks of Greek race or Greek faith. This is, however, entirely unsupported by any

---

1 Hist. Pair., p. 242.
3 In the Arabic Synaxarium (ed. Basset, Bashans 18, p. 1936) Baramūs is once styled Dēr er Rūm (دير الروم), “Monastery of the Greeks.” Yet this is surely no more than a translation of the Coptic ορασιν ἱπρομεος, for which see p. 98.
evidence. It would be natural for monks of Greek race or of the Greek (Melkite) persuasion to live together apart from the Egyptians, whose language, manners, and customs were so different. But we do not know that there was any considerable number of monks in Scetis who were Greek by race; and though there certainly were some Melkites (Greek Orthodox) there in the period following the Council of Chalcedon,¹ there is nothing to show that they were numerous, or that they held their ground for any length of time, or that they formed a distinct community.

The Coptic legend (or romantic history) was already fully developed, as we have seen, in the seventh century, a few years only after the downfall of Greek or Byzantine rule in Egypt. In the reference to the Monastery of Baramūs at this period there is not a trace of consciousness that it had ever been in the possession of Greek nationals or of the hated Chalcedonians. And the protracted development (as it appears) of the Coptic legend thwarts any modification of the theory we have accepted, such as that the convent may have been in Greek (national or religious) occupation long enough to secure for it the name of the “Monastery of the Greeks,” but passed at a comparatively early date into the hands of the Monophysites who invented the legend to explain away the disagreeable appellation.

Yet we must not forget that almost nothing is known of the state of affairs in Scetis after the Council of Chalcedon; and it will therefore be better to regard Sonnini’s theory as a possible alternative.

4. The Foundation of the Monastery of Macarius

The foundation of the Monastery of Macarius is recorded by Coptic writers alone. “Sarapion” in the Life of Saint Macarius² relates that after the death of Maximus and Domitius, and after the building of a little church in their honor, Macarius began to grow famous throughout the world, thus exciting the jealousy of the demons, who attacked and seriously maltreated him. Thereupon the Cherubim,³ who is associated with all the actions of Macarius, appeared and said to him: “‘Lo, the Lord has caused this place to be inhabited because of thee: now arise and follow me, and I will show thee the place where thou shalt finish thy course to the end.’ And he drew him and led him to the top of the rock which is to the south of the marsh, to the west of the well up above (?) the valley; and he said to him: ‘Begin to make for thyself a dwelling in this place and build a church; for verily after a time many people shall dwell in this place.’ And so he (Macarius) dwelt there to the day of his death. This place is called ‘Abba Makari’ (Macarius), because he ended his life there.” The narrative then goes on to describe the digging of a well in this place which was particularly known as the “Well of Abba Makari.”

¹ See pp. 222 f.
² A.M.G., xxv, pp. 87 f.
³ “Cherubim” in Coptic is a singular noun.
THE RISE OF THE FOUR MONASTERIES OF SCETIS

The topographical indications are somewhat hard to follow\(^1\); but there is no doubt that the site described is that of the historic Monastery of Macarius. For in the narrative concerning the consecration of the Church of Saint Macarius by Benjamin I we find the monks informing the patriarch that a "new church... has been built for him at the foot of the rock among the cells; because many of the old and sick... are wearied if they mount to the top of the rock"\(^2\): that is, before the seventh century the Church of Macarius was on a "rock," as described in the Life of Saint Macarius, while the cells of the brethren lay on the level ground below. So, too, in the Virtues of Saint Macarius,\(^3\) Pambo, Evagrius, Moses, and others are described as being guided miraculously to the "Rock of Abba Macarius," whereon the saint dwelt.

We need not fear that these are descriptions of the site occupied by the monastery when the documents cited were written and not necessarily of the place where Macarius himself dwelt. An important Greek apophthegm (a vastly earlier witness) unmistakably reproduces the same topographical features in the following words,\(^4\) which should be compared with the passage quoted above from the History of the Patriarchs: "Abba Macarius was dwelling in the utter desert (ἐν τῇ πανερήμῳ),\(^5\) and he was alone in it, living as a solitary (ἀναχωρόν), while down below\(^6\) was another desert, where were a number of brethren." Here again we find Macarius dwelling on an eminence while the brethren dwell in the plain below.

Palladius relates\(^7\) that the saint had contrived a subterranean passage or tunnel leading from his cell to a cave half a stade (303 feet) distant, and that by this passage he used to escape when visitors were so numerous as to be troublesome, reciting twenty-four prayers on entering and on leaving his retreat. Whether this curious cell was the new abode of Macarius or the old near Baramûs, we cannot tell.

The Greek apophthegm just quoted also throws some light on the community of monks assembled near the new abode of Macarius. These monks clearly acknowledged Macarius as their spiritual chief; for when the saint descended to admonish the careless brother Theopemptus, they "took palm branches and went forth to meet him"—a signal honor; and Theopemptus submitted without demur to his correction. And yet Macarius was not living among them as an ordinary superior: he was, we are told, "alone" in the desert, "leading a solitary life"; Theopemptus was personally unknown to him, and his shortcomings were revealed to Macarius, not through the ordinary intercourse between superior and monk, but by Satan in person; and lastly, Macarius' visits to the brethren were so exceptional as to be regarded as important events. Clearly Macarius had no design of

---

1 See A.A.C.M., II, ii, § 1.
3 A.M.G., xxv, p. 186.
4 Apophth. Patr., Macarius, iii: this anecdote undoubtedly belongs to Macarius the Egyptian and not to the Alexandrian.
5 The Coptic (A.M.G., xxv, p. 230) has "the inner desert" (μυγάζε ἐκείσοδος).
6 The Coptic (id., p. 231) has "within" (εἰς ὅσον) or "to the north" (κατανότ).
7 Hist. Laus., ch. xvii.
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

founding a new "monastery"; like Antony and Amoun before him, he intended to lead
a life of solitude, but gradually attracted a group of admirers, who, nevertheless, remained
at a respectful distance in the desert plain below the rock. Such was the beginning of the
Monastery of Macarius.

The same apophthegm reveals to us a somewhat interesting circumstance in the monastic
life of Macarius with which we may here deal. Isidorus is often referred to as the "Priest
of Scetis" as though he held a unique position,¹ and it is recorded that on one occasion
he "departed to Abba Theophilus the Archbishop of Alexandria"²—the visit being eviden-
tly the official annual visit paid by the heads of monasteries to the archbishop.³ Yet
Macarius was both a priest and the "Father" of Scetis. May we not infer that while
Macarius was living in seclusion he resigned his functions as priest and superior to Isidorus,
resuming them again in circumstances unknown to us?

There is no sound evidence to show when Macarius retired from the neighborhood of
Baramūs to the southeastern part of Scetis. "Sarapion" in the Life of Saint Macarius seems
to date it almost directly after the building of the memorial church to Maximus and Domitius
(about 384–385). But the legendary date of Maximus and Domitius depends upon the
historical milieu of their story, and this is purely romantic. It is possible to substitute the
apparently historical "Little Strangers" for the composite Maximus and Domitius,⁴ and
thus make Macarius retire eastwards after the death of the youths celebrated in the Greek
apophthegm; but this is hazardous and helps little, since the date of the "Little Strangers"
is hopelessly obscure. We must be content, therefore, to leave the origin of the Monastery
of Macarius undefined as regards date, only reiterating that it was founded earlier than
390, the date of Macarius' own death, and was one of the four communities in Scetis of
which we first hear in 399.

5. The Foundation of the Monastery of John the Little⁵

The two remaining of the four primary monasteries, or settlements, in Scetis were founded
in the following circumstances⁴: "And when the saint was grown old, he was besought
by multitudes to give them the (monastic) habit.... He had with him throngs of disciples,
but they were not all with him (i.e., near him), for some of them, having been fired with
this noble zeal during his life, dwelt far from him in other places. And since other (monks)
dwelt near them, their names were given to other Monasteries, which are those of Abba
John Colobos (the Short, or Little) and of Abba Bishōi (Coptic, Pishoi), disciples of Abba

¹ E.g., Apophth. Patr., Isidorus, i.
² Id., VIII.
³ See pp. 179, 180.
⁴ In the Life of S. Macarius (A.M.G., xxv, p. 87) "Sarapion" does not actually name Maximus and Domitius,
but since he describes them as of the country of Romania and gives the usual explanation of the name Baramūs, it
is certain that he knew them.
⁵ Also commonly known in formal or liturgical docu-
ments as the Hegumen (A.M.G., xxv, pp. 316, 324; Renaudot, Lit. orient. col., 1, p. 18). He must be distin-
guished from the VII century John the Hegumen. For a
general discussion of the life of John as revealed by non-
Coptic materials see Tillemont, Mémoires, x, 427 f.
⁶ Life of S. Macarius (A.M.G., xxv, p. 98).
Amoi, the disciple of Abba Pithou. But the holy Macarius rejoiced...seeing his branches multiplied.” It is with the first of these monasteries that we now have to deal.

Our main authorities for the life of John the Little are two: (1) the anecdotes in the *Apostilbegmata patrum*,¹ and (2) a Coptic *Life* by the late seventh-century worthy, Zacharias, Bishop of Sakhâ.² The latter work was compiled, as the author himself states,³ from a Coptic work known as the *Book of the Holy Old Men or Paradise* (elsewhere called the *Paradise of Shiêt*).⁴

According to Zacharias, John was one of two sons born of very poor parents who dwelt at Tesê (τεση) in the nome of Pemje (Oxyrhynchus). Of his boyhood and youth nothing is known save one episode.⁵ He was fired with desire to live free from care and without labor as the angels do, and to realize this ideal, stripped himself and went out into the desert. But a week’s sojourn in the wilds dispelled the dream and sent the boy back to his home. His elder brother, who had apparently inherited the family cottage and a sense of humor, resolved to teach the truant a lesson. John knocked at the door; the brother demanded who was there, and on hearing that it was John, replied: “John has become an angel and is no longer among men.” John was therefore left out of doors all night to be admonished in the morning: “You are a mortal: you must work again to keep yourself.” The episode is clearly a mere boyish essay in asceticism, and certainly belongs to the period of his secular life.⁶

When John was eighteen, “God spake to him spiritually” and bade him go forth “to the mount of the natron, which is Shiêt, the place where they weigh hearts and thoughts with true judgement.”⁷ Obedient to this command, the youth went to Scetis and there joined Abba Amoi (Greek, Ammoês), who shaved his head and invested him in monastic garments thrice marked by an angel with the sign of the cross.⁸ That John was actually the disciple of Amoi is confirmed by the *Apostilbegmata patrum*.⁹

Amoi seems to have been a stern master. When he went to church he would not allow his disciple to walk near him lest they should fall into ordinary conversation, and for the same reason he used to turn the youth out of his cell when he had come for spiritual guidance as soon as the immediate purpose of the visit was fulfilled.¹⁰ On another occasion he pretended to fall into a rage with John, bidding him be gone and go elsewhere. John, however, humbly remained at his master’s door, only to be driven away each morning by Amoi with his palm stick. This test continued for a full week until Amoi, coming forth on Sunday morning to go to church, saw seven shining angels placing crowns upon his

¹ P.G., lxv, col. 204 f. (under the name John Colobus) and col. 240 (under the name John the Theban).
² A.M.G., xxv, pp. 316 f.
³ Id., p. 322.
⁴ On this work see my *New Texts*, p. xxiii, note 2.
⁵ *Apostil. Patr.*, John Colobus, ii.
⁶ The Coptic *Life* (A.M.G., xxv, pp. 354 f.) assigns it to the period spent in Scetis, but John’s elder brother could not then have forced him to work and the story loses point.
⁷ A.M.G., xxv, p. 326.
⁸ Id., p. 330.
⁹ Ammoês, iii; Johannes Thebanus, i (cf. John Colobos, i).
¹⁰ *Apostil. Patr.*, Ammoês, i.
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

disciple's head. In consequence, Amoi treated John henceforth as a "father" rather than as a disciple. Thus when certain brethren were questioning Amoi as to the essential nature of monachism, Amoi referred the problem to John. The young man then threw off all his clothes and trampled upon them, to signify that the true monk must strip himself of all worldly things and spurn them.

The most famous story of the relations between Amoi and John is thus told in the *Aposthgeyma patrum*. "They related concerning Abba John the Little that, having retired to Scetis to join an old man of the Thebaid, he settled in the desert. And his superior took a dry stick and planted it and said to him: 'Water this every day with a jar of water, until it shall bear fruit.' Now the water was far distant from them, so that he went out in the evening and came back in the morning. But after three years (the stick) lived and bare fruit. And the old man took it and brought it to the church, saying to the brethren: 'Take and eat the fruit of obedience.'"

It is interesting to see how this legend grew up. Sulpicius Severus, without mentioning any names, tells the same tale to illustrate the literal obedience rendered by disciples in Egyptian monasteries, adding that it occurred in comparatively recent times. But the narrator, Postumian, while declaring that he had seen the stick (then grown into a small tree) flourishing in the courtyard of a monastery, places the scene of the miracle only two miles from the Nile—a situation which is of course incompatible with Scetis. Cassian gives us what is, no doubt, the fact from which the legend expanded, telling the same story with two vital points of difference: (a) after the stick had been watered for one year, the senior who had imposed the task pulled it up and threw it away—the miraculous ending of the story being wholly absent; (b) John of Lycopolis and not John the Little is the obedient disciple. The marked sobriety of this version establishes it as the true and original form of the story, and the fact that Cassian spent some time in Scetis and yet locates the incident at Lycopolis, surely makes it certain that the legend was only adopted and rounded off by the monks of the desert.

The identical tree (alleged) has been seen by a succession of European travellers since 1657 and still survives (1921) on the site of John's monastery [Pl. V, A].

1 A.M.G., xxv, pp. 334 f.
2 Id., p. 337.
3 John Colobos, 1. See also my New Texts, p. 137.
4 Zacharias in the Coptic Life of John the Little (A.M.G., xxv, p. 347) says that the stick was planted twelve miles distant from the cell of Amoi.
5 *Dialogus*, 1, 13.
6 The travellers (in the *Dialogue*) were at Alexandria in 400-401, since the controversy concerning Origen was then raging.
7 *Inst.*, iv, 24.
8 Note that in the Arabic *Synax.* ed. Basset, Hatür 17, p. 245, John of Lycopolis is said to have been originally a monk at Shiṭ; the incident as narrated by Cassian may therefore after all have taken place in Scetis.
9 This legend no doubt was the model for the story of the Tree of S. Ephraem still existing in the Syrian Monastery (see p. 114), perhaps also for the famous legend of the budding staff of S. Etheldreda (*Liber Eliensis*, 1, 13) figured in sculpture in the Octagon of her church in far-off Ely.
10 The tree seems to have been ancient even in the XVII century. But its actual position (on the ruins of the *wall* of John's monastery) suggests that it took root after the monastery fell into decay, probably in the XV century.
THE RISE OF THE FOUR MONASTERIES OF SCETIS

In the *Apophthegmata patrum*¹ is yet another anecdote of John's early monastic days. Certain monks were once assembled in Scetis at a common meal, John being with them. One of the party, a priest of great fame, rose up to hand the water jar, but all felt ashamed to be served by so eminent a man. Thereupon John received it, and, being rebuked for so doing though he was the youngest of them all, replied that he had presumed to do so lest the great man might feel hurt by a general refusal of his kindness.

We now approach the period when John became independent. "They used to say of the little John of the Thebaid, the disciple of Abba Ammoës (Amoi), that he passed twelve years ministering to the old man when he was sick and he used to sit with him upon the couch. And the old man made nothing of him, though he labored greatly on his behalf, and never said: 'A blessing on you.' But when he was about to die and the old men were sitting by, he (Ammoës) grasped his hand and said to him: 'Blessings, blessings, blessings on you!' And he committed him to the old men saying: 'This is an angel and not a man.'"²

In the Coptic *Life of John*³ Amoi gives a message of some importance to John: "O John my son, when I shall have passed away from this world, go and dwell in the place where thou didst plant the tree... for this tree, which thanks to thee has put forth roots, is a symbol signifying a mystery of the souls which shall be saved by thee in that place, and which shall always make memorial of thee before God." When his master was dead, John obeyed the injunction and "betook himself to the place of the tree according to the order of his Father: he made himself a little cave there." Here he practised numerous austerities, hollowing out in his cave a small underground chamber into which he used to descend, clad in a tunic of palm fiber.⁴ Such was his piety that "a throng (of men) joined him, emulating his angelic life, in order to dwell near him or in his neighborhood...; in such wise that the desert became a town of Christ... Now when the brethren near by him were multiplied, he had need of a well of water, because he saw that they grew weary through going afar to draw water."⁵ John therefore set his followers to work digging a well. But after five days' labor, no water appeared and the toil expended had no result until the saint had spent a night in prayer beside the pit: thereupon a spring of sweet water burst forth.

The digging of this well may be taken as marking the definite establishment of the Monastery of John, for a well is one of the essentials of a settled desert community. Here, therefore, we may pause to inquire how far this account of the origin of the monastery is historical. That the site of the convent was determined by the position of the "tree of obedience" is a detail which must reluctantly be dismissed as apocryphal, but the remainder is probably neither more nor less than the truth. At the first John was an anchoret pure and simple. But as in the case of Macarius, his reputation for holiness gradually

---

¹ John Colobos, vii.
² *Apophth. Patr.*, Johannes Thebanus (cf. id., Ammoës, iii).
³ *A.M.G.*, xxv, p. 350.
⁴ See p. 295 (on the translation of John).
⁵ *A.M.G.*, xxv, pp. 351 f.
attracted a circle of admirers who sought to imitate his life and (no doubt) applied to him for spiritual advice. From this stage to the formation of a community after the usual Antonian type with John as its head or “Father,” was but a step.

The approximate date at which the Monastery of John was thus established can be indicated with fair probability. John was born (as we shall see)\(^1\) about 339 A.D. and went to Scetis in 357; he tended his master Amoi during twelve years of sickness and was probably the old man’s disciple for at least five years before this period; consequently, his independent life as an anchoret cannot well have begun before about 375. The definite establishment of the community known by his name may have taken place some five years later, perhaps between 380 and 385. This dating, be it noted, is in agreement with “Sarapion’s” statement in the Life of Macarius\(^2\) that Macarius was already old when the Monasteries of John and Bishoi were founded.

Not much is known of John’s career as superior of a monastery or community, though we shall hear of him again in connection with Arsenius and with the controversy concerning Anthropomorphism. As a superior he was no doubt priest, and so he is regularly termed in Coptic documents\(^3\); but the date and even the period of his ordination is unknown.

In default of other information, some traits in his character may be noticed here. His most notable characteristic was abstraction from the things of this world. It is recorded in the Apophthegmata Patrum\(^4\) that on one occasion a camel man came to his cell to carry away the baskets manufactured by the saint. John entered his cell to fetch them but, falling into contemplation, forgot the matter. When the camel driver recalled him to mundane things, he reentered his cell to fetch the baskets—only to fall into another fit of abstraction. When roused for the third time, he went to bring what was required, repeating to himself, “Basket — camel, basket — camel,” lest he should again forget what he was about. At another time his absorption caused him to sew up into one basket plaited strips sufficient to have made two.\(^5\)

Many sayings of his illustrate the value of ascetic practice, and some of these are forcible enough. Thus, illustrating the importance of abstinence, he said: “What creature is stronger than the lion? Yet for his belly’s sake he falls into the net.”\(^6\) Other anecdotes show that he had humane qualities. We have seen that he tended his master (an unresponsive patient) through twelve years of sickness. And an apophthegm,\(^7\) which vividly illustrates the dangers of travel in the desert of Scetis, shows that he could consider the feelings of others—a virtue none too common at any time. “When Abba John was once going up from Scetis

---

1 See p. 138.
2 A.M.G., xxv, p. 98.
3 Id., p. 316. In the Greek Apophth. Patr., he is not distinctly mentioned as priest, though the fact is perhaps implied in one of them (John Colobos, viii) where John is spoken of as “seated before the church.”
4 John Colobos, xxxi. (Another version of the same incident is in id., xxx.)
5 Apophth. Patr., John Colobos, xi.
6 Id., xxviii.
7 Id., xviii.
THE RISE OF THE FOUR MONASTERIES OF SCETIS

with other brethren, the guide lost his way; for it was night. And the brethren said to Abba John: 'What shall we do? For the brother has lost his way: perchance we shall wander and die.' The old man said to them: 'If we say anything to him, he will be grieved and ashamed. But see, I will pretend to be sick and say: 'I cannot travel, and must remain here until day.'” And he did so; and the rest said: 'Neither will we go on, but will stay here with you.' So they stayed until it was day, and did not offend the brother.’

Here, too, the curious legend of John and the Three Children¹ must be recorded. Theophilus, Archbishop of Alexandria, had built a *martyrium* at Alexandria dedicated to the Three Children, Ananias, Azarias, and Misaël, who were cast into the fiery furnace by Nebuchadnezzar, and wished to place their bodies in this shrine “in order to secure the blessing of these saints.” But it was revealed to him that no one could win this treasure for him save “the holy Abba John the Little, the priest of Shiêt.” The task of finding the bodies of the Three was therefore intrusted to John, who was conveyed to Babylon upon a cloud. The relics, indeed, were duly discovered; but the saints refused to be transported to Egypt, though in compliment to Theophilus and to his envoy they promised that a signal miracle should take place in the *martyrium*. With this John had to be content, and was conveyed back upon a cloud to Alexandria, where he reported his qualified success, and where the promised miracle took place in due course.

Whether this story has been built around an actual journey of John, cannot now be determined. It did not take final shape until after the Council of Chalcedon since the prophecy of that dire event by the Three² occurs in it.

6. *Foundation of the Monastery of Bishôi*

The primary source for the life of Bishôi is a biography, professing³ to be the work of John the Little himself, and extant in Greek, Arabic, and Syriac recensions.⁴ In reality, this document (as its exordium shows) is a panegyric intended (like most Coptic *Lives*) for recitation at the commemoration of the saint whose deeds it records. Whether the original of the three extant recensions was composed in the seventh century or earlier has yet to be ascertained. As they stand, two of the three versions—the Greek and Arabic⁵—differ considerably, having apparently been altered to suit local exigencies.

---

¹ A. M. G., xxv, pp. 382 if. Zacharias asserts that he found the story in history (perhaps in the *Paradise*).
² Id., p. 386.
³ Of course this claim is absurd: not only did John die before Bishôi, but the work (or at any rate the Arabic) is full of anachronisms.
⁴ The Greek is edited by Pomijalowski (*Zetia Paòia Velekajo*), the Syriac (text only) by Bedjan (*Acta SS. et Mart.,* t. iii). The Arabic is unpublished (B.N., Fonds arabe, No. 4796, fol. 119v): I acknowledge my grateful thanks to B. Evetts who had furnished me with a translation of this lengthy work. (The author is to be distinguished from John Colobos the Athonite, though Lake, *Early Days of Monasticism on Mt. Atbos*, p. 71, note 2, identifies them, being probably unaware of the existence of the Coptic saint.)
⁵ I am unable to state whether the Syriac agrees with the Greek or the Arabic, or with neither.
The short notices in the Arabic and Ethiopic Synaxaria seem to be based upon the Arabic version of the Life, or the Coptic original thereof.

The name Bishōi is written in Coptic ḫep, ḫep, ḫep, or ḫep (transliterated in mediaeval Arabic بيشوى, Bishāi, بيشى Abshāi); in modern Arabic the form Bishū or Bishōi, is universal. In his Letter to Theophilus Ammonius the Bishop mentions that Saint Athanasius inquired concerning “the holy anchorites in Scetis, Paesius, and Paul, and Psoios (Ψσιος) his brethren, and Isaia and Pesyrus and Isaac and Paul.” That Psoios is the Hellenized form of the Coptic Pshoi, or Pishoi, may be taken as certain; but if confirmation is needed, we may refer to a Coptic inscription found in the Monastery of Jeremias at Sakkâreh in which Pshoi (sic) is associated with Paul and Surus (? = Pesyrus).

So far there is no real difficulty. But the Greek Life consistently names the saint whose virtues it records, Paesius. Now Paesius is a perfectly sound Coptic name, borne by several historical persons as well as by the anchorite mentioned above as contemporary with Psoios (Bishōi). The position then is that we have two persons, Paesius and Psoios (Bishōi), both laying claim to one and the same life-story, and no very satisfactory means for deciding the dispute. Whether the Greek Life is dependent upon the Arabic or vice versa, or whether they are independent we cannot tell, and consequently may not assume that the Greek Paesius is a mistaken rendering of the Arabic Bishēh (بشرى). Coptic tradition, however, takes no account of Paesius and consistently identifies the hero of the Life with Bishōi, the founder of the fourth monastery in Scetis.

Bishōi (Pl. IV, 8) was an Egyptian born at Shansha “in the province of Misr.” He was one of seven sons, and though the youngest and weakest of the family, was selected by an angel, who appeared to his mother by night, for the service of God. In due time, therefore, he went to Scetis and became the disciple of Amoi and spiritual brother of John the Little.

On the death of Amoi, Bishōi dwelt for a time, says John, in “the place where I had...”

---

1 For the Arabic, see ed. Forget, ii, p. 210, and for the Ethiopic, see ed. Guidi (P.O., vii, pp. 270 f.).
2 Bishōi, the current form of the name in English works, is a hybrid, part Coptic and part Arabic. Bishōi is to be distinguished from—(a) Bishāi or Abshāi (contemporary with Bchul, the uncle of Shenudheh), whose name is associated with the Red Monastery; on him see Makrizi, ed. Wüstenfeld, Gesch. d. Copt., ch. xi, § 58, and the Synax., ed. Basset, pp. 518 f.; (b) the various persons named Paesius (see note 8 below); (c) Pshoi of Constantinople the soi-disant author of the Life of Maximus and Domitius.
3 Zoega, Cat., No. 119, colophon; Wright, Cat. of Syr. M.S. in B.M., No. ccxc, p. 227, col. 2.
4 See A.M.O., xxvi, p. 98, where the MSS. disagree.
5 § 24 (Acta SS., May iii, Appendix, p. 71*).
6 Thompson, Coptic Inscriptions, No. 240, 11, 13 f. and ἤντοι ἀνθρώπες ἀνα σετεντακτ (in Quibell, Saggara, iv, p. 75).
7 Surus is named again after Paul (and probably Pshoi) in No. 203 from the same site. He may be the same as the Surus (associated with Isaia and Paul) mentioned in Hist. Mon. (Greek), ch. xii; but if so must have migrated from Scetis.
8 E.g., the brother of Poemen (Apophth. Patr., Poemen, ii) elsewhere called Paéisus (the name = Pa-isi, “he of Isis”), and the Paéisus brother of Isaia mentioned by Palladius, Hist. Laus., ch. xiv.
9 This form is used throughout the Arabic Life. But in the lemma the more ordinary Bishā (بشرى) is used.
10 See Amelineau, Geographie, pp. 373 f., 379.
11 In the Greek Life he is called Pambo (sic), in the Arabic, Bāmūyeh (بشرى).
planted the tree,” studying the Scriptures and especially the prophecy of Jeremiah; indeed the prophet is said to have appeared to the monk and explained the meaning of his own work. Ultimately the two friends decided to part; and while John was bidden by an angel to remain in the “Place of the Tree,” Bishōi set out and “made for himself a cave in the rock, at a distance of two miles to the north.” Here the familiar process repeated itself: “the Lord was with him in all his actions: and he was waging a great war in that place, until the fame of his miracles and of his life spread everywhere. On this account many began to come to him, and to seek from him the holy words of the monastic life... And he made them obedient soldiers to Christ the King.” And again: “many brethren also came together to the saint... that they might dwell with him in community. Some of them he clothed with the monastic habit, and they dwelt around him; and he taught them the fear of God.”

No definite circumstances enabling us to date the establishment of this community are recorded; but if the information already quoted in connection with the Monastery of John is sound, the Monastery of Bishōi originated about the same period as the third monastery, when Macarius was an old man.

Though Bishōi was the head of a community, his position seems to have been quite informal. As in the case of Antony and of Macarius, we read of more than one sojourn in the remoter parts of the desert extending over some years, while the community was apparently left to look after itself. A famous story concerning this part of his life is to the following effect. In the excess of his devotion, Bishōi cultivated prayer at the expense of sleep. In order to defeat nature and to remain continually standing in prayer, he fastened the hair of his head to a staple in the rock above him; so that he was unable to sink down exhausted into sleep. Of his life when in touch with his fellows many marvellous are recorded. More than once he was visited (we are assured) by the Savior himself; and on one such occasion Bishōi washed the Lord’s feet, afterwards drinking one half of the water so used. The other half was reserved for his disciple, but this miraculously disappeared when the young man, deterred by its appearance, refused to drink. At another time the spirit of the Emperor Constantine appeared to the saint and confided to him his own regret that he had been an emperor rather than a monk—so much greater were the rewards enjoyed by the monks in heaven. Another exploit for which Bishōi was famous was the conversion of a certain hermit at Antinoë who taught that there was no Holy Ghost. Bishōi is said

1 According to the Arabic.
2 Hence Bishōi is called “of Jeremias” (πηγείας ἤρεμη στηρεῖ ἁπ.) as in graffiti at Bautz and Gebel Gebräuel: Zeit. aeg. Sprache, xi., p. 61; Strzygowski, Köpfl. Kunst, p. 120; and Crum, Cat. Copt. MSS. in Rylands Library, No. 435, p. 211.
3 The Monastery of Bishōi is roughly two miles north of the ruined Monastery of John (see Wilkinson, Modern Egypt and Thebes, 1, p. 392). The Greek Life makes Bishōi go to the west, i.e., from the original cell of Amōi.
4 B.N., Fonds arabe, No. 4796, fol. 124a.
5 Id., fol. 144b.
6 See p. 106.
7 In 1330 A.D. Benjamin II visited a sacred spot in the Monastery of the Syrians (hard by Dēr Anba Bishōi) where the Lord was believed to have appeared to the saint. This is, no doubt, the Oratory of Bishōi still seen at Dēr es Suriān (Book of the Chirism, B.N., Fonds arabe, No. 100, fol. 54a).
to have found an opening for stating his own orthodox doctrine by appearing with a three-handed basket, symbolizing the Three Persons of the Trinity.

Perhaps the most famous incident in Bishoï’s life, or legendary life, is the visit paid him by Ephraem Syrus. The Arabic account of the episode is as follows: There was in “the land of the Syrians” a certain hermit (unnamed) who dwelt in a cave on a mountain. This man came to wonder whether he would be saved, and was divinely assured that he would find acceptance even as Bishoï who dwelt in the Gebel en Natrûn. Thereupon the hermit went to Egypt to seek out Bishoï and found his way to the saint’s abode. Unfortunately Bishoï knew no Syriac, while the hermit knew no Coptic; but the former prayed to God and was enabled to understand his visitor’s speech. The two were thus able to converse together for a week; after which the hermit departed, conveyed (as it transpired) upon a cloud. Neither the Greek nor the Arabic version of the Life actually names this hermit, but his identity is settled by the Syriac Acts of St. Ephraem, wherein the episode is thus related: “Then at length Ephraem bade farewell to his companions and resolved to visit the Egyptian desert...and the monks there. So he went to the city of Antinus and, guided by the natives, entered the desert...There he found a monk Pesoës (Bishoï)...hidden in a certain cave. But since Pesoës had not learnt the Syrian tongue, nor Ephraem the Egyptian, Heaven granted to each this favor which he sought, that Pesoës should speak Syriac and Ephraem Egyptian with the greatest ease. It cannot readily be told with what joy of mind the blessed Ephraem was overcome by the...conversation of the holy Pesoës, being mindful of the oracle which he had received among the mountains of Edessa, that...he should receive an equal reward with Pesoës in heaven.”

With the exception that Ephraem comes to Antinoë (instead of Alexandria as in the Greek and Arabic Lives) this account is substantially the same as that outlined above. In later times an important addition was made to the narrative. Ephraem, as the tradition still current asserts, left his staff outside the cell of Bishoï on his arrival, and on emerging found that it had taken root and put forth leaves. The tree, a great tamarind, is still to be seen in the Monastery of the Syrians, originally the Monastery of the Theotokos of Abba Bishoï.

If there is any truth in the assertion that Ephraem visited Egypt and the desert of Scetis, this episode must be dated earlier than 378, when Ephraem died. But we should recognize that the alleged meeting between Ephraem and Bishoï is probably mere fiction,

---

1 Life of Bishoï, ms. cit., fol. 133a.
2 In the Greek the hermit is called a “man of the north” (ἀπὸ τῆς ἐν αὐτῷ) which suggests that the Greek version was made in northern Palestine to the south of Edessa.
3 Assemari, B.O., 1, pp. 40 f.
4 Possibly a corruption of Enaton, the “Nine Mile” station westwards from Alexandria. Yet Bishoï was, however, slightly connected with Antinoë (see pp. 113, 158).
5 See preceding note.
6 I do not know that the legend occurs in mediæval writers: it is first mentioned by Thévenot (Voyages, ii, ch. lxxi) in the XVII century.
7 For this statement see p. 315. See Pl. LXXIV, b in A.A.C.M.
due to the Syrian monks who from comparatively early times\(^1\) settled in this desert, and who may have considered such a story the best means of establishing their right to be there.

We have now set forth and examined the available information relating to the foundation of the Four Monasteries; and since much of this material seems to be, and perhaps is, legendary, let us repeat that the existence of four communities, or monasteries in embryo, before the close of the fourth century is independently an established fact.

7. Macarius and Heresy in Scetis

The solitary life, though it places its votaries beyond reach of the more ordinary forms of temptation, has its own peculiar dangers. The mind, lacking other occupation and discipline, tends to speculate intellectually; while unnatural conditions of life are likely to turn this speculation into eccentric courses. The Egyptian hermit, therefore, was liable to ponder over obscure points of doctrine, attaching too much importance to them as though they were articles of faith. So it was in Scetis; and a few anecdotes and incidental references show that Macarius had to contend with at least one heresy current among his monks.

An Egyptian ascetic of the late third and early fourth century, Hierax,\(^2\) taught that marriage was positively sinful, that there was no resurrection of the body but of the spirit alone, and that only the perfectly continent (such as monks and nuns) would partake in this resurrection. He inferred, moreover, from a passage in the *Epistle to the Hebrews*\(^3\) that Melchizedek, being “without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life,” was none other than the Holy Ghost. A doctrine which put such a premium upon the ascetic life was naturally popular in the hermitages of Egypt, and Epiphanius\(^4\) assures us that “straightway many of the Egyptian ascetics were led away by him.”

The orthodox met the doctrine of Hierax by asserting that the history of Melchizedek was known, that he was of human parentage, and even that his parents’ names could be quoted.\(^5\) Melchizedek was originally an idolater,\(^6\) but through contemplation of nature had come to believe in the true God. He therefore renounced the pagan worship in which he had been brought up, and when his parents sacrificed his brother to the Seven Planets, besought God to destroy them. The earth opened and swallowed up his family, leaving him literally “without father and without mother.” He lived for seven years after this.

---


3 vii. 3. The Melchizedekian heresy originated with Theodotus in the II century (see Epiphanius, *Haer.*, lv = P.G., xli, col. 972 f.). Whether the view of Hierax continued that of Theodotus or was an independent revival is not clear.

4 P.G., xlii, col. 173.

5 According to Epiphanius, Melchizedek’s father was named Heraclas, his mother Astaroth or Asteria. Other names are given in the *Book of the Bee*, ed. Budge, 35; see also the *Book of Adam and Eve*, trans. Malan, p. 149.

6 See the pseudo-Athanasian *History of Melchizedek* (P.G., xxviii, col. 525 f.).
event upon Mount Tabor in a state of savagery, until he was reclaimed by Abraham and became the "Priest of the Most High God."

It was after Theophilus had become archbishop (385 A.D.) and consequently during the last five years of Macarius' life, that the identity of Melchizedek began seriously to agitate the monks of Scetis. It seems that the matter was judged serious enough to necessitate a meeting of the monastic chapter, or council, where one of the monks was able to express a rational opinion on the subject. "They in Scetis were once assembled considering about Melchizedek," and the monk Copres was at first not summoned to attend. Later on, he was called to the council, where he expressed his view on the matter by saying: "Woe unto thee, Copres! For what God bade thee do, thou didst neglect, and thou art inquiring concerning that which he seeks not of thee!"

According to a notice by Thomas of Mârga, Macarius himself settled the controversy at the bidding of Theophilus. The passage is as follows: "And also when the heresy of the Melchizedekians broke out at Scete in the land of Egypt through the contemptible monks who said that Melchizedek was the son of God, although there were doctors and famous bishops in those days, yet Theophilus, Bishop of Alexandria, allowed the blessed Macarius, a monk, to make a refutation of this error: and that holy man actually did so, and made manifest the foolishness of their opinions." Presumably it is to this achievement of Macarius that the following passage (also from a Syriac source) refers: "He (Melchizedek) sprang from foreign peoples, and on this account (the names of) his parents were not written in the Book of the Generations. . . . And the names of his parents were made known by revelation to the old man (Macarius) in the desert of Scete who in his simplicity (?) meditated upon these things by the counsel of Theophilus, Archbishop of Alexandria." From this it would appear that it was by means of a revelation that Macarius was enabled to refute the heresy of his monks.

Macarius was no less resolutely opposed to the main part of the Hieracite doctrine which denied the resurrection of the flesh and shut out all but the rigidly continent from hope of future bliss. The anecdote quoted above of Macarius and the two married women evidently embodies the saint's reply to one article of the Hieracite creed. But his championship of the orthodox Resurrection of the Body is far more famous.

We have already seen that Palladius alludes (with reserve) to a rumor that Macarius once raised a dead man "to convince a heretic who did not admit that there was a resurrection of the body." The full story of this miracle is set forth in a document extant in

1 *Apolobth. Patr.*, Copres, iii.
3 Payne Smith, *Thesaurus*, col. 2146 (rendered by Budge, loc. cit.).
4 But possibly this is only another version of *Apolobth. Patr.*, Daniel, viii, where we learn that Cyril brought about the conversion of a Melchizedekian monk by pretending to consult the old man concerning Melchizedek and inducing him to pray for a revelation. The monk then saw in a vision all the patriarchs amongst whom appeared Melchizedek, and was thus assured that Melchizedek was human.
5 See p. 71. 6 *Hist. Laus.*, ch. xvii.
THE RISE OF THE FOUR MONASTERIES OF SCETIS

a Greek version (which has been introduced into some mss. of the Lausiac History) and in Coptic; an abridged account is also given in the Historia monachorum. The episode is thus narrated in the Greek. There was in the Arsenoite nome an ascetic who was at once possessed by a spirit of divination and maintained the doctrines of Hierax. Owing largely to his supernatural gifts this man had gathered so large a following that the local bishop besought Macarius to come and make an end of the mischief. Macarius complied, and was challenged by the Hieracite to bring to life one of the dead in a cemetery near by. The saint, after prayer, struck a tomb “with the palm stick in his hand” and called forth the dead man who lay within. The Hieracite was utterly confounded, while Macarius triumphantly led off into the desert the revived man, a pagan who had never heard of Christ, and there baptized him; it is alleged that this man continued to live for three years more.

This story may be historical in so far as it witnesses to a conflict between the saint and the heretics. And further, it is clearly indicated that this conflict took place during the later years of Macarius; for when invoking the saint’s aid, the bishop begged him to come “ere he died” (ἐν σοι γενομαι), that is, at a time when the death of Macarius could not be far off. This agrees perfectly with the date of the controversy concerning Melchizedek and we may therefore conclude that Macarius was dealing with the heresy of Hierax during the last years of his life, between 385 and 390 A.D.

8. Saint Apollinaria Synclctica in Scetis

A phenomenon which recurs at least three times in the records of Scetis is the appearance of a female devotee of high rank who disguises herself as a monk, lives for many years in the desert, and is only recognized to be a woman at or shortly before her death. It is of course quite possible that enthusiastic women did sometimes pass as monks; for the solitary life which was customary in the desert before the era of walled and inclosed monasteries made the chances of detection slight. But the current legends which profess to give the story of such persons are, in essentials, so similar that they can only be regarded as replicas of one another and perhaps ultimately no more than so many versions of a mere romance.

The earliest of these female monks is Apollinaria, who is said to have dwelt in Scetis

---

1 For the Greek see Preuschen, Palladius und Ruýnus, pp. 124 f.; for the Coptic see Zoëga, Cat., No. i.xx, pp. 127 f.
3 In the Coptic version the incident is located at Wasim. So too in the Life of Bishbôi we read “...that great prophet and apostle Abû Makâr...when he came to the district of Wasim...converted the fool and all his companions to the orthodox faith” (ms. cit., fol. 130v).
4 In the Coptic “with the palm stick which he carried after the manner of the monks.” On the monastic staff see p. 107.
5 The three instances are Apollinaria (here discussed), Hilari the “daughter of Zenô,” and Anastasia the inamorata of Justinian. Another female saint connected with Scetis is Aripisma (see Appendix v) since she is numbered among the “Children of Abba Macarius.” But when and how she is alleged to have come into this region has yet to be discovered.
6 See Apophth. Patr., Bisarion, iv. Bisarion and his disciple Dulas find a solitary dead in a cave and when preparing the body for burial discover the remains to be those of a woman.
7 See p. 224 (on Hilaria).
in the lifetime of Macarius. She is described as a daughter of Anthemius the Emperor.\(^1\) Earnestly desiring the ascetic life, she refused marriage and departed on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Thence she travelled to Alexandria, and, having purchased a suit of monastic garments, went on to the Shrine of Saint Menas. To the authorities there she declared her intention of going to Scetis, and set out accordingly one evening in a litter. She changed her dress during the journey, putting on the monastic garments she had purchased, and, when a halt was made at midnight at a spring beside a marsh, still called after her,\(^2\) Apollinaria, left the litter.

For some years she remained in the “marsh” until the bites of the mosquitoes had made her unrecognizable. When at length she felt it safe to do so, she joined the community of Macarius giving her name as Dorotheus, and soon won for herself a high repute for holiness and austere living.

Now it so happened that the younger daughter of Anthemius was possessed, and the emperor was recommended to send her to the saints in Scetis to be healed. The girl was carried into the desert and committed to the charge of Dorotheus (Apollinaria), her own sister. A cure was effected and the young princess returned to her parents. But no sooner had she returned, than the devil caused her to appear to be pregnant. In great indignation the emperor sent for the monk to whom his daughter had been intrusted, only to discover that it was his own long-lost daughter Apollinaria.

This recognition brought about no change in the life of the pretended monk. She returned to Scetis and continued to preserve her secret until she died not long afterwards. It was only when her body was being prepared for burial, that she was found to be a woman. She was interred with due honor “to the east of the holy Church in the Laura of Abba Macarius.”\(^3\) She is commemorated by the Greek Church on January fifth.\(^4\)

This romantic story—for it is nothing else—is of little or no value as an episode in the history of Macarius, but it is of real importance, as we have already pointed out, in the legendary history of Scetis as the first of a well-marked series.

9. The Last Days of Macarius the Great

In the Life of Macarius “Sarapion” describes circumstantially the last days of his hero. We hear that when he was old and without strength Macarius was placed in the courtyard outside his cell, and though in this exposed position he was assailed once again by demons,

---

1 If Apollinaria was contemporary with Macarius (died 390) she cannot have been the daughter of Anthemius the Emperor (reigned 467-472); possibly we should understand Anthemius the elder, grandfather of the emperor, who was consul in 405 and whose daughter might therefore have been a younger contemporary of Macarius.

2 Apparently the marsh is the Marsh of Scetis: the spring of Apollinaria is not otherwise known.

3 See the Greek printed in the Bollandist Bibli. Hagior. Graeca, 2nd ed., p. 22. In 1712 Sicard saw a chapel dedicated (he says) to S. Apollinarius (sic) in a ruined church at the Monastery of S. Macarius (Lettres édifiantes, t. v. p. 24); but since he was told that she was a daughter of Zeno, it is probable that Hilaria was the saint so honored.

4 Note that Hilaria, the VI century replica of Apollinaria, is commemorated in suspicious proximity on Tébeh 21 = Jan. 16.
The rise of the four monasteries of Scetis

his spiritual strength was unimpaired and enabled him to discomfort his foes once more.\(^1\) And again, as his strength passed from him, he was besought by the brethren to relax his austerities; but while thanking them for their affection, he reminded them that he had but little of his course yet to run and therefore needed not to pause for rest.\(^2\) A little further on we are told that “the holy Abba Macarius became exceeding heavy through sickness after many years: his flesh was well nigh consumed by reason of the toils which he laid upon himself in secret... Moreover his eyes began to grow dim and to refuse their service... for he was ninety-seven years old and on the verge of death. Then little by little he lost his strength and began to take to his couch: he trembled while going in and coming out.”

Like Samuel the Prophet he delivered to the brethren a vindication of his own life which moved them to tears,\(^3\) and then retired into his cave. There at the seventh hour two saints, Antony and Pachomius, appeared to him to warn him that after nine days his end would come. And so it came to pass. During the night following the eighth day of his sickness, Phamenoth twenty-seventh,\(^4\) as he lay stricken with a fever, “upon a mat according to his custom,” the Cherubim, who had directed him at all the great crises in his career, appeared to him with a throng of heavenly beings and summoned him away. He expired with the words, “My Lord Jesus, beloved of my soul, receive my spirit.”\(^5\)

The narrative of “Sarapion” summarized above is not unimpressive in the picture it presents of Macarius gradually sinking under the weight of years. Unfortunately it cannot be accepted as historical. Omitting the circumstance that Sarapion of Thmuis died long before Macarius and that he cannot therefore have recorded the end of Macarius, we may note that Macarius the Great died at the age of ninety,\(^6\) not ninety-seven. Now Palladius tells us that he himself visited Macarius of Alexandria “towards the end of his old age,” when the saint was “close upon one hundred years old and had lost his teeth”—and found him contending with the devil\(^7\): we have, therefore, strong grounds for suspecting that “Sarapion” (or his source) has deliberately or ignorantly borrowed Palladius’ information concerning the last days of Macarius the Alexandrian and used it to stiffen his own (imaginary) account of the end of Macarius the Great.

Our suspicions must, surely, be confirmed when we turn to what is definitely known of Macarius’ closing years and find there no hint that the saint fell latterly into great bodily weakness. We have lately seen that it was after 385 and when his end was near that Macarius journeyed to Wasîm to confute the Hieracite heretic. Moreover the following anecdote\(^8\) shows that when his death was recognized to be not far off, he was still hale enough to

---

1 A.M.G., xxv, pp. 96 f.
2 Id., p. 101.
3 Id., pp. 105 f.
4 March 23. Macarius is commemorated on Jan. 15 by the Latin, and (with his namesake of Alexandria) on Jan. 10 by the Greek Church (see Ada S.S., Jan. 1, pp. 1005 f., Synax. Constant., ed. Delehaye, col. 401 f.).
5 A.M.G., xxv, p. 109.
6 Palladius, Hist. Laur., ch. xvii.
7 Id., ch. xviii.
8 Apophth. Patr., Macarius, xxxiv.
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

make the difficult journey from Scetis to the Mount of Nitria. “Once the elders of the Mount (of Nitria) 1 sent to Abba Macarius in Scetis beseeching him and saying: ‘Lest the whole multitude weary thee, we ask thee to come to us that we may see thee before thou departest unto the Lord.’ 2 And when he was arrived at the Mount, all the people were gathered together to him. And the elders besought him to speak a word to the brethren. Hearing this, he said: ‘Let us weep, brethren, and let our eyes pour down tears before we depart to that place where our tears will scald our bodies.’ And they all wept, and fell upon their faces, saying: ‘Father, pray for us!’”

This apophthegm is probably the last authentic information we have on the life of Macarius; for Palladius makes no reference to the last scene of all, and if we reject the Coptic story of his gradual enfeeblement, much less can we accept the narrative of the death scene.

“Sarapion” relates that when the death of the saint was known, the deepest grief prevailed in the desert. The monks came up from their dwellings mourning and sorrowing. “And when they reached the Church all weeping bitterly because their father had been torn from them . . ., they cast themselves upon his holy body for a long time. . . . After that they celebrated the appropriate liturgy and brought unto his glorious remains the bloodless Sacrifice . . . . At length they laid his holy body in the cave near the Church which he had built and departed to their dwellings.” 3

Macarius had bidden his disciples hide his body 4 ; but so many and famous were the miracles of healing wrought on those who prayed in his cave that the men of Jibber plotted to secure the precious relics. 5 They went to the monastery and, having bribed John, the avaricious disciple of Macarius, 6 to show them where his master’s body lay, carried the remains secretly to their own town. The body was placed in a church specially built for the purpose and remained there until its removal in A.M. 500 (784 A.D.) 7 to Elmi.

10. Paphnutius, the Successor of Macarius

Palladius 8 states that Macarius was succeeded in his priesthood by John, 9 his avaricious disciple. This must not be misunderstood. John merely became priest of the community

---

1 The “Mount” is not defined in the Greek, but the corresponding Coptic (A.M.G., xxv, p. 218) definitely names “the Mount of Pernoud.”
2 These words show that Macarius was then not considered likely to live long.
3 A.M.G., xxv, pp. 109 f.
5 See the Coptic fragments, my New Texts, No. xxiii, D, Frag. 3.
6 This detail is found only in the Synax., loc. cit. The Coptic fragments just mentioned say nothing about the treachery of John, for whose avaricious nature see Palladius, Hist. Lav., ed. Butler, ch. xviii.
7 The Synax., loc. cit., states that the body remained at Jibber “about a hundred and sixty years, until the time of the domination of the Arabs, after the construction of the Cells.” Since the saint’s body was removed from Jibber in A.M. 500 (New Texts, ut supra) and from Scetis in the lifetime of a disciple of Macarius, we must emend the Synax. and read “three hundred and sixty years,” i.e., the theft took place before 424 A.D. From the Coptic fragments above cited it appears that the “domination of the Arabs” means a devastation of Jibber by the Arabs, probably in the Coptic rebellion of 767 A.D. (see Lane-Poole, History of Egypt in the Middle Ages, p. 32). The “construction of the Cells” must be an anachronistic and loose reference to the restoration of the monasteries after the fifth sack in 817 A.D., when the body of Macarius was reinstated in a new church.
8 Hist. Lav., ch. xvii.
9 Not to be identified with John the Little.
founded by Macarius, but not the Primate of Scetis. Coptic authorities assert that it was Paphnutius who became the “Father of Shiêt.” In the *Life of Macarius* he is described as “the greatest among the disciples of the holy man—he who assumed the Fatherhood in the holy places (μητριότητ παν πατρικός συνετέ) after him”: that is to say, Paphnutius became the superior-in-chief of the desert and of the four *topoi*, or monasteries, in it. Similarly in the *Life of Maximus and Domitius* Paphnutius is called the disciple of Macarius and “Father of Shiêt after him.” We have good reason to admit the truth of this assertion; for (a) in Egypt supremacy in a monastic colony was commonly assigned to the senior priest; (b) after the death of Macarius, Paphnutius was certainly senior of all the priests in Scetis, being, indeed, about eighty years of age at the time; (c) on one occasion we find him exercising powers which were probably reserved for the “Father of Shiêt.”

A few notes on the career of Paphnutius may be added. He was born apparently in the first decade of the fourth century and through Antony’s influence devoted himself to the monastic life in his youth, being trained first in a coenobium and then hastening “to explore the secret places of the desert”: indeed, such was his love of solitude that he was nicknamed “Bubalis.” Possibly he was among the earliest denizens of Scetis; for Cassian tells us that he was still young when he was a monk under Isidorus and was falsely accused of theft by a jealous brother. And it must have been before 356 that he won the commendation of Antony himself by means of an apposite parable.

He succeeded Isidorus as priest and superior of the primary community in Scetis, possibly about 373 and was one of the monks banished in the Lucian Persecution. He was also surnamed Cephalas (as well as Bubalis), and is so styled by Palladius who met him and records some interesting particulars concerning him. Thus he had “the grace of knowledge” of the Scriptures and could interpret them throughout, though he could not read; his meekness was such as to disguise the prophetic power which he actually possessed; and it was reported that during eighty he had never had two tunics in a single year.

Cassian, who was in Scetis between 390 and 400, repeatedly speaks of Paphnutius (“Pafnutius”) as priest-superior of the community to which he himself belonged,

---

1 Coptic, παφνουτ. “the (man) of God.”
2 *A.M.G.*, xxv, p. 111.
3 Paphnutius was only in the most general sense a disciple of Macarius the Great, having been brought up under Isidorus the Priest. The Coptic authors certainly confound him with Paphnutius the disciple of Macarius of Alexandria.
4 *A.M.G.*, xxv, p. 312.
5 As at the Mount of Nitria; see p. 170.
6 See p. 150.
7 In the case of Hero: see Cassian, *Coll.*, II, 5, 5. 8 “coenobiorum scholis.”
9 See Cassian, *Coll.*, III, 1, 2 f.
10 *Id.*, xviii, 15.
12 Cassian, *Coll.*, xviii, 15, 3.
13 Isidorus is often mentioned as living on until after 385 but it is significant that Palladius, though he mentions an Isidorus, does not speak of Isidorus the Priest of Scetis as being banished—presumably because he was dead.
16 *Hist. Lai.*, ch. xlvii.
17 Yet he was accused of having stolen a codex (Cassian, *Coll.*, xviii, 15).
18 Probably Paphnutius’ age early in Palladius’ sojourn in the desert.
19 Cassian, *Coll.*, II, 5, 5; III, 1, 1; X, 2, 3.
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

Paphnutius mentions a favorite disciple of his named Daniel; reference is also made to a certain Abba John who was oeconomus and administered the affairs of the church under Paphnutius. About the end of Cassian’s stay in Scetis, Paphnutius still inhabited the same cell in which he had dwelt in his more youthful days, though it was five miles distant from the church, and would not move to a nearer abode to save himself the fatigue of the customary journey to church for the Sabbath and Sunday. Nay more, though he was then above ninety years old, he would carry back to his cell a jar of water sufficient to last him for the whole week.

In the alphabetic Apophthegmata patrum some of the sayings attributed to “Paphnutius” belong to the disciple of Macarius of Alexandria, but at least two of them are concerning Paphnutius of Scetis. The second of these informs us that a brother who was in difficulties consulted first Paphnutius, then John (the Little), and finally Arsenius—an interesting indication of the relative importance of these three fathers.

Paphnutius will appear again when we come to deal with the Origenist controversy and Anthropomorphism in Scetis.

11. The Coming of Arsenius

None among the later pre-Chalcedonian monks of Scetis is more famous than Arsenius; but though at least two biographies are extant, neither contains much independent information; both are in fact are compilations from the Apophthegmata patrum which stands out as our chief original authority.

Abba Daniel, disciple of Arsenius, has left us the groundwork for a complete chronology of his master. The saint lived ninety-five years in all; and of these forty were spent “in the palace of Theodosius the Great of divine memory,” forty more in Scetis, ten at Tröë, three at “Canopus of Alexandria,” and two more at Tröë. That Arsenius spent forty years “in the palace” is obviously a loose way of stating that he lived for that period “in the world” and partly in the palace. And since he fled to Scetis certainly not later and probably not earlier than 394, his birth may be dated about 354.

Both Greek Lives affirm that he was a native of Rome—and this may very well be true. He appears to have belonged to a prosperous family, for we hear incidentally of a kinsman who was of senatorial rank; but his name shows that he did not belong to the old nobility, and the post which he held in the palace suggests that he, like Ausonius, the tutor of

---

1 Cassian, Coll., iv, 1, 1.
2 Cassian, Inst., v, 40, 1.
3 On the week-end observances at Scetis and elsewhere see p. 207.
4 Cassian, Coll., iii, 1, 1. 5 P.G., LXX, col. 377 f.
6 No. 1 with its references to the “village” certainly belongs to this Paphnutius.
7 Nos. 4, 5.
8 For evidence of his wide fame see Cyril of Scythopolis, Life of Euthymius, ch. LVIII.
9 For the Life of Arsenius by Theodore of Studium see Acta SS., July iv, pp. 617 f.; an anonymous life (admittedly a compilation) is edited by Peretele, Zélia...Arsenia Velekago. For general treatises on the life of Arsenius see Acta SS., July iv, pp. 605 f.; Tillemont, Mémoires, xiv, 676 f.
10 Apophth. Pair., Arsenius, XLII.
11 On this date see p. 123.
12 Apophth. Pair., Arsenius, XXIX.
The rise of the four monasteries of Scetis

Gratian, had once been a professor of rhetoric. He had certainly received a thorough education according to the standards of his age.\(^1\)

At a date unknown Arsenius was appointed by Theodosius I tutor to the Princes Arcadius and Honorius, but, since Arcadius was born in 383, 388 or 390 may be a fair approximation. Rightly or wrongly the Life\(^2\) published by Peretele asserts that Arsenius was a deacon, and was recommended for the post by the pope and by the Emperor Gratian—who was slain, however, in the very year in which Arcadius was born. The Apophthegmata patrum constantly dwell upon the luxury and magnificence which he enjoyed at court,\(^3\) but there is reason to believe that he was far from happy as tutor to the princes. Nicephorus\(^4\) asserts that Theodosius, on paying a surprise visit to the school-room one day, found the pupils lounging at ease while their master stood humbly beside them. The same author, together with the anonymous Greek Life\(^5\) and Eutychius,\(^6\) says that he fled from the palace because he had been driven to cane Arcadius, and the young prince sought to assassinate him. These, however, are late authorities, and the story is not necessarily true. According to the Apophthegmata patrum\(^7\) his retirement was due to the admonition of a heavenly voice: "While he was in the palace, Abba Arsenius prayed to God saying: 'Lord, lead me in the way whereby I may be saved.' And there came to him a voice, saying: 'Arsenius, flee from men and thou shalt be saved.'" He therefore left the palace and sailed in secret to Alexandria.

The date of this event can hardly be other than 394—the date advocated by Tillemont and generally accepted—for Theodosius (died January sixteenth, 395) was still alive, and it is likely that Arsenius held his post at any rate for three or four years before deciding to renounce the world; moreover, fear of Arcadius and his resentment is alleged as a motive of the flight, and this (if true) makes it probable that the moment chosen was the sickness of Theodosius which supervened in the autumn of 394 and was expected to end fatally.\(^8\) However this may be, Arsenius found his way to Scetis "and entering the Church, approached the clerics and said: 'For the Lord's sake make me a monk and show me the way whereby I may be saved.'" The fathers, perceiving that he had been used to a delicate life, tried to dissuade him from attempting to face the hardships of the desert. Arsenius persisted and at length wrung consent from the fathers. But on learning his name, they were at a loss to know who should undertake to initiate such a man into the monastic lore, but finally decided to place him in the charge of John the Little.\(^9\)

While the clerics and John were engaged in discussing the matter, the ninth hour came and John proposed that they should take their meal (\(\alpha\gamma\alpha\pi\eta\)). They sat down, then, to eat leaving Arsenius standing. During the meal John tossed a cake of bread upon the floor

---

1 Apophth. Patr., Arsenius, vi (cf. v).
2 See pp. 3, 4.
3 Id., iv, xviii, xxxvi.
4 H.E., xi, 23.
5 See p. 8.
6 Annales, ed. Pococke, 1, p. 536.
7 Arsenius, 1.
9 This and the following incident are found only in the Life by Theodore of Studium (Ada Ss., July iv, pp. 618 f.).
for Arsenius, as though to a dog; and like a dog, the ex-tutor crawled on all fours to the morsel and ate it up. Thereupon John pronounced that he had the making of a monk in him.

Arsenius lived for a time as John’s disciple and then “graduated” as an anchoret, dwelling, probably, not far from Petra where Moses the Robber resided. Here he prayed as he had done before and received the answer, “Arsenius, flee, keep silence, live in solitude; for these things are the roots of sinlessness.” Even in Scetis, therefore, he became notorious for his solitariness. Abba Mark once asked him: “Why do you flee from us?” To which Arsenius replied: “God knows that I love you, but I cannot be with both God and man.” Similarly, when Theophilus visited him and asked him to favor his companions with some edifying saying, he answered: “In whatever place you hear Arsenius to be, go not there.” He regarded the slightest external sound as a fatal distraction: when visiting certain monks who dwelt near a bed of reeds, he took exception to the rustling caused by the wind, remarking that if but a sparrow’s chirp were to be heard, a man’s heart could not be at peace.

He made a point of reversing completely his former mode of life. “They said of him that as no one in the palace used to wear more costly array, so in the Church no one wore a meaner garb.” Because he had enjoyed rich perfumes when in the world, he now kept unrenewed the water, in which the palm leaves used in basket making were steeped, until it stank. So too with his secular learning: he would not even write a letter without urgent necessity, and rated his scholarship far below the spiritual wisdom possessed by the meanest fellah who had become a monk. In short, he accounted himself dead to the outside world; and when an official courier came to him with a will by which he was constituted heir to the estate of a dead relative, he was with difficulty prevented from tearing up the document, declaring that he had died before his kinsman and could not therefore be his heir.

The monastic life of such a man was necessarily barren of striking events. All that we can record under this head is that his daily wants were attended to by others, and that on one occasion he became so severely ill that he was brought by the priest into the church and there accommodated with the unusual luxuries of a couch and a pillow. Possibly this removal marks a definite change of habitation. Hitherto Arsenius seems to have dwelt in the neighborhood of Petra; but if, as is probable, he is identical with the anonymous Abba Romaeus (Greek Father) of the Apophthegmata patrum, his residence hereafter was near the church (i.e., that now known as Baramūs). Other and more stirring happenings in the life of Arsenius will be recorded in due course below.

From the comparatively peaceful activity of this period we must turn to a convulsion which shook the Mount of Nitria and certainly did not leave Scetis unmoved.

---

1 Apophth. Patr., Arsenius, ii.
2 Id., xiii.
3 Id., xv.
4 Id., xxv.
5 Id., iv; cf. xxxvi.
6 Id., xviii.
7 Id., xxix.
8 Id., vi.
9 Id., xxix.
10 Id., xxi, xxxvii.
11 Id., xxxvi.
12 The monks of Dér el Baramūs still point out a small group of ruins, about a kilometer to the south of their monastery, as the Cell of Arsenius.
CHAPTER VIII

THE ORIGENIST AND ANTHROPOMORPHIC STRIFE
AT THE MOUNT OF NITRIA AND IN SCETIS

1. Preliminary

At the close of the fourth century the monastic communities of the Mount of Nitria, Cellia, and, to some extent, Scetis entered upon a crisis such as they had never yet experienced. The majority of the monks at these centers were “through rustic simplicity” (as Jerome somewhere expresses it) Anthropomorphists, and held that the Deity was literally human in form. In support of this view they referred particularly to Genesis 1: 26, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness,” and to innumerable passages in Scripture which spoke of the eye, the ear, the hand, and the finger of God. On the other hand a smaller, but still a considerable and influential party, believed that such expressions were merely figurative, and that God was a spiritual Being “without body, parts or passions.” This latter doctrine had been held by the famous Origen, and consequently the party which advocated it was believed—rightly or wrongly—to maintain all the doctrines of that teacher.

Before we narrate the struggle between these two parties, we must premise that the exact truth is hard to discern. This is not due to lack of material. Most of the documents relating to this episode are indeed primary, but being the work of participants in the struggle or of active partisans, they have all the bias and animus of controversial literature; and this one-sidedness is the more pronounced in proportion as the controversy was unusually bitter.

2. The Origin of the Crisis

It will not be necessary in this place to give any account of the life and work of the third-century father, Origenes or Adamantius,¹ but the nature of our subject requires a statement of such of his views as were held to be heretical, at the period with which we

¹ On Origen and his work see Dict. of Christ. Biogr., iv, pp. 96 f.
are now dealing. In a synodical letter sent by the Patriarch Theophilus of Alexandria to the Bishops of Cyprus and Palestine, these views are summarily stated as follows. (1) The Son is indeed similar to mankind but not to the Father. (2) The Son is inferior to the Father even as Saints Peter and Paul are inferior to the Son. (3) We should not pray to the Son alone or with the Father. (4) The body with which men will rise at the resurrection will be material and mortal ultimately fading away to be replaced by a spiritual body. (5) The angels were not created to constitute various grades or orders, but such gradation is the result of a partial fall. (6) The Israelites sacrificed to angels just as the pagans did to demons. (7) Heavenly bodies have foreknowledge of events which are compassed by the devil. (This was held to sanction astrology.) (8) The Son of God did not become man, but merely took the form of man. (9) The Kingdom of Christ will in due time come to an end. (10) The devil will ultimately be redeemed through the sufferings of Christ and will, like Christ, become subject to the Father. Elsewhere we hear that Origen held the doctrine of metempsychosis in a modified form. The orthodoxy or heresy of Origen was therefore a perennial subject of controversy, with the earlier stages of which we are not concerned.

About the year 390 the study of Origen’s works flourished at Jerusalem. John, bishop of that city, was an admirer, so too were Rufinus, Melania, Paula, and, for the time being, Jerome. But in 392 an Egyptian monk, Aterius, came to Jerusalem and attacked Jerome and Rufinus for their devotion to Origen. Jerome, while asserting his right to distinguish between the sound and unsound in Origen’s works, seems to have felt that his attitude was open to misinterpretation and might be dangerous. Hence when Epiphanius of Cyprus came to Jerusalem (394) to conduct an anti-Origenist campaign, Jerome went over to his side. John the Bishop and Rufinus, however, held their ground, and the former replied to Epiphanius by attacking Anthropomorphism and refusing to condemn Origen. Thus a quarrel arose at Jerusalem with John and Rufinus as protagonists upon the one side, and Epiphanius, backed by Jerome, upon the other. Ultimately John requested Theophilus of Alexandria to intervene. In response Theophilus sent Isidorus the Hospitaller to Jerusalem about 396 nominally with letters to Jerome, but probably with less simple instructions, since Isidorus appears to have refused to deliver the letters. Jerome, therefore, very naturally regarded Isidorus (who lay under the same imputation of Origenism at Alexandria as John did at Jerusalem) as having come not as a mere envoy, but as an ally of John.

1 Translated by Jerome, Epist., xci, § 2 (Migne, P.L., xxii, col. 762 ff.). Theophilus is not likely to have exposed himself by attributing to Origen doctrines which he never expressed; but it must be remembered that Origen’s genuine works were much interpolated, and many books were attributed to him which were not really his.
2 Based on 1 Cor. xv: 35-54.
3 Cf. Phil. ii: 7.
4 See 1 Cor. xv: 24, 28.
5 For these see Dict. of Christ. Btg., iv, pp. 132 f.
6 In id., iii, p. 379, it is asserted that John, who had once been a monk, had lived his monastic life at the Mount of Nitria, and it is suggested that his sympathy with Origenism was a result. This rests upon an entirely groundless conjecture, as Tillemont has shown (Mémoires, xii, 640).
7 In Johannem, § 37 (P.L., xxiii, col. 390).
THE ORIGENIST AND ANTHROPOMORPHIC STRIFE

At the same time he replied to Theophilus complaining that his backwardness in pronouncing against Origen’s works was giving offense to many holy persons. A little later John appealed once more to Theophilus for support, and the latter took at least one definite step in writing to Siricius of Rome and charging Epiphanius as a heretic and schismatic. These facts, as Tillemont has shown, make it clear that up to this point Theophilus, though not a blind enthusiast, was distinctly sympathetic in his attitude to the study of Origen’s works. We have now to ask what was the cause which transformed the Archbishop of Alexandria into the relentless persecutor of the alleged Origenists at the Mount of Nitria and Cellia.

3. Attitude of the Egyptian Monks towards Origenism

We hear little about the attitude of the Egyptian monks towards Origenism until we reach the very close of the fourth century; but there is every reason to suppose that it was distinctly hostile. Pachomius “hated and abominated Origen as a blasphemer and an apostate”; he “strictly forbade the brethren not only to read Origen’s rubbish, but also to listen to it.” And he is said to have thrown into the water a chance found volume of Origen, declaring that had it not contained the name of God he would have burned it. Elsewhere it is related that Pachomius was once visited by certain strange ascetics, and was greatly puzzled by an odor, not of sanctity, which proceeded from them. After these unsavory visitors were departed, it was revealed to him that it was the Origenist heresy in the strangers which so manifested itself. Pachomius then called back his guests and solemnly adjured them to abandon their soul destroying doctrines.

For a time the weightier Arian controversies and the troubles they brought with them sank out of sight the less urgent matter of Origen’s doctrines. It was only in the last quarter of the fourth century that this latter reëmerged, and even at this period our information is of the scantiest.

In the *Apologeticma patrum* mention is made of a monk who settled near “the little marsh of the Arsenoite nome” and caused trouble to Abba Lot by speaking to the monks there “the words of Origenes.” Lot hesitated to expel the man and, having consulted Arsenius as to the course he should take, was advised only to request the stranger not to propagate his opinions. Some of the monks at any rate took a common-sense view of the matter. Thus Abba Daniel related that Arsenius “never would speak on any controverted passage in Scripture (such as the Origenist controversy involved), though able to have spoken had he wished”—in other words Arsenius wisely refused to be drawn into the dispute. And Sopater, when asked to give a piece of salutary advice to a brother, replied: “Let no woman enter into thy cell, and do not read apocryphal books. Moreover seek

1 Palladius, *Dial. de vita J oh. Chrys.*, § xvi (P.G., xlvi, i, 1, col. 56).
2 Mémoires, xii, 458.
3 *Acta SS.*, May iii, Appendix, p. 30*.
4 Id., p. 53* (cf. *P.O.*, iv, p. 445; § 26 f.).
5 Lot, r. 6 *Apologeticma Patrum*, Arsenius, xlvi.
not out concerning the Image (of God); for this is not heresy but mere foolishness (idiotēs) and contention on either part. For this matter cannot be comprehended by any created thing.”¹ Unhappily so reasonable an attitude was the reverse of being general.

At the Mount of Nitria and Cellia there was, as we have seen,² a coterie of Hellenic or Hellenized monks whose theology was more intellectual and more speculative than the naive and literal beliefs of their Egyptian brethren. In this circle Origen’s works were undoubtedly read and studied,³ but there is no evidence beyond hostile assertions to show that any unorthodox doctrine of that teacher was held or taught by any member of the group.⁴ On the contrary, until the storm was on the point of breaking the so-called Origenists were regarded with the deepest veneration and respect by the body of the monks—a sure proof that they had not taught and were not known to hold any unorthodox opinion. In one respect and one only are these men known to have held an opinion of Origen which was abhorrent to the simple and uneducated Egyptian monks—that of asserting that the Deity, being essentially spiritual, must not be regarded as literally possessing the form and shape of man. This tenet (which is of course entirely orthodox) they probably kept to themselves as aware that insistence upon it would be ineffectual and only lead to strife. In a word, the attitude of these monks towards Origen was apparently as liberal as that of Theophilus himself⁵ until he saw fit to trim his sails to catch another breeze.

4. The Persons of the Drama

Before we proceed further, some account must be given of the Origenist leaders, the actors in the tragedy which is to follow.

The most prominent member of the Origenist party was Isidorus, stigmatized by Theophilus as “the standard-bearer of the heretical faction.”⁶

When Palladius reached Alexandria in 388 Isidorus was aged seventy and lived for fifteen years after that date; his life therefore extended from 318 to 403. From Palladius again we learn that he became a monk in his youth at the Mount of Nitria, where the historian had seen the old man’s cell.⁷ It was probably in 340 that he accompanied Athanasius to Rome, when Ammonius the Tall is said to have been of the party;⁸ and perhaps not much later that he was ordained priest by Athanasius. Whether he is to be brought to repentance and restored.

¹ Apophth. Patr., Sopater. This anecdote refers to the Anthropomorphic side of the Origenist controversy.
² See p. 84.
³ Palladius, Hist. Laos., ch. xi, mentions that Ammonius the Tall knew by heart considerable passages from the treatises of Origen and others.
⁴ Possibly the statement (id., ch. xix) that the demon which had driven Moses the Robber into sin was brought “to a full knowledge of Christ” is connected with the Origenistic doctrine that the devil will ultimately be

⁶ For Theophilus’ real views on the works of Origen see Socrates, H.E., vi, 17.
⁸ Palladius, Hist. Laos., ch. 1.
¹⁰ Palladius, Hist. Laos., ch. 1; on the visit of Ammonius to Rome, see p. 130.
THE ORIGENIST AND ANTHROPOMORPHIC STRIFE

identified with Isidorus “the priest of the anchorets” (i.e., of Cellia) mentioned by Ammonius in his Letter to Theophilus, must remain uncertain; but he was already director of the hostel for the reception of strangers and the relief of the poor at Alexandria by 373, for it was he who induced Melania to visit the Mount of Nitria by the account he gave her of Pambo. Whether it was he, or his namesake, the Priest of Scetis, or the Bishop of Hermopolis Parva, who was banished in the Arian Persecution of Lucius is again doubtful.

At a later date (388) we find him playing a dubious part as agent for Theophilus in Rome. The collision between Theodosius I and the Western usurper, Maximus, was then imminent, and the archbishop, who then, as later, favored no lost causes, sent Isidorus to Rome with a rich gift and letters addressed to each of the contending rivals. The envoy was instructed to await the issue of the conflict, and to deliver to the victor the gift with the letter addressed to him. Unhappily for the scheme, all important letters were stolen, and Isidorus lost no time in returning to Alexandria and to safety. It was in the same year that Isidorus, as hospitaler, received Palladius, then newly arrived in Egypt, and placed him under the charge of Dorotheus the Hermit.

In 396, as we have seen, Isidorus was sent by Theophilus to Palestine to intervene in the Origenist controversy then raging between John, Bishop of Jerusalem, with Rufinus, and Epiphanius of Salamis with Jerome. Sent nominally to carry letters from Theophilus to Jerome, Isidorus possibly had instructions as “diplomatic” as those he had received in 388. In any case his attitude suggested that he came as a partisan and not as a mere envoy.

Two years later the bishopric of Constantinople fell vacant through the death of Nectarius. John Chrysostom, Bishop of Antioch, was selected by the court favorite to occupy the see; but Theophilus, whether to reward Isidorus for his services, or, as is more probable, anxious to put “his own man” in the rival see, tried to hinder John’s consecration and to press the claims of Isidorus. The attempt was thwarted, we are told, by Eutropius the court favorite who threatened to produce the incriminating duplicate letters of Theophilus stolen in 388. In the same year (398) Isidorus was dispatched as Theophilus’ representative with Acacius of Beroea to attempt to effect a reconciliation between Flavian of Antioch and Damasus, then Pope of Rome. It was on his return from this mission that circumstances threw him across the archbishop’s path.

Since the attitude of Theophilus to Origenism will be a consideration of great importance in the sequel, we may remark here that: (a) Theophilus must have been well acquainted with the theological views of his intimate associate Isidorus; and (b) when employing Isidorus as his agent in 396 and 398, and when putting him forward as candidate for the see

1 § 24 (Acta SS., May iii, Appendix, p. 71*).
2 Palladius, Hist. Laus., ch. x.
3 Id., xlvi.
4 See Socrates, H.E., vi, 2.
5 See p. 126.
6 Socrates, H.E., vi, 2.
7 Id., vi, 9; cf. Palladius, Hist. Laus., ch. i and Butler’s note 8 thereon.
of Constantinople, he identified himself implicitly with the views of his nominee thereby guaranteeing them as in his opinion orthodox. Up to 398, then, Theophilus was as much an Origenist as Isidorus, or at least found nothing reprehensible in the Origenism of the latter.

While Isidorus appears to have been the brain of the Origenist group, the more picturesque and romantic element was constituted by the four brothers, Ammonius, Dioscorus, Euthymius, and Eusebius, who from their unusual stature were nicknamed the “Tall Brothers.”¹ Such was the piety of the family that all four brothers retired to the desert, while two sisters became nuns.²

The earlier limit for the period of their activity is open to some doubt. Socrates³ identifies Ammonius with the person of that name who, with Isidorus, accompanied Athanasius to Rome and took no interest in any of the sights of that city excepting the Basilicas of Saint Peter and Saint Paul. This visit to Rome is usually dated, no doubt correctly, 340. If Socrates is right, Ammonius must have been born about 313, and his brothers presumably in the same general period. But Palladius,⁴ who knew Ammonius well, in mentioning the chief monks ejected by Theophilus in 400, speaks of this man—who with his brothers “were pilloried and exiled under Valens”—as being sixty years old at the time of his ejection from the Mount of Nitria. According to this statement Ammonius would have been born in 340 and could not have visited Rome in that year.

Can we surmount this difficulty and retain the characteristic anecdote recorded by Socrates by assuming that Palladius has made a slip? Did he mean to say that Ammonius was sixty years of age, not at the time of his ejection by Theophilus, but at the date of his banishment under Valens?⁵ The context quite forbids such escape; and unless we can assume that the visit to Rome took place much later than 340, the anecdote of Socrates must be sacrificed and assigned to that other Ammonius of the Mount of Nitria who is classed with Theodore, the disciple of Amoun, Elurion, Pambo, and Pior, and who died shortly after 355.⁶ The further consideration that Ammonius is not likely to have been only ten years younger than his master Pambo makes it still more probable that 340 rather than 313 was the date of this father’s birth.

Ammonius and his brothers, then, may have retired to the Mount of Nitria about 360. There they became the disciples of Abba Pambo,⁷ and probably soon rose to eminence among the monks. Ammonius is said⁸ to have learned by heart the whole of the Old and New Testaments together with considerable passages in the treatises of Origen, Didymus, Pierius, and Stephanus. He ate nothing which was cooked with fire, except bread, from

¹ Socrates, H.E., vi, 7.
² Palladius, Hist. Laus., ch. xI.
³ Socrates, H.E., iv, 23.
⁴ Dial. de vita Joh. Chrys., § XVII.
⁵ This is the view taken by Tillemont, Mémoires, xi, 632.
⁷ See Palladius, Hist. Laus., ch. x.
⁸ See id., ch. xi.
THE ORIGENIST AND ANTHROPOMORPHIC STRIFE

his youth onwards, seared himself with a hot iron, and, as we shall see, was prepared to inflict other mutilations upon himself.

When the Arian, Lucius, raided the Mount of Nitria in 373 Ammonius was amongst those monks who were banished to Diocaeasarea,¹ while another source teaches us that all the four suffered exile at this time and submitted to the ignominy of wearing the yoke or wooden collar. Some few years after the return of the exiles and during the patriarchate of Timothy (381–385) the people of a certain city desired to have Ammonius for their bishop; but when they came to take him before the archbishop for consecration, he cut off his left ear in order to disqualify himself for the dignity; and, being further molested, threatened to cut out his tongue also.² In consequence of this mutilation he was nicknamed the “One-eared.” He seems to have dwelt at Cellia where he was closely allied with Evagrius as the leader of a group of disciples (the Origenists).³ His cell there and his hospitable reception of strangers have been already described.⁴

Of the remaining three of the Tall Brothers less is known. Palladius mentions that he was taken by Dioscorus “then priest of the Mount of Nitria” to see Benjamin.⁵ This was probably in 390. Between that date and 394 Dioscorus was elevated to the bishopric of Hermopolis Parva,⁶ for in the latter year he attended the Synod of Constantinople as a bishop,⁷ and his dignity is mentioned—apparently as recently conferred—by the author of the Historia monachorum.⁸ In the same work mention is made of the two younger brothers, Euthymius and Eusebius, who were then (394–395) still with their brother Ammonius. Of the three, and of Ammonius in particular, the author cannot speak too highly. The charity, humility, patience, gentleness, and kindness of Ammonius are each and all extolled; nor did he lack the gifts of wisdom and knowledge. Indeed, the three brothers together were the spiritual nurses of the monks in those parts; and their fame was so great not only in Nitria but also in Alexandria that the Archbishop Theophilus sought to attach them to himself and, in an evil hour for them, forced the two younger brothers to accept his overtures, probably in 395 or 396. These two, Eusebius and Euthymius, were “honored with the dignity of priesthood” and intrusted with the administration of the affairs of the Church in Alexandria.⁹

Of Evagrius, one of the most prominent, if not the foremost, of the Origenist group, we have already given some account,¹⁰ since he died before the evil days of persecution and calumny could overtake him.

---

¹ Palladius, Hist. Laus., ch. xlvi.
² Id., ch. xi; Socrates, H.E., iv, 23; Sozomen, H.E., vi, 39, 4; cf. also Theophilus in Jerome, Epist., xcii (Migne, P.L., xxii, col. 761).
³ Palladius, Hist. Laus., ch. xxiv.
⁴ See p. 93.
⁵ Palladius, Hist. Laus., ch. xii.
⁶ See Socrates, H.E., vi, 7 and Ammonius, Letter to Theophilus, § 22 (Acta SS., May iii, Appendix, p. 71*).
⁷ See Hardouin, Acta Conciliorum, i, 956.
⁸ Latin version, ch. xxiii, 2 (=Greek, ch. xxvi, 2).
⁹ Socrates, H.E., vi, 7.
¹⁰ See pp. 84 f.
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

5. Theophilus and the Anthropomorphists

The Origenist crisis was preceded by a collision between the Archbishop Theophilus and the monks on the subject of Anthropomorphism. The majority of the Egyptian monks, simple and uneducated men of the peasant class, were, as we have seen, Anthropomorphists. But many condemned this crude doctrine (which necessarily implied that the Deity was a finite being and also subject to human emotions and passions), following Origen in contending that God was incorporeal. Thus the Anthropomorphic was in some sense an episode in the Origenist controversy.

This difference of opinion had grown acute in the monasteries of Egypt shortly before 399, and the situation called for the intervention of the archbishop. Now whatever else he was, Theophilus was educated and could only look upon Anthropomorphism as childish at best, heretical or erroneous at worst. Overrating his own influence or underrating the passionate intensity with which the unlettered monks clung to their own opinion, he denounced "before the Church in the presence of the people those who affirmed the Deity to be of human form."

The statement of Socrates is a little indefinite. What Theophilus actually did was to devote his paschal letter of 399 to the subject and therein to denounce those who maintained the doctrine of Anthropomorphism. This fact is recorded not only by Sozomen, but also by Cassian, who was in Scetis when the paschal letter arrived, and who has left a vivid account of the situation there. What Anthropomorphism meant to the simpler monks and what was the relative strength of the parties opposed will best be illustrated by the relevant passage:

"In the country of Egypt this custom is by ancient tradition observed—that when Epiphany is past, which the priests of that province regard as the time both of our Lord's Baptism and also of His birth in the flesh, and so celebrate the commemoration of either mystery, not separately as in the western provinces, but in the single festival of this day—letters are sent from the Bishop of Alexandria through all the Churches of Egypt, by which the beginning of Lent and the day of Easter are pointed out, not only in all the cities, but also in all the monasteries. In accordance, then, with this custom a very few days after the previous conference (Coll., 10) had been held with Abbot Isaac, there arrived the festal letters of Theophilus, the Bishop of the aforesaid city, in which together with the announcement of Easter he considered as well the foolish heresy of the Anthropomorphites at great length and abundantly refuted it.

"And this [paschal letter of Theophilus] was received by almost all the body of monks

---

1 For this and the following see Socrates, H.E., vi, 7.
2 This document is not extant: it is presumably the treatise mentioned by Gennadius, Deciris industriis, ch.xxxiv.
3 H.E., viii, 11.
4 Coll., x, 2 f. The rendering here given is that of Gibson.
residing in the whole province of Egypt with such bitterness owing to their simplicity and error, that the greater part of the Elders decreed that on the contrary the aforesaid bishop ought to be abhorred by the whole body of the brethren as tainted with heresy of the worst kind, because he seemed to impugn the teaching of holy Scripture by the denial that Almighty God was formed in the fashion of a human figure, though Scripture teaches with perfect clearness that Adam was created in his image. Lastly this letter was rejected also by those who were living in the desert of Scete, and who excelled all who were in the monasteries of Egypt in perfection and in knowledge, so that, except Abbot Paphnuthius the presbyter of our congregation, not one of the other presbyters who presided over the other three churches in the same desert, would suffer it to be even read or repeated at all in their meetings. Among those then who were caught by this mistaken notion was one named Sarapion, ¹ a man of long-standing strictness of life. . . . And when this man could not be brought back to the way of the right faith by many exhortations of the holy presbyter Paphnuthius, because this view seemed to him a novelty, and one that was not ever known to or handed down by his predecessors, it chanced that a certain deacon, a man of very great learning, named Photinus arrived from the region of Cappadocia with the desire of visiting the brethren living in the same desert: whom the blessed Paphnuthius received with the warmest welcome, and, in order to confirm the faith which had been stated in the letters of the aforesaid bishop, placed him in the midst and asked him before all the brethren how the Catholic Churches throughout the East interpreted the passage in Genesis where it says: ‘Let us make man after our image and likeness.’ And when he explained that the image and likeness of God was taken by all the leaders of the churches not according to the base sound of the letters, but spiritually . . . and showed that nothing of this sort could happen to that infinite and incomprehensible and invisible glory, so that it could be comprised in a human form and likeness . . ., at length the old man was shaken . . . and was drawn to the faith of the Catholic tradition. And when both Abbot Paphnuthius and all of us were filled with intense delight at his adhesion . . . and when we arose to give thanks, and were all together offering up our prayers to the Lord, the old man was so bewildered in mind during his prayer because he felt that the Anthropomorphic image of the Godhead which he used to set before himself in prayer was banished from his heart, that on a sudden he burst into a flood of bitter tears and continual sobs, and cast himself down on the ground and exclaimed with strong groanings: ‘Alas, wretched man that I am! they have taken away my God from me, and I have now none to lay hold of; and whom to worship and address I know not.’ By which scene we were terribly disturbed.

Such was the reception accorded to the paschal letter of Theophilus in Scetis, where the Anthropomorphists appear to have outnumbered the liberal party by at least three to

¹ This Sarapion had dwelt for fifty years in the desert of Scetis (see Cassian, Coll., x. 4. 1).
one. At the Mount of Nitria and Cellia the disproportion may have been less, for the latter place was the headquarters of the so-called Origenists.

Whether it was the Scetiotes alone or the combined forces of both Scetis and the Mount of Nitria which took the next step is not clear. Socrates\(^1\) merely says that “when they heard these things [the steps taken by Theophilus against the Anthropomorphists] the ascetics of the Egyptians left their monasteries and came to Alexandria. And they raised a riot against Theophilus, regarding him as a blasphemer, and meaning to slay him.” Theophilus, hard pressed, arranged to meet the monks in conference, and as soon as he appeared greeted them with the words: “I beheld you as the face of God.” This gave the monks pause, and they rejoined: “Nay, but if you really mean that the face of God is as ours, anathematize the works of Origen; for certain persons arguing from them resist our doctrine. But if you will not do this, then suffer at our hands the penalty due to blasphemers and enemies of God.” Thereupon Theophilus agreed to do as they dictated and bade them not be angry with him: “For I also am hostile to the works of Origen and censure those who accept them.”

This incident is recorded by Socrates and Sozomen; and there is every reason to believe that it actually took place, though Palladius, strangely enough, does not notice it in his *Dialogues on the Life of John Chrysostom*. From the narrative of Socrates it appears that Theophilus, taking advantage of the simplicity of the monks, adroitly shelved the Anthropomorphic question by committing himself to condemn the works of Origen. Now there can be little doubt that Theophilus had hitherto stood in very much the same position as Evagrius, Ammonius, and the rest as regards the works and teaching of Origen. He—as they probably did\(^2\)—could find much that was profitable in Origen, but that did not mean that he accepted every article of Origen’s views.\(^3\) Many pieces of evidence make it clear that he had been the reverse of intolerant in this matter previously to 399. His apparent reluctance to declare himself against the Origenists had caused Jerome some uneasiness\(^4\); he had selected men for the most responsible offices in the Church from the ranks of those whom he afterwards persecuted as Origenists; Isidorus had been his confidential agent for years, and had even been put forward by him as a candidate for the patriarchate of Constantinople; Dioscorus, one of the Tall Brothers, was consecrated (about 394) to the see of Hermopolis. Moreover, Theophilus had selected many bishops from among the disciples of the two Isaacs\(^5\); he had tried to force Evagrius to accept the bishopric of Thmuis\(^6\); and had intrusted important administrative work at Alexandria to two others.

---

1 Cassian, *Coll.*, x, 4, 1.
2 It would be hard to say what doctrine of Origen was held by the Nitrian group except that they maintained the spiritual nature of God as against the Anthropomorphic view—a doctrine certainly not peculiar to Origen! For the theological character of Palladius (and his associates at the Mount of Nitria) see Butler, *L.H.*, i, pp. 173 f.
6 See p. 86.
of the Tall Brothers. Since we can hardly suppose that all these persons suddenly developed
into blind followers of Origen, and must credit Theophilus with not appointing bishops
and officials without previous knowledge of their theological views, it is clear that he must
have been well aware of their beliefs and satisfied as to their substantial orthodoxy.

Why then did Theophilus, with no fanatical hatred of Origen and his works, redeem
his pledge to the Anthropomorphists by selecting for persecution a single group\(^1\) of men—
and those men whom he must have known to be orthodox? The whole evidence goes to
show that the archbishop realized that he could use the Anthropomorphist majority of the
monks as a means to gratify his personal hatred against Isidorus and the Tall Brothers
who had championed him. We must therefore attempt to piece together from the various
documents the story of Theophilus’ breach with Isidorus and to show how the Tall Brothers,
Dioscorus, Ammonius, Eusebius, and Euthymius, became involved in the quarrel.

6. The Quarrel between Theophilus and Isidorus

Sozomen\(^2\) states that Isidorus and Peter, the Archpresbyter of Alexandria, had declined
to perjure themselves in support of a claim made by Theophilus, through his sister, to a
disputed inheritance. In his vexation at the refusal Theophilus seems to have determined
on the ruin of both men, and took advantage of the absence of Isidorus at Rome in 398
to charge Peter with having admitted to Communion a Manichaean woman who had not
renounced her heresy. Peter stated in defense that the woman had been reconciled to the
Church, and that Theophilus had been informed of the case and had directed him to admit
the woman to Communion. In support of this he cited Isidorus as witness. Isidorus on
his return from Rome confirmed both statements. Thereupon, Theophilus excommunicated
both Peter and Isidorus.\(^3\)

Along with this account Sozomen gives another, based on information supplied to him
by a reliable man who knew the Tall Brothers well, to the effect that Isidorus was excom-
municated because he refused to let Theophilus divert trust funds for his own purposes.
This version is presented in detail by Palladius in his Dialogue on the Life of John Chrysostom.\(^4\)
When Isidorus was the hospitaler at Alexandria, a certain widow of high rank intrusted
him with one thousand pieces of gold with which to buy clothes for the poorer women
of Alexandria. She exacted from him an oath that he would conceal the matter from
Theophilus “lest he should spend it (the money) upon stones; for he is possessed by a
Pharaonic passion for building.”\(^5\) Unfortunately Theophilus came to hear of the matter,
through his agents, “for he had spies upon whatever was said or done,” and demanded
the money. When Isidorus, pleading the terms on which he had received the gift, refused

\(^1\) Presumably there were other places besides the Mount
of Nitria in Egypt where Origen’s works were read; yet
Theophilus does not seem to have made a move in any
other direction.

\(^2\) H.E., viii, 12.

\(^3\) 1b.; cf. Socrates, H.E., vi, 9.

\(^4\) Migne, P.G., xlvii, i, i, col. 22 f.

\(^5\) ἄθομανία Φαραώνος.
to surrender it, Theophilus was enraged with him, but "like a snapping dog" (λαθροδάκτης κώμη) bided his time.

It was here perhaps that the two Tall Brothers, Eusebius and Euthymius, who had been brought to Alexandria by Theophilus to aid in the administration of the Church, incurred the hostility of the archbishop. Socrates, who alone refers to the part they played, says that after they had worked for a while in Alexandria, they came to recognize the grasping and unscrupulous nature of Theophilus, and asked permission to retire to the desert once more. They were pressed by Theophilus to stay, until he found out their real reason for wishing to leave him, when he dismissed them with threats. Making light of his menaces the two brothers returned to the Mount of Nitria. It is not unreasonable to suppose that it was the collision between Isidorus and Theophilus described above which enlightened the brothers as to the real character of the archbishop.

Resolved to ruin Isidorus, Theophilus assembled his clergy two months after the quarrel had taken place, and in their presence handed him a paper bringing against him a charge of sodomy; the accusation had been handed in to him (the archbishop asserted) eighteen years previously, but pressure of business had caused him to forget it. Isidorus replied that, assuming this to be the case, had he not been reminded by the person who brought the charge? Theophilus replied that the youth implicated had been at sea. But did he not return? persisted Isidorus. Theophilus, thus baffled, was fain to escape by adjourning the meeting with a promise that the evidence should be forthcoming. He then bribed a youth with fifteen pieces of gold to support the charge; but the mother of this witness (who was also bribed) revealed the plot to Isidorus himself, whereupon her son, fearing legal penalties and mistrusting Theophilus, took sanctuary in the church and failed to play the part assigned to him. Theophilus then excommunicated Isidorus without giving him a hearing. Fearing that some further attack might be made upon him, Isidorus fled to "the Mount of Nitria where he had had his dwelling in youth."

7. Ammonius the Tall and Theophilus

The excommunication of Isidorus was pronounced perhaps in 399. Sozomen's informant related that Ammonius the Tall went down to Alexandria to induce Theophilus to remove the ban, and received a promise that this should be done; when the pledge was not fulfilled, Ammonius with certain others interviewed the archbishop again, with the result that one of the party was put in prison. Thereupon Ammonius and his fellows, after gaining admittance to the same prison, refused to leave it until Theophilus was forced to beg them before an ecclesiastical court, and that he was excommunicated "by many Bishops for various reasons" (Jerome, Epist., xcii, § 3; Migne, P.L., xxii, cols. 764-65).
to do so. Was it this humiliation which completed the breach between Theophilus and the Tall Brothers, begun by the retirement of two of their number from Alexandria and probably widened by the attempts made to remove the sentence pronounced against Isidorus and by the shelter which the monks had afforded him?

Late in 399 or early in 400 \(^1\) a synod had been held in Alexandria at which Origen’s works had been duly condemned; and it may have been the decision of this synod which gave Theophilus a means for proceeding against his former friends. According to Palladius\(^2\) he sent letters to the bishops in the neighborhood of the Mount of Nitria and without stating any reason, ordered them to expel “from the Mount and the Inner Desert” (i.e., Cellia) three of the chief monks—no doubt Ammonius, Eusebius, and Euthymius. Dioscorus, Bishop of Hermopolis, must certainly have been one of those who received this order; and thus the choice was given him of unjustly proceeding against his own brothers or of incurring the unscrupulous enmity of Theophilus by disobeying.\(^3\) The three monks named together with certain other priests came down to ask Theophilus to state the cause for their expulsion (which, however, does not seem to have been carried into effect). The archbishop would make no reply, “but glaring, snake-fashion, with bloodshot eyes, he glowered at them with lowered brows like a bull, now flushed, now pale, now with a bitter snarl upon his lips. At length carried away by his ungovernable passion, he caught Ammonius, a man of his own age, round the neck by his *omophorion*, and with his own hands rained blows upon his cheeks, and, clenching his fists, bloodied his nose, roaring out: ‘Heretic, anathematize Origen!’ though there was nothing in question except the petition on Isidorus’ behalf.\(^4\) So, covered with blood, and without receiving an answer, they returned to their cells.”\(^5\)

Either on this occasion, or at the time of the interviews recorded by Sozomen, a good deal of rioting (apparently in the form of a popular demonstration in favor of the monks and against Theophilus) certainly took place. Sulpicius Severus\(^6\) brings his pilgrims to Alexandria “where shameful struggles were in progress between the bishops and the monks...because the prelates after assembling more than once had decreed in full synods that no one should read or possess the works of Origen”; and speaks a little later of rioting which the Church could not control, and which led to the interposition of the civil authorities. Theophilus\(^7\) has his own version of this affair. In their rage (he says) at the condemnation of Origen’s works “they joined to their company certain needy fellows and slaves, who

---

\(^1\) See Bright, *Age of the Fathers*, II, p. 54.
\(^2\) *Dial. de vita Job. Chrys.*, § vi.
\(^3\) This was no doubt the end at which Theophilus aimed.
\(^4\) δὲ, ὑφαίστως ὀφθαλμοῖς ὀρατοῦς ἀναπνέον, ταυρηδόν ὑπελέπτετο, ποτὲ μὲν πελάνα, ποτὲ δὲ χρῶ, ποτὲ δὲ καὶ ἱππάλα, τοῦ ἀκρατοῦ ἄρπης φερόμενος. ἔπειτα, τῷ Ἀμμωνίῳ, ἄνδρι ἄλλῳ προσχέδω, τὸ ὄμολομον ἐν τῇ τρεχήλῃ οἰκεῖαν χεῖρα καὶ πλῆγμα ταῖς συγγένεις αὐτῶν ἐμφόριον ἀνακτο- πασμένος δικαστικοῦ αἴματος τὰς μίνας, ἐτύφωσεν τῇ φωνῇ ἀἰτητικὴ, ἀναθηματικοῦ ὁργήν. (Falladius, op. cit., § vi; P.G., XLVII, i, i, col. 23.)
\(^5\) This statement makes it possible that the interview should be identified with one of the two recorded by Sozomen.
\(^6\) *Dialogus*, 1, chs. 6, 7.
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

were excited by hopes of filling their bellies, and forming mass tried to put pressure upon me when I was residing in Alexandria,” with the object of making the case of Isidorus a public affair. “For their whole object was to defend their heresy under the name of Isidorus, who for various reasons had been cut off by many bishops from the Communion of Saints.” With this in view the woman and the youth, her son (i.e., the false witnesses whom Theophilus had tried to secure), were publicly brought forward; Theophilus himself was denounced, and the pagans incited against him on the score of the destruction of the Serapeum and other temples.

That Isidorus had already been condemned and that Theophilus was at Alexandria leave little doubt that this rioting took place at the time of one or other of the recorded interviews between Theophilus and Ammonius. As to the statement that it was organized by the monks in order to intimidate Theophilus, we have only the dubious word of that prelate. It is not in the least likely that Ammonius and his fellows really used the destruction of the Serapeum—which had occurred some nine years previously, in 391—as a means of rousing the mob; and it is not probable that they would be foolish enough to expect to get any permanent advantage by means of any intimidation. It is far more likely that the tumult was due partly to popular sympathy with Isidorus and the Tall Brothers, and partly to the natural inclination of the Alexandrians to take any pretext for an outbreak.

8. The Proceedings against the Tall Brothers

It is likely that when Theophilus wrote to the bishops bidding them expel the three monks from the Mount of Nitria and Cellia, he also began to poison the minds of the majority of the monks against the Tall Brothers. Socrates\(^1\) relates that, knowing the reverence in which the brothers were held, Theophilus was aware that he could do them no harm unless he could alienate the monks from them. For this purpose he circulated a message among the monks to the effect that “they ought not to obey Dioscorus or his brethren who say that God is incorporeal. For God, according to Holy Scripture, has eyes and ears, and hands, and feet, even as men have. But Dioscorus and his party follow Origen in introducing a blasphemous doctrine, to wit, that God has neither eyes, ears, feet nor hands.” This had the desired effect. The majority of the monks, simple and ignorant men, and often quite illiterate, separated from Dioscorus and his party, which included only the more educated who saw through the manoeuvre. Thus, says Socrates, there arose “a war without truce between the monks.”

If we may believe Theophilus, he now received a summons from the Anthropomorphist monks to intervene. By his own account,\(^2\) he “was so gravely alarmed by the entreaties of the saints and especially of the fathers and presbyters who are over the monasteries,” that he was compelled to go to the Mount of Nitria itself, for fear that delay might lead

---

\(^1\) *H.E.*, vi, 7.

THE ORIGENIST AND ANTHROPOMORPHIC STRIFE

to yet further corruption of the simple. After "assembling from the neighborhood enough bishops duly to form a synod," he "proceeded to Nitria, and in the presence of many fathers who had hurried thither from almost all Egypt, the works of Origen were read." Further on in the same letter Theophilus, after detailing various unorthodox doctrines found in the works of Origen, which he alleges the accused monks to have taught in the monasteries, mentions the condemnation and excommunication of the monks; at the same time he lets fall the significant remark that they refused to obey the judgment of the bishops.¹ This refusal to accept the sentence of the synod led to a remarkable scene in the church at the Mount of Nitria, of which Theophilus gives the following version²:

"I pass over the rest, how they tried to compass my death, and by what wiles they devised this, when they seized even on the church which is in the Mount of Nitria after they were condemned, so that both we and very many bishops with us and fathers of the monks, venerated alike for their life and age, were prevented from entering. For they had lured freedmen and slaves who for their gluttony and their belly's sake were prepared for any outrage. And when they held the more advantageous parts of the church (as though in the siege of a city), they hid cudgels and sticks in palm branches, so as to disguise under the emblems of peace their hearts which were set on bloodshed. And, that their party might be the stronger and more inclined to daring action they lavished money on many freeborn persons who received it, not with intent to participate in their outrage, but so as to foresee their attempts against us, and to reveal the traps prepared by them. Now when the countless assembly of monks saw this manœuvrœ, they all began to cry out at them; and by their united shouts they should at least allow the synod to be held without fear and the laws of the Church to be observed, they cowed the madness of the few. And had not the grace of God restrained the violence of the crowd, the usual result of rioting would have ensued; for these wicked men had broken out into so great presumption, nay madness, that even the monks of holy conversation, though always most gentle, could not endure their mad rage."

Palladius³ deals briefly with this synod, stating that Theophilus gathered a synod of bishops, and without giving the accused monks any chance of pleading their cause, excommunicated three of the chief of them for alleged perverse doctrine; he was afraid to proceed against a larger number.

Origen's works had now been condemned, and three of the Tall Brothers excommunicated; but the latter appear to have ignored their sentence. To get over the check thus caused Theophilus chose "five miserable creatures (ἀνθρωπάρα) [monks at the Mount of Nitria] who had never stood in the assembly of the elders of the desert and were not worthy to

² Id., § 6 (Migne, op. cit., col. 768).
³ Note the contradiction: Theophilus has just said that the monks were already condemned.
⁴ Dial. de vita Job, Chrys., § vii.
⁵ The account which follows is that of Palladius, loc. cit.
be even door-keepers.” One of these men was consecrated a bishop, a second was ordained a priest, and three others deacons. In return for their elevation, they furnished false witness against the Three Brothers. Theophilus, having received their charges “in the presence of the Church,” went to the *augustalis* or prefect, and demanded military aid to expel the excommunicated monks from Egypt.

It appears that shortly before this synod took place, the anti-Origenists had induced the Emperors Arcadius and Honorius to issue a rescript prohibiting every “servant of God” from reading the works of Origen, and pronouncing the sentence of the emperors against any who might be convicted of so doing.¹ Jerome also refers to “edicts of the Emperors which order the Origenists to be driven out of Alexandria and Egypt.”² No doubt the accusations received by Theophilus from his creatures asserted that the three brothers had transgressed the terms of this edict; and the archbishop was therefore able to appeal for secular aid. The prefect, obliged to support Theophilus, seems to have done so without enthusiasm; for according to Palladius he issued the decree for the exile of the monks, but detailed only one soldier³ to deliver it. Theophilus, however, gathered a rabble of slaves and having primed his force with wine, marched on the monasteries by night.

Dioscorus, brother of the excommunicated three, was dragged from his episcopal throne by Ethiopian slaves “who were probably unenlightened” (i.e., heathens). From Hermopolis (Damanhûr), where this outrage took place, the archbishop hurried on to the Mount of Nitria; his night march, no doubt, enabled him to surprise the Origenists before they could resist, and, if we may believe Socrates,⁴ he had armed the Anthropomorphists against them. Having safely occupied the place, “he pillaged the Mount,” writes Palladius, “giving up the poor chattels of the monks to the younger men. When he had sacked the cells, he sought for those three, but (their friends) had let them down into a cistern and placed a mat upon the mouth of it. Since he did not find the men, he burned their cells with brushwood,⁵ consuming along with them all their books, which were canonical, and one little child, as those who were eyewitnesses declared, and the Eucharistic elements. After he had thus vented his blind anger, he returned to Alexandria, giving an opportunity to those saints to escape.” The three monks then took their *melotes* and went into Palestine to Aelia (Jerusalem).

³ Sulpicius Severus, *Dialogue*, 1, 7, speaks of the prefect’s “being called in by a sinister precedent to direct the discipline of the Church,” and represents the brethren as fleeing in terror of him. Sulpicius, however, had no detailed information on the Origenistic affair, and his statement can only be taken as corroborating the points that the secular power was invoked, and that the Origenists ultimately took to flight. Palladius, *Dial. de vita Job. Chrys.*, § xvii, also speaks of Hierax as being expelled in consequence of a decree (διὰ προστάγματος).
⁴ *H.E.*, vi, 7; vii, 14.
⁵ Hence presumably the wildly exaggerated legend found in the *Synax. Constant.*., ed. Delehaye, col. 812: “On the same day [July 10] the commemoration of the holy thousand Fathers in the Caves, whom Theophilus, Archbishop of Alexandria delivered to a bitter death in smoke and flame because of Isidorus the Priest.” Another version (op. et loc. cit.) states that these fathers were of Scetis.
Three hundred monks with priests and deacons of the Mount went with them, and their remaining adherents were scattered in all directions. Palladius in another passage gives the names and a few particulars of four of the leading monks who shared the exile of the Tall Brothers: two bore the name of Hierax, and two that of Isaac.\(^1\) The elder Hierax, who was more than ninety years of age when thus ejected, had been intimate with Antony. The younger Hierax had spent four years in the desert of Porphyrites before he came to the Mount of Nitria, where he had lived for twenty-five years. After the death of Ammonius he returned again to the “utter desert” (probably Cellia, but possibly Porphyrites). Another priest, Isaac, had been the disciple of “Macarius the disciple of Antony.” He had retired to the desert at the early age of seven, and though he knew all the Scriptures by heart, and could take up horned vipers without receiving hurt, he was now cast out after a monastic life of more than forty years, at the age of fifty; he had been at the head of a community of one hundred and fifty monks, of whom Theophilus had selected as many as seven or eight to be bishops. The second Isaac, also a priest, had been the disciple of Cronius, and had succeeded him as one of the priests at the Mount of Nitria, probably about 395 A.D.\(^2\) From the *Apopthegmata patrum*\(^3\) we learn that he had been so unwilling to be ordained that he fled “into Egypt” and hid in a field amid the crops. The fathers who were pursuing him happened to stop for the night near by, and their ass went and stood near where the old man lay hid, thus leading to his discovery. Palladius further informs us that he was the head of a community numbering two hundred and ten monks, and that he had built a hostel in the utter desert (ξενοδοχεῖον ἐν τῇ πανερήμῳ), that is, at Cellia,\(^4\) for the refreshment of those who came to visit the fathers, and for the relief of sick monks. He had lived as an anchoret for thirty years before he was turned adrift.\(^5\)

Theophilus, though modestly silent as to the details of his military exploit, was jubilant over its results: those wicked and raving men, who attempted to plant the heresy of Origen in the monasteries of Nitria, had been cut down by his prophetic sickle; he had remembered the apostle’s precept: “Rebuke them severely”; the Church of Christ had cut short with the sword of the Gospel these Origenistic serpents as they came forth from their holes; in a word, the monk Theodore who was paying a visit to Palestine had seen the monasteries of Nitria and could assure Jerome of the “obedience and gentleness” of the (remaining) monks.\(^6\)

\(^1\) Palladius, *Dial. de vita Job. Chrys.*, § xvii.
\(^2\) Cronius was still alive (aged 110 years) in 394-5: see *Hist. Mon.* (Greek), ch. xxvi. For the priesthood of Cronius, see Palladius, *Hist. Laus.*, ed. Butler, ch. xxi.
\(^3\) *Apopth. Patr.*, Isaac the Priest, i.
\(^4\) πανερήμῳ is usually taken to denote Scetis (as it certainly does in *Hist. Laus.*, chs. xvii, xx, xxii); but it is also used generally to indicate any completely desert tract (id., ch. vii), and as such is applied to the Eastern Desert where Antony’s monastery was (id., xxi). In connection with Pior, Palladius almost certainly uses the term to indicate Cellia (id., xxxix). In the present instance such a use cannot be doubted; for Isaac, the disciple of Cronius, is connected with the Mount of Nitria and Cellia exclusively.
\(^5\) As an anchoret, Isaac no doubt lived at Cellia (and built the hostel there during that period of his life). He was presumably at the Mount of Nitria itself as one of the college of priests at the time of the archbishop’s raid; and must have become Priest of Cellia between 403 and 408 when Scetis was sacked (see *Apopth. Patr.*, Isaac, v; and p. 145).
\(^7\) Id., xc.
\(^8\) Id., lxxxix.
9. *Subsequent Fortunes of the Tall Brothers and Their Party*

Meanwhile the group of exiles which had first gone to Jerusalem, wandered from place to place. Sozomen\(^1\) reports them at Scythopolis, where the abundant palm trees furnished them with material for the work to which they were accustomed; but their party was reduced to about eighty. They were maintained partly by their handiwork and partly (says Theophilus) by the means which Isidorus, who accompanied them, had at his command.\(^2\) But even in their exile they were allowed no respite: Sulpicius Severus speaks of certain edicts which forbade them to settle in any one place\(^3\); and Theophilus writes to the Bishops of Palestine and Cyprus\(^4\) to tell his version of the whole affair and to express a wish that, since he has heard that the fugitives have passed over into the provinces to which he writes, they will “provoke the heretics to tears with evangelical precepts.”

It is not clear which party took the next step which was to have momentous consequences. Sozomen\(^5\) asserts that Theophilus sent agents to Constantinople, and that on hearing this, Ammonius with Isidorus and the rest proceeded thither. Theophilus, on the other hand, writes to Epiphanius,\(^6\) Bishop of Salamis, urging him to hold a synod to condemn Origenism and to send synodical letters expressing this condemnation to himself and to John Chrysostom at Constantinople, “for I have heard that the slanderers of the true faith, Ammonius, Eusebius and Euthymius, have taken ship for Constantinople to deceive yet others if they can...and that our letters may reach Constantinople the more quickly, send a diligent man and one of the clergy, even as we ourselves have sent fathers from among the monks of Nitria itself with other holy and most obedient men.”

The Origenists who reached Constantinople numbered fifty\(^7\); they appealed to John Chrysostom for aid, threatening to refer their cause to the emperor if necessary. John received them kindly but without admitting them to Communion, and wrote to Theophilus urging him to become reconciled to the monks. Theophilus only replied by sending agents to Constantinople to carry on intrigues against John. A second appeal was met by the excommunication of “Dioscorus the Bishop, the brother of the monks,”\(^8\) who seems hitherto to have remained in Egypt despite the indignity with which Theophilus’ followers had treated him. At length, despairing of any other means, Ammonius and his fellows met the Empress Eudocia in public, declared their case to her, and gained her promise that a synod should be convoked and that Theophilus should be summoned to attend.\(^9\)

But the wrongs of the Tall Brothers were now destined to become a mere side issue. A false report reached Theophilus that John had admitted the monks to Communion,\(^10\)

---

2. *Jerome, Epist.*, xcii, § 3.
3. *Dialogus* 1, 7.
7. Isidorus was with them (*Socrates, H.E.*, vi, 9).
and from thence onwards the efforts of the Alexandrian archbishop were directed towards the ruin of John. The series of intrigues and incidents which led to the desired result have nothing to do with the history of Nitria and may be passed over. It is only necessary to record the close of the whole affair.

In 403 a synod met at the Oak (a suburb of Chalcedon). But now the question at issue was not the vindication of the monks, but the deposition of John himself. As Socrates puts it "there was no longer any recollection of Origen's work"; though he mentions that while in Constantinople Theophilus did not conceal his real attitude towards the writings of Origen. The archbishop was asked how he justified his present approval of what he had formerly condemned, and replied: "Origen's books are like a meadow full of all kinds of flowers: if therefore I find anything good in them, I gather it; but if anything seems to me to be thorny, I pass it by as dangerous." The Nitrian affair, then, was never directly mooted: Sozomen says that Theophilus merely "called upon the monks from Scetis (i.e., the Mount of Nitria) to repent, promising to bear no malice and to do them no harm," and that the monks, bewildered by their surroundings and (probably) by the attitude of their persecutor, fearing to seem too stubborn, submitted and were received back into Communion. The historian gives it as his opinion that such would not have been the ending of the affair had Ammonius and Dioscorus been present. But Dioscorus was already dead, and had been buried in the Church of Mocius the Martyr; while Ammonius had been taken ill just before the synod, and died soon after. Theophilus on hearing of his end is said to have wept most bitterly! Palladius adds a little to this account of the end of two famous men. Dioscorus had prayed that he might see peace in the Church, or else be removed from the world—and the latter petition was granted. He was buried in the basilica before the gate at the Oak. Ammonius, as Palladius heard from the followers of Aurelius and Sisinnius, foretold just before his death that a great persecution would befall the Church, and that a most shameful end would requite the guilty, leading to the reunion of the Church. He was interred in the Basilica of the Apostles across the sea (i.e., at Constantinople), and his tomb was believed to have the virtue of curing the fever-stricken.

Isidorus also must have died in 403. Apparently he was reconciled to Theophilus and returned to Alexandria; for Palladius states that, though he was exceedingly wealthy, he made no will and left nothing to his sisters (who presided over a convent of seventy nuns, presumably in Alexandria) "but committed them to Christ, saying: 'He who created you will order your life even as (he has done) mine.'" Ammonius, says he died soon after Theophilus had left Constantinople and was buried in the basilica at the Oak.

1 H.E., vi, 15.
2 Id., viii, 17.
3 Socrates, H.E., vi, 16, notes with strong disapproval that he admitted the Tall Brothers to Communion immediately after John's deposition, thus plainly showing how insincere he had been in his previous attitude.
4 Socrates, H.E., vi, 17, apparently confusing him with

---

143
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

With Isidorus, Ammonius, and Dioscorus dead and the remaining monks reconciled to Theophilus, the Origenist controversy came to a complete end.¹ The surviving monks probably went back to Cellia and the Mount of Nitria: Isaac, the disciple of Cronius, certainly did so, and subsequently became the Priest of Cellia. A few may have remained irreconcilable.

¹ For a recent discussion of the chronology of the Origenistic controversy as a whole see Holl, Zeitfolge des ersten Origenistischen Streits.
CHAPTER IX

THE MOUNT OF NITRIA DURING THE FIRST HALF OF THE FIFTH CENTURY

1. General Situation at the Beginning of the Century

The exact state of affairs at the Mount of Nitria and Cellia after the Origenist troubles had been brought to a close is obscure. We have seen that the surviving Tall Brothers, Eusebius and Euthymius, were reconciled with Theophilus, and it is possible that they returned to their old abodes. Palladius tells us that the younger Hierax, one of the ejected monks, remembering the judgment pronounced against those who put their hands to the plough and look back, returned when the struggle was ended to the “utter desert” (πανέρημος) of Cellia. He too must have made his submission to Theophilus. So also with Isaac the disciple of Cronius, and doubtless with the unnamed rank and file of the party. By force and by craft Theophilus had established ascendancy over the monks.

But the Origenists must have felt all the shame and humiliation of those who have been defeated and have submitted. Is it fanciful to trace this in some of the anecdotes concerning Isaac which have come down to us and which show the petulance of an embittered and disappointed man? Thus: “Abba Isaac used to say to the brethren: ‘Our Fathers and Abba Pambo used to wear old patched clothes and garments of palm fiber; but now ye wear costly apparel. Get you hence, ye have made this place desolate.’ And when he [read they] were about to go forth to the harvest, he would say to them: ‘I no longer give you commandments; for ye do not keep them.’”¹ And again, when Isaac was dying the seniors assembled and asked in despair what they should do when he was gone. Isaac replied: “If ye will...keep the commandments of God, He (will) send his grace and preserve this place. But if ye keep them not, ye shall not abide in this place.”² The tone is surely pessimistic.

¹ Apophth. Patr., Isaac the Priest, vii. ² Id., xi.
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

Isaac had certainly been reinstated as Priest-Superior of Celia after the reconciliation with Theophilus; he was still alive in 408 when Scetis was sacked for the first time, for he warns his disciples against such lapses as had brought destruction on the four churches of that place.1

2. Cyril and the Monks of Nitria

In 412 Theophilus fell into a lethargy and died.2 After a sharp contest as to who was to succeed him, Cyril, the nephew of the dead archbishop, who had himself been in some sense a monk, was elected. Isidorus of Pelusium, a contemporary, writes reproachfully to Cyril3: “What profits you John’s retirement into the desert4 which you once so zealously imitated, since you have now ceased to do so, and are turned back to your own personal concerns?” Cyril, therefore, had led the monastic life for a time. And later authors rightly or wrongly suggest that Cyril was a monk at the Mount of Nitria or Scetis. Thus the History of the Patriarchs5 states that “the patriarch (Theophilus), when he sent Cyril to the desert, entrusted him to Sarapion the Wise.” This Sarapion is perhaps Sarapion the Great who was prominent at the Mount of Nitria when Melania visited the place,6 and from whom Palladius derived some of the facts he records.7 The Synaxarium,8 confusing the Mount of Nitria with Scetis, speaks of him as having belonged to the Monastery of Saint Macarius for five years “where he learned all the divine sciences,” and as being subsequently committed to the care of “Sarapion the Bishop.”9 The fact that Cyril was so strongly supported by the Nitrian monks lends some color to these late assertions that he was trained in the Nitrian desert.

With the patriarchate, Cyril had inherited something of his uncle’s overbearing and revengeful spirit. Isidorus of Pelusium10 writes urging him to make an end of disputes and quarrels and to restrain his inclination to gratify his private malice; and the reference which follows to the punishment of Jonathan for Saul’s sake, shows that Isidorus was thinking of the darker passages in the career of Theophilus. The events of 415, as related by Socrates,11 show that such advice was not uncalled for. Orestes, the Prefect of Alexandria, had already had reason to feel aggrieved at patriarchal encroachments upon the sphere of civil government; but matters were now brought to a climax. While a proclamation of the prefect was being read in the theater, the Jews present detected a certain schoolmaster named Hierax, a zealous partisan of Cyril, and cried out that he was present in order to provoke strife. Resenting Cyril’s action in setting spies to report upon his proceedings, Orestes caused Hierax to be seized and publicly tortured. To this Cyril replied

1 Apophth. Patr., Isaac the Priest, v.
2 See Socrates, H.E., vii, 7. In Apophth. Patr., Theophilus, v, the archbishop is represented (in defiance of chronology) as crying out on his deathbed: “Blessed art thou, Abba Arsenius, for that thou wast always mindful of this hour!”
3 Epist., i, xxxv (P.G., lxxviii, col. 197).
4 See Mark 1: 4.
5 Page 164.
6 Palladius, Hist. Laus., ch. xlvi.
7 Id., ch. vii.
9 On the various persons named Sarapion see Butler, L.H., ii, pp. 213 f. By Sarapion the Bishop, Sarapion of Thmus is probably meant, but he was dead before 370.
10 Epist., i, ccclxx.
indirectly by warning the Jews that any further molestation on their part would be met with reprisals. In spite of this threat—it is alleged—the Jews planned a night massacre of the Christians, luring them abroad by means of a false alarm that the Church of Alexander was on fire; many Christians who hurried to the scene were taken unawares and massacred. Cyril avenged them by seizing the synagogues, driving all the Jews out of the city, and giving up their property to be pillaged by the mob—a manœuvre which of course gained him the hearty support of the rabble.

Orestes was naturally incensed at this outrage which not only bespoke contempt for the civil authority, but had also deprived the city of its most prosperous inhabitants. When therefore Cyril (having attained his end) calmly professed himself ready to be reconciled, over a copy of the Gospels, the prefect indignantly refused.

Socrates, in a tone of marked censure, relates the part now played by the monks “in the mountains of Nitria.” Ever since Theophilus had armed them against the party of Dioscorus, these monks had shown themselves overweening and turbulent. On this occasion they determined to take up the cause of Cyril and dispatched five hundred of their number to Alexandria, where they gained control of the city. These monks waylaid Orestes as he drove abroad and greeted him with cries of “Sacrificer” and “Hellen” (pagan). Orestes, suspecting that this was Cyril’s work, cried out that he was a baptized Christian; but, disregarding the protest, one of the monks, named Ammonius, threw a stone which seriously wounded the prefect, who, deserted by his bodyguard, would have been slain, had not the citizens intervened, rescuing their governor and seizing the miscreant Ammonius. The prisoner was examined according to law and died under torture, whereupon he was canonized by Cyril who bestowed upon him the title of Thaumasios (Marvellous) the Martyr. “But,” observes Socrates, “sensible people, even though Christians, did not respond to Cyril’s zeal on this man’s behalf. For they knew that Ammonius had paid the penalty for rashness and that it was not to compel him to deny Christ that he was tormented to death.” Consequently Cyril was soon glad to let the memory of the “martyr” fade away.

Worse was to follow. Hypatia, the daughter of Theon the Mathematician, was famous at this time for her learning, virtue, and beauty. She was on familiar terms with Orestes, and the malicious attributed to her influence the continued breach between the prefect and the archbishop. The rest may be told in the words of Socrates: “To be short, certaine heady and rash cockbraines whose guide and captaine was Peter, a Reader of that Church, watched this woman coming home from some place or other, they pull her out of her chariot; they haile her into the Church called Caesarium: they stripped her starke naked:

1 H.E., vii, 14.
2 John of Nikiu, Chron., trans. Charles, lxxxiv, 94, describes him as “an illustrious monk of the convent of Pernôdj” (i.e., of Nitria).
they raze the skin and rend the flesh of her body with sharpe shels (potsherds), untill the breath departed out of her body: they quarter her body: they bring the quarters unto a place called Cinaron and burn them to ashes. This heinous offence was no small blemish both to Cyril and to the Church of Alexandria.”

Whether Cyril was in any way directly responsible for this last outrage we cannot tell. Socrates implies that he was at least indirectly the cause, and John of Nikiu\(^1\) does not hesitate to accept the responsibility for Cyril, relating that “all the people surrounded the Patriarch Cyril and named him ‘the new Theophilus’; for he had destroyed the last remains of idolatry in the city.”

So far as they go, these incidents give us a most unfavorable impression of the monks of Nitria at this time. They are bigoted, disorderly, turbulent, and we hear nothing of those virtues which had distinguished their predecessors in the fourth century. Possibly it was not without cause that Isaac of Cellia so querulously reproached the monks of his community.

3. *Visit of Melania the Younger*

At a date which lies between 416 and 430, and may perhaps be determined as 418–419,\(^2\) the younger Melania, granddaughter of Melania the Elder, journeyed to the Mount of Nitria and Cellia. The following brief account of the visit is given in the Greek *Acta Melaniasiae*:\(^3\) “And leaving Alexandria, they came to the Mount of Nitria and the place called Cellia. There the most holy Fathers of the monks in that place received the holy woman as though she were a man…. When they had therefore conversed with the holy Fathers and received their blessing, they departed after a stay with them, all (the monks) escorting them with great joy.”

4. *Eladius of Cellia*

Nothing is so noticeable in this barren period as the general absence of really eminent men among the monks of Nitria and Cellia. Men like Pior, Pambo, or Macarius are no longer found at all, and only a few comparatively ordinary persons can be identified as belonging to this epoch. Among such, Eladius or Elladius may be selected for mention. In the *Apophthegmata patrum*\(^4\) it is related of him that he lived for twenty years in Cellia without once raising his eyes so as to see the roof of the church, and that at Easter he considered it his duty to stand while he ate. But he seems to have been particularly noted as a prophet; for John Rufus of Maiuma\(^5\) records that John of Beth Tatiana used to visit Eladius “the prophet of the Cells” and once heard from him a prediction of the Council of Chalcedon, of the deposition of Dioscorus, the murder of Proterius, and the fortunes of Timothy Aelurus. Possibly the sojourn of Eladius at Cellia may be dated about 420–440.

---

3. Ch. 39 (*Analecta Bollandiana*, XXII, p. 28; Latin version in id., VIII, p. 45).
4. Eladius, I, 11.
MOUNT OF NITRIA DURING FIRST HALF OF FIFTH CENTURY

Beyond the few facts and incidents recorded above nothing seems to be ascertainable concerning the history of the Mount of Nitria and Cellia in this period. Cyril’s manifesto,\(^1\) addressed to the “Priests, Deacons and Father Monks” of his province after the usual conference of the ecclesiastical chiefs held at Alexandria\(^2\) shows that Nestorian propagandists were busy in Egypt before 431; but whether they obtained any following in the desert of Nitria, it is impossible to say.\(^3\)

From this scarcity of information we cannot but infer that the former settlement at any rate had passed its zenith and was beginning to decline. Possibly the number of monks at the Mount of Nitria had seriously fallen in the earlier part of the fifth century owing to the growth of monastic centers elsewhere. Scetis, we know, was populated at the expense of the Mount of Pernoudj\(^4\); and the development of monasteries in Egypt generally and in the neighborhood of Alexandria\(^6\)—as at Pempton, Enaton, Oktokaidekaton\(^8\)—undoubtedly had the same effect. Thus at this period the Mount of Nitria would seem to have been losing the exclusive position which its early foundation and the fame of its earlier inhabitants had secured for it. At any rate from now onwards nothing like a continuous history of these settlements is possible. All that we can recover is a handful of brief and isolated notices which assure us of their existence down to the sixth century at least.

---

1 *Epist.*, I (P.G., LXXVII, col. 9 f.).
2 Id., col. 9, ἀφίκοντο μὲν τινὲς κατὰ τὸ εἰσόδον εἰς Ἀλεξάνδρεια τῶν σειρῶν ὑμῶν. On this annual conference held at Easter tide, see p. 179.
3 This is subject to correction. Monophysites and Melkites at Nitria and Cellia called each other Nestorians (see p. 233), but this does not show that actual Nestorianism was rife there.
4 See p. 66.
5 See Besse, *Les Moines d’orient*, p. 9. Palladius, *Hist. Laus.*, ch. vii, speaks of the monks in the neighborhood of Alexandria as numbering about 2,000 at about 390. This figure must have largely increased by the end of the century.
6 I.e., at five, nine, and eighteen (miles) from the city: on these see Cauwenbergh, *Étude sur les moines d’Égypte*, pp. 64 f.
CHAPTER X

SCETIS IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE FIFTH CENTURY

1. General Situation at the Beginning of the Century

At the opening of the new century Scetis was evidently in a flourishing condition. We do not indeed know how many monks were then settled in the valley, but it is an established fact that they were sufficiently numerous to form four congregations or communities, each governed or guided by its priest-superior.¹ It is probable too that the storm of controversy concerning Origen's works which had burst with such dire results over the Mount of Nitria and Cellia had not seriously disturbed the calm of Scetis. There, as we have seen,² Paphnutius and the community which he governed stood apart from the monks of the other three communities on the question of Anthropomorphism, but we hear nothing about any such study of Origen's works as had brought disaster upon the neighboring monastic settlements.³ Above all, Theophilus had no grudge against the sons of Macarius such as that which led him to compass the ruin of the Tall Brothers.

Paphnutius, as we have seen,⁴ succeeded Macarius as "Father," but as he was over ninety years of age when Cassian was in Scetis about 399, he cannot much longer have held that office. His death may be presumed to have occurred very early in the fifth century.⁵ He was succeeded by John the Little, if we may attach any weight to his description by Coptic writers as Hegumen of Shiêt.⁶

¹ See p. 180.
² See p. 133.
³ It was quite possible to reject Anthropomorphism and at the same time to condemn any and every other tenet held by Origen. Neither Cassian nor any other writer gives any hint that the more distinctive views of Origen were current in Scetis.
⁴ See p. 120.
⁵ Abū Sālih, Churches and Monasteries of Egypt, fol. 65 b, states that Paphnutius, disciple of Macarius the Great in Wādī Habib, retired to the Monastery of Esh Shema' and died there. This might suggest (in contradiction to the view expressed above) that there was some disturbance in Scetis in connection with Anthropomorphism, and that Paphnutius was driven out or retired.
⁶ προσώπαν ἀπ' ὧν ἔμπνευ (A.M.G., xxv, p. 316). Whether the same may be inferred from Ἀποφθέγματα Πατρ., John Colobos, xxxvi ("who is John that through his humility he has hung all Scetis upon his little finger") is doubtful.
SCETIS IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE FIFTH CENTURY

The peaceful development of Scetis was destined to be rudely interrupted by a succession of barbarian invasions occurring at intervals during the half century with which we are dealing.

2. The Barbarian Raiders

The invaders are ordinarily called “barbarians” (βαρβάροι), a term which is merely transcribed by Coptic and Arabic writers. But at least once in the Apophthegmata patrum and elsewhere they are distinguished as Mazices (Μάζικες). There was a well-known tribe of this name in Mauretania Caesariensis which took part in the revolt of Firmus but submitted to Theodosius in 373 A.D. Claudian describes them as Moors. But these Mazices can hardly be identical with the Mazices of writers on Egyptian affairs. They were too remote to have harassed the western border of Egypt.

The evidence of authorities of this latter class may be collected here. Palladius speaks of the Mazices as being to the southwest of the Mount of Nitria; and Cassian refers to them as haunthing the desert, dwelling particularly upon their ferocity and love of bloodshed for its own sake. Their homes were somewhat remote; for “Sarapion” in the Life of Macarius describes them as dwelling in the distant “mountain” (desert), but advancing gradually to the west side of the river and making prisoners of all upon whom they could lay hands. Other documents locate them generally in the west. Thus in the Coptic version of the apophthegm concerning Anub lately referred to, the name “Mazices” is replaced by “Barbarians in the west” (βαρβάροι και μεσάν), and the Ethiopic Life of Samuel describes the saint as being captured by “the rustics (i.e., barbarians) of the west.” Philostorius associates them with the Auxoriani and vouchsafes that they “dwell between Libya and the Africans”: from this vague seat “they desolated Libya on their eastern side and also ruined no small part of Egypt” in the fifth century.

Further references are rather more helpful. In one of the Apophthegmata patrum we hear of a certain Bishop of Oxyrhynchus who went exploring into the “inner desert which is near Oasis...where is the race of the Mazices.” Palladius again mentions the banishment of Demetrius “deep into Oasis which is near by the Mazices—for there are also

1 ἕπαθροκας.
2 (See Hist. Patr., p. 226.)
3 Anub, 1.
5 In the lemma to the Morgan ms. of the Life of Abba Samuel the devastators of Scetis are called μακτίροι: in a Coptic ode on Abba Samuel (my New Texts, p. 140, and n. 2) the country of the “barbarians” (probably Siweh) is called τυρσώπα τιμίας. If τιμίας is there a blunder for τιμίας, the true Coptic name for this people may, as W. E. Crum suggests, be τιμίας.
6 Ptolemy, Geographia, ed. Müller, iv, 2, 5: Müller in a note ad loc. places them to the south of the modern Orleansville.
7 De Cons. Stilich., 1, 356.
8 Hist. Laus., ch. vii; cf. p. 22.
9 Coll., ii, 6, 2.
10 A. M. G., xxv, p. 56.
11 See Zoë, Cat., p. 352.
12 Pereira, Vida do Abba Samuel, p. 150, and ib., note 3. Pereira, op. cit., pp. 56 ff., unnecessarily distinguishes between these and the “rustics” who made Samuel prisoner for the second time.
13 H. E., x, 8 (P. G., lxv, col. 604).
14 R.O.C., x, p. 412 (Latin in Rosweyd, Vitae patrum, p. 655). The oasis here mentioned might well be the Oasis of Behnese.
other Oases.”  These passages strongly suggest that the Mazices were in the vicinity of Khârgeh or Dâkhleh Oasis. And such a conclusion is well-nigh confirmed by the narrative of Nestorius who relates that when he was banished to the “Oasis which is also called Habis” (i.e., to Khârgeh) and was taken captive by the Blemmyes, these people released him with the other exiles, advising him to escape with all speed, since the Mazices would occupy the place as soon as they were departed. Again, when John Moschus visited the oasis (probably Khârgeh) he was told an anecdote of a devoted monk named Leo, which occurred when the Mazices “came to the Oasis and killed many of the monks and made many prisoners.”

Probably we should identify as Mazices the people called Mastikos (μαστικοὶ) in the Life of Manasseb, and the Marikos against whom an expedition was sent in the days of the Emperor Maurice. Some centuries later than the period with which we are dealing, we find that the barbarians (called Arabs) who so dismayed the pilgrims to Wâdî Habib (Scetis) in the time of Shenûdeh I, are described as “coming down (regularly) from Upper Egypt to the Delta, after (?) putting their horses and camels out to grass.” These raiders may well have been the descendants of the fifth-century Mazices.

On the other hand, the Mazices have been located in or near the Oasis of Siweh. Amélineau bases this view largely on the statement that it took Abba Samuel sixteen days to return from his place of captivity to the Fayyûm—a length of time sufficient for a journey between the two places. Other evidence suggests that the sixth-century raiders of Scetis at any rate came from due west rather than from the southwest, since the captives taken at that time were sold as slaves in Pentapolis and the coastwise regions of northeastern Africa. Abba Daniel, for example, was ransomed by a benevolent shipmaster, and so must have been sold in some coastal town or village. Marcellus of Apamea, again, told John Moschus that when the barbarians sacked Scetis (about 580), he was sold as a slave into Pentapolis. It might be supposed that these raiders at any rate were the Libyan shepherds who visited Scetis annually, and may have fallen foul of the monks. Finally Ptolemy mentions a people named Mæstitai (Μαστιται) in close proximity to the “region of Sciathis”; and these might be regarded as identical with the Mazices.

1 Dial. de vita Job. Chrys., § XX (P.G., XLVII, 1, 1, col. 71).
2 Khârgeh was a notorious place of banishment in ancient times, and in recent years has been used as a penal colony.
3 In Evagrius Scholasticus, H.E., 1, 7.
4 Pratum spirituale, C.XII.
5 Ed. Amélineau, Mem. miss. arch. franc. au Caire, 1v, p. 678. It is there stated that these people used to sell their captives “to the cannibals who used to sacrifice and eat them; for their country was near that country.” In the lemma to the Morgan Life of Maximus and Domitius, the devastators of Scetis are in fact called Mastiki.
7 See pp. 323 f.
8 Hist. Patr., B.N., Fonds arabe, No. 302, p. 32.
10 Clugnet, Vie de l’Abbe Daniel, pp. vi (and note 1) and 27.
11 Pratum spirituale, C.XII.
12 See A.M.G., xxv, p. 236: “the sheep of the Libyans are brought once every year into the marsh of Shët to eat the sboushet, and the herdsmen also who are in the villages in the direction of Pernoud bring their oxen into the marsh of Shët to eat the green grass once a year.”
13 Geographia, iv, 5, 12.
SCETIS IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE FIFTH CENTURY

The apparent conflict in our evidence is, however, not real. “Mazices” is believed to be a Hellenized form of the Berber ‘Imâzighin (يبازورن) —now a name for a section of the Lewâteh Berbers; and if we agree with Oric Bates that “Mazices” for the ancients had an ethnic rather than a tribal significance, we may conclude that these people were the inhabitants of the hinterland of the Western Desert, and that in the fourth or fifth century the “Mazices” meant much what the “Senûssi” mean in the twentieth century. We need not therefore be surprised to find “Mazices” busy both in the region of Khârgeh to the south of Scetis and in the north. 3

At all times the people of this remote region have borne the same character. So soon as failure of their own resources impels them, or governmental embarrassment or weakness allows them an opportunity, they descend upon Egypt using the various oases as stepping-stones across the desert. 4 So it was in the times with which we are dealing; so too in the days of Mohammed ‘Ali, when an English traveller records that the “Bedawins of the west” were unusually audacious—one of their exploits being the theft of three hundred camels from the Wâdi ‘n Natrûn; and so, too, in late years the embarrassments raised by the European War invited the Senûssi attack on Egypt in 1915 by way of the coast and the Wâdi ‘n Natrûn on the north, and the Oases of Dâkhle and Khârgeh on the south.

3. The Number of Raids

Scetis was thrice devastated during the first half of the fifth century. This may perhaps be inferred from the following apophthegm: “They used to say concerning a certain great old man in Scetis that whenever the brethren were building cells in Scetis, he used to go out and lay the foundation. Once, however, when he went forth to build, he was exceeding sad and very sorry. And he said unto them: ‘My sons, this place shall be laid waste. For I have seen a fire kindled in Scetis and have seen that the brethren took palm branches and beat upon it until they extinguished it; and it broke out again, and the brethren extinguished it. But it broke out the third time and filled all Scetis, and the brethren were never again able to extinguish it.’” 7

In the Coptic Virtues of Macarius we find the saint foretelling two destructions of Scetis in the following terms: “And it shall be so until the first destruction of Shiêt after

---

1 See Basset, *Le Dialecte de Syouah* (i.e., Siweh), p. 6; and Pereira, *Vida do Abba Samuel*, p. 57.
3 It is probable (see p. 164) that the third sack of Scetis and the flight of Nestorius from Khârgeh for fear of the Mazices were simultaneously occurring in 444.
4 Thus if the Mazices advanced to the first sack of Scetis via the southerly Oases of Farâfrah and Bahryeh, we can understand how the monks escaped from Scetis (Wâdi ‘n Natrûn) by the northeastern track to Terenuthis—a point which has puzzled Abbot Butler (*L.H.*, II, p. 189).
5 See Bayle St. John, *Adventures in the Libyan Desert*, p. 19. The author (who travelled in 1847) remarks further on that the unrest in which he found the local Bedawi tribe (Aulad ‘Ali) was due to “hostile inroads from a fiercer and more independent tribe on the west” (p. 45).
7 The wording of the conclusion, however, rather suggests that the “fire” was either heresy or misconduct on the part of the monks which was to be punished by the destruction of Scetis.
8 *A.M.G.*, xxv, pp. 135 ff.
forty years, because they shall have fulfilled their passions. Again, Christ the King shall have pity on them, and he will cause them to return again (and) will give them these laws and commandments. And they obeyed (sic) and performed the half of the commandments. And that shall be until the second destruction of Shiët, because of the greatness of their luxury. And again Christ the King...shall cause them to return..."

But independently of these allusions we know that the first sack of Scetis occurred in the first decade of the fifth century, the second forty years after the arrival of Arsenius, and the third ten years later. We have to deal therefore with three separate inroads.

4. The First Sack of Scetis

The first destruction of Scetis was foretold by two of the great fathers of Scetis. "Abba Macarius used to say to the brethren concerning the desolation of Scetis: ‘When ye see a cell built near the marsh, know that her desolation is nigh; when ye see trees, it is at the doors; but when ye see boys, take up your melotes and depart!’"

Moses the Robber, who was to be the first martyr of Scetis, also foresaw that the shortcomings of the monks would be punished by barbarian invasion: “Abba Moses used to say in Scetis: ‘If we keep the commandments of our Fathers, I assure you by God that the barbarians will not come here; but if we keep them not, this place shall be laid waste.’”

The date of the first raid thus prophesied is usually given as 395. Tillemont considers that Moses the Robber, who fell a victim to the barbarians, died between 391–392 and 400, and elsewhere definitely decides for 395. In this he is followed by the Bollandist editors, and quite recently by Nau. But so early a date is impossible. Palladius, who lived at Cellia down to 399, has no allusion to it; Cassian, who was actually in Scetis in 399 and a member of one of the four “congregations” there, never mentions it. Can we believe that the four churches had risen from their ashes in four years or less, and that the devastation which so impressed Abba Isaac of Cellia left Cassian unaffected? Finally, the voluminous literature of the Origenist controversy contains no hint of any raid save that of Theophilus upon the Mount of Nitria and Cellia, nor does the Historia monachorum.

On the other hand, there is good reason for accepting 407 or 408 as the date of the first

---

1 Unfortunately we have no clue to the date from which this period is to be reckoned.

3 The degeneracy of Scetis is to be progressive. First, the monks will settle in the less arid part of the valley. Secondly, they will indulge in such amenities as gardens and orchards. [This is the explanation given in the Life of Lazarus of Mt. Galea, § 216 (Acta SS., Nov. 111, p. 574 B), and is no doubt correct.] Thirdly, they will fall into more serious transgression.

4 Cf. Apophth. Patr., Isaac the Priest, v: “Nolite huc pueros adducere. In Sceti enim quattuor ecclesiae propter pueros ad solitudinem sunt redactae.” It is clear that there were instances of immorality in Scetis and that one such led directly to the destruction of Scetis. Such moral dangers

---

...were formidable in the monasteries: A.M.G., xxv, p. 187; Apophth. Patr., John Colobos, iv; Kario, ii; Eudaemon; Cyril of Scytopolis, Life of Our Holy Father Sabas, xxix.

5 Apophth. Patr., Moses, ix.
6 Mémoires, x, 76, 728. 7 Id., xiv.
8 See Acta SS., July iv, p. 610.
9 Hist. de Jean le Petit, p. 37, note 3.
10 Possibly he had then been there for some two or three years.

11 Against these considerations the statement in the lemma to the Morgan Life of Maximus and Domitius that Isidorus took the original copy of Pshol’s work with him to Alexandria “when Shët was devastated by the Mastiki” is of no value—Isidorus seems to have died in the desert where he was succeeded by Paphnutius.
destruction of Scetis. In November (?), 409, Saint Augustine\(^1\) writes: “For a little while ago even in those solitary parts of Egypt which they had chosen as a secure place in which to build their Monasteries, remote from all disturbance, the brethren were slain by the barbarians.” A raid involving the death of certain monks in Egypt took place, therefore, shortly before 409. Again, according to Philostorgius\(^2\) “the Mazices and Auxorians... wasted Libya and no inconsiderable part of Egypt” in the reign of Arcadius—that is, not later than May first, 408. Now only one instance of the slaughter of monks in Egypt by Mazices at this general period is on record—that of Moses the Robber and his companions in Scetis. The event is commemorated by the Coptic Church on June eighteenth\(^3\); and if this rests upon sound tradition, the year in which it occurred was probably 407 rather than 408.

Before we proceed further, some account may be given of Abba Moses. Palladius\(^4\) informs us that he was an Ethiopian (hence his nickname “the Black”), and had been a slave, but was cast off by his master for unruly conduct and robbery. Some even said that he was guilty of murder.\(^5\) His strength and courage were such that he became the leader of a band of robbers; and the story is told that he swam the Nile with his sword in his teeth to kill a shepherd against whom he bore a grudge. In consequence of some trance or vision he became a monk comparatively late in life. His repentance coupled with his earlier reputation, soon made him famous; and his strength as shown on occasions maintained the general interest with which he was regarded.\(^6\) We hear that when attacked by four robbers at once, he mastered them all and carried them to the “Church of the brethren” for punishment. Temptations, however, grievously assailed him, and these were only with difficulty overcome. Thus at one time he used to spend the nights visiting the cells of the anchorites, who dwelt at distances of from two to five miles from the water, and replenishing their water jars. But such toils broke down his strength (Palladius affirms that he was knocked down by a demon with a club), and he was found half-dead beside the well. For a year he lay sick at the church over which Isidorus the Priest presided, and was comforted by the old man who appears to have been his spiritual adviser.\(^7\) After this breakdown, it was found that his temptations were at an end.

The remainder of his life is cursorily summed up by Palladius in the statements that he was accounted one of the great fathers of Scetis, that he became a priest, and died\(^8\) at the age of seventy-five, leaving seventy disciples.

---

1 *Epit.*, 21 (P.L., xxxiii, col. 422).
2 *H.E.*, xi, 8.
4 *Hist. Laus.*, ch. xix.
5 The Moses of Palladius is certainly identical with the Moses of Cassian, *Coll.* iii, 5, 2, who lived “in that part of the desert called Calamus and who, through fear of death on account of a homicide he had committed, fled and became a monk.” In *Coll.*, vii, 26, 2, he is again mentioned as living at Calamus which is there described as situated in this wilderness (i.e., Scetis).
6 Arsenius and Moses were the two personages in Scetis who attracted most attention (see *Apophðb. Patr.*, Arsenius, xxxvii; Moses, viii).
8 Palladius says nothing as to the manner of Moses’ death, and we must assume that in his exile at Syene he had not heard the full story.
This conclusion can be somewhat amplified. It was probably after his sickness above described that he retired on the advice of Macarius to Petra.1 How long he remained there is unknown, but he may have quitted this retreat when he became a priest. His ordination is recorded not only by Palladius but also in the *Apopthegmata patrum*, where the following curious anecdote is told: "They used to say concerning Abba Moses that he became a priest, and they put on him the *epomis*. And the Archbishop [Theophilus] said to him: 'Behold, thou art become altogether white, Abba Moses!' But the old man said to him: 'Outwardly, holy Father, or inwardly also?' And the Archbishop, wishing to prove him, said to the clergy: 'When Abba Moses comes to the sanctuary, drive him out and follow him to hear what he says.' So when the old man entered in, they rebuked him and drove him out, saying: 'Get thee gone, thou Ethiopian!' Then he went forth and said to himself: 'They dealt rightly with thee, thou sooty-skinned black man! Thou art not a man; why then dost thou come in among men?'

The same spirit of humility is shown in another anecdote,2 which relates that when the monastic council met to sit in judgment upon an erring monk, Moses at first refused to attend. But when pressed to do so, he entered carrying a broken basket full of sand which ran out from the burst seams. Asked what this signified, he replied: "My sins run down behind me and I do not see them; and I am come to-day to judge another's transgressions." Very similar in thought is the following: "Unless a man keep in mind that he is a sinner, God doth not hearken to him." And the brother said: 'What is it to keep in one's mind that one is a sinner?' And the old man said: 'If a man bears his own sins, he does not behold those of his neighbor.'" Not less was his fear of vainglory.3 Hearing that a certain governor was coming to see him, he left his cell and happened to meet his visitor as he was making his escape to the marsh of Scetis. Being asked where was the cell of Abba Moses, he replied: "What would you with him? He is crazed!" The stranger went on to the church and repeated the statement to the clergy there, only to learn that his informant was Abba Moses himself. From the same anecdote we glean a slight description of the ex-robber, "an old man, wearing old clothes, tall and black"; that he was strong and vigorous is obvious from the notice of him given by Palladius.

We now come to the death of Moses as recorded in the *Apopthegmata patrum*.4 "Once when the brethren were sitting with him, he said to them: 'Lo, to-day the barbarians are coming to Scetis; but rise ye up and flee.' They say unto him: 'Dost thou, then, not flee, Abba?' But he said unto them: 'All these years have I been looking for this day, that the saying of the Lord Christ might be fulfilled: "All they that take the sword shall perish

---

1 *Apopth*. Patr., Macarius, xxii; Moses, xiii.
2 Id., Moses, iv.
3 Id., ii.
4 Id., xvi.
5 Id., viii.
6 Moses, x; cf. Synax. (Eth.), Sanê 24 (P.O., i, pp. 665 f.), which also informs us that the body of Moses "rests unto this day in the Monastery of Barmos (sc. Baramūs)."
SCETIS IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE FIFTH CENTURY

with the sword.” 1 They say unto him: ‘Neither do we flee, but die with thee.’ And he said unto them: ‘I have no concern (in the matter): let each one think well how he takes his seat.’ Now there were seven brethren (who remained); and he saith unto them: ‘Lo, the barbarians draw nigh the door.’ And (the barbarians) entered in and slew them. But one of them (sc. the monks) escaped behind the palm-leaves; and he saw seven crowns coming down and crowning them.”

The whole of Scetis, with the possible exception of some outlying parts, was sacked. For the reference to παῦδια as a sign of the imminent destruction of Scetis in the prophecy of Macarius quoted above connects with this raid the saying of Isaac of Cellia: “Do not bring παῦδια hither; for four churches in Scetis are become desolate because of them.” The four communities of Scetis, then, were dispersed for the time being, and the churches and cells belonging to them destroyed.

The material damage was the least serious. Many of the best-known monks so despaired of the situation, that they abandoned all hope of return to Scetis and settled elsewhere. Of Theodore of Phirme we hear that “when Scetis was desolated, he came to dwell in Phirme.” 5 The famous Poemen and Anub with their brothers, who were monks in Scetis, “retired thence, when the Mazices came and sacked it the first time, and came to a place called Terenuthis (the modern Terrâneh, or Tarûnut).” 6 Others wandered yet further afield. Peter the Iberian 7 tells us: “I remember that when I was still young and was recently come from the Royal Palace, I came to this mountain (Pisgah, beyond the Jordan). And since I heard that one of the great monks of Scetis dwelt there in peace, who had come forth from Scetis with all the monks of that place when a horde of Mazices had fallen upon the Monasteries there, I besought, etc. . . . But this cell, which you see, is that in which that holy man had dwelt for forty years 8 without going out of the door. . . . (He was) an ascetic, and prophet, and full of godly grace.”

But the most eminent among these fugitives were the founders of the two most recent of the “Four Monasteries”—John the Little and Abba Bishoi.

“Many days”—we are told 11—after John’s return to Scetis from the search for the bodies of the Three Children, 12 “the barbarians had mastery over Shiêt with hateful and oppressive

1 Matt. xxvi: 52. The end of Moses is said to have been foretold by Macarius in the presence of Pambo, Cronius, Evagrius, and Moses himself, reference being made to this same passage (A.M.G., xxv, p. 187).
2 παῦδια, i.e., a pile of palm leaves plaited into strips (see p. 199), or perhaps here merely a pile of raw material for basket making.
3 Arsenius is said to have dwelt for 40 years in Scetis (394–434): if this is strictly accurate, he must have remained there during the raid of 407 and have been overlooked by the barbarians. But it is possible, if not probable, that he retired for a few weeks or months. (On all this see pp. 160 and 162.)
4 Aposph. Patr., Isaac the Priest, v.
5 Id., Theodore of Phirme, xxvi.
6 Id., Anub, i.
7 See Raabe, Petrus der Iberer, p. 83.
8 Peter, son of the King of the Iberians, was brought up as a hostage at the court of Theodosius II, which he quitted on reaching manhood.
9 The Symm., ed. Basset, Kth 1, p. 292, distinctly suggests that this was Isaiah of Scetis, the well-known ascetic writer, and this is borne out by the association of Isaiah with Peter the Iberian in the Pierophoriae of John Rufus, §§ xi, xxvii, lvv (ed. New, P.O., viii, p. 1).
10 The date of Peter’s visit, then, was about 447–448.
11 A.M.G., xxv, pp. 390 f.
12 See p. 111.
The flight of John the Little

THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES
deeds upsetting the settled and orderly life of our Fathers...pursuing them, and ruining the holy places (nironia). But our Father the holy Abba John considered the saying of Christ.¹ And with that our Father Abba John prepared to abandon the place, to go to Clyisma.² But when he was about to go forth from the place..., all the brethren surrounded him in tears, saying to him: ‘Our Father, wilt thou also go away? Dost thou fear before the barbarians?’” John denied the latter suggestion, ingeniously explaining that if he stayed in Scetis, some barbarian would doubtless slay him and be doomed to hell for so doing; to save a human being from such a calamity it was necessary for him to flee. “And with this,” the narrative continues, “he left Shièt, as did the rest of our inspired Fathers; and Christ guided him to the mount of the great Antony in the interior of Clyisma. And he dwelt upon a rock up above a river in a cave which he made for himself with stones after the fashion of that in which he had dwelt at Shièt.”

John does not appear to have lived for long after his retirement from Scetis, the only considerable incident in this part of his career being the conversion of a rich and tyrannical pagan. Antony, Macarius, and his own master Amoi appeared to him shortly before his end to assure him of his salvation in the next world. At the actual hour of his death, which occurred on Sunday, Paophi twentieth (October seventeenth), he was alone, having purposely sent away his attendant on some errand. He was then seventy years of age.³

Nau has pointed out that the seventeenth of October actually occurred on a Sunday in 398 and 409⁴; and as we have seen reason to accept 407 as the date of the first sack of Scetis, we may conclude that John died in 409 after some two years spent in the desert of Clyisma. Consequently his birth may be dated 339–340, and the beginning of his monastic life (since he retired from the world at the age of eighteen)⁵ at 356–357.

Bishoi is closely associated with John in the flight from Scetis, which is thus described in the Arabic version of the Life of Bishoi⁶: “After this, the barbarians began to invade the deserts and to kill the holy seniors. Therefore I, the mean one John, also sat down once with the saint Abba Bishiyeh, and said to him: ‘My dear brother...behold, the barbarians have devastated the deserts and slain our fathers. So I desire to quit this mountain (gebel), lest a barbarian come and kill me, and go to hell because of me.’ When I said this to him, he answered: ‘If thou desirest to depart, I also will come with thee.’ For this cause we both arose and stayed at Misr. Then I departed to El Kulzem (Clyisma), and thence to the monastery of the great one, Abba Antony.... But the pious saint Abba Bishiyeh went away to the regions of Upper Egypt and retired to the city of Ansina (Antinoë), and dwelt on that mountain, practising austerities and exercising great influence.”

---

¹ Matt. x: 23.
² In the neighborhood of Suez.
³ A.M.G., xxv, pp. 400 f.
⁴ Hist. de Jean le Petit, p. 37, note 3. (But Nau adopts 395 as the date of the sack of Scetis and 398 as that of John’s death; the fatal objections to this are stated above. ⁵ See p. 107.
⁶ B.N., Fonds arabe, No. 4796, fol. 153a−b. (The Greek version has no reference to the barbarian invasion, nor to the retreat to Antinoë.)
The remainder of Bishōi’s life is an amorphous mass of marvels and incidents of little directly historical value. To this period of his life belong his alleged washing of Christ’s feet,1 and the beginning of his close association with Abba Paul of Tamweh. The Synaxarium2 assures us on the authority of Ezekiel, a disciple of Paul, that this personage out of excessive devotion committed suicide seven times, being brought to life by divine intervention after each attempt. When Bishōi came to Antinoë the two dwelt together,3 and God assured Paul that in death he should not be divided from his companion. The repute of the two was so great that a certain Abba Athanasius of Antinoë used to visit them to seek their blessing and receive their counsel. They in turn declared to their visitor: “Thou shalt have a monastery given thee by God; and it shall be named after thee.”4

But the last days of Bishōi were now approaching. His mortifications and austerities had enfeebled his body, and “he went to his rest on the eighth day of the month Abib (July second). And the Lord received his holy soul; and he was met by the angels and saints, rejoicing with him until they carried him into Heaven with glory and honor. And the brethren enshrouded his holy body and buried him in that fortress—I mean the fortress known as Munyat es Sakar.”5

The story of Bishōi does not end with his death. Paul his companion died on Babeh seventh (October fourth) and was buried. But the Athanasius above mentioned, hearing that the two saints were dead, went up by boat to Munyat es Sakar “in order to bring the body of our father Abba Bishiyeh to Ansina to lay it in the monastery which he had formerly built. And when he reached the place where the body of our father Paul was, the boat stopped in the middle of the river, and so they remained two days without progressing... Now there was an old monk... whose name was Armenius, which is the same as Jeremias.”6 He was dwelling in that place on a rock; and he came to the boat and said to the men: ‘Why does the boat not move?’ They answered: ‘We know not, our Father.’ He said to them: ‘It is because of the body of Abba Paul... For he had made an agreement with the saint Abba Bishiyeh during his life that they should be together while they lived in this world, and after their death their bodies should not be separated the one from the other.’ So when Athanasius heard these words from Jeremias, he... fetched the saint Abba Paul. And they lifted him up from the place where he was laid, and carried him on board the boat by force. Then the boat moved forward... until they arrived at Ansina.

1 ms. cit., fol. 153b.
2 Ed. Basset, P.O., 1, pp. 321 f.
3 lb.; and ms. cit., fol. 163a.
4 ms. cit., fol. 163b. This Monastery of Athanasius was perhaps that seen by Wansleben three hours south of Asīūt. It is described as “one of the most woful Monasteries in Egypt” (Wansleben, Present State of Egypt, p. 227; cf. also p. 61 of the same edition).
5 ms. cit., fol. 165b. The place is unidentified, but was clearly not remote from Antinoë.
6 Apparently a local celebrity. In the Greek version (Pomijalowski, Zetia Paesia Velkago, p. 60) he is called Jeremias without alternative. He can hardly be the Apa Jeremias of Sakkārėh, unless he subsequently migrated northwards to the region of Memphis.
Then he carried the two bodies to his monastery, and...commanded that (they) should be placed in a new shrine....And their bodies gave healing to all the sick down to our own day, as I have learnt from trustworthy persons...who came to the city of Ansina, to the Monastery of Abba Shenûdeh.”

We may leave Bishôî to rest undisturbed for some centuries at Antinoë, and turn to examine his chronology. The saint’s biographer offers us little encouragement. He records a saying of his hero: “The days that I have passed in the desert of Shihêt are equal to those that I passed in Upper Egypt while I was with the fathers, visiting them from time to time and asking their advice.” He adds: “Therefore if a man-wishes to know concerning the years that he (Bishôî) passed in the desert, he cannot know them, because he would not inform us of them”; but in the same breath he relents and vouchsafes that he has heard from “truthful people” that the sojourn in Shihêt extended over sixty years—presumably broken by visits to Upper Egypt. At the conclusion of the notice of Bishôî in the Ethiopian Synaxarium, a more adequate, though unfortunately a corrupt, chronological statement is given. According to this Bishôî dwelt for twenty-seven years in Shihêt, for ten years at Antinoë, and for twenty years “in the world,” but his total age was ninety-seven years. Apparently it is the initial figure which is wrong, and for twenty-seven we should read sixty-seven years in Shihêt. If this correction may be provisionally accepted, Bishôî would have been born in 320, have retired to Scetis at the age of twenty in 340, and have left that place for the region of Antinoë in 407, where he died in 417. The fact that this scheme makes him considerably senior to John the Little (whereas the Life distinctly represents him as slightly junior to that father), may or may not be a serious objection. An absolute chronology for either saint is most uncertain; we can only feel confident that they flourished in the latter half of the fourth century, and died in the earlier decades of the fifth.

What became of Arsenius during the incursion of 407 is not altogether clear. In a chronological notice of his life by his disciple Daniel we are told that he lived for forty years in Scetis—the context rather implying that this period was unbroken. This brings us down to 434, the date of the second devastation of Scetis; and we might infer that Arsenius did not leave Scetis in 407, the remoteness of his cell securing him from molestation until the barbarians had retired. But there is at least one anecdote concerning him which, as it stands, implies that he, like the rest of the fathers, bowed before the storm

1 B.N., Fonds arabe, No. 4796, fol. 166 f. In the Greek version (Zeta Patrisia Velkeago, ed. Pomijalowski, ch. lxxix, p. 59) the same miraculous story is told, but it is “our father Isidorus” who secures the bodies which he carries away to Pisidia.
2 Ms. cit., fol. 164b. The meaning appears to be that the time spent in visits to Upper Egypt with the residence at Antinoë together equal the years actually passed in Scetis.
3 Ms. cit., fol. 166a.
4 Ed. Guidi (P.O., VII, pp. 275 f.).
5 Since Bishôî is described as dying at an advanced age, and since the “truthful persons” quoted in the Arabic credited him with sixty years in Shihêt. But there are of course other possibilities.
6 Ἀποστίθι, Patr., Arsenius, XLII.
and fled. This is a circumstantial story of a visit paid to him by a Roman lady of senatorial rank under the auspices of Theophilus. He was then dwelling at Canopus. As Theophilus died in 412, we must admit that Arsenius had left Scetis somewhat before that date, with the qualification that his absence was so short (perhaps a matter of weeks or months at most) that this absence was not regarded by Daniel as a real break in the continuity of his life in Scetis. It is reasonable to associate this residence at Canopus with the events of 407, and to conclude that Arsenius took refuge temporarily at Canopus just as Poemen and Anub at Terenuthis, or John the Little at Clyisma. And one of the Greek Lives, be it noted, states that when all the fathers were fled from Scetis, he remained for a time, observing: “If God careth not for me, wherefore do I live?” But when he had passed through the midst of the barbarians unseen by them, he said: “Lo God cared for me and I was not slain: do then thy part as a man, and flee like the Fathers.”

5. The Recovery of Scetis

Complete as the devastation of Scetis was, the place was not abandoned. The prophecy of Macarius quoted above speaks of the return of the fathers, of whom Arsenius may be but an isolated example. Others may have remained in hiding in the desert itself. But the fact that Scetis was sacked again in 434 is sufficient to show that restoration was effected.

We should have signal proof of the completeness of this restoration, could we feel confident of the legend linking the name of Shenûdeh the Great with Scetis. This story asserts that “Cyril the Wise” invited “the holy Apa Shenoute” to the council which met at Ephesus (431 A.D.) “concerning the impious worshipper of men, Nestorius.” After the council, Shenûdeh had the misfortune to lose his boat, and was miraculously transported to Egypt upon a cloud. And “when the cloud passed over the holy topos of our righteous Father, the great Abba Makari of Shiêt... the aged archimandrite Apa Shenoute wondered within himself, saying: ‘When my Lord Jesus Christ shall set me down at my Monastery, I will come to this place to see the work thereof, and those who are therein, to know of what manner they are.’ And it befell that when he had embraced the brethren of his Monastery, he took with him certain other old men, he came to Shiêt to the holy topos of Abba Makari; and the Hegumen of that time received him with joy.”

---

1 *Apophth. Patr.*, Arsenius, xxviii.
3 If the text is sound. But the names of patriarchs in the *Apophthegmata* are often of very doubtful authority.
5 The famous ascetic Pijimi, for example, lived for a time in Scetis; and we know that he was contemporary with Shenûdeh the Great: see *Synax.*, Khk11, ed. Basset, pp. 347 f.; and my *New Texts*, pp. 157, 162.
6 *A.M.G.*, xxv, pp. 149 f.
7 For this cf. *Synax.* (Eth.), Hamlë 7 (*P.O.*, vii, p. 265).
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

Shenûdeh, however, appears to have entertained disparaging thoughts of the monks of Scetis. The hegumen of Scetis was aware of this, thanks to a divine revelation, and therefore led his guest into the kitchen. It being a feast day, there was a pot boiling upon the fire; and the hegumen bade the brother, who was over the kitchen, plunge his hand into the cauldron and draw out the meat. The cook did so, and suffered no hurt—a marvel which so impressed Shenûdeh that he returned to his monastery, "giving glory to Our Lord... and his servant Abba Makari the righteous."

At first sight, the whole episode may be dismissed as apocryphal, and the reference to the kitchen may be regarded as an anachronism significant of a late date.1 But it is by no means improbable that Shenûdeh visited Scetis at this period. That he went to Ephesus in 431 appears to be a fact;2 and when in Lower Egypt he may well have turned aside to visit the famous monastic center of which he must often have heard. For another document informs us that on at least one occasion certain "great and famous monks came from Shiët to hear his discourse."3 Shenûdeh would hardly have troubled to visit (if he indeed did visit) Scetis, had it not already regained something of its former greatness.

6. The Second Sack of Scetis and the Close of the Life of Arsenius

Daniel’s outline of Arsenius’ chronology4 has already been mentioned and may here be quoted in full. "He lived for ninety-five years. (Of these) he spent forty in the palace of Theodosius the Great of divine memory as tutor (παρήγος) of the most sacred Arcadius and Honorius; forty in Scetis; ten at Tröë which is above Babylon over against Memphis; and three years at Canopus of Alexandria. And he came again and spent two more years at Tröë, and there fell asleep having finished his course in peace and in the fear of God." It was in 434, then, that Arsenius finally left Scetis. Another apophtegm5 shows that he did so in consequence of a barbarian invasion, the date of which is consequently established. "They used to say of him (sc. Arsenius) that his cell was thirty-two miles distant.6 He used not lightly to go forth from it; for others ministered unto him. But when Scetis was desolated, he came forth weeping and said: ‘The world has ruined Rome and the monks Scetis.’"

The reference to the Sack of Rome (410 A.D.) shows that this anecdote is to be connected with the second destruction of Scetis and not with the first, which preceded the greater disaster. But beyond this date and the fact that Arsenius was forced to flee, nothing concerning this fresh inroad of the barbarians can be ascertained.7

---

1 At this period the monks dwelt in separate and scattered cells. Yet there must have been kitchens near the churches to prepare food for the community when it assembled weekly for the observance of the Sabbath and Sunday. See p. 188.
2 Cf. Besa, Life of Shenouti, ed. Amélèneau, pp. 67 f., 244 (Coptic), and 426 (Arabic). See also pseudo-Timothy’s discourse in P.G., lxxxvi, i, col. 271 f.
3 Zoëga, Cat., No. xxvi, p. 39.
4 Ἀποφθῆμ. Patr., Arsenius, xlvi.
5 1d., xxv.
6 ? from Cellia.
7 Unless Ἀποφθῆμ. Patr., Daniel, i (narrating Daniel’s passage through the midst of the barbarians) refers to this raid.
SCETIS IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE FIFTH CENTURY

Arsenius retired to Troë or Petra Troae (the modern Tura) to the south of Babylon (roughly "Old Cairo"), and east of Memphis. Only one incident of his life there is preserved. Towards the end of his stay in this place he was visited by "an uncle of Timothy, the former Archbishop of Alexandria, who was called the Poor: and he had with him one of his nephews." Arsenius was sick and would not receive these visitors, lest others also should come and disturb him. They returned, therefore, vexed, to Alexandria.

Not long after, "it chanced that an inroad of the barbarians took place." The raiders seem to have penetrated into the Nile valley itself; for Arsenius fled (444 A.D.) and dwelt in "the lower regions"—that is, at "Canopus of Alexandria," as stated by Daniel. Here his visitors succeeded in gaining an interview. Another account of his retreat to Canopus is given elsewhere. Arsenius was settled in "the lower regions" (here apparently meaning Troë), but owing to the disturbance to which he was subject he determined to leave his cell. Taking nothing with him, and leaving his disciples, Alexander and Zoilus, he sailed down to "the region of Alexandria" (i.e., to Canopus, as stated above). Here, as Daniel tells us, he spent three years; but at the end of that period he fell seriously ill, possibly owing to the climatic conditions of the coastal region. On his recovery he returned (447) to Troë, where his disciples had continued to reside.

The two remaining years of his life were spent at Troë with his disciples. When his end drew near, he bade them not trouble to make an agape on his behalf; his disciple Daniel (as well as Zoilus and Alexander) was then with him. Again, he solemnly adjured them not to hand over his body to any one to be prepared for burial. If they could not do for him the last offices, let them tie a rope to his foot and drag his corpse into the desert. As he lay dying, his disciples discovered him weeping, and asked in surprise if he feared death. He replied that since he became a monk this fear had been ever with him. Nevertheless his death, which took place in 449, was, according to Daniel, peaceful. He is commemorated by the Coptic Church on Bashans thirteenth (May eighth), but on July nineteenth by both the Greek and Roman Churches. His body was interred in the place where he died. Abū Sāliḥ in his notice on the Monastery of El Kuseir would have us believe that this monastery was built by Arcadius (who died, however, in 408) over the tomb of

---

1 Apophth. Patr., Arsenius, xxxiv.
2 This is very difficult, for Timothy died in 385 and can hardly have left an uncle who was alive about 440—the date of this episode. An easy remedy is to read "Θεοφίλου" instead of Θουλέων (the two are often confused); and this change has the support, whatever it is worth, of the Greek Life of Arsenius edited by Peretele. The qualification τοις λεγομενοι δειμουσοι would then be an interpolated gloss; and the Syriac of Anan Isho actually omits the phrase (Budge, Paradise of the Fathers, ii, p. 71); the same version, however, has the name Timothy and not Theophilus.
3 To be distinguished from his probable residence there in 407.
4 Apophth. Patr., Arsenius, xxxii.
5 Id., xxxix. The agape is here apparently an intercessory rite, perhaps including a Mass for the departed and a distribution of alms to the poor.
6 Id., xl.
7 Possibly it was embalment to which Arsenius objected.
8 Cf. Apophth. Patr., Theophilus the Archbishop, v (though this is anachronistic).
10 Churches and Monasteries of Egypt, ed. Evetts, pp. 145 f.
his tutor. He records that a great festival was held there in the saint’s honor on Bashans thirteenth, and that his remains lay beneath the altar of a church specially dedicated to him.

The faithful Daniel tells us that his master left to him his “tunic of skin and his white hair shirt and his sandals of palm fiber. And I, the unworthy, wear them that I may receive a blessing.” From the same authority also we have a description of the saint’s personal appearance: “He was angelic in appearance, even as Jacob; altogether white-haired, graceful in frame, but shrivelled. He had a full beard coming down to his waist: his eyelashes were fallen out through excess of weeping. He was tall, but stooped by reason of old age.”

Arsenius holds a somewhat peculiar place in the history of Scetis. Unlike Macarius, John, and Bishôi, he was not the founder of a monastery, though there is reason to believe his story has deeply influenced the official legend on the origin of Baramús. He was not even a great father; for besides Daniel, Alexander and Zoilus seem to have been his only disciples. Though the life he led was as austere as that of the most famous ascetics, even this does not account for the peculiar honor in which he was held. It is rather as renunciant, as one who sacrificed great material splendor to live amongst rough, uneducated peasants, that he was ranked among the great worthies of Scetis.

7. The Third Sack of Scetis and the Forty-nine Martyrs

We do not know how great was the havoc wrought by the barbarians in their second raid. Presumably the churches and buildings were again wrecked, but it is nowhere stated that any monks fell victims. Whatever the damage, it was soon repaired. Within ten years monastic life had resumed its normal course; though there are some signs that the monks had learned wisdom from experience, and had taken measures to protect themselves against the barbarian peril.

The departure of Arsenius from Troë to Canopus in 444 was due to a barbarian inroad which seems to have penetrated right into the Nile Valley. Though we are not told that this incursion involved the monasteries of Scetis, it is a priori probable that this happened; and, as we shall see, other information suggests that the third sack of Scetis occurred at or about this date.

Our knowledge of this raid is almost wholly derived from a notice of the Forty-nine Martyrs of Scetis given in the Synaxarium under date Tûbeh twenty-sixth (January 3 Ib. 4 See p. 101.
5 See p. 163. Perhaps it was at the same time that the Blemmyes sacked the Oasis of Hibis (El Khârgeh) and released Nestorius: they were apparently followed by the Mazics who were also “on the warpath.” The unrest was probably general among the barbarian neighbors of Egypt at this time.
6 Ed. Basset, pp. 665 f.
SCETIS IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE FIFTH CENTURY

twenty-first). Theodosius II, the son of Arcadius, having no male issue to succeed him, sent to the old men of Scetis asking them to pray that he might have a son. Among the monks was an aged father, Isidorus, who wrote to the emperor that God denied him a son, lest the child should associate with heretics after the death of Theodosius. The emperor submitted; but subsequently certain wicked persons (the emperor's sister Pulcheria is mentioned in one ms.) pressed Theodosius to marry another wife in hope of begetting an heir. A new message, therefore, was sent to Scetis by the hand of a courier (magistrianus), who took his son with him. Isidorus was then dead; but the monks took the courier to the place where his body lay, and repeated the message; whereupon the dead man, rising to the occasion, declared that even if the emperor took ten wives, he should not beget a son. The monks then wrote a reply in accordance with this pronouncement.

The magistrianus and his son had barely started on their return journey, when the barbarians arrived. An old monk, Anba John, then called upon any who desired martyrdom to keep with him, while those who declined the honor should go up into the tower. Some of the monks took refuge in the tower; but forty-eight of them remained with John and were slaughtered by the barbarians.

Now it happened that the son of the magistrianus, named Dios, turning about while on the road, saw angels placing crowns upon the heads of the murdered old men and declared that he too wished to receive a crown like one of them. He returned, therefore, accompanied by his father, and both were slain.

The rest of the story is told in the Coptic Depositio XLIX Martyrum. When the raiders were departed, the surviving monks descended and buried their murdered brethren "in a holy cave near the great Tower which they call that of Piamoun." Here they wrought such miracles that their fame spread even to the imperial palace, and Theodosius built a martyrion in their honor at Constantinople. It was their influence, the Coptic author claims, which at a later date led Hilaria, the daughter of Zeno, and Anastasia "to whom Severus wrote," to retire to Scetis.

Brief reference is made to the story of the Forty-nine in a doxology quoted by Jablonski, where mention is made of the forty-nine old men slaughtered by the barbarians in the deserts "near the place of Piamoun." A real addition is made by a passage in the Arabic Life of Bishôi: "When the barbarians had slain the holy seniors at Shihêt near the Tower called the 'Eastern' and while they were returning to their own province, they

---

1 The reference is of course to the "Chalcedonians."
2 This is not a proper name (as sometimes represented).
3 Ed. de Ricci and Winstedt, Notices et extraits, xxxix, cp. 349 f.
4 On the tower and place named after Piamoun see p. 38.
5 Opuscula, 1, 163. In the hymn to "Abba Makari and his Children" in a fragmentary Theotokia lately recovered from Dér Abû Makár, mention is made of "The Forty-nine Martyrs, the old men of the deserts—they poured forth their blood upon the Rock of Piamoun." See my New Texts, p. 122.
6 B.N., Fonds arabe, No. 4796, fol. 163 b.
reached a spring of water at the Monastery of our holy Father Abba Bishlyeh. There they rested beside the water and they washed their swords stained with the blood of the saints in that spring. Thus its water became a source of healing to all who bathed in it; and all who are sick of any disease down to our own day, if they descend into it obtain a cure."

Can we determine how much of the foregoing is historical and how much legendary? A barbarian invasion put an end to the residence of Arsenius at Troë in 444 and it is therefore likely that Scetis would have been overrun. Moreover, the narrative summarized above points to 444 or thereabouts as the date of the events with which it deals. For we are told that Theodosius first asked the fathers to pray that he might have a son, and then proposed to take another wife in the hope that she might prove fruitful. There was one occasion when it may conceivably have been rumored that the emperor intended to embark on a fresh matrimonial venture; this was in 444 when Eudocia was disgraced, and according to the Chronicon paschale: "a separation and estrangement" took place.

The story of the massacre in its main outline may be accepted; for it contains a certain amount of circumstantial detail which is not likely to be invented, and the main facts in it are probable enough. What then of the first and second appeals of Theodosius to the monks of Scetis? To consult the fathers on a matter of difficulty as in an earlier age men consulted the oracles was neither unusual at this time nor foreign to the nature of Theodosius; and John of Nikiu actually records the first consultation of the monks of Scetis by Theodosius, though he carries the story no further. Theopistus also in his Life of Dioscorus mentions one consultation only and says nothing of the barbarians, though he has in common with the Synaxarium: (a) the invocation of a monk three years dead (Isidorus), (b) the magistrianus named Artemius (?) and his son, (c) the superior named John. That Theodosius sent once at any rate to the monks of Scetis may accordingly be pronounced possibly, but hardly probably, true. At the same time the omission by John of Nikiu and Theopistus of any reference to the massacre of the monks suggests that two incidents—the consultation and the raid—originally distinct but separated by no long interval of time, have been conflated by some later hagiographer to form the current legend.

The story of the Forty-nine Martyrs is our earliest authority for the existence of "Towers of Refuge" in Scetis—the prototype of the kasrs, or keeps, so characteristic of the

1 Migne, P.G., xcii, col. 804.
2 The Forty-nine Martyrs of Scetis are ignored, however, by both the Greek and the Roman Church.
3 Chron., lxxxvii, 14 f.
5 Note that both authorities are late: John of Nikiu belongs to the second half of the VII century, while the work of Theopistus in its present form is not earlier than the VI.
6 John of Nikiu at least was well acquainted with Scetis (see p. 287), and must have known its legends thoroughly. Yet as he rejects the scandal concerning the Empress and Paulinus as a fiction of "lying historians," he may have thought well to suppress the story of the second consultation and consequently of the barbarian raid associated with it.
monasteries of Wâdi 'n Natrûn in the middle ages and today. Certainly the monks had learned from their experiences in 407 and 434 and had provided themselves with places of retreat against times of peril. In the present instance they were able to descend as soon as their foes had retired and to take up the threads of their ordinary life. Thus the disaster was not complete, cells and churches may have been wrecked, but there seems to have been no general dispersal of monks such as followed the first and perhaps the second sack. At any rate we have some evidence that monasticism in Scetis was still alive at a period not long after the Council of Chalcedon.

On the other hand it is possibly significant that Peter the Iberian met at Alexandria a certain Potamon, “one of those holy monks formerly of Scetis, (who had) come up from there and dwelt at this time in a cell in Egypt,”¹ and who foretold the murder of Proterius, successor of Dioscorus, three days before it took place (457 A.D.). This Potamon may have fled from Scetis in 444. In any case the constant inroads of the barbarians cannot but have checked the growth of Scetis, which therefore entered upon the tempestuous period of the Council of Chalcedon enfeebled and half-crippled.

CHAPTER XI

THE MONASTIC SYSTEM DURING THE FOURTH AND EARLY FIFTH CENTURIES

1. General Character of the System

We have seen how important a part was played by Antony, directly or indirectly, in the foundation and development of the Mount of Nitria, Cellia, and Scetis. All three settlements, therefore, were emphatically Antonian in character. But it must be remembered that the Antonian "system" was not based on any preconceived plan. When Antony retired into the desert he had no thought of founding an order. It was force of circumstances which compelled him to do so; and a rudimentary form of organization and a rule of life were only gradually evolved partly in accordance with the demands of experience, and partly as custom and "the wont of the fathers" crystallized into definite law. It will not be surprising then to find that these Antonian communities had but a simple organization and no hard and fast code of regulations.

2. Anchoretic and Cenobitic Life

The ideal mode of life set before himself and his disciples by Antony was the anchoretic. Renunciation of the world was to be carried to the furthest possible limit. The monk should retire to the desert and live in complete solitude, cutting himself off entirely from his fellows rather than settling with others of a like mind in a community outside the world. So stated, the ideal could not be realized. Human nature demanded some measure of companionship, and human needs forced the anchoret into some amount of intercourse with his fellows and even with the world. It was with necessary modifications, therefore, that the solitary life was made the main feature in the Antonian system.

Experience must have shown from the first that the ordinary man could not plunge into such a life without training and preparation. Discipline was as necessary a preliminary
to facing the dangers, trials, and temptations of solitude in the desert as to encountering the horrors and hardships of war. Consequently, two grades came to be recognized in the Antonian Order—that of the cenobites and that of the anchorites. This is made perfectly clear by Cassian\(^1\) who writes: “The first [class of monks in Egypt] is that of the cenobites who live together in a congregation and are governed by the direction of a single elder... The second is that of the anchorites, who are first trained in the coenobium and then, being made perfect in practical life, choose the recesses of the desert.” And the same author, after distinguishing the “elementary schools of the coenobium” (\textit{primae scholae coenobii}) and the “secondary stage of the anchoritic life” (\textit{secondus gradus anchoreseos}), states that when he had acquired the elements, he pursued the science of solitary dwelling (\textit{solitariae commorationis}) at Scitium (Scetis).\(^2\) A concrete example of this all-important distinction is furnished by Cyril of Scythopolis in his description of the Laura of Gerasimus near Jordan.\(^3\) There was, he tells us, a coenobium in the midst of the laura for the reception of novices (\textit{τῶν ἐξομομένων τῶν μοναχῶν}), and only those who were experienced in monastic life and had attained to perfection were permitted to dwell “in what are called The Cells” (\textit{ἐν ταῖς λεγομέναις Κέλλαις}).

This feature appeared at the Mount of Nitria and Cellia.\(^4\) There was no distinction between the two classes in the earliest days at the Mount of Nitria; for a while there was room for both. But ultimately the place became too full to permit of the solitary life’s being led there, and Cellia was founded under the auspices of Amoun and Antony expressly as a home for anchorites. In course of time the interrelation of the two places became yet more clearly defined: Evagrius dwelt for two years at the Mount of Nitria, and entered into the desert (i.e., Cellia) in the third\(^5\); Palladius states that he himself was instructed by Arsisius and others at the Mount of Nitria for a year and then entered into the “innermost desert”\(^6\); and lastly the author of the \textit{Historia monachorum} observes that “those who have first been instructed there (\textit{sc.} at the Mount of Nitria) and... wish to lead a more solitary life, retire to this place (Cellia).”\(^7\) In the latter part of the fourth century, then, the Mount of Nitria—though doubtless it boasted many hermits of very old standing—had become a training school where monks were prepared for residence at Cellia. In a word, the Mount was semi-cenobitic in character; Cellia was anchoritic; while the two grades were perhaps less sharply distinguished in Scetis. We must, therefore, examine the organization of each one of these places separately.

\(^1\) \textit{Coll.}, xviii, 4.
\(^2\) Id., xviii, 16, 15.
\(^3\) \textit{Life of Evagrius}, ch. lxxxix.
\(^4\) The position at Scetis is less clear.
\(^5\) Palladius, \textit{Hist. Laus.}, ch. xxxviii.
\(^6\) Id., ch. vii (cf. ch. xviii, \textit{ad init.}). No doubt Palladius’ previous training under Dorotheus was taken into account in forwarding him to Cellia after one year only.
\(^7\) Latin version, ch. xxii.
3. Organization at the Mount of Nitria

The Historia monachorum contains the following important statement on the state of the Mount of Nitria: “In this place, then, are to be seen some fifty ‘tabernacles’ or thereabouts, near together, and subject to one Father: in them therelive sometimes many together, sometimes few, sometimes individuals.” The whole settlement, then, was governed by one father, or abbot; and the same is confirmed by the Apophthegmata patrum, where we read that “the blessed Theophilus the Archbishop once visited the Mount of Nitria; and the Abbot of the Mount came to him . . .” But Palladius carries us far beyond these bare statements and introduces a new element in the organization: “Now there are eight leading priests belonging to this church (at the Mount of Nitria): and so long as the first lives, no other priest celebrates the Offering, or delivers discourses, or gives judgment; but they sit quietly beside him.” The father, or abbot, was therefore the head of a college of eight priests, holding that position for life and claiming sole right to (a) celebrate Mass, (b) deliver addresses or discourses, (c) exercise disciplinary functions.

In virtue of the third of these privileges it was he, no doubt, who sentenced offending monks, thieves, and other offenders to flogging. Since he alone celebrated Mass, he could use the powerful weapon of excommunication either as a punishment or to maintain his own authority. At the same time he is probably to be regarded as a privileged president rather than an absolute autocrat. For Ammonius in his Letter to Theophilus says that he delivered his message (in 355 A.D.) “to those who were with the holy Pior and Pambo and the rest of the priests in the Mount of Nitria”; that he read a letter privately to “the priests”; and again, that the letter from Theodore of Tabennesi was addressed to “the Priests, Deacons and Monks” of the Mount of Nitria (and not to the abbot or father of the Mount). Moreover, we shall see presently that there was a chapter or council to influence his decisions or policy. The “first priest,” as Palladius calls him, was therefore a primus inter pares.

Concerning the persons who actually held this office little can be said: Amoun, though it is not known that he was a priest, was certainly Father of the Mount of Nitria and Cellia; Pambo apparently, and Macarius of Alexandria definitely, were Fathers of Cellia, but whether or no the priesthood of Cellia was sometimes held in conjunction with that of the Mount of Nitria is not clear.
Palladius tells us nothing as to the status and functions of the seven subordinate priests, save that they acted as silent assessors to their chief. But quite probably they constituted the monastic chapter or council to which more or less definite references are made. If so, they corresponded to the assembly of elders or notables in the ancient (and modern) village community in Egypt, just as the chief priest corresponds to the 'omdeb or sheikh el beled. This body is definitely mentioned by Palladius, who speaks of the creatures advanced by Theophilus at the Mount of Nitria as monks who "had never stood in the assembly of the elders of the desert" (ἐν συλλόγῳ τῶν τῆς ἐρήμου γερόντων). Jerome also tells the story of a monk who died at the Mount leaving a small hoard of money which he had earned by weaving flax. To determine what was to be done with the money, the monks consulted, but being unable to reach any decision, referred the question to "Macarius and Pambo and Isidorus and the rest whom they call fathers (πατρέσ)." These decided that the money should be buried with its owner, quoting the text: "Thy money perish with thee." This body is more generally referred to as "the fathers" (πατρές) or "old men" (γέροντες). It was to the "fathers in the desert" that the bishop (or Saint Antony) sent directing that Pior should grant his sister the interview she desired—and the command of these fathers, be it noted, could not be gainsaid. So too when Isaac (disciple of Cronius, Priest of Nitria, and then of Theodore of Pherme) could not induce his master to set him any of the tasks usually assigned to disciples, he reported the matter to "the old men," who came and asked an explanation of Theodore. And again, when the same monk heard that he was to be ordained, he fled into Egypt, but was pursued by "the fathers," who, guided by their ass, found him hiding in a field.

In all these instances "the fathers" or "old men" are quite clearly a recognized and influential body, though the scope and limits of their powers are nowhere precisely defined. Whether it was composed of priests only, or included lay monks of acknowledged eminence, is a matter for conjecture; but there is some evidence which implies that certain of them were coenobiarchs, superiors of groups of monks undergoing training in coenobia. This is vaguely suggested by Palladius' own statement that when performing his preliminary course at the Mount of Nitria he was "greatly edified by the blessed fathers Arsisius the Great and Petubastes and Ason and Cronius and Sarapion, and incited by many discourses of the fathers (heard) from them"—whence it appears that the monks named (some of whom were certainly priests) instructed novices, at least in a general way. But the same author more definitely asserts that Isaac (the disciple of Cronius) had under him two

1 Of course only on public occasions, as when pronouncing sentence or celebrating the Mass.
3 "Epist., xxii, § 33 (ad Eustochium de custodia virginatis).
4 "Initium est inter monachos consilium." These constituted the regular chapter or council with which we are dealing.
7 "Apologie. Patr., Isaac the Priest, ii.
8 Id., i.
9 Hist. Laus., ch. vii.
10 "Dial. de vita Job. Chrys., § xvii (P.G., xlvii, 1, i, col. 39 f.)"
hundred and ten monks; the other Isaac also who was expelled by Theophilus presided over a company of one hundred and fifty ascetics. And lastly, the fact that the monks of Nitria were split up, as we shall see immediately, into a number of larger and smaller groups, postulates superiors or fathers of these groups; and such would naturally be members of the council.

We may sum up, then, by saying that the seven subordinate priests probably constituted the council, independently known to have existed, and that they may perhaps be identified with the heads of the various groups into which the settlement as a whole was divided.

The author of the Historia monachorum, quoted above, saw (in 395 A.D.) some fifty cells or "tabernacles" at the Mount of Nitria, in which the monks dwelt in larger or smaller groups, or even one by one. Now when Rufinus was at the Mount (about 373), there were about three thousand monks there; in the days of Jerome and Palladius they numbered about five thousand. About five thousand monks were, therefore, accommodated in approximately fifty cells; in other words, there were on an average one hundred monks in each cell, though some of the groups, such as that ruled by Isaac, considerably exceeded this number. Herein, as it seems, we have a certain proof of the existence of coenobia at the Mount. Unfortunately none of our authorities vouchsafes any particulars as to the life led in these establishments and their structural form. Certainly they differed widely from the coenobia established by Pachomius; for Palladius is emphatic in asserting that every monk determined his own mode of life, each according to his power and inclination.

Discipline and order, we must suppose, were ensured mainly by the earnestness of the monks themselves; but serious offenses could be severely punished—apparently after report made to the chief of the priests and after sentence pronounced. The incorrigible could be expelled from the settlement, and Palladius witnesses that in the case of erring monks (as well as of thieves and chance comers) "those who offend and are convicted as deserving chastisement" were triced up to one of the three palm trees standing in (sic) the church, and received a given number of strokes from the whip which hung ready.

Besides monks in the coenobia, there were those who dwelt singly or in pairs. Of the solitaries Palladius gives us examples in Nathanael and perhaps Benjamin; Or and Theodore are instances of companionship in the monastic life. But these men and their like belonged to the old order which was fast passing away at the time of Palladius’ sojourn; it is probably true that the quasi-cenobites formed the majority of the inhabitants of Nitria.

1 Dial. de vita Job. Chrys., § xvii (P.G., cxlvii, 1, i, col. 59 f.). But this Isaac was possibly (or probably) of Sceticis.
2 Rufinus, H.E., ii, 3.
3 Jerome, Epist., xxi, § 33: "nam in eodem loco circiter quinque millia diversis cellulis habitabant"; Palladius, Hist. Laus., chs. vii, xiii (ad fin.).
4 Loc. cit. ἰσαρόροις ἱκανοῖς πολεμεῖς, ἱκανοὶ ὡς δύναται καὶ ὡς βούλεται.
5 Loc. cit.
6 Hist. Lasi., chs. xii, xvi.
7 Ἀναφθα. Patr., Or. i, viii.

172
MONASTIC SYSTEM DURING FOURTH AND EARLY FIFTH CENTURIES

So considerable a settlement cannot have existed without some system of domestic economy. The monks provided for their own support by weaving flax, “so that,” says Palladius, “all are independent.”¹ Jerome’s overthriftiness monk, it will be remembered, had accumulated his little hoard by weaving flax. At the proper season, also, some, if not most, of the monks went harvesting—an employment so normal that we find Piu laboring for three years running in the service of the same farmer.² The money earned by these means sufficed not only for the support of the individual monk, but also for a certain amount of charity; since Pambo, we are told, recommended that each should contribute an ardeh of wheat per year for the relief of the needy.³

But the disposal of the monks’ manufactures on the one hand, and on the other the purchase of necessary supplies for so large a body of men, cannot have been effected by individual effort. No doubt all this was arranged collectively by the steward or oeconomus. This official is passed over without notice by the authorities; but since Palladius incidentally refers to Origenes as the steward of Abba Pambo (at Cellia),⁴ and Cassian mentions one John as steward at Scetis under Paphnutius,⁵ we may infer that there was a similar arrangement at the Mount of Nitria; or perhaps each group, or coenobium, had its own steward to take charge of its material interests.

The bread needed by the monks at the Mount of Nitria, as for “the anchorites in the utter desert (Cellia), six hundred men,” was baked at seven bakeries—⁶ one possibly being assigned to each group of monks⁷; we hear also of a garden and a kitchen belonging to the settlement.⁸ All of these may have been controlled by the steward (or stewards), and a certain number of monks must have been employed in connection with them.

Certain provision was also made for what, in a monastic sense, were luxuries. According to Palladius, wine was in general use and on sale at the Mount of Nitria, and even cake sellers were to be found there.⁹ But the vendors were doubtless outside hucksters and had no part in the monastic organization. Perhaps the same is true of the physicians mentioned by Palladius in the same context. Yet elsewhere this author particularly mentions a certain monk Apollonius, who, knowing no trade and being no penman, spent twenty years of his life in visiting the monasteries and tending the sick, whom he supplied with medicines and delicacies at his own charges.¹⁰

Adjacent to the church was a guest house in which a stranger might lodge for as long as two or three years. Visitors were permitted to spend one week only unemployed; after

---

¹ Hist. Laus., ch. vii.
² Apophth. Pair., Pior, i.
³ See p. 54.
⁴ Hist. Laus., ch. x.
⁵ Inst., v. 40, 1. No doubt the functions of the steward were much the same in an Antonian community as in a Pachomian, to supervise the supply of clothing and provisions, and to collect and dispose of articles manufactured by the monks (see Cassian, Inst., iv. 6; iv. 18; x. 20).
⁷ This would agree well with our conjecture that the seven subordinate priests were superiors of a corresponding number of coenobia.
⁹ ib.
¹⁰ Id., ch. xiii. The description of this man’s devoted work is impressive: “You might see him from early dawn until the ninth hour making a round of the monasteries, entering in at the doors to see if any lay sick.” It does not appear, however, that Apollonius was a regular physician.
that time they were expected to undertake some form of work. Thus common folk were employed in the garden, the bakeries, or the kitchen; but people of consideration were furnished with a book and not permitted to meet any one until the sixth hour (noon).\footnote{Palladius, \textit{Hist. Law.}, ch. vii.} We do not know when this establishment was founded, but doubtless it existed when Melania visited the Mount of Nitria and was designed to accommodate those who wished to see what monastic life was like without actually joining the community. It was presumably managed by the steward.

The Antonian system differed markedly from others in the small demands which it made on its followers in the matter of public worship. Palladius tells us that there was a great church at the Mount of Nitria, but categorically asserts that it was used only \textit{“on the Sabbath and on the Lord’s Day”}; there were neither daily services nor public observance of the canonical hours. In this, as we shall see, he is at one with Cassian and other authorities on the Antonian settlements at Cellia and Scetis. This week-end celebration will be examined in detail below.

One at least of the canonical hours was observed, but in a semi-private manner. \textit{“About the ninth hour,” says Palladius, “one may stand and hear how from each cell the chanting of psalms floats forth, so that one fancies one is aloft in Paradise.”} The ninth hour, then, was celebrated with psalmody, semi-privately in the cells, though analogy\footnote{Cf. p. 186.} makes it probable that the occupants of each cell joined together for this purpose. Somewhat strangely Palladius says nothing as to observance of the night office, which was almost certainly usual here as elsewhere in Antonian settlements.\footnote{Cf. p. 186.} In any case, this office also was performed in the cells and not in the church.\footnote{Except possibly in the night of the Sabbath (cf. p. 208).}

The monastic buildings at Mount Nitria were probably of the simplest. The church (mentioned by Theophilus at the time of the Origenist crisis) is described by Palladius as a great one, but not as magnificent; it may well have been quite rude in construction, the work of the monks themselves. Near by (or in it according to Palladius)\footnote{If Palladius is to be taken literally, this implies that some part of the church—possibly the nave—was open to the sky, like the courtyard of a mosque.} stood the three palm trees where offenders were punished; and the guest house adjoined. The kitchen and bakeries must have been near by; and, though Palladius does not mention them, there must have been also storehouses for grain and provisions. The monastic cells will be described further on\footnote{See p. 214.}; but we may notice here that if some of these \textit{“tabernacles”} held a hundred monks and more, such must have been of considerable size; possibly that cell which Agatho and his disciples were so long in building, and which the old man abandoned to the great disgust of his followers,\footnote{\textit{Apophth. Patr.}, Agatho, vi.} was something of this kind.
4. The Organization of Cellia

We have already seen the relation in which Cellia stood to the Mount of Nitria. Originally founded as an annex, it tended to become more important than the parent settlement, which towards the close of the fourth century was sinking into the position of a training college for aspirants to the "higher life" of solitude.

The following description of the place is furnished by the *Historia monachorum*.

"There is another place in the inner desert distant nearly ten miles from this [sc. from the Mount of Nitria] which has received the name Cellia from the number of cells scattered about in the desert there. Those who have first been instructed there [at the Mount of Nitria] and wish to lead a more solitary life, retire to this place: for it is a desolate wilderness, and the cells are at such a distance, each from the other, as to be out of sight and out of sound of one another. They (the anchorites) dwell singly in these cells; and there is profound silence and deep stillness among them. It is only on the Sabbath and on Sunday that they come together to the church and there behold each other as though transferred to Heaven. If anyone happens to be missing from that assembly, they know at once that he has been prevented by some bodily ailment, and all make their way to visit him—not in a body, but some at one time, some at another; and each takes with him anything he may have which can please the sufferer. There is no other cause for which anyone ventures to break in upon the solitude of his neighbor, unless it be when one is able to instruct another by word of mouth and anoint (as it were) the athletes engaged in struggle with the consolation of speech. Many of these monks come a distance of three or four miles to meet at the church—so far apart lie the cells in which they dwell. But their charity is so great, and the bond of love which binds them to one another and to all the brethren is so strong, as to excite general admiration and to be a pattern. And so, if any one chance to wish to dwell with them, so soon as they are aware of it, they offer severally their own cells."

The inhabitants of Cellia were all anchorites—graduates, so to speak, in monastic lore, and needing no such governance as was necessary at the Mount of Nitria. Yet the settlement had a head or superior with vaguely defined powers in the priest, who evidently enjoyed a monopoly of sacred functions even as did the chief priest at the Mount. His position alone guaranteed him a certain amount of influence and authority; and there is a concrete instance of this in the anecdote which relates that when a certain brother came to Cellia jauntily wearing "a little cowl," Isaac the Priest drove him away, saying: "This place is for monks; but you are a layman: you cannot stay here."

But since the monks were all anchorites, the priest could not compel their obedience,

---

1 Latin version, ch. xxii.
2 Cf. the description (sometimes with the definite article) of Macarius the Alexandrian and of Isaac as "the Priest of Cellia" (Palladius, *Hist. Laus.*, ch. xviii; *Apophth. Patr.*, Isaac the Priest).
3 *Apophth. Patr.*, Isaac the Priest, viii.
and his authority was based on personal influence rather than on rule. Isaac, therefore, exclaims in despair that he will give the monks no more precepts, for they will not keep them.\(^1\) Any assumption of superiority on the part of the priest was likely to be bluntly met, as when Valens sent a message to Macarius\(^3\): “I am not inferior to you, that you should send me your blessing.”

It was as ex-officio president of the council of fathers that the priest was most powerful. The existence of such a body and the authority of the priest are well illustrated in the following apophthegm.\(^8\) “A council (συνέδριον) was once held at Cellia touching a certain matter, and Abba Evagrius spoke. The Priest said to him: ‘We know, Abba, that if you were in your own country, you might have been a bishop and the chief of many, but as it is, you sit here as a stranger.’” In default of any definite evidence we must assume that the council was composed of clericals with, possibly, lay monks of acknowledged eminence. Its powers were considerable, if we may judge from the treatment it meted out to Valens.\(^4\) This monk was so deluded by the devil that “he entered into the church when the brethren were assembled and said: ‘I have no need of the Communion….’ Then the Fathers (i.e., the council) bound him, and having kept him in irons for one year, cured him.” So, too, it was “the fathers” who imprisoned (or excommunicated) for a year two brethren who had sinned but repented.\(^5\)

The account of Cellia in the Historia monachorum might lead us to think that each anchoret led an entirely isolated life and that there was little or no intercourse. This is hardly borne out by Palladius’ references to his own experiences. His account of Macarius the Alexandrian is based on what he heard from that father himself and from Paphnutius his disciple\(^6\): and he certainly had much conversation with Evagrius,\(^7\) with Ammonius,\(^8\) and with others. Truth is that the ideal of rigid solitude was breaking down, and giving place to a system of groups under the guidance of masters eminent for holiness or learning. Evagrius himself is an example of this as the disciple of Macarius, and Palladius again as the disciple first of Macarius and then of Evagrius.\(^9\) Moreover, it will be remembered that John of Lycopolis recognized Palladius as belonging to “the fellowship (συνοδία, ἑταιρεία) of Evagrius”\(^10\); and such discipleship is implied in Hero’s taunt to Evagrius: “Those who are persuaded by your teaching are deceived.”\(^11\) At the same time the proportion of strict solitaries was certainly very great. We even hear of one old man who was a complete recluse (περικεκλεισμένος) and did not go out of his cell even to attend church.\(^12\)

\(^1\) Apophth. Patr., Isaac the Priest, vii.
\(^2\) Palladius, Hist. Lusi., ch. xxv.
\(^3\) Apophth. Patr., Evagrius, vii.
\(^4\) Palladius, Hist. Lusi., ch. xxv.
\(^6\) Palladius, Hist. Lusi., ch. xviii.
\(^7\) Id., ch. xxxviii.
\(^8\) Id., ch. x.
\(^9\) Id., ch. xxiii.
\(^10\) Id., ch. xxxv.
\(^11\) Id., ch. xxvi.
\(^12\) Apophth. Patr. (R.O.C., xi, p. 56, No. 21).
MONASTIC SYSTEM DURING FOURTH AND EARLY FIFTH CENTURIES

In his description of the Mount, Palladius mentions that bread was baked there for “the six hundred anchorites in the utter desert” (πανέρημος).¹ By the term πανέρημος this author is generally understood to denote Scetis: this, however, is by no means exclusively true. The word, of course, means a completely desert spot in contrast to places like the Mount of Nitria where a garden and palm trees were possible: as such it is applied alike to the Libyan Desert as a whole and to the Eastern Desert between the Nile and the Red Sea.² In the present instance it undoubtedly means Cellia which was in fact “sheer desert”; for Palladius elsewhere³ uses the word to denote this place, and it is clearly improbable that bread would be carried from Nitria to Scetis some fifty miles distant. We have, therefore, definite assurance that in the last decade of the fourth century there were six hundred monks at Cellia.

These anchorites were provided with food, as we have just seen, from Mount Nitria; but it is not clear how far the financial and supply arrangements of the two places were otherwise interconnected or independent. Pambo (at Cellia) had a steward, Origenes⁴; and it is possible that this official may have managed the temporal affairs of both settlements.

At Cellia, as at the Mount of Nitria, the monk supported himself by manual labor. No doubt flax was woven (though this is never mentioned); but we know that Pambo at least followed the conventional monastic trade of basket making, and two anecdotes relating to Isaac the Priest of Cellia show that the monks went down into the cultivated lands to reap the harvest for wages.⁵ Writing also was a recognized means of earning a living; for Evagrius, a skilled calligraphist, actually provided for his needs in this way,⁶ and moreover composed certain works still in part extant.⁷

The anchorites assembled in church only on the Sabbath and on Sunday, and this was the only means of ascertaining if any of their number were sick or even dead.⁸ But there can be no doubt that vespers and the night office were observed in the cells,⁹ since Cassian¹⁰ assures us that these were universally recognized throughout Egypt.

There was a single church at Cellia, as we gather partly from the use of the definite article in references to it and partly by inference from the statement that a second was built only after and in consequence of the Council of Chalcedon.¹¹ Possibly it was built directly after the foundation of the settlement by Amoun and Antony, but certainly not

1 Palladius, op. cit., ch. vii.
2 ib., and ch. xxi.
3 Dial. de vita Job. Crys., § xvi (P.G., xlvi, 1, i, col. 60), where it is stated that Isaac of Cellia built a guest house “in the utter desert”—which can only be Cellia. So too in Hist. Laus., ch. xxxix, he speaks of Pior (who definitely belongs to the Nitria-Cellia group) as appearing “out of the utter desert,” meaning apparently that he came from the region of Cellia to Nitria.
4 Palladius, Hist. Laus., ch. x.
5 Ἄποφθ. Patr., Isaac, iv, vii.
6 Palladius, Hist. Laus., ch. xxxviii.
7 For the text of Evagrius’ works, see P.G., xl, col. 1219 f., and cf. Butler, L.H., ii, pp. 217 f.
8 The Greek of the Hist. Mon. (ch. xxiii, 3) asserts that consequently it was sometimes four days before a death was known to have occurred.
9 Possibly Ἀποφθ. Patr., No. 229 (R.O.C., xiv, p. 361), which records the observance of these hours in the cells, should be located at Cellia.
10 Inst., ii, 3.
11 See p. 222.
later than the middle of the fourth century if "Isidorus the Priest of the Anchorites," mentioned by Ammonius the Bishop\(^1\) in association with Pior, Elurion, and others, was Priest of Cellia. There is no evidence as to its architectural character.

Palladius tells us that Isaac, the disciple of Cronius and Priest of Cellia, who was expelled by Theophilus in 401, built a guest house (ἐκατοδοχεῖον) in "the utter desert," that is, at Cellia,\(^2\) for the refreshment of those who came to visit the fathers and for the relief of sick monks. No mention is made of this building in the *Historia monachorum*; indeed the statement there made that Ammonius the Tall used to lead newcomers to the church for refreshment\(^3\) implies that in 395 the hostel did not exist. It is to be dated, therefore, between 395 and 400.

Though they are never mentioned, a kitchen must have existed to meet the needs of the monks at their week-end assemblies at the church, and possibly storehouses containing a reserve of food—unless supplies from the Mount of Nitria arrived at frequent intervals.

The little we can learn as to the cells of these anchorites will be gathered together hereafter.\(^4\)

It is highly improbable that there was at Cellia any such "civil settlement" of wine and cake sellers as existed near the Mount of Nitria.

5. *Organization at Scetis*

The original settlement in Scetis was in the vicinity of the present Monastery of Baramûs.\(^5\) But the state of things in the earliest days of the occupation of Scetis is so obscure through lack of evidence that no analysis of it is possible. What we can learn as to the organization of monasticism in the desert of Scetis belongs mainly to the second half of the fourth and to the first half of the fifth century.

As at the Mount of Nitria, Cellia, and Antonian monastic colonies generally, the primacy at Scetis was vested in a father *par excellence*, known in Greek as ὁ πατὴρ τῆς Σκῆτους and in Coptic as φιλωτ ὅ τιτιν and (later) as ἱοῦδομενος ὅ τε ὅμιτ.

Though none of these titles seems to be definitely\(^6\) applied to Macarius the Great in early documents, it is certain that he held the position it denotes, and highly probable that he was so styled in his lifetime. In later documents, such as "Sarapion's" *Life of Saint Macarius,*\(^7\) he is unequivocally called "the Father (φιλωτ) of the Monks of the holy Mount of Shiêt." The office of father in an Antonian community not only originated with Antony himself, but was an instinctive reproduction in the monastic system of the

---

5. See pp. 101 f.
7. *A.M.G.*, xxv, p. 46 (but this title is post-Sarapionic).
headship so characteristic of the Egyptian village community. This position was naturally occupied by Macarius in virtue of a threefold claim: as the founder of monasticism in Scetis, as priest, and as possessed of unusual individuality and force of character. At any rate we can point to numerous instances in which Macarius exercised the authority of a father. When he represented to Antony that there was no priest in the topos at Scetis, and when on his return he was deferentially met by the monks, he was clearly acting as chief of the community. This is even more clear in the anecdote which relates that he once excommunicated his namesake of Alexandria and imposed penance upon him. It is to him that the "Little Strangers" apply for admission to Scetis; it is he who exhorts backsliding monks, and who admonishes the brethren assembled in church. His, no doubt, was the central authority which issued general commands, such as the week of fasting mentioned in an anecdote concerning Moses the Robber.

After the death of Macarius (390 A.D.) the title of "Father of Scetis" emerges into clear light. Paphnutius, who succeeded (apparently as senior surviving priest in Scetis) to the office, is definitely styled "Father of Shiēt" (πατρὸς Σκιήτου) in one Coptic document, and is stated in another to have succeeded to "the fatherhood in the holy topos" (εἰς τὸν ἁγίον τοπὸν). Far more valuable, because far earlier, is the following evidence of the Αφοπθήμενα πάτρων: "Eudaemon said concerning Abba Paphnutius, the Father of Scetis (τοῦ πατρὸς τῆς Σκιήτου): 'I went down there when I was young; and he did not suffer me to remain there, but said: 'I do not suffer any with a girlish face to remain in Scetis, because of the assaults of the enemy.'" Lastly, John the Little is called the Hegumen of Shiēt (πατρὸς Σκιήτου) and thus substantiates the continuity of the office. As we shall see, this more technical title was prevalent in the sixth and seventh centuries.

The powers of the Father of Scetis may be gathered largely from the notices given below: he could admit and reject those who sought to become monks, he could expel offending monks, or suspend them by temporary excommunication, or inflict penance, and he exercised a general supervision over the religious life of the community and directed its general policy. He was responsible directly to the Archbishop, or Patriarch, of Alexandria; for Scetis lay within the territorial limits of no episcopal diocese. This, we surmise, is the

---

1 See p. 171.
2 Αφοπθήμενα πάτρων, Macarius, xxvi.
3 Id., xxvi.
4 Id., xxxvi.
5 Id., xxxvii.
6 Id., xxxviii.
7 Id., Moses, v ("A command was once given in Scetis: 'Fast this week'").
8 "Psori," Life of Maximus and Domitius (A.M.G., xxv, p. 312).
10 Eudaemon: the regulation here mentioned was generally followed. S. Sabas (Cyril of Scythopolis, Life of Our Holy Father Sabas, cap. xxix) used to say to youthful postulants "it is unseemly—nay rather harmful—that such a laura should contain any unbearded (youthful) person. This law the ancient Fathers of Scetis laid down, and our great father Euthymius handed it down to me." ( Cf. Cyril's Life of Euthymius, ch. lxxviii.)
11 A.M.G., xxv, p. 316; cf. p. 150.
12 Daniel (VI century) is called "Hegumen of Shiēt" in his Coptic Life (in Clugnet, Vie de l'Abbé Daniel, p. 83).
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

explanation of the annual visit paid by the Father of Scetis to the archbishop at Easter. This custom probably dates from the fourth century; for in the *Apophthegmata patrum* it is related that “Abba Isidorus once went up (from Scetis) to Abba Theophilus the Archbishop of Alexandria”—the visit probably being official and paid by Isidorus as acting Father of Scetis. The purpose of this annual conference was to report on the state of the monasteries, and, probably, to communicate to the superiors the patriarch’s advice or commands.

The office of father was characteristic of Antonian monachism in its earlier phases when communities were comparatively small and authority could, therefore, be centralized, but in course of time the number of the monks was vastly increased and there was a marked tendency for the younger men to group themselves round this or that famous saint or teacher. Thus decentralization was set going, leading to the formation of more or less independent groups.

We have already remarked traces of this tendency to division into groups in the brotherhood of anchorets at Cellia. In Scetis it was pushed to its natural end, and some time before 399 there were four distinct “congregations” to be found there. Topographical considerations were presumably responsible for this. When circles of disciples formed round Macarius, or John, or Bishôî, in the remote spots to which they had retreated the great distance from the church at the parent settlement must have caused grave inconvenience. This was met by building churches at each of these new centers, which consequently developed independently of one another and of the primary settlement. Moreover, Cassian shows that the four congregations could and did act independently.²

The four congregations, then, were “presided over,” as Cassian says, by their respective priests, who were also in some sense superiors of the assemblies under them. They could prevent any obnoxious doctrine from being promulgated in their churches. But their individual authority rested mainly on their right to excommunicate—though use of this weapon was deprecated by some of the fathers. This is illustrated by the following anecdote³: “A certain brother had sinned and was separated (excommunicated) by the priest from the church. But Bissorion rose up and went out with him, saying: ‘I also am a sinner.’” To the priest also belonged the duty of giving spiritual advice to members of his congregation and of tending them when sick. Isidorus the Priest, for example, is found first aiding Moses the Robber with his counsel, and subsequently caring for him when he fell sick.⁴ And when Arsenius fell ill, “the priest went forth and brought him into the church and laid him upon a couch.”⁵ But perhaps the most striking instance of the authority of these priests over their congregations is furnished by Cassian,⁶ who relates that, when a monk

---

1 *Apophth. Patr.*, Isidorus, viii.
2 See p. 133.
5 *Apophth. Patr.*, Arsenius, xxxvi.
6 *Col.*, xviii, 15, 4.
MONASTIC SYSTEM DURING FOURTH AND EARLY FIFTH CENTURIES
falsely alleged that his codex had been stolen, Isidorus kept back all the brethren in the
curch, and sent out three seniors to search the cells of the brethren.
The presiding priests were not necessarily the only priests in the desert. More than
once mention is made of “the clergy”\(^1\)—apparently a fairly numerous body. And from
Cassian we learn that Paphnutius caused his disciple Daniel to be ordained successively
deacon and priest, even designating him as his successor\(^2\); though Daniel refused to exercise
priestly functions in the presence of his superior. There must, of course, have been one or
more deacons to assist each priest.
The priest-superior was moreover president of the council (συνεδριῶν), which seems
to have assembled in the church of the community, principally as a disciplinary court.
Most of these points are illustrated in the anecdote of Moses the Robber and the basket
of sand, quoted above.\(^3\)
Similarly when Moses transgressed the general command to fast, in order to entertain
certain brethren from Egypt, the breach was reported to “the clergy” (τοῖς κληρικοῖς) who
dealt with the matter on its merits.\(^4\)
That points of disputed doctrine also were considered by this body, we learn from the
opening sentence of an apopthegm of Copres\(^5\): “They of Scetis once assembled together
(inquiring) concerning Melchizedek” (i.e., whether he was the son of God).
The assembled elders might even remonstrate with one of their own number who seemed
to be acting imprudently. So when it was reported that Silvanus showed favoritism to
his disciple Mark, “the elders (οἱ γέροντες) were grieved . . . and came to him and began to
rebuke him.”\(^6\)
The composition of this council is not altogether clear. That it included the clerical
monks is obvious from the foregoing citations; but whether or no some of the “elders” of
whom it consisted were lay monks must remain doubtful.
In its early days Scetis was preëminently the home for anchorites. Ammonius the Bishop\(^7\)
reports that Athanasius questioned him about “the holy anchorets in Scetis”—and about
no one else. Cassian also at a later period says that it was in Scetis that he studied the
science of solitary dwelling.
Some of these anchorites lived in the completest solitude or even as recluses. Certain
monks came to Arsenius asking him to speak concerning “those who live solitary and meet
with none” (τῶν ἀσυνχωροῦν καὶ μηδενὶ ἀπαντῶν)\(^8\); and Ammonas, who lived for fourteen
years in Scetis, discouraged a certain hermit of Cellia who meditated whether he should
“shut himself up in his cell and meet with no one.”\(^9\) Macarius, too, lived alone in complete
isolation and retirement for a period. But the most striking example of this class is

---

1 *Aposth. Patr.*, Moses, v; Arsenius, xxxviii.
2 *Coll.*, iv, i.
3 See p. 156.
5 1d., Copres, iii.
6 1d., Marcus, i.
7 *Letter to Theophilus*, § 24 (*Acta SS.*, May III, Appendix, 
p. 71*).
8 *Aposth. Patr.*, Arsenius, xliiv.
9 1d., Ammonas, iv.
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

Ptolemy who dwelt at Climax,¹ where he “kept aloof from instruction and profitable intercourse with holy men” and even from “regular partaking of the Mysteries.”

Such men were exceptional. The ordinary anchoret (ἀναχωρητής, ἀσκητής) did indeed live a solitary life, but it was relieved by attendance at church on Saturdays and Sundays when he met his fellows, and by paying and receiving occasional visits. The Ἀποφθέγματα πατρών conveys a distinct impression that many monks of Scetis associated fairly freely with their fellows. Thus the brethren who settled near Macarius when that saint was living as a solitary must have been in close touch with one another, since they were able to assemble so soon as Macarius came down from his retreat. Herein we may perhaps recognize a distinct step in the evolution of the laura. In Scetis, as at Cellia, the earlier anchorets lived at considerable distances apart. Paphnutius dwelt all his life in a cell five miles distant from the church,² which marked the center of the community; Chaeremon was twelve miles distant “from the marsh and the water,”³ and consequently died (as it seems) alone and untreated⁴; and there are many other examples. But subsequently there was a distinct tendency for the scattered members of the brotherhood to draw together⁵ and concentrate round the church, which was, in fact, the axis of the community.

A contributory cause to this was the formation of larger or smaller bodies of disciples.

In the earlier part of the history of Scetis disciples were, so to say, apprentices, tending and serving their master on the one hand, and receiving instruction from him on the other. The master, or father, did not gather round him a numerous company of disciples (though a large outer circle of uninvited admirers and imitators might surround him at a distance),⁶ but contented himself with one or two such pupils only. Consequently, the relation between master and disciple was personal and intimate, the disciple often continuing to serve and obey the master until death parted them. In illustration of all this we may refer to Abba Amoi, who had but one⁷ disciple, John the Little, and was tended and cherished by him through many years of sickness down to the time of his death⁸; or to Macarius the Great, who had many followers, but only two intimate disciples.⁹

As the monastic life became more popular and the number of those seeking admission into the monastic colonies progressively increased, the average of novices (ἄγγχαροι, εἰσαγόμενοι) under the control of individual fathers rose considerably. Silvanus, the father of Marcus, had twelve disciples when in Scetis.¹⁰ Moses the Robber left no less than seventy.¹¹ Some of these disciples, doubtless, joined this or that father for personal

¹ Palladius, Hist. Laus., ch. xxvii; cf. p. 38.
² Cassian, Coll., iii, 1.
³ Apophth. Pat., Chaeremon.
⁴ Palladius, Hist. Laus., ch. xlvii.
⁵ Cf. the Rule ascribed to Sarapion, the two Macarii, and Paphnutius (P.G., xxxiv, col. 977 f.).
⁶ Macarius, John, and Bishoi exemplify this.
⁷ Or two, if we admit the claim made for Bishoi in his Life; cf. Apophth. Patr., Ammoe, v.
⁸ See p. 109.
⁹ Palladius, Hist. Laus., ch. xvii.
¹⁰ Apophth. Patr., Marcus, i.
¹¹ Palladius, Hist. Laus., ch. xix (ad fin.). Isaac, the disciple of Macarius who was expelled by Theophilus, was the father of 150 monks (see p. 141).
reasons, because he was a relative or a countryman; others were placed by the authorities under the teacher considered best fitted to instruct them—as Arsenius was committed to John the Little. In these larger groups of disciples the personal relation between master and disciple must necessarily have been weakened, if it did not totally disappear.

The ideal relation between the disciple and the father is well expressed in an apophthegm of Isidorus: “Those who live as disciples ought to love those who are truly teachers as fathers, and to fear them as rulers.” Isaias of Scetis laid it down that those who make a good beginning and are in subjection to the holy fathers, receive a tincture which, like purple dye, never washes out. The same teacher also recommended “insult” as salutary for the novice; and many fathers did not scruple to administer this prophylactic against pride. To Arsenius left standing while the monks sat at meat John threw a morsel upon the floor, and John himself received no gentle treatment at the hands of Amoi: even Antony shut his door in the face of Macarius. Such conduct, if it did not produce a premature explosion, cultivated the virtues of patience and humility. Obedience was no less essential a factor in the relation. At his master’s bidding John the Little waters a dry stick in the desert: Mark, when called by Silvanus, did not wait even to complete the omega he chanced to be writing, and when a wild pig was pointed out to him as a “little buffalo,” he did not presume to disagree.

Had this tendency of the monks to “bunch” and the presence of novices or disciples given rise to some form of semi-cenobitic life in Scetis similar to that prevailing at the Mount of Nitria? The Laura of Gerasimus, it will be remembered, had a coenobium for novices at its center, while the anchorites dwelt in isolated cells on the circumference of the circle. By analogy some similar arrangement might be inferred for Scetis. Yet those who gathered round Macarius, John, and Bishõi, while they put themselves under the guidance of or other of these fathers, were grouped like independent satellites round a central luminary; though they were actuated by a common aim, they certainly did not live a common life, but lived each one alone and (comparatively speaking) in solitude. It was otherwise with the novice disciples. The twelve disciples of Silvanus, indeed, dwelt each in a separate cell and there is no suggestion that they lived a common life; but the nature of the relation postulates comparatively close intercourse between such subordinate fathers as Silvanus or Amoi and their disciples; and in early days at any rate the temporal concerns of all the members of the groups thus constituted were collectively

---

1 John the Little and his master Amoi are both described as “Thebans.”
2 Theodore of the Studium, Life of Arsenius, § 6: ἐξ ὅριν μικροῦ πολεμίου is the phrase used (§ 5).
3 Apolithe. Patr., Marcus, i (where Silvanus appears on very indifferent terms with all his disciples except Mark).
4 Id., Isidorus Presbyter, v.
5 Id., Esaias, ii.
6 Id., Esaias, i.
7 Theodore of the Studium, loc. cit.
8 See p. 107.
10 See p. 108.
11 Apolithe. Patr., Marcus, i, ii.
12 See p. 160.
13 Forming the great laurae.
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

managed—witness the story of the fifty ardebs of grain abandoned by Amoi to his disciples’ intense chagrin.¹ In such groups of disciples we have, surely, the nucleus of those manshubehs (dwelling houses or dependent cells) so characteristic of later ages.

It was an axiom of the monastic system that a monk should habituate himself to toil, so as to earn by his own labor a daily supply of food for himself and to relieve the wants of strangers.² This daily toil was such as could be performed mechanically, permitting the monk to meditate without distraction upon the Psalms or other Scriptures³; and to the earlier monks meditation was more important than the manual toil which accompanied it. Theodore of Pherme reflects sadly: “When I was in Scetis the work of the soul was our work, and our handiwork we regarded as by-work (παρεργον). But now the work of the soul has become a parergon, and the (former) parergon our (serious) work.”⁴

The regular handicraft practised in Scetis was the making of baskets and mats woven from palm leaves. Literary allusions to this work are so numerous that we need only cite two of them which show that the supply of raw material was obtained locally. In one instance the brethren say to John the Little: “We give thanks to God that it has rained abundantly for the year, and the palms have been watered, and put forth shoots; and the brethren will find material for their handiwork.”⁵ Similarly it was while fetching palm branches from the Marsh of Scetis that Macarius met the devil.⁶ Some notes on the process of manufacture will be added elsewhere.

The finished articles were variously disposed of. On his first arrival in the desert Macarius is said to have bartered his handiwork to the natron workers for bread;⁷ whereas the “Little Strangers” are bidden to give them to “the guards” (of the natron).⁸ Sometimes the monks themselves carried their wares to market in the Delta—as Macarius did to Terentuthis⁹; at others they were transported by camel to market.¹⁰

To the proceeds of such labor the monks added a further sum earned by harvest work. Sisoes relates an incident which occurred when he with Macarius and other fathers, in all seven persons, had gone down from Scetis to reap the harvest;¹¹ and harvesting is mentioned as a regular feature of monastic life in certain apophthegms of John the Little,¹² and elsewhere.¹³ A saying of Isaias of Scetis,¹⁴ who demanded corn of a farmer when he had not worked at the harvest, suggests that harvest wages were paid in kind.

Writing, that is, copying books for sale or for use at the church or by the monks, was a

¹  Ἀποπρέψις, Amoês, v.
²  Cassian, Inst., II, 3, 3.
³  Id., III, 2: “itam namque ab eis incessanter operatio manuum privatim per cellulas exercetur, ut Psalmorum quoque vel ceterarum Scripturarum meditatio nunquam penitus omittatur.” This conjunction of meditation and manual labor still obtained in the 1X century: see the criticism of the Egyptian monks of that period by Dionysius of Antioch, quoted, p. 301.
⁴  Ἀποπρέψις, Theodore of Pherme, x.
⁵  Id., John Colobos, x.
⁶  Id., Macarius, xi.
⁷  A.M.G., xxv, pp. 76f.
⁸  Ἀποπρέψις, Macarius, xxxiii.
⁹  Id., xiii, xiv.
¹⁰  Id., John Colobos, xxxi.
¹¹  Id., Macarius, vii.
¹²  Id., John Colobos, vi, xxxv.
¹³  R.O.C., xiv, p. 376, No. 291.
¹⁴  Ἀποπρέψις, Esaias, v.
MONASTIC SYSTEM DURING FOURTH AND EARLY FIFTH CENTURIES

recognized occupation, though it was regarded with some suspicion, as likely to produce high-mindedness. Mark the disciple of Silvanus was a copyist (καλλιγράφος), and was engaged in writing when his master with other fathers came to visit him. Abraham told an anecdote of one in Scetis who “was a scribe, and did not eat bread.” This man, commissioned to copy a book for another brother, was so wrapt in meditation that he omitted certain passages. When the other came back to complain of this defect, the ingenious scribe bade him “go away and first do that which is written, and then come; and I will write for you the remainder.” Cassian also mentions a monk who commissioned an indifferent scribe to write a copy of the Epistles in Latin professedly to send to his brother, who was “bound in the chains of military service.”

Those who could produce anything edifying might even become authors; for Macarius the Great is reputed to have written a number of homilies and tracts on Christian virtues, and Isaias of Scetis is responsible for a series of exhortations (Orations) and a collection of Chapters on the Ascetic and Solitary Life.

Though there was no communal garden (as at the Mount of Nitria), gardening was sometimes practised by individuals. This pursuit, however, was regarded as a dubious one, no doubt because meditation and gardening are incompatible; and Mark discussed with Arsenius the action of a brother who grew a few vegetables, but subsequently pulled them all up.

As the number of the monks increased in Scetis, it must have become more and more difficult for individuals to dispose of their manufactures and to purchase necessaries. We should, therefore, have to infer that in Scetis, as at the Mount of Nitria and Cellia, there was a steward who managed financial affairs and arranged for needful supplies. Happily Cassian has one definite reference to a steward in Scetis—a certain Abba John “who regulated the administration of the said Church in the days of the blessed Paphnutius... who had committed this (office) to him.” Since John is mentioned as sending a gift of figs to an ailing monk the steward’s duties may have included the care of the sick and helpless.

In Scetis, as at the Mount of Nitria and Cellia, public services were held in the churches only on the Sabbath and on Sunday. On these two days it was customary for the anchorites and all members of the community or “congregation” to assemble at the church for public worship, just as the anchorites in the Laura of Gerasimus used to come up on these days

1 See R.O.C., xviii, p. 141, No. 375, where the trades mentioned are the manufacture of baskets, of mats, of sieves, copying, and flax weaving.
2 A paraph. Patr., Marcus, i.
3 Id., Abraham, iii.
4 Cassian, Inst., v, 39.
5 For the Greek text of these see P.G., xxxiv.
6 See P.G., xl, col. 1105 f.
7 Cf. John Moschus, Pratum spiritualis, lv, where a monk sees the devil presenting the brethren with hoes in order to distract them from the “work of God.”
9 Cassian, Inst., v, 40.
10 The steward in the Tabennesiote monasteries had charge of the feeding and clothing of the monks, and collected their handwork daily.
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

from their cells to the coenobium which stood in the midst of the laura.¹ We need only state here that the main purpose of the brethren in so assembling was to partake together of the Holy Communion.

That this week-end gathering was customary in Scetis is clearly established by two passages in Cassian’s observations on Abba Paphnutius.² Even in extreme old age this father would not remove from his cell (which he had inhabited from his youth onwards and which was five miles distant from the church) to any other less remote—even to save himself the fatigue of the journey to church “on the day of the Sabbath or on Sunday.” And when in his youth this father had been falsely accused of theft, it was his custom “on the day of the Sabbath or the Lord’s Day to haste in the morning, not to receive the Holy Communion, but to prostrate himself at the threshold of the church and humbly to implore forgiveness.”³ With the public services held on these occasions, and with the semi-social and practical aspects of these gatherings, we shall deal later.

Devotional life, however, was by no means neglected. Once again we must refer to Cassian, who bears witness that, whereas in other countries the canonical hours were observed as set times for prayer, the Egyptian monks along with their manual labor maintained an unceasing stream of devotional meditation throughout the day.⁴ But the same authority assures us that two canonical hours—vespers and the night office—were formally, though privately, observed by the Egyptian monks,⁵ this use originating apparently with Antony himself who recommended his followers to pray frequently and to chant psalms before and after sleep,⁶ that is to say, in the evening and in the night or early morning.

Somewhat strangely, references to the observance of vespers in Scetis are few. But in the Apophthegmata patrum⁷ we find that Alexander, after working until evening (δεύτερου) stripping palm leaves, comes to the cell of his master Arsenius and is bidden to make haste and take his meal in order to perform his synaxis—here certainly vespers. On the other hand, when Macarius relates his visit to the “Little Strangers,”⁸ no mention whatever is made of vespers; it is only after Macarius has lain down to sleep that the two brothers arise and pray together; and this is clearly regarded as an extraordinary act of devotion. But in the same narrative we find that the night office was fully and formally celebrated towards dawn (πριν τὴν πρωίαν). There is, however, no doubt that both vespers and the night office were duly observed in Scetis. For it is recorded of “Abba Romaeus” (who is almost certainly identical with Arsenius) and his critical visitor that “when it was late (evening) they recited the twelve psalms, and lay down to sleep. So also in the night.”⁹

¹ Cyril of Scythopolis, Life of Euthymius, ch. lxxxix.
² Cassian, Coll., iii, 1.
³ Id., xviii, 15, 6. For the form of penance here alluded to see further Inst., ii, 16.
⁴ Inst., iii, 2 (quoted above, p. 184, note 3).
⁵ 1b., “exceptis vespertinis nocturnisque congregationibus, nulla apud eos per diem publica sollemnitas.”
⁶ Athanasius, Life of S. Antony, § 55.
⁷ Apophth. Patr., Arsenius, xxiv.
⁸ Id., Macarius, xxxiii.
⁹ Id., Romaeus, i.
MONASTIC SYSTEM DURING FOURTH AND EARLY FIFTH CENTURIES

As the instances just quoted show, these exercises were performed in the cells, and where two or more monks were present they united in such acts of devotion. During the greater part of the period with which we are concerned in this chapter, almost the only buildings designed for general use of which we have any knowledge are the four churches, one of which belonged to each of the “four congregations,” or communities.¹

Primarily, of course, the churches were places for public worship, but they were also used for certain other purposes. They were used as places of assembly where matters affecting the brotherhood as a whole were communicated and discussed. It will be remembered that three of the priests in Scetis refused to allow Theophilus’ attack on Anthropomorphism to be read in the churches.² There the council seems to have met, as we may infer from the anecdote concerning Copres and the discussion concerning Melchizedek.³ It was in the church also (if we may argue from the custom at Cellia) that the agape, or semi-ritual meal, of the brethren was observed.⁴ And lastly, the churches were used as hospitals for those who were dangerously ill, either because they were the only buildings available, or because their sanctity was expected to contribute towards a cure.⁵ Both Moses the Robber and Arsenius were thus provided for.⁶ It is very possible that at the week-end gatherings the monks were even housed in the church,⁷ for we hear of no other place of accommodation for them.

No reference is made to any guest house in Scetis at this period. Visitors who came to see any individual monk were lodged and entertained by him in his cell—as Moses the Robber received his friends⁸; but what befell strangers of high rank who visited the desert, we cannot tell. On the other hand, a certain Paësia transformed her house—probably situated at Terenuthis—into a hostel (ἐνοδοχέαν) for the monks of Scetis,⁹ where she received and lodged them when they came up from the desert; the arrangement, however, seems to have been only temporary.

It is only towards the end of our period, in the story of the Forty-nine Martyrs, that we hear of a tower in the desert built as a place of refuge from the barbarian invaders. We may infer, therefore, that such buildings were of comparatively late date, and defer any further consideration of them until we reach the Byzantine Period in which a “tower of refuge” became an essential in every community.

Storehouses for provisions, though never mentioned, may be presumed to have existed in Scetis during the latter part of the fourth century; for the large number of monks in

¹ See p. 97.
² See p. 133.
³ Apophth. Patr., Copres, 111; cf. p. 116. When Copres had made his pronouncement, the brethren “fled to their cells”—certainly from the church.
⁴ On the agape see pp. 310f. An apophthegm in one of the Latin versions relates that a monk entered into the church when there was a festival in Scetis and there addressed the assembled monks (Rosweyd, Vitae patrum, p. 607, No. 109). Possibly this was when the agape was being held.
⁵ See p. 61.
⁶ See Palladius, Hist. Laus., ch. xix; Apophth. Patr., Arsenius, xxxvi. Visitation of the sick in their cells was also undertaken by monks: cf. Hist. Laus., ch. xi.
⁸ Id., Moses, viii, where the visit of a governor or magistrate is recorded.
⁹ Id., John Colobos, xl.
the desert cannot well have been left to provide for themselves individually. Probably the steward already mentioned both disposed of the monks' baskets and other manufactures and made purchases of provisions for the whole brotherhood he represented. Moreover, there is some slight evidence that each individual drew his rations for five days at the close of the weekly assembly on the Sabbath and Sunday at the church.\textsuperscript{1} It is conceivable that the towers of refuge above mentioned served this purpose just as the \textit{kasrs} of the existing monasteries.

It was customary for the monks to partake of cooked food at their week-end assemblies.\textsuperscript{2} Consequently there must have been a kitchen near each of the four churches, though there appear to be only two references to such an institution. The first is in an anecdote concerning Abba Mark who, when sought out by his mother, appeared "begrimed from the kitchen"\textsuperscript{3}; the second is in the narrative of Shenûdeh's visit to Scetis about 431 A.D.\textsuperscript{4}; but the latter, being possibly anachronistic, is somewhat doubtful.

There are but two mentions of a bakery (or mill) in Scetis\textsuperscript{5}; but the assumption that there were several (perhaps one to each community) seems inevitable.

\textsuperscript{1} See p. 213.
\textsuperscript{3} \textit{Apophth. Patr.}, Marcus, iii.
\textsuperscript{4} See p. 161.
\textsuperscript{5} \textit{Apophth. Patr.}, Theodore of Phermé, vii, xviii. It is not directly stated that this was in Scetis, rather than at Phermé; but the bakery was clearly a regular institution in every settlement.
CHAPTER XII

PARTICULAR ASPECTS OF MONASTIC LIFE DURING THE FOURTH AND EARLY FIFTH CENTURIES

1. The Monks and the Monastic Profession

Although no definite estimate can be presented, it is clear that the majority of the Egyptian monks belonged to the lower orders and were drawn from the fellah class. Antony and Amoun of Nitria, though possessed of some property, were merely peasants in good circumstances; Macarius the Great was a camel driver; Macarius of Alexandria, a small tradesman or huckster probably of much the same standing as the modern sellers of bread or pastry in the streets of Cairo or Alexandria. Men like Moses the Robber, the peasant Paul the Simple, Apollo the Herdsman, and Macarius the Homicide more truly represent the social order from which the monks were recruited than do Mark the disciple of Silvanus, Evagrius, or Palladius. This preponderating rustic element was, naturally, Egyptian, as we gather from an apothegm of Arsenius in which “rustics” (fellahin) and “Egyptians” are treated as synonymous. In consequence, most of the monks had little or no education. Pambo and Paphnutius of Scetis were illiterate, as indeed, according to Socrates, were most of the monks of Nitria.

Representatives of the middle class were not numerous. Palladius, however, mentions Apollonius, a trader, who retired to the Mount of Nitria and undertook the duty of visiting and tending the sick; and Paësius and Isaias, the sons of a merchant, both of whom seem to have been connected with the same place.

1 Palladius, Hist. Laus., ch. xxii.
2 Apophth. Patr., Apollo, ii: Apollo is there located in Scetis, but in id., i, at Cellia.
3 Palladius, Hist. Laus., ch. xiv.
5 Socrates, H.E., iv, 23.
6 Palladius, Hist. Laus., ch. xlvii.
7 H.E., vi, 7.
9 Id., ch. xiv. Since Pambo was asked to pronounce upon their merits after their deaths (before 373), and since one of them was near enough to the world to entertain freely, they were probably at or near the Mount of Nitria. Paësius is sometimes wrongly identified with Bishôi of Scetis, but the name was a common one.
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

Still fewer were the monks drawn from the educated and upper classes. Albanius,\(^1\) Evagrius,\(^2\) and Palladius at Cellia are examples of the former, the "Little Strangers" and Arsenius at Scetis of the latter; and it is noticeable that all these were foreigners: there is, perhaps, no example on record of an Egyptian of the upper class who became a monk at this period.

Apart from the consideration that it was far harder for the educated and the comparatively well-to-do to renounce the world and all it could offer, there is good reason for this paucity of monks from the higher social ranks. Life in the desert—and particularly in Scetis—was such that none but those inured to hardship and privation could ordinarily hope to lead it. When the "Little Strangers" came to Scetis, Macarius tried to turn them from their purpose because he saw that they were delicately bred, and fully expected that a short experience would drive them from the desert,\(^4\) and for the same reason the fathers were unwilling to admit Arsenius as a monk.\(^5\) Yet life at the Mount of Nitria was comparatively easy, since Palladius was sent there to recover from his rigorous apprenticeship under Dorotheus near Alexandria.\(^6\) Moreover, the well-to-do were restrained by legislation from becoming, or pretending to become, monks, in order to escape their duties in local administration.\(^7\)

For the lower orders on the other hand the monastic life meant something like ease, as a priest pointed out to a herdsman who ventured to criticize Arsenius.\(^8\)

While the great majority of the monks at the centers with which we are dealing were Egyptians,\(^9\) the number of foreigners was evidently considerable. "Sarapion"\(^10\) states that among the monks of Scetis were men from Romania (? Greece), Spain, Libya, Pentapolis, Cappadocia, Byzantium, Italy, Macedonia, Asia, Syria, Palestine, and Galatia. This may be exaggerated; but we know on good authority that Porphyry of Gaza came to Scetis from Thessalonica,\(^11\) and Photinus of Cappadocia was in Scetis in 399.\(^12\) John Cassian, the "Little Strangers" of the Greek apophthegm, and Arsenius were likewise foreigners. At Cellia were men like Evagrius of Pontus, Palladius, and Albanius of Galatia, doubtless with many others.

Despite the lowly origin of most of them, the monks claimed of the laity and others a high measure of reverence, as men leading the "angelic life." Pambo, journeying with certain brethren in Egypt, met certain laymen who remained seated, and addressed them thus: "Rise up and salute the monks, that ye may be blessed; for they do continually

---

2. Id., ch. xxxviii.
3. On the rigor of life in Scetis see *Hist. Mon.* (Greek), ch. xxx.
7. See p. 81.
8. *Apophth. Patr.*, Arsenius, xxxvi; Romaeus, i.
9. The nomenclature of the monks (e.g., Pambo, Pihor, Petubastes) sufficiently warrants this statement.
11. See p. 95.
12. See p. 133.
PARTICULAR ASPECTS OF MONASTIC LIFE

speak with God and their mouths are holy.’”

The admiration of Saint Athanasius for the monastic life and the unfailing support accorded to him by its professors need no illustration; Theophilus, with motives less sincere, entertained the monks at his own table. Even emperors gave proof of their interest or confidence in the monks: Antony was invited to Constantinople by Constantius; Theodosius I consulted John of Lycopolis, and—it is asserted—a certain Senouchi of Scetis, concerning his fortune in war. Superstitious reverence for men believed to have intercourse with the saints and with heaven itself, and implicit confidence in the miraculous powers of many of the monks, must have ensured the unbounded respect of the masses.

2. The Form of Initiation

Once monasticism was firmly established, a man could be made a monk only by recognized authority—that is, by some acknowledged father or superior. In illustration we may cite the question asked of John the Cenobite by the affronted monks of Scetis: “John, who invested you with the schema, or who made you a monk?” Partly, no doubt, this was authorized initiation prompted by some idea of a mystic transmission of grace (similar to the apostolic succession); and this may be the reason why “Sarapion” represents Macarius the Great as being invested by Antony himself. But we may well suspect that there was also some civil enactment which demanded that there should be some responsible person to vouch for genuine monks.

In early days any fully qualified father could “give the habit” and so make a monk; and this Amoi seems to have done for his disciple John without reference to any higher authority. Subsequently it was usual—or perhaps the rule—for the superior to admit or reject a postulant: Macarius himself admitted the “Little Strangers,” while Paphnutius of Scetis rejected Eudaemon, and Isaac drove away from Cellia a would-be monk who was too foppish in his garb.

No formal vows seem to have been taken; as the monk voluntarily offered himself it was assumed that he was in earnest and would continue to live as a monk until death. If he changed his mind there was nothing to prevent him from migrating to another monastery or even from returning to “the world.” Porphyry of Gaza went to Scetis and “sojourned there with the holy fathers for the space of five years,” after which he retired

1 *Apolib. Patr.*, Pambo, vii; cf. also *Hist. Mon.* (Greek), ch. xxx.
2 Id., Theophilus, iii.
3 Id., Antonius, xxxi.
5 *Acta Cyri et Johannis*, ch. v (*Acta SS.*, Jan. ii, pp. 1087 f.). Senouched’s aid was invoked by Theodosius through the medium of Theophilus. The saint refused to come personally to the emperor’s support but sent his cloak and his staff, which proved efficacious. This personage, however, is not otherwise known and may be a mere duplication of John of Lycopolis.
6 *Apolib. Patr.*, John Coenobita.
7 *A.M.G.*, xxv, pp. 184 f.
8 In order to detect the spurious monks. Under Arab rule a system of registration was enforced with this object (see pp. 288 f.).
10 *Apolib. Patr.*, Eudaemon.
11 Id., Isaac the Priest, viii.
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

to the Holy Land.\(^1\) Palladius himself confesses that he once nearly abandoned the monastic life in despair, and records that Hero of Cellia and Ptolemy of Scetis actually did so.\(^2\) Such a step did not necessarily preclude the monk from returning: Hero was received back as a penitent, and Paphnutius readmitted a monk who had left Scetis, returned to the world, and even married, but found the cares of wedded life too heavy for him.\(^3\)

What was required of the monk was complete renunciation of the world, its pleasures and concerns, in the fullest sense. Macarius repeated with evident approval the dictum of the two naked monks he had met in the desert: “Unless a man renounce all the things of the world, he cannot become a monk”\(^4\); though he himself confessed that he was incapable of full obedience to this injunction.\(^5\) Abba Zacharias\(^6\) and John the Little were no less emphatic in their insistence upon this general principle.

A few examples will show what this involved. The monk cut himself off absolutely from his parents, his wife and children, if he had any: Poemen, Anub, and their brothers repulsed their aged mother who sought only to look upon them\(^7\); Pior, when he became a monk, swore never to behold any of his kindred again\(^8\); Mark took the first opportunity to escape a meeting with his mother\(^9\); and Abba Kario retired to Scetis abandoning his wife and two children.\(^10\) Arsenius\(^11\) summed up the attitude of the monk towards his relatives when, being informed that a relative had made him his heir, he exclaimed: “I died before him; and he is only lately dead.” So also Evagrius, when informed of the death of his father, bade his informant, “Cease blaspheming; for my Father (God) is immortal.”\(^12\)

Naturally this rule was not always rigidly observed. Abba Kario willingly or unwillingly had an interview with his wife in Scetis; and as we learn from the same context there were provisions regulating such meetings between a woman and her brother or other relative who had become a monk.\(^13\) Moreover, Kario himself was obliged to bring up his son Zacharias in Scetis. Further relaxation of the rule (if it can be so called) was permitted when the authorities ordered Pior to grant his sister a last interview.

If he renounced his own flesh and blood, much more was the monk required to sacrifice property or wealth. Antony taught a monk who had retained part of his wealth, that one who renounced the world and wished to own money would be torn to pieces by demons.\(^14\) It was in the same spirit that the fathers at the Mount of Nitria pronounced sentence upon the monk who died leaving behind him a little hoard of money.\(^15\) At least in theory the monk could not call even the necessaries of monastic life his own. Theodore of Pherme\(^16\) was,

---

\(^1\) Mark the Deacon, \textit{Life of Porphyry}, ch. iv.
\(^3\) \textit{Apophth. Patr.}, Paphnutius, iv.
\(^4\) Id., Macarius, ii.
\(^5\) Id., Zacharias, iii.
\(^6\) Id., Poemen, lxxvi.
\(^7\) See p. 51.
\(^8\) \textit{Apophth. Patr.}, Marcus, iii, iv.

\(^9\) Id., Kario, ii.
\(^10\) Id., Arsenius, xxix.
\(^12\) \textit{Apophth. Patr.}, Kario, ii: “This was the custom in Scetis, that if a woman came to speak with her brother or other relative, they should sit a distance apart and so converse with one another.”
\(^13\) Id., Antony, xx.
\(^14\) See p. 171.
\(^15\) \textit{Apophth. Patr.}, Theodore of Pherme, i.
PARTICULAR ASPECTS OF MONASTIC LIFE

therefore, advised by Macarius to dispose of the three books he possessed, even though they edified both him and the brethren to whom he lent them, on the ground that complete poverty was better even than good actions.

In a word, to be a monk meant for the ancient Egyptian the sacrifice of every hope, every inclination, every pleasure however innocent or natural which might interrupt the continuity of that direct service and homage which he believed to be demanded of him by God.

Postulants were ordinarily admitted at about eighteen years of age, that is, when they had attained full manhood. John the Little, for example, was eighteen years old when received by Amoi. There were serious objections to the entrance of younger persons, yet mere children were sometimes to be found in the desert: Zacharias, indeed, grew up in Scetis under his father's care; but Isaac, the disciple of Macarius, "retired to the desert at the early age of seven"; and Cassian records the death in the desert of two lads sent to carry fruit to a sick monk. Possibly children were bequeathed to the monasteries at this period as in later times, and due provision made for their control. It is hardly probable that they can have been admitted as regular monks in boyhood.

The reproach addressed to John the Cenobite by the monks of Scetis, quoted above, implies that a monk was initiated by the formal act of investiture in the monastic habit. In mediaeval times the investiture of a monk was a rite with its set form of service. Whatever may be the origin and antiquity of this mediaeval ritual, in Scetis investiture was a simple and apparently a private ceremony performed after the postulant was found to be acceptable. Maximus and Domitius assume "the uniform of the monks of this part" (i.e., of Scetis) on their own initiative and without any formal investiture whatever; Porphyry of Gaza (about 378 A.D.) "went to Scetis and after a few days was deemed worthy of the honorable habit." Concerning John the Little our information is more ample. Amoi, his master, is described as instructing him in the word of God and calling upon him "to prepare himself with courage for strife against the invisible enemies... teaching him so to gird himself with strength for the battle in order to conquer all the army of the adversary." He then shaved John's head, and placing the monastic garments on the ground, prayed over them in company with his disciple for three days and nights. During the third night an angel came down, made the sign of the cross thrice upon the habit, and then disappeared. It was only when the next dawn came that John was invested. This account contains certain elements which appear in the mediaeval rite—the reference to the spiritual combat which recalls the opening lesson (Ephesians v) of the formal ceremony, the prayers

1 See A.M.G., xxv, p. 326.
2 Apophth. Pat., Kario, i.
3 Palladius, Dial. de vita Job. Chrys., ch. xvii.
4 Cassian, Inst., v, 40.
5 Le Rite capte de la prise d'habit, ed. B. Evetts in R.O.C., xi, pp. 60 f.
6 Evetts (op. cit.) points out that it is almost certainly anterior to the Council of Chalcedon (451).
7 See A.M.G., xxv, p. 296.
8 Mark the Deacon, Life of Porphyry, ch. iv.
9 See A.M.G., xxv, pp. 330 f.
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

over the garments, and their consecration with the sign of the cross. On the other hand, the investiture begins the day after John’s arrival, there is no indication of a prescribed form being followed, and above all the proceeding is quite private.

In the fourth century therefore, and perhaps even later, investiture though a formal act was in no sense a public ceremony but concerned merely the master and disciple. In support of this we must refer to notices of investiture belonging to a far later period; Abba Samuel (seventh century) is described as being habited in just the same private manner.\(^1\)

We hear nothing of investiture at the Mount of Nitria and Cellia, but it is probable that the habit was bestowed only at the end of the probationary period spent in the former settlement.\(^2\)

3. The Monastic Habit

The monks of Egypt wore a distinctive garb. The origin of this monastic uniform or habit is obscure. While Amélineau confidently asserts that it was Saint Antony who brought it into use and that certain features in it were adapted from the Egyptian priestly dress,\(^3\) others consider that it was older than monasticism itself.\(^4\) The problem is not made easier by the *Historia monachorum*, where Patermuthius is alleged to have been “the first to devise this monastic garb.”\(^5\)

Whatever its origin, the monastic dress was believed to possess supernatural virtues in itself. Antony—according to a Coptic apophthegm\(^6\)—wishing to test its power, once set up a dummy dressed as a monk, and saw the demons shooting arrows at it from a distance. The saint ridiculed their simplicity in shooting at a mere dummy, but was told that the garments themselves caused suffering to the infernal powers and were hated by them accordingly. There is no need to regard this as a piece of late superstition. For one of the most valuable of the Greek apophthegms, after relating that Abba James of Cellia arrayed himself in his grave clothes, observes: “For the Egyptian fathers have a custom to keep the tunic in which they receive the holy schema, and the cowl until they die, and to be buried in them; only wearing them on the Lord’s Day for the Holy Communion and straightway putting them away.”\(^7\) Surely the object aimed at was to scare away the demons from the dead body (perhaps also to repel them when the monk lay on his deathbed), and to frustrate their assaults which were specially violent when the monks were communicating.

1 See Pereira, *Vida do Abba Samuel*, p. 140.
2 An apophthegm published by Nau (R.O.C., xiv, p. 364, No. 243) relates that “a certain brother after taking the habit (οχύμα) shut himself up (ἀφιέλευεν θαυμώ) and called himself an anchoret. But when the old men heard it they came and cast him out and made him go round the cells of the brethren and ask pardon, saying: ‘Pardon me; for I am not an anchoret but a novice.’” Here the obnoxious brother seems to have taken the habit just before entering the settlement of anchorets, i.e., after his probationary period. His offense was in proceeding to make himself a reclusus forthwith.
3 A.M.G., xxv, pp. xxii f.
4 See Besse, *Les moines d’Orient*, pp. 245 f.
5 Greek version, ch. xi: το μοναχευτικόν ενυμα τούτο πρώτος ἐφευρείς. The Latin (ch. ix), however, has: “hic...viam salutis omnibus nobis primum ostendit”—*viam salutis* possibly representing a variant *εργα* for *ενυμα*.
6 A.M.G., xxv, pp. 40 f.
7 *Apophth. Patr.* Phocas, i.
PARTICULAR ASPECTS OF MONASTIC LIFE

Cassian\(^1\) gives a list of the garments worn by the Egyptian monks, explaining that a symbolical meaning was attached to each; and Evagrius,\(^2\) while substantiating this, adds that the fathers used to teach the monks this significance. It is regrettable that no monument depicting this dress—at least in recognizable form—has come down to us.

Cassian first mentions the leathern girdle and a body robe, apparently as worn by monks of all countries. Of these the girdle (ζώνη, σχημα, ἀσ-τύλη), denoting manliness,\(^3\) is noticed as part of the equipment of the “Little Strangers” in Scetis;\(^4\) the same passage shows that it was removed on retiring to rest. The body robe, however, is so rarely mentioned that we may surmise that it was superfluous in Egypt,\(^5\) though in the form of a hair shirt or the like it was sometimes worn as an act of mortification. Thus Arsenius possessed a tunic of skins (χιτώνα δερμάτων) and a hair shirt (τρίχων καμάσων) which he bequeathed to his disciple Daniel;\(^6\) and John the Little at certain seasons assumed an even more formidable tunic (παπήρον) of palm fiber.\(^7\)

Among the distinctively Egyptian garments mentioned by Cassian,\(^8\) the first is the cowl, or hood (cuculla, κουκούλλων, τεχλάγη), which covered the head and neck. Being imitated from (or resembling) the headgear of a child, it was held to symbolize the innocence proper to monks. References to it in the Ἀποφθεγματα πατρών show that it was not attached to any other garment and could readily be laid aside.\(^8\)

The second garment worn was a loose tunic of linen known as the colobium (κολάβιον, τολάβιον), from the fact that its sleeves were cut off short above the elbows leaving the hands free—a feature which signified the cutting off of all worldly actions and concerns. From an anecdote relating to Theodore of Pherme quoted below, it appears to have been a loose blouse leaving the breast and shoulders bare, like the modern Egyptian gallabiye. Old patched garments (κεντονάρια) of this kind were worn by monks when engaged in rough or dirty work: Mark, for instance, appeared in a κεντονάριον stained with smoke from the kitchen, when his mother came to visit him in Scetis.\(^9\)

The colobium was also called lebito (λεβίτον). As we have seen, the monks carefully preserved the lebito and cowl worn when they received the σχημα to be used as grave-clothes, never wearing them save on Sundays when they received the Communion. There are several interesting illustrations of this custom. Thus when three robbers invaded the cell of Theodore of Pherme and “brought out the books and the lebito,” the monk begged them to leave him the latter. When they refused, he overcame them, and dividing his

---

1 Inst., 1, 3 f.
2 P.G., xl, col. 1221. See also reference in the following note.
4 Id., Macarius, xxxiii. Makrizi (in Wüstenfeld, Gesch. d. Capt., ch. vii, § 67) defines it as “a band of leather with which the monks alone gird themselves, and on which there is a cross,” and asserts that Antony was the first to wear it.
5 Apophth. Patr., Arsenius, xlili.
6 See A.M.G., xxv, p. 351.
7 Loc. cit.
8 Apophth. Patr., Zacharias, xi; Theodore of Pherme, xxviii. The cowl is shown in a mediaeval painting of S. Antony in the north sanctuary of the main church at the Monastery of S. Macarius (see A.A.C.M., xi, iv, § 7). It is still occasionally worn by monks in the Wādī ‘n Natrūn when travelling in the desert.
9 Apophth. Patr., Marcus, iii.
property into four parts, assigned three to the thieves but retained for himself the *lebito* worn at the synaxis (λεβίτων τῶν συνακτικῶν).² So too Jonas the Gardener in the Monastery of Pachomius "had one *lebito* only which he used to wear when he was about to partake of the Divine Mysteries. And he used to put it away straightway (afterwards), and kept it clean for himself for eighty-five years."³ Lastly, Joseph of Pelusium told of a monk at Sinai who "used to come to the church at the Synaxis wearing a small old *maphorion*, full of patchés," and strangely contrasting with the "angelic" appearance of the other monks. He was accordingly reproved by Joseph who, on learning that he had no other clothes, gave him a *lebito* and whatever else he needed. The brother appeared thenceforward "clad like the rest of the brethren."⁴

Thirdly, cross ties of woollen yarn called ἀνάλαβοι, or *rebracchioratoria*⁵ (Coptic, φαιρίης άναμενος),⁶ were worn. They were a pair of bands united at the back of the neck, whence they passed on either side of the throat to cross over the breast and pass under either armpit. These bands were intended to confine the slack of the *lebito*, which could be tucked under them, when the wearer was engaged in manual labor. They are mentioned as part of the monastic garb worn by the "Little Strangers" in Scetis,⁶ and are summarily described by Evagrius of Cellia.⁷ They were naturally regarded as a symbol of the cross.⁸

The fourth item in the monastic uniform was a cape (*mafor, μαφόριον*) covering the neck and shoulders which the *lebito* appears to have left bare, as the following narrative⁹ well shows. "One of the Fathers related concerning Abba Theodore of Phermó: 'I came to him once in the evening and found him wearing a ragged *lebito*, with his breast bare and his cowl before him. And lo, a certain count came to see him...; and I took a piece of his cape and covered his shoulders.'" The *mafor* must, however, have been somewhat larger than the passages above cited suggest; for the monk of Sinai already mentioned went to church clad in a *mafor* only, and Theonas, after giving away his *lebito* to a beggar, seems to have found the *mafor* sufficient for purposes of decency.¹⁰

The fifth and most characteristic article of dress was the "sheepskin" (*melotes, μηλώτης, μηλωτάρμον, Copt. μπόπ*).¹¹ Cassian says explicitly that it was really a goatskin (as also does the *Historia monachorum*)¹² typifying death to all wantonness and carnal desire,¹³ but no doubt its practical purpose was to keep off chill. It was regularly worn when travelling but laid aside in the cell¹⁴; and consequently the phrase "to take up the *melotes*" was

---

1 *Aphosth. Patr.*, Theodore of Phermó, xxix.
2 See P.O., iv, p. 474.
3 *Aphosth. Patr.*, Chronus, v.
4 Cassian, *Inst.*, i. 5, gives a number of other Latin equivalents, none very descriptive.
6 *Aphosth. Patr.*, Macarius, xxxiii.
7 See P.G., xl, col. 1221, where it is described as "the *analabos* which encircles their shoulders crosswise."
8 *R.O.C.*, xii, p. 180, No. 55.
10 Id., xviii.
11 *A.M.G.*, xxv, p. 136.
12 Latin version, ch. ix.
13 *Inst.*, 1, 8.
14 *Aphosth. Patr.*, Macarius, v; Motius, ii; Poemen, xliv; John Coenobita.
PARTICULAR ASPECTS OF MONASTIC LIFE

synonymous with “to depart,” “to go on a journey”: we are told, for example, that the
monks persecuted by Theophilus, “took their meloles and went to Aelia.”

According to Cassian,¹ shoes or sandals were worn by the Egyptian monks only to pro-
tect them from the chill of the mornings in winter, and from the scorching heat of summer;
they were always laid aside when the monks received the Communion. Consequently
literary references to the use of sandals are extremely rare; but Arsenius bequeathed
sandals of palm leaves or palm fiber (σανδάλια σέβενων),² and we also hear of a monk putting
on his sandals before setting out on a journey.³

The whole outfit was completed with a staff of palm wood (ῥάβδος βατής,⁴ ἐπίατος ἱδρυς)⁵
which was used by the monk when travelling. Its adoption as a regular part⁶ of the monastic
equipment was apparently ascribed to Antony; for “Sarapion” is careful to record that
Macarius received from the father of the monks “a staff which had long lain by him.”⁷
The monk’s staff came to be so particularly associated with Macarius that in the nineteenth
century (as Tischendorf records)⁸ it was known as “the staff of Macarius.”

The monastic uniform above described came to be almost universally worn. Only a
few eccentrics rejected it, such as the anchoret of Cellia who confronted the world in a
mat,⁹ or others from Scetis who wore skins alone.¹⁰ Possibly uniformity was attained only
in course of time; for Isaac of Cellia, complaining of the degeneracy of the later monks,
observes that “our Fathers and Abba Pambo used to wear old garments of patchwork and
of palm leaves (σέβενων).”¹¹ Pambo himself taught that a monk’s clothes ought to be
such that if he left them outside his cell for three days, no one would take them away¹²:
this is hardly consistent with the regular use in early years of the formal dress described
by Cassian.

4. The Daily Life of the Monks

For five days in the week the anchorets of Scetis and Cellia lived a life of retirement in
their cells, assembling together only on the “Sabbath” (Saturday) and on the “Lord’s
Day.”¹³ At the Mount of Nitria,¹⁴ the semi-cenobitic life must have necessitated considerable
modifications in this rule. Unfortunately there is no precise description of the mode in
which the day was spent; but from incidental references it is possible in some measure to
reconstruct the daily program.

It was held necessary above all things for the monk to remain in his cell, lest the most

¹ Inst., i, 8. The use of shoes by the modern Egyptian
peasant is very similar.
² Ἀποφθ. Πατρ., Arsenius, XLII.
³ Id., Amma Theodora, VII.
⁴ Id., Macarius, XXXVIII (cf. Preuschen, Palladius und
Rufinus, p. 128, line 15).
⁵ A.M.G., xxv, p. 229.
⁶ It is so mentioned by Evagrius (P.G., XL, col. 1221).
⁷ A.M.G., xxv, p. 86.
⁸ Travels in the East, p. 51.
⁹ Ἀποφθ. Πατρ., Ammonax, IV.
¹⁰ Id., Pambo, III.
¹¹ Id., Isaac the Priest, VII.
¹² Id., Pambo, VI.
¹³ See below, § 6, “The Weekly Assembly.”
¹⁴ Among the monks of the earlier generation it may
have been otherwise. But in any case there was no formal
assembly save on the Sabbath and on Sunday.
ordinary sights and sounds of the world outside should distract him from continuous pursuit of the higher life. When Isaías asked Macarius for a precept, the latter replied: "Flee from men." Isaías then asked: "What is it to flee from men?" and received the answer: "To sit in thy cell and to bewail thy sins."¹ Again, a monk once came to Arsenius and observed that as he could not fast or work, his thoughts inclined him to undertake the visitation of the sick. But the saint, aware that this was a suggestion of the devil, replied: "'Go, eat, drink, sleep and do not work. Only do not stir from thy cell.' For he knew that by patient continuance in his cell the monk is brought to the regulation of his life."²

A general idea of the manner in which the five "week days" were spent may be formed from a saying of Abba Poemen.³ Asked by one of the brethren how he ought to spend his time in his cell, this father advised him to work with his hands, to eat once a day, to keep silence, and to meditate, not to neglect the hours of the synaxis (i.e., the canonical hours), and (apparently) to associate in times of leisure with good companions. How these occupations were distributed throughout the day we shall now attempt to determine.

Isaías of Scetis⁴ recommended the monk to spend half the night in sleep and half in "watching unto prayer." Consequently the day began at or soon after midnight⁵ with the night office. This mode of beginning the day was in accordance with Antony's injunction "to pray frequently, and to sing psalms before sleep and after sleep, and to get by heart the precepts in the Scriptures."⁶ The office was privately observed in the cells,⁷ and when two or more monks were gathered in one cell, they united in the recitation of the psalms, prayers, and other prescribed forms. These will be described in the following section.

After the office the monks "do not rest or sleep till, when the brightness of day comes, the labors of the day succeed the meditation of the night"⁸; that is to say, the hours intervening between the night office and full daylight were spent in meditation.

As soon as it became light, the monk set about manual labor "in such a way that by repeating by heart some Psalm or passage of Scripture, he gives no opportunity for dangerous schemes or evil designs."⁹ Elsewhere Cassian again dwells on this combination of work and devotion: "...manual labor is...unceasingly carried on in the privacy of their cells, meditation upon the Psalms or other Scriptures is never wholly left out."¹⁰

The various forms of manual labor practised at Nitria, Cellia, and Scetis have already been mentioned, but the staple industry of plaiting palm leaves to form baskets or mats

---

1 Apophth. Patr., Macarius, xxvii.
2 Id., Arsenius, xi.
3 Id., Poemen, clviii. Cf. the Rule of Isaías, § xii (P.L., cxxi, col. 426): "When you sit in your cell be concerned about three things, assiduity in prayer, in meditation... and in manual work."
4 Regula, § lvii (P.L., cxxi, col. 432).
5 The exact hour is rather uncertain: in Apophth. Patr., Macarius, xxxiii, this office is observed by the "Little Strangers" and Macarius, πειράς πολιορκεί, i.e., in the early hours.
6 Athanasius, Life of S. Antony, § 55.
7 See pp. 174 and 186.
8 Cassian, Inst., xi, 12.
9 Id., ii, 15.
10 Id., iii, 2.
deserves a more detailed notice. Raw material was furnished by the palm trees (and, no
doubt, rushes) which were numerous in the "marsh" of Scetis. The branches (θαλά
βαλά) cut from these were carried away to the cell and there stacked to become dry: it
was probably behind such a pile that the monk, who escaped massacre with Moses the
Robber and his companions, lay hid. Next, the leaves were stripped off the branch or
stem, and, being now dry, were rendered pliable by being soaked in water: Arsenius, it
will be remembered, did not change the water used for this purpose for a whole year.
When softened the leaves were woven together into a plait or narrow strip (σειρά), the
beginning of which seems to have been a matter of some little difficulty; for Macarius
relates that he showed the "Little Strangers" "the beginning of the plait," as though a
process likely to baffle the unskilled.

Cassian mentions that the jealous brother, who falsely accused Paphnutius, hid his
codex "amid the strips of palm leaves which they call sirae," thus suggesting that the
sirae when woven were laid aside for the time being. When a sufficient quantity of strips
was accumulated, the process of basket making began. After being moistened once more,
the sira was attached by one end to the wall in order to keep it taut, and the length was
then arranged in coils so as to form a hemispherical basket, the edge of each coil being
stitched to that below it and the operator advancing towards the wall as he worked. Some
difficulty was presented in the stitching of the first seam, forming the center or boss of
the bottom of the basket. The process may be illustrated by the following passages:
(1) "A brother came to Abba Theodore that he (Theodore) might teach him to stitch,
bringing the plait with him. But the old man said to him: 'Go, and return hither early
in the morning.' And when the old man rose up, he moistened for him the plait, and pre-
pared for him the first stitching-down (προκαταρραφίν); saying: 'Do thus and thus.'" Macarius
also taught the "Little Strangers" how to stitch the sira. (2) That the end of
the sira was fixed to the wall appears from an anecdote concerning John the Little,
who wove a plait sufficient to have formed two baskets, but in his abstraction stitched
the whole into one, and did not notice his mistake "until he was come night to the
wall."

The baskets manufactured are almost invariably called spyrides (σπυρίδες), that is,
large baskets, but no doubt baskets of all kinds, and perhaps mats, were made; indeed

1 Apophth. Pat., John Colobos, x; Macarius, xi, xxxiii. Dwarf palms still abound in the Wâdi 'n Natrun.
2 Id., Macarius, xi.
3 A strip woven from green leaves would of course have become loose and shrunk as it dried.
4 Apophth. Pat., Arsenius, xxiv, where Alexander is mentioned as engaged in this task.
5 Id., xviii; Theodore of Pheme, xxii. Similarly Antony before setting Paul the Simple to work "moistened the
leaves" (Palladius, Hist. Laus., ch. xxii).
6 Apophth. Pat., Macarius, xxxiii.
7 Cassian, Coll., xviii, 15, 4: "inter plectas palmarum quas illi 'siras' vocant."
8 The modern Egyptian basket is made from the bottom upwards, so I am informed by natives.
10 Id., John Colobos, xi.
11 See Palladius, Hist. Laus., ch. xxxii (ad fin.).
the monk John who was slain during the third sack of Scetis is called Ṣeṣq Ṣeṣq or "maker of malakia" (small baskets).²

Finally, the industry and dexterity of the monks may be gauged from the fact that Abba Achillas plaited no less than twenty fathoms (about one hundred and twenty English feet) of sira, working (contrary to the ordinary custom) from evening through the night.³

The meditation in which the monk was engaged while working included the commitment to memory of the Psalms and other Scriptures and even of edifying works. Antony, as we have already noticed,⁴ strongly recommended this practice; and Macarius urged the monk Theopemptus to learn "the Gospel and the other Scriptures."⁵ Certain of the monks performed astonishing feats of memory: Ammonius the Tall knew by heart the Old and New Testaments, besides considerable passages from patristic works;⁶ and Hero of Cellia, while journeying from Cellia to Scetis, repeated from memory fifteen psalms, the Great Psalm, the Epistle to the Hebrews, Isaiab, part of Jeremiab, The Gospel According to Saint Luke, and Proverbs.⁷

Manual labor probably ended somewhat before noon; for it is said of Arsenius (as though something exceptional) that "he used to plait and stitch until the sixth hour" (noon).⁸ It is a probable conjecture that the midday hours (at least in summer) were given up to repose.

Abba Isaias⁹ enjoined the monk to eat once a day, but not to excess. This rule (like almost every part of the Antonian system) was the outcome of practical experience, as the following apophthegm of Abba Poemen shows. "Abba Joseph asked Abba Poemen how a man ought to fast. Abba Poemen said to him: 'I would have a man eat every day a little, so that he be not full-fed.' Abba Joseph said to him: 'When you were younger did you not fast for two days together?' And the old man said: 'Certainly; and even three and four days or a week together. And the Fathers, being powerful in virtue, made trial of all these; but found it better to eat every day, taking a little at a time. And they handed this down to us as the "royal road," because it is light.'" When Cassian was in Scetis in the last decade of the fourth century the custom of eating one meal a day seems to have been almost universally prevalent.¹¹

The time for this repast was fixed at the ninth hour (about three p.m.), apparently in imitation of the practice of Antony himself, who according to Saint Athanasius used to

---

¹ See Notices et extrait, xxxix, p. 341.
² For malakia see Palladius, loc. cit.; Apophth. Patr., Paul the Great, III (who spent Lent in weaving and unwaving one malakion). The malakion is still manufactured and used in the Oasis of Khârgah; its Arabic name, malkîn (مَلْكَيْنَ), is a mere transliteration from the Greek. In shape this basket is oval with the top and bottom flattened, the former being the lid which is secured by a series of loops. It is used for carriage of food by persons temporarily away from home.
⁴ See p. 198.
⁵ Apophth. Patr., Macarius, III.
⁶ Palladius, Hist. Laus., ch. xi.
⁷ Id., ch. xxvi.
⁸ Apophth. Patr., Arsenius, XVIII.
⁹ Regula, § LVI (P.L., CI, col. 432).
¹⁰ Apophth. Patr., Poemen, XXXI.
¹¹ See Cassian, Coll., II, 19 f.
PARTICULAR ASPECTS OF MONASTIC LIFE

eat at about the ninth hour. In the narrative of the foundation of Cellia Antony replies to Amoun of Nitria: “Let us eat at the ninth hour and go forth...to look for the place”; and again, when the site had been selected, he commends it because the monks of the Mount of Nitria can come over to visit those of Cellia “when they have tasted their little morsel at the ninth hour.”

Sometimes this meal was postponed until evening (six P.M.) as an act of self-denial or austerity; so, when the lax monk Theopemptus informed Macarius that he fasted until the ninth hour, Macarius bade him prolong his fast until evening (δύνε). Agatho also had a disciple who fasted until evening; and the monk Ares bade a brother, who consulted him, live for a year in this way. But this practice was abandoned as rendering the monk heavy and dull at vespers and the night office. Otherwise, the appointed time for the daily meal was changed only when strangers arrived who needed attention. Thus when brethren from a coenobium visited a certain anchorite, the old man, seeing that they were weary, supplied them with an early meal (παρὰ τὴν ὁρῶν). In the fourth century, Cassian has a story of an old man who declared that he had laid his table six times over to entertain brethren who visited him.

The foregoing citations and references serve to correct the impression made by the Lausiac History that monastic life was an orgy of superhuman austerities. Palladius, no doubt, did not intend to convey that impression, but he was so interested in exceptional feats of asceticism, that he leaves unnoticed the more moderate form of abstinence usually prevailing. Allowing for a certain amount of exaggeration, we may admit that the mortifications and austerities recorded by Palladius really took place, but we must regard them as exceptional, and, as the apophthegm of Poemen quoted above makes clear, as belonging to the earlier days of monasticism. The Apophthegmata patrum furnish materials for a picture far less highly colored. We do indeed hear occasionally of extravagant acts such as that of Bisarion who alleges that “for forty nights and days I remained in the midst of thorns, standing up and not sleeping”; or of Agatho who kept a stone in his mouth for three years in order to learn to keep silence. But normally life was regulated on more reasonable lines. To fast for two days together (δύο δόσοι) was something exceptional or even excessive; and Abba Moses is reported by Cassian as even censuring this practice, as to consume two days’ rations at one meal was positively harmful, nay, in certain cases a form of gluttony.

1 Life of S. Antony, § 65.
2 Apophth. Patr., Antony, xxxiv. References to the ninth hour as the regular hour for the meal are very numerous; e.g., Cassian, Coll., ii, 11, 1; Apophth. Patr., Macarius, xxxiv, where the “Little Strangers” prepare a meal for Macarius at the ninth hour.
3 Id., Macarius, iii.
4 Id., Agatho, xx.
5 Id., Ares.
6 Cassian, Coll., ii, 26, 2 f.
8 Id., Cassian, iii.
9 Id., Bisarion, vi.
10 Id., Agatho, xv.
11 Id., Agatho, xx; Ares.
12 Coll., ii, 24, 1.
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

The daily ration of food taken each day was determined by the degree of austerity which the monk appointed himself, but the danger of gluttony made it necessary to fix a maximum. “Our Fathers,” as Abba Moses informed Cassian,1 “have appointed for all a meal of bread alone, the amount of which they fixed at two paxamatia, small loaves known to weigh (together) scarce one pound.”2 This statement is confirmed by numerous passages in the Apophthegmata Patrum and elsewhere: Serenus “used to eat two paxamatia regularly,”3 as did one of the disciples of Agatho, though the other ate this amount only at the end of his two days’ fast.4 Evagrius, also, at one period of his life used to eat one litra (twelve ounces) of bread per day.5 We may notice in passing that Abba Moses recommended that one only of these cakes should be eaten at the ninth hour, the other being reserved in case a visitor appeared needing refreshment, or until evening.6

This regulation also seems to have originated directly or indirectly with Antony. Palladius in his story of the life of Paul the Simple7 relates that when Paul joined Antony, the latter “set the table and brought bread. And when he had set forth the loaves (παξαματίας) of six ounces each, he moistened one for himself—for they were dry—and three for that other (Paul),” that is, Antony regarded two loaves as the proper allowance, but gave up half his share to his guest.

In the passage just quoted, Palladius remarks that Antony moistened the loaves because they were dry. No doubt Antony, like the Upper Egyptian peasant at the present day, had provided himself with a store of bread for a month or more which needed to be soaked in water before it became eatable. In the Mount of Nitria and Scetis, however, where there were bakeries and fresh bread was obtainable at frequent intervals, this was not customary, as we learn from the following quaint anecdote8: Isaias of Scetis, after cutting palm branches in the heat, found he could not swallow his bread, and therefore poured some water with salt into a plate in which he moistened his bread. Unfortunately Achillas entered his cell, and seeing him trying to conceal the plate behind the heap of palm leaves cried out: “Come and see Isaias taking sop in Scetis! If you wish to take sop, get hence into Egypt.”

It was, however, a recognized practice to eat bread with a flavoring of salt. John the Little, for example, said: “While eating bread and salt, the Fathers of Scetis used to say, ‘Let us not make bread and salt necessary to us.’ And so they had strength for the work of God.”9

1 Coll., 11, 19: “praeposuerunt cunctis illis refectionem solius panis cuius aequissimum modum in duobus paxamatiis statuerunt, quos parvulos panes vix librae unius pondus habere certissimum est.” Cf. id., 11, 26, 2: “duobus paxamatiis quae nobis canonicà mensura jure debentur.”
2 I.e., a Roman pound of twelve ounces. The cakes were probably identical with those still commonly used by peasants in Upper Egypt and in the monasteries in the Wâdi 'n Natrûn.
3 Apophth., Patr., Serenus, 1.
4 Id., Agatho, xx.
5 Palladius, Hist. Laus., ch. xxxviii.
6 Cassian, Coll., 11, 26, 2.
7 Palladius, op. cit., ch. xxii. Note that in this case (no doubt to try Paul) Antony did not prepare the meal until after sunset and after vespers.
9 Id., John Colobos, xxix.
PARTICULAR ASPECTS OF MONASTIC LIFE

In Scetis at any rate, as in the Laura of Gerasimus, no cooked food was eaten in the cells on the five week days. Exception to this rule was, however, allowed when visitors coming from a distance arrived. Three instances may be quoted to illustrate this: when Macarius visited the Little Strangers, the meal set forth at the ninth hour consisted of a dish of cooked food and three paxamalia (one for each person present); again, when Moses was visited by certain brethren from Egypt, he prepared for them a little cooked food (εψημα) even though a fast had been proclaimed; and Isaiaas boiled a handful of lentils for a brother whom he had summoned, apparently from some distance.

While bread was the ordinary food of the monks, some of them used it sparingly or not at all. We hear of an anonymous scribe in Scetis who ate no bread; Arsenius used only one tballium of corn in a year, and fed his visitors from this scanty allowance; towards the end of his life Evagrius of Cellia abandoned bread for a vegetable diet of pearl barley and pulse; and Silvanus lived for a time on chick-peas. Other vegetables and fruit, such as onions, figs, apples, and grapes, were rare luxuries presented to the monks and usually distributed by the presiding priest or steward to the sick. Oil was used, but sparingly. Evagrius consumed about a pint in three months. Benjamin relates that though a flask was brought to every man in Scetis (? Cellia) from Alexandria as an offering, none of the brethren used any at all, save himself who bored a hole in his flask with a needle and abstracted a little of the contents. The same father also tells us that on visiting an ascetic in Scetis, he found that he still had with him untouched a flask of oil given him three years previously.

In regard to wine the attitude of the monks was variable. In earlier days its use was regarded as perfectly lawful for Macarius when in company with the brethren used to drink wine as often as it was offered him. The fact that he compensated for this by abstaining from water during one whole day for every cup of wine drunk, merely indicates that he considered some corresponding austerity necessary in his own case. But wine was to be used in moderation. Abba Sisoes accepted two cups of wine, but refused a third, saying: "Refrain, brother; do you not know that it is from Satan?" This probably represents the view of the average monk who deprecated excess in either direction. Yet Paphnutius abstained altogether, and Poemen declared absolutely that monks had no business at all with wine. In any case wine seems to have been drunk only at the week-end assembly of the monks.

1 Cyril of Scythopolis, Life of Euthymius, ch. lxxxix.  
2 Apophth. Patr., Macarius, xxxiii.  
5 Id., Abraham, iii.  
6 Id., Arsenius, xvii.  
7 Palladius, Hist. Laus., ch. xxxviii.  
9 Id., Theodore of Pherme, xxii.  
10 Id., Arsenius, xvi; cf. Cassian, Inst., v, 40.  
11 Id., Achillas, ii.  
12 Hist. Mon. (Latin), ch. xxix.  
13 Palladius, Hist. Laus., ch. xxxviii.  
14 Apophth. Patr., Benjamin, i.  
15 Id., ii.  
16 Even late in the IV century it was freely used at the Mount of Nitria, as Palladius shows.  
17 Apophth. Patr., Macarius, x.  
18 Id., Sisoes, viii.  
19 Id., Paphnutius, ii.  
20 Id., Poemen, xix.  
21 See p. 211.
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

Water, the ordinary drink of the monks, was taken after the daily meal, and apparently then only; for Arsenius urges Alexander to make haste and make his meal “in order to say the office and to partake of water”\(^1\); and Macarius relates that after he had eaten with the “Little Strangers,” the younger of them “brought the water jar, and we drank.”\(^2\)

Palladius says that it was at “about the ninth hour” that the psalmody could be heard proceeding from each cell at the Mount of Nitria, and since Cassian states positively that the only two canonical hours formally observed in Egypt were vespers and the night office, we must conclude that this office is to be identified as vespers. Possibly the new or half-trained monks at that settlement observed vespers at an unusually early hour and retired very early to rest in order to get sufficient sleep ere they rose for the night office. For this they could quote sound precedent, since Antony was wont both to eat and to pray “about the ninth hour,”\(^3\) and recommend his disciples to pray and sing psalms before and after sleep.\(^4\)

Nevertheless at the first meeting of Paul the Simple and Antony, the two observe vespers in the orthodox fashion and at or soon after the regular hour (say, sunset).\(^5\) It is certain that the anchorets (who were hardened to the monastic life) did likewise, saying their office in the evening, and in proof of this we may refer to the ordinary statement “And when it was late (_topic_, i.e., evening) they recited the twelve psalms,”\(^6\) or to Cassian\(^7\) who (quoting Abba Moses) recommends that food be taken at the ninth hour that it may be digested before vespers.

The nature of this office will be described below when we deal with the week-end assemblies in Scetis and other centers. But it may here be added that the prescribed form could be indefinitely extended; for we hear\(^8\) of a certain anchoret who, for purposes of his own, “when it was late, he made a great synaxis,” and prolonged the night office until early morning.

After vespers the monk—unless given to exceptional austerities—retired to rest. The leathern girdle and analabus were laid aside, but the remaining garments above enumerated were retained, with the melotes possibly excepted. Bedding was of the simplest, consisting of a single mat (\(\psi\alpha\beta\omicron\upsilon\sigma\nu, \psi\iacutai\beta\omicron\upsilon\sigma\nu\)) of palm leaves spread upon the ground.\(^9\)

We do not hear that any coverlet, such as was allowed the anchorets in the Laura of Gerasimus,\(^10\) was used, possibly the melotes served this purpose. It is sometimes implied that a pillow or bolster was regarded as a piece of luxury, if not effeminacy\(^11\); yet Cassian records the ordinary use of _embrimia_ (\(\epsilon\mu\beta\omicron\rho\iota\mu\alpha\)) as a support for the head during sleep.\(^12\)

\(^1\) _Apophth. Patr._, Arsenius, xxiv.
\(^2\) Id., Macarius, xxxiii.
\(^3\) Athanasius, _Life of S. Antony_, § 65.
\(^4\) Id., § 55.
\(^5\) Palladius, _Hist. Laus._, ch. xxii.
\(^6\) _Apophth. Patr._, No. 229 (R.O.C., xiv, p. 361).
\(^7\) _Coll._, 11, 26.
\(^8\) _Apophth. Patr._, loc. cit.; cf. p. 207.
\(^9\) See p. 206.
\(^10\) Cyril of Scythopolis, _Life of Euthymius_, ch. xc, states that the anchorets in the laura had for their beds a mat (\(\psi\iacutai\beta\omicron\upsilon\sigma\nu\)), a patchwork coverlet (\(\kappa\epsilon\tau\omicron\nu\omicron\omicron\omicron\nu\)), and a bolster (\(\iota\mu\beta\omicron\rho\iota\mu\omicron\omicron\alpha\omicron\nu\)).
\(^11\) _Apophth. Patr._, Arsenius, xxxvi.
\(^12\) _Coll._, 1, 23, 4.
PARTICULAR ASPECTS OF MONASTIC LIFE

As described by the same authority, these were bundles of coarse papyrus stalks bound at intervals of a foot so as to form long and slender fascines, which were also used as seats for the brethren at the time of the office; and on other occasions.

Thus furnished, the monk slept from vespers until the time for the night office came round.

5. Monastic Visits and Etiquette

Since the anchoret retired to the desert to lead a solitary life, visits prompted by curiosity or by a desire for relief from monotony were strongly discountenanced. Theodore of Pherme dismissed with small ceremony the brother who came to him to learn basket making, so soon as he found his pupil inclined to multiply his visits, alleging that such threw him into temptation and disturbance of mind; and Achillas reproached Betimes (Pijimi) for disturbing him for so frivolous a purpose as to bring him some apples. The author of the Historia monachorum, also, it will be remembered, insists on the isolation in which the solitaries at Cellia dwelt, affirming that it was only in cases of sickness or in order to edify and instruct the less proficient that they ventured to visit one another. From the Apophthegmata patrum it is apparent that younger monks would often visit the seniors to ask of them some piece of advice or "word of salvation." But doubtless this principle was liberally interpreted; for notices of monastic visits are not rare.

The usual time for paying visits was the interval between the ninth hour and vespers, if we may judge by Antony’s recommendation that the brethren from the Mount of Nitria should visit those at Cellia at this opportunity, but there is little other evidence on this matter. Strangers who came from a distance, as from the Delta to Scetis, were less able to regulate the time of their arrival.

On arrival, the visitor was expected to knock at the door, which was opened by the host. The stranger was then greeted, ushered into the cell, and relieved of his meolotes or sheepskin. He was then invited to offer up a prayer and, when he had complied, to sit down. All these points are illustrated by one or other of the Apophthegmata patrum. Macarius thus relates his reception at the cell of the "Little Strangers": "When I had knocked, they opened and greeted me silently. And after I had offered a prayer, I sat down." Again, when certain monks of Scetis visited John the Cenobite, their host greeted them, but turned again and continued his work; whereupon they asked indignantly: "John, who...made you a monk, and did not teach you to take from the brethren their sheepskins, and to say to them, 'Say a prayer,' or, 'Sit down'?

1 Coll. 1, 23, 4: "gros souribus papyris in longos gracilescus fasciculos coaptatis. Quae pedali intervallo pariter colligata nunc quidem humillimum sedile...fratribus in synaxi considentibus praestant, nunc vero subiecta cervicibus dormientium praebent capita non nimis durum sed tractabile aptumque fulcimentum."
3 Id., Achillas, ii.
4 Latin version, ch. xxii.
5 Apophth. Patr., Macarius, xxiii, xxv, xxviii.
6 Id., Macarius, xxxix.
7 Id., John Cenobita.
8 Cf. id., Motius, ii., where the old man demands of his visitors, "Where are your sheepskins?"
The seats with which visitors were accommodated were the *embrimia* described above, as is shown by another apophthegm¹: “The old man therefore set two *embrimia*...and said, ‘Sit down.’” If the strangers came from any distance, their host then set a table and prepared a meal for them, irrespective of the hour²: Abba Moses as reported by Cassian³ recommends that half the day’s ration of bread should be reserved from the ninth hour until evening in case a visitor appeared; but this ordinary fare was supplemented by a dish of cooked food—probably lentils or beans.⁴

When taking a cup or dish it was usual for the monk to say, “Pardon me” (συγγρώμησον)—a formula of politeness. Theodore of Pherme was once associating with the brethren in Scetis, and as they ate they took their cups in silence (apparently out of shyness), “and did not say the ‘Pardon.’ And Abba Theodore said: ‘The monks have destroyed their title to nobility, the phrase Pardon.’”⁵ Either as a piece of self-restraint or of good manners, the monk, whether in his own cell or as a visitor, was expected not to eat greedily or voraciously.⁶

After the meal, conversation followed until the hour of vespers came when host and guests said the office together. All then lay down to sleep, rising again to observe the night office.

The visitor took his leave with the formula, “Pray for me.”⁷

Before we leave this subject, it may be well to quote *in extenso* Macarius’ account of his visit to the “Little Strangers”⁸ to which frequent reference has been made in the foregoing pages. Macarius, it must be remembered, wished to get a knowledge of the life and piety of the two youths.

“When I had knocked,” he relates, “they opened, and greeted me in silence. And when I had prayed, I sat down. And the elder having made a sign to the younger to go out, sat down to weave his plait, without speaking anything. And at the ninth hour he knocked,⁹ and the younger brother came and made a little cooked food, and set a table beside me at a sign from the elder. And he put on it three *paxamati* and stood silent. Then I said: ‘Arise, let us eat.’ So we rose up and ate. And he brought the water jar; and we drank. But when it was evening, they said to me: ‘Will you depart?’ And I replied: ‘Nay, but I will sleep here.’ So they placed for me a mat apart, and another for themselves in the corner. Then they took off their girdles and *analabi*, and laid themselves down together on the mat before my eyes.... And when they thought I slept, the elder nudged the younger in the side, and they rose up, girded themselves, and stretched forth their hands to Heaven....

¹ Latin in Roswey, *Vitæ patrum*, v, xviii, p. 636, No. 3.
³ Cassian, *Coll.*, xi, 26, 2.
⁴ See *Apophth. Patr.*, Macarius, xxxiii; Moses, v; Esaias, vi; Cassian, *Coll.*, ii, 21, 1.
⁵ *Apophth. Patr.*, Theodore of Phærme, vi.
⁶ Id., No. 229 (R.O.C., xiv, p. 361).
⁷ Cf. id., Romeus, 1.
⁸ Id., Macarius, xxxiii.
⁹ It is not clear whether this was to “sound the hour” or merely as a signal to the younger brother.
PARTicular ASPECTS OF MONASTIC LIFE

"And when they laid themselves down in the early morning, I showed that I was awake, and they did likewise. Then the elder said to me this word alone: 'Wilt thou that we recite the Twelve Psalms?' I said, 'Yea.' And the younger chanted five psalms of six verses each\(^1\) and one Alleluia.... Likewise also the elder.... And I also said a little from memory. And when I went forth I said, 'Pray for me.' But they made obeisance in silence."

Very different is the amusing account of a visit paid by brethren from a coenobium to an anchoret in the desert (? of Cellia).\(^2\)

The old man, seeing that they were weary with their journey, supplied them with an early meal and sought to make them comfortable. Thus when evening came, he recited with them only the bare office of Twelve Psalms and so also at the night office. From this the visitors concluded that the anchorets led an easier life than the cenobites. Their remarks, however, were overheard by their host, who on their departure to visit another anchoret, sent the cryptic message, "Do not water the cabbages." The second anchoret took the hint, and kept his visitors at work, unfed, until evening, when he inflicted on them "a great synaxis." After this (as a concession to their weariness) he set food before them; though it was, he said, unusual for such as he to eat at all during the day. However, he would furnish them with a feast specially provided for their sakes—dry bread and salt, with a little vinegar to the salt. Next the relentless host forced them to join in a night office which was protracted until early morning, suavely remarking that for their sakes he would not finish the complete canon.

Worn out by this ordeal, the visitors hinted at an early departure. The hermit begged them to stay at least three days "according to our custom in the desert"; but they had already had more than enough and left hurriedly.

6. The Weekly Assembly

At the Laura of Gerasimus, which has already furnished us with many parallels to the customs observed in Scetis and the other monastic colonies, the anchorets remained solitary in their cells for five days, but assembled together at the coenobium in the midst of the laura on the Sabbath and Sunday to partake of the Communion and take a meal in common, where they enjoyed cooked food and a little wine. Further, on the Sabbath they brought in to the central coenobium the produce of their manual labor during the past five days, and on the Sunday evening received their allowance or ration (\(\delta\nu\alpha\lambda\omega\mu\alpha\)) consisting of bread, dates, and a vessel of water together with palm branches for their manual labor, for the following week.\(^3\)

From the Lausiac History of Palladius\(^4\) and from the Historia monachorum\(^5\) we know that there were weekly assemblies for public worship on the Sabbath and on Sunday at

---

1 Or perhaps sections of six verses, each of which counted as a psalm: see p. 209.
3 Cyril of Scythopolis, Life of Euthymius, chs. lxxxix, xc.
4 Ch. vii.
5 Latin version, ch. xxii.
the Mount of Nitria and Cellia, while Cassian\textsuperscript{1} and the \textit{Aposthagmata patrum}\textsuperscript{2} show that the same institution was observed in Sceitis also, as indeed it was in all settlements of anchorites.\textsuperscript{3} The proceedings at these weekly assemblies may be classified under three heads: religious observances, the common meal, semi-secular business.

The religious ceremonies observed on the Sabbath and Sunday were the celebration of the Communion, collective observance of vespers, and the night office.

It was customary at the period with which we are dealing for the Communion to be celebrated in Egypt both on the Sabbath (Saturday) and on the Lord's Day (Sunday). Thus Cassian\textsuperscript{4} refers to these as days "on which they (the Egyptian monks) assemble at the third hour for the purpose of (celebrating) the Holy Communion"; Macarius of Alexandria observes, "never a Sabbath nor Sunday passes without my seeing the angel of the altar...while I make the Offering to God"\textsuperscript{5}; while Epime, who was martyred under Diocletian, states that since there is no priest in his village, "I go round every village (near) to find some one to give us the Communion on the Sabbath and Lord's day."\textsuperscript{6}

In the passage just quoted Cassian speaks of the monks as assembling at the third hour (about nine A.M.). This seems to mean that the Communion was celebrated then, and such is perhaps the fact. For elsewhere we have a definite reference to celebration of the Communion at the third hour.\textsuperscript{7} Yet in another passage\textsuperscript{8} Cassian declares that to avoid any interruption in their devotions the Egyptian monks "are wont to rise even before cockcrow, and after the canonical Mass has been celebrated, to prolong their vigils afterwards until daylight." In this he is supported by various evidence. The \textit{Historia monachorum}, quoted below, apparently connects the Mass with the night office: the so-called Rule of Macarius (earlier than 500 A.D.) also refers to the Mass as connected with vigils\textsuperscript{9}; a very early celebration was in use in the ninth century in Sceticis\textsuperscript{10}; and in the early eighteenth century the combination of the night office and Mass was still maintained in the monasteries of the Wādi 'n Natrūn.\textsuperscript{11}

Remembering that the authorities all indicate two celebrations, we can only conclude that Mass was said in conjunction with the night office or vigils on the Sabbath

\textsuperscript{1} See \textit{Coll.}, \textit{III}, \textit{I} (on Paphnutius' weekly journey to the church on the Sabbath and Sunday); \textit{xviii}, \textit{15}, \textit{6} (on the same father's penance made at the church door on these days, when falsely accused of theft).
\textsuperscript{2} Daniel, \textit{vii}; Moses, \textit{v}.
\textsuperscript{4} \textit{Inst.}, \textit{III}, \textit{2}: cf. Timothy of Alexandria, \textit{Responza Canonica} (P.G., \textit{xxxiii}, col. 1305), who excepts the Sabbath and Sunday: "because on them the Spiritual Sacrifice is offered to the Lord." So also Paphnutius when in disgrace used to go to the church "on the Sabbath Day or on Sunday, not to partake of the Holy Communion, but to prostrate himself," etc. (Cassian, \textit{Coll.}, \textit{xviii}, 15, 6).
\textsuperscript{5} See \textit{A.M.G.}, \textit{xxv}, pp. 254 f.
\textsuperscript{6} \textit{Acta martyrum}, ed. Hyvernat and Balestri, p. 82.
\textsuperscript{7} In \textit{the Life of Hilaria} (Wensinck, \textit{Legends of Eastern Saints}, \textit{II}, p. 45): "So on Sunday morning, at the third hour the solitary assembled into the...church" (in Sceticis).
\textsuperscript{8} Cassian, \textit{Inst.}, \textit{III}, \textit{5}, \textit{2}.
\textsuperscript{10} See p. 326.
\textsuperscript{11} See Sicard, \textit{Letters édifiantes et curieuses}, t. v, p. 45. The whole rite lasted from 2 A.M. until daybreak.
"as it dawned towards the Lord's Day," and *again* at the third hour on Sunday morning.

Notices of the actual rite of Celebration are infrequent; consequently only a few (though not uninteresting) details can be recorded here. From a narrative of Arsenius preserved by Abba Daniel, we learn that during some part of the rite the monks stood upon their *embrimia* (three are mentioned as standing together upon one of these supports); that the acts of Consecration and the altar itself were open to view and not hidden behind screens, as in the mediaeval period of Coptic Church history; and that the monks came up from their places to the altar to receive the Sacrament. Moreover, the context of the apophthegm referred to leaves little or no doubt but that the Elements were administered together; since the monk there described as sceptical concerning the Real Presence appeared to receive from the priest a portion of *bleeding* flesh.

We have hitherto deferred any detailed account of the office for the two canonical hours as recited on week days in the cells of the monks, because Cassian, our prime authority, evidently describes the public and not the private celebration of them. That these hours were publicly observed on the Sabbath and Lord's Day by the Egyptian monks generally, and by those of Scetis in particular, is established first by Cassian's authority, and secondly by the story in the *Historia monachorum* of Macarius' summons to the church by a demon to behold the brethren at vigils.

Cassian gives a very minute and detailed account of these services. Twelve psalms were chanted at each, and were followed by two lessons, one from the Old, and one from the New Testament (on the Sabbath and Sunday, however, both lessons were from the New Testament, one from the Epistles or *Acts*, and one from the Gospels). The twelfth psalm was always ended with an alleluia and the Gloria and must be one of the psalms which were headed "Alleluia" in the psalter. The longer psalms were divided up into two or three sections, each of which was reckoned as a complete psalm.

The recitation or chanting was not, however, continuous. Each psalm, or its equivalent, was followed by a prayer or space for prayer; and in this interval the monks stood praying with outspread hands for a time, then, casting themselves for a moment upon the ground, rose and stood as before in prayer.

---

1. This surely is the meaning of phrases such as Cassian's "vespera Sabbati quae lucescit in diei dominicum" (*Inst.*, ii, 18); Palladius' *σαββάτου διάφανον* (*Hist. Laus.*, ch. xvi: in the anecdote of Nathanael and the devil, quoted p. 211); and ἐν τῷ σαββάτῳ εἰσφωνοντος Κυριακῆς (*Apophth. Patr.*, Arsenius, xxx).
3. Possibly this was merely to command a clear view of the altar.
5. *Inst.*, ii, 4 f.
6. It was probably by way of a lesson that Macarius "repeated a little from memory" at vigils in the cell of the "Little Strangers."
7. So the younger of the "Little Strangers" chanted "five psalms of six verses each" and one Alleluia (*Apophth. Patr.*, Macarius, xxxiii).
8. This is perhaps what is meant by the "five psalms of six verses."
10. This was of course the regular posture during prayer.
The chantings or recitation of the psalms might be divided equally between two, three, or four brethren.¹ If any one of these continued for too long, the senior monk present would clap his hands as a sign for all to rise for prayer. During the chantings, the congregation remained seated on their low seats;² keeping complete silence.

That the foregoing account may be regarded as an exact description of the proceedings in Scetis is warranted first by the fact that Cassian was thoroughly familiar with life there, and secondly by the account of vigils given in the Historia monachorum.³ One night (this authority relates) Macarius was summoned by a demon to attend vigils to see how prominent a part the powers of evil played in the service. When Macarius entered the church, therefore, he perceived that the place was full of imps in the shapes of Ethiopian boys who flitted hither and thither. “It is the custom there,” says the author, “for one to recite the psalm while the rest sit and either listen or respond.”⁴ The imps, then, were busy closing the eyes of the monks to make them sleep,⁵ or putting a finger in their mouths to make them yawn. And after the psalm, when the brethren were wont to cast themselves down to pray, the imps sought by various suggestions to divert their thoughts. Furthermore, when the monks received the Communion Macarius saw these same imps placing hot coals in the hands of the unworthy, while the real Element was conveyed back to the altar.

In this narrative the Communion appears to have followed vigils (though this is not definitely stated), suggesting that the Celebration took place quite early, as some of our evidence suggests, rather than at the third hour.⁶

While Cassian shows that vespers and vigils were both publicly observed at the weekly assemblies, it is not quite clear whether both were celebrated on the Sabbath and on Sunday, or only on the former. For we do not know at what hour the assembly dispersed, whether before or after vespers on Sunday evening; it was in the evening however that the hermits in the Laura of Gerasimus returned to their cells. To draw up an exact time-table of the proceedings seems to be impossible.

As in the Laura of Gerasimus, so in Scetis (and presumably at the Mount of Nitria and Cellia) the brethren assembled on the Sabbath and Sunday were regaled with cooked food and even with wine. This meal was apparently known as the ἁγάπη (agape).

In our texts the term agape is used in various senses more or less closely connected. (1) In the ordinary request, “Do me an agape,” it means no more than “kindness” or “charitable action.” (2) Elsewhere it denotes a meal of some kind. In this latter sense the use of the term is fourfold:

1 The “Little Strangers,” again, divided the psalmody between them.
2 I.e., the embrimia described above.
3 Latin version, ch. xxix.
4 Cassian, however, says there were no responses.
5 This seems to have happened not infrequently: certain fathers asked Poemen whether in such a case it was right to nudge them, to wake them up (Apophth. Patr., Poemen, xci).
6 See p. 208.

210
PARTICULAR ASPECTS OF MONASTIC LIFE

The agape was a festival commemorative of a saint or of an ordinary person deceased. In either case its two features were celebration of Mass and a meal or banquet—possibly a survival of the ancient Egyptian funerary feasts. It was in the latter of these allied senses that Arsenius bade his disciples "take no thought to celebrate agapae" on his behalf after he was dead. Again, in his notice on Nathanael of Mount Nitria, Palladius tells us that the devil in the guise of a lad bringing loaves of bread sought to tempt that father from his cell by saying, "I am carrying bread; for it is the agape of such and such a brother, and to-morrow when the Sabbath dawns (διαβαίνωντος) there is need of the Offerings": possibly in this instance the agape was commemorative of a dead monk; though this is by no means certain.

Secondly, the agape might be a meal provided by the charitable for those in need, such as was afforded by one of the two brothers Paesius and Isaia, who "entertained every stranger, every feeble person, every aged man, every poor person, setting up three tables each Lord's Day and Sabbath."  

Again the common meal partaken of by the monks on the Sabbath and Sunday was called an agape. This will be discussed immediately below.

Lastly, the term was loosely applied to the ordinary monastic meal, as when John the Little called upon the fathers at the ninth hour to join him in making an agape—certainly an ordinary meal, as the context shows.

At Scetis, Cellia, and presumably at the Mount of Nitria, the brethren assembled on the Sabbath and Sunday used to eat together, as the citations given below will fully show. Now Cassian informs us that "from the evening of the Sabbath which dawns upon the Lord's Day (quae lucescit in diem dominicum, i.e., which directly precedes Sunday), the Egyptians do not bend the knee... nor on those days is the rule of fasting observed among them." At this common meal therefore the ordinary monastic fare was so far improved that the monks partook of bread, cooked food, and wine.

This meal was regularly held in the church (either because it was semi-ritual in character, or because that building alone was available). The literary authorities for this statement are very numerous, but the following must suffice: "Once when the brethren were eating in the church of Cellia at the Feast of Easter, they gave a brother a cup of wine...." or again: "Once, when there was a feast at Cellia, the brethren were eating in the

1 Typicum of S. Saba, § 14; Hippolytus, Canones, § 33.
2 A.M.G., xxv, p. 62, where it is stated that Macarius held such a festival in memory of his deceased parents.
3 Aepith. Patr., Arsenius, xxxix.
4 Hist. Laus., ch. xvi.
5 The meaning is, however, not altogether clear: see p. 200, note 1.
6 Hist. Laus., ch. xiv: cf. Hippolytus, Canones, § 32, and Roswey, Vitae patrum, p. 591, No. 46: "the poor there (at Oxyrhynchus) came on the evening of the Sabbath to receive the agape."
7 Theodore of the Studium, Life of Arsenius, § v.
8 Inst., 11, 18.
9 Aepith. Patr., Isaac of Thebes, 11.
10 Cassian, Coll., 11, 19, 1: "coctionis pulmentum vel die dominico vel sabbato."
11 Canon xxviii of the Council of Laodicea (363 a.d.), however, ordained that οὐ δὲ ἐν τοῖς κυριακοῖς ἢ ἐν ταῖς ἐκ- κλησίαις τὰς λειμάνας δύσατος τοιῶν καὶ ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ τοῦ θεοῦ θησίαν καὶ ἀδικούσεται στραφόντιν.
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

church..." On the latter occasion, be it noted, an over zealous brother refused to take cooked food but asked for salt instead. At Raithu the senior monks had a separate table; for it is said that "when (the monks) were eating in the church they compelled them (Peter the Pionite and Epimachus) to go to the table of the elders": no doubt there was a similar distinction drawn between the older and younger monks in the western deserts also.

Possibly the cost of the agape was defrayed by the steward from the common funds, or possibly each monk paid in his own share. But on some occasions a single brother provided the whole. Agatho, for example, says: "I have never given an agape." More illuminating is the following statement concerning Isaac the Theban: "Often he used to give the brethren paxamalia after the synaxis and a cup of wine. But he himself would not accept them, not as repulsing the blessing of the brethren, but in order to retain the peace of the synaxis." Nevertheless this cannot well have been done when the number of brethren was very large.

We must now consider a rather important matter—the time or times at which the agape was eaten.

Socrates in an important notice observes that the Egyptians (inhabitants of the Delta) and they of the Thebaid (Upper Egypt) "celebrate the synaxis (Communion) on the Sabbath, but do not partake of the Mysteries as the Christians are accustomed. For after feasting and taking their fill of all manner of meats, they make the Offering about eventide and partake of the Mysteries." If this practice obtained in the desert monasteries as it did in the towns and villages of Egypt, then the agape was held in the evening. This is practically confirmed by an apopthegm stating that a certain brother at Cellia "fasted during the week of Easter. And when they were gathered together late (i.e., in the evening), he fled that he might not eat in the church."

On the other hand, the agape provided by Isaac the Theban certainly followed the synaxis, or Communion; and this appears to have been the use at the "Mount of Abba Antony" (i.e., Pispir) when Sisoes dwelt there. Above all, in a Latin apopthegm it is related of a certain monk that "when he had come late on the Sabbath to communicate at the Mass, he used to flee straightway afterwards, lest he should be forced by the brethren to eat in the church." Definite reference is made moreover to an agape following the Mass in the Historia Treviresis. Unless therefore the time of the agape was changed from before to

1 R.O.C., xiv, p. 367, No. 256.
2 Occasionally we hear of monks who from over austerity avoided the agape. Abba Motti cautioned a disciple against seeking to get a name by doing this (Apopth. Patr., Motti, 1).
3 Id., Petrus Pionites, iii.
4 Id., Agatho, xvii.
5 Id., Isaac of Thebes, ii. Possibly the "agape of such and such a brother" mentioned in the story of Nathanael at the Mount of Nitria (Palladius, Hist. Laus., ch. xvi) was such a provided meal; but see p. 211.
6 H.E., v, 22.
8 Popth. Patr., Sisoes, viii.
9 Rosveyd, Vitae patrum, p. 572, No. 69.
after the Communion, two such meals were eaten at the weekly assembly; the first in the evening of the Sabbath, and the second on the morning of Sunday (probably after the celebration of Mass at the ninth hour). Cassian indeed seems to imply as much when he speaks of taking cooked food “on the Sunday or on the Sabbath.”

From one point of view the agape was a social meal, at which conversation was ordinarily allowed, though it might be checked for some special reason. For example: “When there was an agape and the brethren were eating in the Church and conversing with one another, the Priest of Pelusium rebuked them and said: ‘Be silent, brethren; for I have seen a brother eating with you and drinking as many cups as you, whose prayer ascends up before God as fire.’” That it was a solemn rather than a convivial gathering is well shown in the following: “The Fathers used to say that while the brethren were eating at the agape, one brother at the table laughed. And Abba John (the Little), beholding him, wept and said: ‘What then hath this brother in his heart that he laughed when he ought rather to have wept seeing that he is eating the agape?’”

If this solemn aspect of the agape was based upon its close connection with Communion (as the passage quoted from Socrates distinctly suggests), this observance is none other than a survival of the much abused agape, or love feast, so prominent in the history of the primitive Christian Church.

Cyril of Scythopolis informs us that at the Laura of Gerasimus the anchorites used to bring in the result of their week’s handiwork to the central coenobium on the Sabbath; on Sunday evening they carried back to their cells a jar of water and supplies for the next five days. That there was a similar arrangement at Cellia and Scetis is extremely probable; but there is little evidence to establish the point. The few facts available are the following.

According to Cassian, Paphnutius of Scetis used to carry away to his cell a vessel of water after the assembly on the Sabbath and Sunday, and this supply used to last him for the remainder of the week. Probably a corresponding supply of food was also taken; for when the monastic organization was developed it was customary for the monk to have a week’s ration of bread in his cell. John the Cenobite, for instance, used to have “seven days’ food, that is, seven pairs of paxamadia laid aside in a prochirium or hand-basket” that he might know at the end of the week if he had forgotten to eat on any day. So too an apophthegm in one of the Latin collections alludes to the paxamadia as being kept in

---

1 Cassian, Coll., 11, 19, 1: “coctionis pulmentum vel die dominico vel sabbato (sumentes).” Cassian’s use of vel... vel is perplexing: it cannot well present an alternative. See also Cyril of Scythopolis, Life of Euthymius, ch. LXXIX, which says of the anchorites in the Laura of Gerasimus “on the Sabbath and Sunday they come to the church, and after partaking of the holy Mysteries... partake of cooked food and a little wine.” The point is perhaps clinched by the following apophthegm (Rosweyd, Vitas patrum, p. 607, No. 109): “they who dwelt in Scetis fasted during the week; and when the Sabbath was come, the Egyptians sat down to eat with the old men.”

3 Id., John Colobos, ix.
4 See I Cor. xi: 17 f.; Jude: 12.
5 Life of Euthymius, ch. LXXIX.
6 Coll., 111, 1; Chaeremon also (Apophth. Patr., Chaeremon) used to carry out one by one two jars of water.
7 Cassian, Coll., xix, 4, 2.
8 Rosweyd, Vitas patrum, p. 493, No. 4.
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

a small basket—again indicating that the supply on hand was small, and therefore renewed at frequent intervals. No other such suitable opportunity as the weekly assembly could be found. While therefore we have little positive evidence, analogy makes it highly probable that the weekly assembly closed with a general issue of necessaries, after which the anchorites dispersed to their cells to spend five more days in solitude.

7. The Cells of the Monks and Their Furniture

The cells in which the monks dwelt are nowhere described, and casual allusions suffice to form only a very general picture of them.

Though Palladius\(^1\) speaks of the cells of the Tall Brothers at Cellia as “huts sufficient merely to ward off the stress of the sun’s glow and the dew of the atmosphere,” there is some reason to think this is rhetorical depreciation. In the Historia monachorum the cell of Ammonius is described as furnished with all things necessary and surrounded with a wall of brick (to secure seclusion) inclosing a well\(^2\); the cell of Evagrius was substantial enough to remain standing from the fourth to the latter part of the sixth century\(^3\); and Macarius of Alexandria could secure privacy by shutting up the courtyard which lay before his cell.\(^4\) At Cellia, then, the homes of the monks were sometimes substantial, though they are not likely to have been in the least convenient.

As to the “tabernacles” at the Mount of Nitria nothing can be said, unless archaeological evidence should in the future be forthcoming. Seeing that some of them housed at least one hundred monks,\(^5\) certain of them must have been of considerable size. How far the “two domed cells,” built by Amoun of Nitria for himself,\(^6\) were imitated by his followers is matter for conjecture.

In Scetis the cells, usually termed caves, were wholly or partly contrived in the rock. The back part was a cavern, natural or artificial, with a fore part and courtyard of loose stone rubble or brick. Something of the sort is suggested by Macarius’ instructions to the “Little Strangers”\(^7\): “The old man showed them a hard rock and said, ‘Quarry here, and bring yourselves wood from the marsh; and when you have roofed (your cell), abide in it.’”

The architecture must have been primitive. There was a door which could be locked. The interior seems to have been undivided, and was perhaps plastered with mud.\(^8\) Ordinarily each cell was provided with windows (Macarius of Alexandria had certain cells purposely deprived of this convenience)\(^9\) and with cupboards. This last feature deserves some special

---

1 Dial. de vita Job. Chrys., § xvii.
2 Hist. Mon. (Latin), ch. xxiii.
3 John Moschus, Pratum spirittuale, clxxvii.
4 Palladius, Hist. Laus., ch. xviii (Butler’s ed., p. 53).
5 See p. 172.
6 Palladius, Hist. Laus., ch. viii. Presumably one was a sleeping room, the other for use by day.
7 Apophth. Patr., Macarius, xxxiii.
8 Id., Or, i; cf. p. 50.
9 Palladius, Hist. Laus., ch. xviii (Butler’s ed., p. 51).
notice. They were apparently sunk in the wall and no more than blind windows (hence called θυρίδες or θυρίδια, Coptic, άφορήτ). In these any valuables or treasured articles were bestowed. Pambo, according to the Coptic recension of the Lausiatic History, bade his steward place Melania’s gift of money in the cupboard. They also served as bookcases. ‘‘You have taken that which belongs to widows and orphans,’ said Sarapion to an unhappy bibliophile, ‘and placed it in this cupboard.’ For he saw it full of books’; and Amoi declared: ‘‘I have seen men fleeing and leaving their cupboards strewn with parchment books; nor did they (stay to) close the cupboard-doors, but departed leaving them open.’ The last citation assures us that the cupboards could be closed with shutters or doors.

Books, though not numerous, were certainly not rare: Theodore of Pherme is twice mentioned as an owner of books; Paphnutius of Scetis was accused of stealing a book from a fellow monk; Sisoes called for ‘‘the book of the holy Athanasius’’ in order to discomfort certain Arians; and one of the Tall Brothers owned a collection of ‘‘canonical and excellent’’ books which were burned by Theophilus in his raid on the Mount of Nitria and Cellia. Invariably (we may be sure) these were either copies of the Scriptures or theological works of various kinds.

In every cell, too, there would be found a pile of palm branches, needles and thread for stitching for use in basket making, plaited strips of palm leaves (σεραί, plectae), and an accumulation of finished baskets. At the Mount of Nitria there must have been looms for flax weaving. A scribe would of course have by him a supply of pens, material for ink, and papyrus or parchment. We hear also of a certain number of common tools needed in manual labor such as axes, hoes, sickles (the modern mindal) for cutting palm branches, ladders for climbing in and out of pits, and so forth.

Furniture in the modern sense was very elementary. There was a table for meals, and the embrimia already described served as seats by day and as bolsters by night. There were also sleeping mats (ψιθαία); beds or couches (χαράδρια, χαλάδρια, κοιτωνάρια) with pillows were rare and reserved for the sick alone.

Finally there was a small variety of domestic utensils; a large store-jar (πίθος) for either water or grain; a hand-basket to hold the week’s supply of paxamatia or bread;
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

a small box (κάμψιον) for salt; τίρσ (ὀδρίαι); balalis (λαγύνω), kullebs (βαυκάλια, water bottles) for the storage, transport, and drinking of water; and some plates (πινάκια) and cooking pots (χύτραι), with means for making fire, which probably complete the list.

1 Vita Melaniae iunioris, ch. 38 (Analecta Bollandiana, t. xxii).
2 Palladius, Hist. Laos., ch. xix.
3 Ἀποφθ. Patr., Moses, xiii; Chaeremon.
4 Id., John Colobos, vii; Macarius, xxxiii.
5 Id., Achillas, iii.
6 Id., Esaias, vi.
SECTION II

THE BYZANTINE PERIOD
451–641 A.D.

(FROM THE COUNCIL OF CHALCEDON TO THE ARAB CONQUEST)
CHAPTER I

THE MONOPHYSITE SCHISM AND THE MONASTERIES

1. Consequences of the Council of Chalcedon

The date of the Council of Chalcedon marks a turning point in the history of the Egyptian Church. Hitherto that Church had been a branch of a single international organization; after 451 A.D. it separated from the main body and became a distinct national institution—the Coptic Church.

The events which led up to this result may be briefly summarized. In 448 Eutyches, a priest and abbot of a monastery near Constantinople, had been excommunicated by Flavian, the patriarch of that city, for heretical teaching. His doctrine, that the Nature of Christ after the Incarnation was single and not twofold, was based by him upon an expression used by Cyril of Alexandria and resting on the authority of Athanasius himself—"one incarnate Nature of God the Word." The sentence of excommunication pronounced by Flavian might therefore be construed—rightly or wrongly—as casting a slur upon the two great fathers of the Egyptian Church—a consideration which may have had weight in determining the attitude subsequently taken by Dioscorus, the Patriarch of Alexandria.

For his own purposes Chrysaphius, the minister of Theodosius II, determined to champion Eutyches against Flavian, and with this aim secured for him the active support of the Egyptian Patriarch Dioscorus. The emperor, influenced by his minister, accepted the petition of Dioscorus for a settlement of the point of faith at issue between Eutyches and Flavian, and directed that an ecumenical council should assemble for the purpose at Ephesus. The proceedings of this assembly, which met in 449, were so disgraced by the violence of Dioscorus and his supporters as to win for the council the nickname of "Latrocinium" or Brigands' Council. The finding was that Eutyches was not heretical and that his excommunication was therefore invalid; and conversely, that Flavian should be deposed for putting his own interpretation upon the Creed of Nicaea.
So far Dioscorus had triumphed. But on the death of Theodosius, Marcian came to the imperial throne, and the influence of his wife, Pulcheria, was altogether on the side of the orthodox party. In 451, therefore, a new council was held at Chalcedon in which Dioscorus was from the first treated as on his trial, though on such conditions he refused to appear. The deliberations of the council resulted in a condemnation of the Monophysite doctrine of Eutyches, and the Letter of Pope Leo of Rome to Flavian (the execrated Tome of Leo of Coptic history) was adopted as truly defining the orthodox doctrine of the unity of Christ’s Person alone in the following terms: “the divine Nature and the human Nature, each remaining perfect, have been united in One Person...Neither Nature is altered by the other: He who is truly God is also truly Man.” Dioscorus was deposed and banished to Gangra where the remainder of his life was spent.

The great majority of Egyptian Christians utterly refused to accept the condemnation of Dioscorus, and Proterius, his successor, after maintaining his position for a while by military aid, was murdered by the Alexandrian mob. It is a significant fact that this crime was foretold with obvious approval by a certain Potamon, formerly a monk of Scetis, but at the time of the outrage (457) dwelling in Egypt.1

The doctrinal point involved seemed to the Egyptian of the fifth century one of the most solemn and vital importance; and to it, as such, due weight must be assigned as a cause of the schism. But this does not explain fully the obstinacy with which the Monophysites rejected the decision of the Council of Chalcedon. Had the Egyptian Church at the first been anxious to maintain peace, it is probable that an agreement might have been reached. But when he took up the cause of Eutyches, Dioscorus was more eager to win a triumph over the See of Constantinople than to come to an understanding over the disputed doctrine. However sincerely held, the Monophysite dogma was really only a casus belli.

The real causes of the stubborn animosity with which the Egyptians opposed the formula of Chalcedon are probably two. First, the long standing jealousy of the Church of Alexandria of that of Constantinople. The third canon of the Council of Constantinople (381 A.D.) had assigned precedence to the See of Constantinople over all other sees save Rome—a step not likely to please the See of Alexandria2; and the bitterness which resulted had (probably) largely actuated Theophilus in his hostility to John Chrysostom3 at the beginning of the fifth century. Instinctive esprit de corps must have caused every officer of the Egyptian Church to regard the rival body in much the same way as did the patriarch, and from bishops and priests the feeling must have been communicated to the masses. The second cause was more deep rooted—the racial instinct of the Egyptian people. National sentiment was quite unknown to the Egyptian at this time; but the feeling of race was

---

1 John Rufus, Plerophoriae, § 34 (ed. Nau, P.O., viii, p. 77).
2 This precedence was actually ratified by Canon xxviii of the Council of Chalcedon—a provocative step.
3 See chapter vii.
strong and, as usual with uneducated or unreflecting peoples, took the form of antipathy to the foreigner. This was aggravated by external circumstances: the "foreigner" was generally an official, often a tax-gatherer, of the oppressive Byzantine Government. The people of Egypt, then, may often have been quite in the dark as to the theological point at issue on its intellectual side; but instinctive hatred of the foreigner as such, acquired hatred of the foreigner as representing a crushing alien domination, and blind confidence in the guidance of their own priests and bishops, impelled the great mass of them to welcome so plausible a pretext for maintaining their religious independence as the defense of a dogma believed to have the authority of their own famous prelates, Cyril and Athanasius—a dogma for which their actual patriarch was suffering exile.

2. Monophysites and Orthoadox at the Mount of Nitria, Cellia, and Scetis

The fierce temper of the monks as shown in the Anthropomorphic controversy and in their championship of Cyril against the Prefect Orestes, would lead us to expect to find that the Council of Chalcedon was the signal for some wild outbreak, but if such took place, we hear nothing of it. The Arab-Jacobite Syntaxarium under the date ‘Amshīr second relates that after the Council of Chalcedon "he (Marcian) sent to all the Convents messengers bearing copies of the declaration of faith mentioning the Two Natures" (i.e., the Tome of Leo)—and describes the reception accorded to it by Longinus, Superior of the Monastery of El Zajāj (Enaton), near Alexandria. The monks of the northwestern desert, then, were officially informed of the decisions of the council and, no doubt, were called upon to subscribe to the formula embodying it. But, strangely enough, neither history nor legend tells us anything as to the reception of such a document at either center. The conclusion to be drawn is obvious: there was no spirited protest, and no scenes of defiance occurred.

The explanation of this is not hard to find. There is evidence, small but adequate, to establish that there were divided counsels at the Mount of Nitria, Cellia, and Scetis; that while some of the monks were Monophysites, others were Orthodox or "Chalcedonians." If the latter were in the minority, they probably gained through official support what they lacked in numbers. As at the time of the Anthropomorphic troubles, the minority seems to have consisted of foreigners. Moreover, we hear of a monk who found it hard to decide to which party he should attach himself; and it is not likely that he was alone in his perplexity. In such conditions no concerted action of the monks in opposition to the

---

1 Apophth. Patr., Phocas, 1, gives a good example of this. That the native Egyptian element was essentially Mono-
physite and the foreign element Orthodox is strikingly
illustrated by the testimony of the History of the Patriarchs
to the staunchness of the monks of the Monastery of
Metras during the Heraclian Persecution (see p. 254).

2 Ed. Basset, p. 732 (P.O., xi, pp. 766 f.).

3 This may be inferred from nomenclature: Phocas was
Orthodox; Potamon (Petamon) was Monophysite.

4 Abba James: see the Apophthegm of Phocas quoted
on p. 222.
decisions of the council was possible. Nevertheless it is clear that before many years were passed the balance inclined steadily against the Orthodox, who were forced to leave the monasteries and seek more congenial homes.

There is only one brief reference to the state of affairs at the Mount of Nitria, but it is pregnant. Cyril of Scythopolis\(^1\) records that after the accession of Leo and the death of Proterius (457), the disturbances raised by Timothy Aelurus, the Monophysite patriarch, in Egypt forced two anchorets, Martyrius, a Cappadocian, and Elias, an Arab, to leave the Mount of Nitria and to retire to Palestine, where they joined the famous Euthymius. That is to say that until the death of Proterius, the Orthodox were able to hold their own but that thereafter they began to yield to pressure and retire from a place where they were subject to molestation.

A most interesting apophthegm of Phocas,\(^2\) a monk of Scetis, illustrates the situation at Cellia, where the two parties excommunicated one another, but otherwise seem to have lived side by side without strife. The anecdote is worth quoting in full.

"Abba Phocas... used to say: 'When I was settled in Scetis, there was a certain young monk, Abba James, at Cellia... Now Cellia has two Churches, one for the Orthodox (where also he used to communicate), and one for the Schismatics. Since therefore Abba James had the grace of humility he was beloved by all, both Churchmen and Schismatics. The Orthodox, then, used to say to him: 'Take heed, Abba James, lest the Schismatics deceive you and draw you into their communion.' Likewise also the Schismatics used to say to him: 'You must know, Abba James, that by communicating with the Chalcedonians (τῶν Διαφωτιστῶν) you are destroying your soul. For they are Nestorians and pervert the truth.' But Abba James, being simple, was afflicted by what was said to him by both parties; and being perplexed he was brought to call upon God. So he hid himself away in a quiet cell outside the Laura (ἐξω τῆς λαύρας) and clothed himself in his grave-clothes... For the Egyptian Fathers have a custom, to keep the tunic (λεβίτωνα) in which they receive the holy habit (σχημα), and the cowl (κουκουλων) until death, and to be buried in them, only wearing them on Sunday at the Holy Communion, and putting them away immediately afterwards. He departed, then, and remained in that cell and with calling upon God and strict fasting he fell to the ground, where he remained lying. He said he suffered much during those days from the demons... And when forty days were passed, he saw a child coming in unto him with great joy and saying: 'Abba James, what dost thou here?' And immediately he was enlightened and received strength from the sight of him, and said to him: 'Master, thou knowest what I suffer. These say to me: 'Leave not the Church'; and the others say: 'The Diphysites lead thee astray.' And I am perplexed'... And the Lord answered him: 'Wherever thou art, it is well with thee.' And straightway at that word he was found before the doors of the holy Church of the Orthodox, the adherents of the Council.'"

\(^1\) *Life of Euthymius*, ch. xciv. \(^2\) *Apophth. Patr.*, Phocas, 1.
There were, then, at Cellia both Orthodox and Monophysite monks, apparently more or less equal in number, and (since either party refused to communicate with the other) a second church had been built. Incidentally we also learn from this anecdote that Cellia, which in the fourth century had been a group of widely scattered cells, had in the latter part of the fifth condensed into a laura, or agglomerate of adjacent cells.

The same apophthegm of Phocas shows that in Scetis also there was an Orthodox party; for Phocas assuredly was not the only monk of that persuasion there. But here also the adherents of the council probably suffered from the disturbances caused by Timothy Aelurus. Phocas at any rate is described as an inmate of "the coenobium of Abba Theognius the First of Jerusalem."\(^1\) It is natural to infer that he retired from Scetis to Jerusalem during the troubles which followed after 457.

Yet in Scetis at this period there can have been little room for the play of party feeling. Part, if not the whole, of that region had been ravaged by barbarians in 444; and though the story of the Forty-nine Martyrs implies that the surviving monks resumed their normal life after the barbarians were retired, yet others—the monk Potamon above mentioned may be an instance—left the desert in despair. In any case the havoc wrought in the third sack of Scetis can hardly have been so far made good by 451 as to leave the monks no concern but doctrinal questions.

A very doubtful addition may be made to the limited evidence for the presence of an Orthodox, or Melkite, party in Scetis. While Timothy Aelurus was recognized by the Monophysites as their patriarch, the Byzantine Government installed another Timothy, known as Suros or Salophacalus. Timothy Suros held the patriarchate until 475, when the usurper, Basilicus, having ejected the Emperor Zeno, restored Timothy Aelurus to Alexandria. In the words of Eutychius:\(^3\): "in the second year of the same Emperor (Zeno) Timothy surnamed Suros, Patriarch of Alexandria, fled to the Wâdi Habib (Shiêt or Scetis)," where he remained until Peter Mongus, who succeeded Timothy Aelurus as Monophysite prelate, was ejected.

If we could confidently accept the statement that the Melkite Timothy retired to Scetis, we should have grounds for believing not only that there was a Melkite party there, but also that it was of some strength. But the narrative of Eutychius, as given above, is garbled,\(^3\) and Evagrius Scholasticus\(^4\) alleges that Timothy Suros when deposed retired to Canopus. Nevertheless, the mistake—if mistake it is—is curious in a Melkite historian.

3. Zeno and Scetis

The division between Melkites and Monophysites was not merely deplorable from the ecclesiastical standpoint, it was also a political danger which the Byzantine Government

---

1 Apophth. Patr., Phocas, 1. The coenobium in question was founded in 475: see R.O.C., v, pp. 289 f.
3 H.E., ii, 11 f.
4 Id., iii, 11.
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

sought to eliminate by attempting sometimes to reconcile the two parties, sometimes to force the Monophysites into reunion with the Orthodox Church. In 482 the Emperor Zeno made such an effort to remove the causes of difference by the issue of his Henoticon, or Instrument of Union.

Though this step was mainly dictated by political motives, ecclesiastical intrigue also played a large part. Owing, it is said, to some real or fancied slight Acacius, Patriarch of Constantinople, was bent upon upsetting the election of John Talaia, the new Melkite patriarch of Alexandria. Thus he was induced to support the claims of Peter Mongus, the deposed (Monophysite) patriarch, whose restoration he secured from Zeno in return for Peter’s promise to accept the Henoticon.¹

Now that document² opens with a statement that “certain abbots, hermits, and other reverend persons” had presented to the emperor a petition supplicating him to restore the unity of the Church. With this end in view a formula was put forward which, it was hoped, would restore the theological position which had existed before 451. It was declared that the Son is consubstantial with the Father according to His Godhead, and with man according to His Manhood; that He was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God; that He is one Son, not two; and that it was this one and the same Son of God who wrought miracles. Moreover, the Incarnation without sin on the part of the Mother of God did not cause the addition of a Son; for the Trinity remained unchanged even when one Person, God the Word, became incarnate. Finally, anything contrary to this exposition, whether put forth at Chalcedon or elsewhere, was to be rejected.

The one fault of this compromise was that it glossed over the matter in dispute, the question whether there was one Nature or two. But it is not surprising that the Monophysites claimed it as a triumph. The somewhat pointed reference to the Council of Chalcedon certainly implied censure of its definitions; and Peter Mongus, restored to the patriarchal throne, acted as though his party had won a victory rather than consented to a reconciliation. He seized the opportunity to eject all Melkite monks from their monasteries; and though, according to Evagrius,³ the status quo was restored by Zeno’s commissioner, it must have been obvious that the Henoticon had failed in its object.

The Henoticon brought Zeno the reputation, however unsought and undeserved, among the Copts of a pious and sincerely Monophysite prince. But the name of this emperor is particularly associated with Scetis through a legend which almost certainly contains some elements of historical fact. The Arabic Synaxarium⁴ commemorates on Tūbeh twenty-first the death of Hilaria, daughter of Zeno, which took place in Shihêt (Scetis). According to

¹ Evagrius Scholasticus, H.E., III, 14 f.
² Ib.
³ Id., III, 22. Presumably the remaining Melkite monks of Scetis, Cellia, and Nitria (?) were ejected (and again restored) at this time; but no definite statement to this effect is made.

⁴ Ed. Basset, pp. 590 f. For the (fragmentary) Coptic version of the story of Hilaria see Amélineau in P.S.B.A., x (1887–88), pp. 194 f.; Giron, Légendes coptes, pp. 44 f. The texts of the Arabic and Syriac versions are given in Wensinck’s Legends of Eastern Saints, i, where also are renderings of the Coptic and Ethiopic versions.
this narrative Zeno had two daughters (unknown to history). The elder, named Hilaria, either owing to her pious upbringing or (as another document asserts)\(^1\) to the influence of the Forty-nine Martyrs of Scetis, who were venerated even at Constantinople, was strongly inclined to adopt the monastic life. Her decision was taken owing to the apposite occurrence of certain passages in Scripture on one occasion when she was in the church. Disguising herself, therefore, as a courier she took ship for Alexandria and proceeded to Scetis under the escort of a certain deacon, where she informed the priest, Abba Bamfu, or Bamu\(^2\) (probably the Hegumen of Scetis), of her desire to become a “monk.” At first the superior tried to dissuade her, advising her to go rather to Enaton, where the life was less hard, but on finding her resolved, “he tried the saint and put her to the test, informed her of the fatigue of the strife and gave her the patched crown and the hair-tunic. Straightway she put them on. He prayed over the garments and arrayed her in them.”\(^3\) He assigned her a cell in the desert, where she lived in great austerity for many years, being known to the other monks as Hilarion the Eunuch.

At length it chanced that Zeno’s younger daughter became possessed. No cure could be effected, and after a little the emperor was advised to send his child to the fathers of Scetis. This was done; and the girl after being placed in the charge of Hilarion (Hilaria) was cured and returned to Constantinople. The peculiarity of the method of healing as described by his daughter excited Zeno’s curiosity. Hilarion was summoned and by force of circumstances was obliged to reveal her identity to her father, after pledging him to keep her secret and to allow her to return to the desert. “When the king heard that, he was astonished, and issued an edict in favor of the monks of Shihôt, granting them each year three thousand ardebs of wheat for the Eucharist of his daughter and six hundred measures of oil. These revenues have been granted them each year unto this day.”\(^4\)

After her return to Scetis Hilaria lived for twelve years and, dying, charged Abba Bamfu to have her buried as she was, and only then to reveal her story to the brethren of the desert. Her injunction was obeyed, and after her burial Abba Bamfu delivered to the assembled monks a discourse upon her virtues.

It is clear that the story of Hilaria as a whole is a pious legend and no more. In the first place, no daughters of Zeno are known to history. Secondly, the motive of a woman passing as a monk and maintaining her secret until she was prepared for burial is no new one. Thirdly, the main outlines of the story represent a recasting on Christian lines of the old Egyptian story of Bent-Resh,\(^5\) and the name Hilaria is a reproduction of the meaning (according to popular etymology) of the name of the heroine Bent-Resh (“Daughter of

---

1 Notices et extraits, xxxix, p. 349.
2 According to Amélineau this is equivalent to the Coptic Ṛmnbµ, the Greek Πάμβα, Pambo. Elsewhere this personage is identified with the Pambò who buried Abba Kiros (Cyrus), brother of Theodosius the Great: Synax. (Eth.), Hamlé 8 (P.O., vii, pp. 289ff.). The two must of course be distinguished.
5 See O. von Lemm, Mil. asiatiques tirés du bull. de l’Acad. . . de St. Pétersbourg, ix, 595-97; Wensinck, Legends of Eastern Saints, ii, pp. vii and 3 f.
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

Joy”). Lastly, the story in its outlines exactly reproduces the story of the fourth-century heroine, Apollinaria, summarized above, and is certainly no more than a tale retold.

But the benefactions bestowed upon Scetis by Zeno cannot be similarly dismissed. Besides the version quoted above from the Synaxarium, a short recension of the same story gives the following: “From that day forth the king sent to the inhabitants of the desert at the cost of the revenue of Egypt provisions, means, and all things that were necessary to them. The monks multiplied greatly and commenced to build themselves cells.” The short Karshüni text states that “the king ceased not to send these gifts [yearly] till after the death of his daughter. And the other kings followed his example by providing for this place, till Islam appeared.” This endowment which was continued “unto this day” or “till Islam appeared” cannot be dismissed as apocryphal. For Makrizi records that in the early fifteenth century the monks still enjoyed a (depreciated) endowment, said to have been granted them by ‘Amr, but certainly of more ancient origin and only confirmed by the Arab conqueror. It is almost certain that the legend is historical. The History of the Patriarchs, while it tells us nothing whatever of Hilaria, records Zeno’s bounty in the following terms: “And he (John I, Patriarch, 494–503) lived in the time of the holy Zeno, the blessed prince; and on account of his faith and goodness the prince commanded in his days that there should be carried to the monastery of Saint Macarius in the Wādī Habib (Scetis) all that the monks needed of wheat and wine and oil, and whatever they required for the furnishing of their cells.” Now since Zeno died in 491 and John I was elevated in 494 the emperor must have bestowed his gifts on the Wādī Habib some time before John’s consecration. How came he, then, to have knowledge of the “faith and goodness” of John? Since John is regularly called the Monk, and the monastery which benefited through his virtues was that of Saint Macarius, it is clear that he was a monk (probably the superior) of that convent, and it is highly probable that the occasion of his meeting the emperor was the negotiations which preceded the issue of the Henoticom. For not only did Zeno preface that document with a reference to the petition received by him from “certain abbots, hermits, and other reverend persons,” but the extant correspondence between Peter Mongus and Acacius shows that the influence of the monks was used to sway the emperor. Thus in his fourth letter Acacius advises Peter to send to Constantinople

1 Ed. Basset, p. 592.
2 Wensinck, Legends of Eastern Saints, ii, p. 62.
3 Unless the phrase is used conventionally, which is unlikely here, the “unto this day” of the Coptic and longer Arabic versions means that the endowment was still in force at the time of writing. Probably the endowment comprised the fruits of the “treasurership of the northern districts” about which ‘Amr wrote the monks (Makrizi, ed. Wüstenfeld, Gesch. d. Copt., ch. vii, § 67); if so, the phrase “until Islam appeared” does not mean that the revenue ceased at the Arab Conquest.

4 See p. 268.
5 Ed. Evett, pp. 184 f.
6 As often, this probably stands for the whole group of monasteries in Scetis. In the Coptic Calendar this John is described as a monk in “the Asklē of Abū Makār” in the days of Zeno who sent food to the monasteries. In the Synax. for Bashans 4 (ed. Basset, pp. 996 f.), John is positively stated to have been a monk in the Monastery of S. Macarius and to have influenced the Emperor Zeno.

7 Zoëga, Cat., No. 131, pp. 97 f.
THE MONOPHYSITE SCHISM AND THE MONASTERIES

“holy men, monks from the desert and the monasteries and the city” to convince Zeno that rejection of the Council of Chalcedon would ensure reunion; and Peter in his sixth letter promises to send such monks. To this latter document a note is added by the editor of the correspondence: “But after the old men of the desert came to Constantinople to the prince, this Henotic was made.” On such a mission Scetis would certainly have been represented, and the probability is therefore strong that John, a monk of Scetis, went to represent the views of “the desert” at Constantinople.

Zeno’s bounty, then, is historical but not disinterested; it was either a gratuity paid to the monks for service rendered, or, as seems more probable, a means of securing their loyal support for the future and of limiting their independence. The alleged continuity of the endowment also goes far to explain the undoubted passiveness shown by the monks (with isolated exceptions such as Daniel the Hegumen and Samuel of Kalamûn) on subsequent occasions.

Certain versions of the legend of Hilaria represent the saint as inducing her father to improve the condition of the desert itself. The Syriac represents Hilaria as saying: “There are places in the desert, where the solitaries are distressed by want of water and the large distance of it. Others are unfit for dwelling, because of the absence of materials necessary for buildings. Send a trustworthy man and let him dig pits [wells] and build well-secured dwelling-places and make holes and hidden caves for those who wish to dwell in them secretly.” Thereupon, “the king sent a trustworthy man... He gave him much money for the expenses of the buildings and for erecting well-secured towers.” The short Karshûni text relates that “the king sent many treasures with her to that place. Then she built [manâshir (مناشير)] and fortified houses and churches and monasteries all over the desert.... The church of Abû Macarius was built in Wâdî Habib.”

It is possible that here again an historical fact shows through a mass of exaggeration. Admitting, as we have seen reason to do, the historicity of Zeno’s endowment, it is highly probable that the new-born prosperity of the monasteries did lead to an increase in the number of the monks and consequently to considerable building activity. The “well-secured towers” of the Syriac version, places of refuge from barbarian raiders, were certainly characteristic features of the Egyptian monasteries at this period; and the statement of the short recension of the Synaxarium that “the monks multiplied greatly and set themselves to build cells” is more probably below than above the truth.

1 Cf. Zacharias of Mitylene (Chron., v, 7): “But there were in Constantinople at that time some chosen monks who were pleading for Peter. And they showed him (Zeno) by written documents...the sad afflictions which...had occurred in Alexandria and in Egypt...on account of the Synod.”

2 So far as the stand made by either or both of them can be regarded as historical: see pp. 246 and 255.

3 Wensinck, Legends of Eastern Saints, ii, p. 53.

4 Id., ii, p. 62.

5 See p. 166.
CHAPTER II

THE GAIANITE HERESY AND THE RISE OF THE THEOTOKOS MONASTERIES

1. The Heresy of Julian

The great schism which divided the Monophysites from the Melkites was by no means the only religious difference which agitated Christian Egypt. The Monophysites themselves rapidly broke up into a multitude of sects, two of which now play a prominent part in the internal history of Scetis.

In 518 Severus, Patriarch of Antioch, and Julian, Bishop of Halicarnassus, were driven from their sees and took refuge in Egypt, where Timothy III was then patriarch, and settled at the Monastery of Enaton (“Nine Miles” from Alexandria). Here they developed divergent views on the nature of the Body of Christ. Severus held that it was corruptible; for otherwise the reality of the Passion would be called in question; Julian argued that to deny the Incorruptibility of the Body was to admit that Christ’s Nature was dual. The followers of these champions formed the two sects of Phthartolatrai (Worshippers of the Corruptible, followers of Severus and, later, of Theodosius) and Aphthartodocetae (followers of Julian and subsequently of Gaianus, who held Christ’s Body to be incorruptible, ἀφθαρσία, and consequently—according to their opponents—that Christ’s Passion was apparent only, δοκήσει). Both parties spread their views vigorously during the patriarchate of Timothy III (518–553), who is said to have inclined now to the one side and now to the other.

2. Prevalence of the Heresy in Scetis

The controversy reached Scetis and there bore fruit in actual violence. How this came about is best told in the words of the History of the Patriarchs:

1 Theophanes (Chronographia, P.G., cviii, col. 383) records the flight of Severus and Julian in 511, when Dioscorus II was patriarch; and the Synax. (ed. Bassett, Babeh 2, p. 99) states that Severus arrived in Egypt in the reign of Anastasius (i.e., before 513).
2 See Leontius Byz., De sectis, v, 3.
3 John of Nikiu (Chron., xciv) exactly reverses this, attributing the Severian doctrine to the Gaianites and vice versa.
5 Ed. Evetts, pp. 189 f.
“And the father Severus... was fleeing from city to city... and from monastery to monastery. And he wrote to the bishops, his companions, who were at Alexandria, and consoled them... And there was with them one who was no true bishop, whose name was Julian. This man plainly showed that he was a partaker in the council of Chalcedon, because he divided the Lord Christ, who is One, into Two... And when he found an opportunity in the absence of the Father Severus, he wrote a Tomarion... and he filled it also with the blasphemous creed of those who believe in the doctrine of the Phantasiasts, and deny the life-giving Passion... And he sent this book about Egypt, and to the monks of the desert. And they received him, and fell into the snare, except seven persons, whose hearts God enlightened... for they heard a voice saying: ‘This is the impure Tomarion.’ Then those who had fallen into the error of Julian rose up against them, and killed two of them. So the rest were scattered, and began to celebrate the liturgy in their cells in the Monastery of Saint Macarius and in other monasteries. And this was the cause of their separation, and of the prevalence of error in the four monasteries and in the hermitages.”

This incident is related towards the close of the account of Timothy’s patriarchate, it presumably occurred therefore shortly before 535. There can be little doubt that the more circumstantial account given in the Coptic Translation of the Forty-nine Martyrs refers to the same affair. “In those days”—it relates—“an impure heresy arrived in this mountain, it tyrannized in the blasphemy of the impure imagination of the accursed and detestable Gaianites. When the Commemoration of these saints (the Forty-nine) was come, these impious heretics gathered together, not to do honour to the saints, but to cause confusion and to shed the blood of innocents in the house of God. But our holy fathers, the orthodox monks, strengthened themselves in their courage not to let them enter into the holy church. Then the murderous people of the accursed Gaianites, being the more numerous with their impure troop, and strong in their sinful flesh, made a violent assault. They fought with our blessed fathers and so struck down a multitude of these saints. They alleged a pretext saying: ‘We also, we are sons of these martyrs: we desire to celebrate a synaxis for them.’ But rather they desired to recite with their mouths... their dogma, full of all impieties, in our church on the day of the Commemoration of these Saints.”

If this second version is in the main historical, we must understand that the partisans of Severus provoked the riot by attempting to exclude the Julianists from participation in one of the great festivals of Scetis—a particular ignored in the History of the Patriarchs.

1 In the Chronicon orientale (ed. Ecchellensis, p. 100) this incident is misrepresented, and all the monks except seven accept the Tome of Leo thrust on them by Apollinaris, a Melkite patriarch, no doubt through confusion of Julian’s Tomarion with the better-known Tome, and of the names يوليانوس (Julianus) and يوليانوس (Apollinaris).

2 Notices et extraits, xxxix, pp. 353 f. The Coptic compiler loosely defines the date of the affair in the phrase “in those days” (i.e., of Theodosius I, though Timothy III would be more exact). His closing words (“when these things were known of our father Benjamin”) refer to all of the incidents relating to the martyrs as set forth in the whole document, and do not suggest that the affray took place in Benjamin’s day.

3 Probably an exaggeration since according to the Hist. Patr. only two were killed.

4 Tūbeh 26 (Jan. 21).
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

Both narratives agree, however, in showing that the Severians were worsted, and the History makes it clear that they were themselves excluded from the church and were forced to celebrate their services in their own cells.

On hearing of the misfortune which had befallen his followers, Severus took steps to check the spreading heresy. Besides writing letters in which he informed men that "Julian was an evil serpent, filled with blasphemy," he "bestowed his care on those that were afflicted with this plague...and encouraged those that did not follow the Tomarion." It may have been at this period that he paid that visit to Scetis of which two notices are extant.² In the Synaxarium³ under date of Babeh fifth we read the following:

"When he (Severus) came to Egypt, he wandered about, hiding himself, from place to place and from Monastery to Monastery...one day he came to the desert of Shīhēt: he entered the Church under the guise of a strange monk. The priest elevated the Host and censed the faithful. After having read the Chapters and the Gospel, he raised the covering and looked for the Host in the Chalice, and did not find it, because it was hidden from him. Then he turned weeping to the congregation and said: 'My brethren, I know not whether this has befallen because of your sin or of mine; for I can no more find the Host in its place, it has become invisible to me.' The people wept. Then appeared an angel of the Lord and said: 'It is not because of your sin...but because you have dared to elevate the Host in the presence of the Patriarch.' 'Where is he, Lord?' asked the priest. The angel pointed him out with his finger: he was in a corner of the Church. The monk recognized him by this favor and went to fetch him. The saint (Severus) bade him finish the ceremony, after they had caused him to enter with great honor near the altar. When the priest went up again, he found the Host in its place. Afterwards the holy Severus departed and went to the town of Sakhā where he abode in the house of a pious chief named Dorotheus."⁴

The second account is found in the Ethiopic Confict of Severus⁵:

"And he (Severus) went unto the monastery of Abba Macarius. And there was there a monk...of the land of Sa'id, whose name was Macarius...And the Lord revealed to him that it was Severus the patriarch....And there was in the care of the holy monk a spring of bitter water. And the brother monks were troubled because of it, and Macarius the holy elder drew near unto him to make it known to him....And the patriarch said to the elder-monk: 'Thy prayer, O my father, is able to do this.' And he refused. And...Severus the patriarch said to Macarius...,'When the brethren receive the cup wherefrom ye drink in the church put the water that is left in it when they have done receiving the holy mysteries into this fountain of bitter water, and it shall become sweet....' And the elder-monk had

¹ Hist. Patr., p. 191.
² It is possible however that the two accounts relate to distinct visits and that the first may have taken place before the heresy of Julian became dominant.
³ Ed. Basset, pp. 99 f. (P.O., i, pp. 313 f.).
⁴ Cf. Hist. Patr., p. 193 (quoted below), where Severus is shown to be residing at Sakhā after the elevation of Theodosius I (535).
⁵ Ed. Goodspeed and Crum (P.O., iv, pp. 714–15). The "spring" here mentioned is probably the well still known as Bir Makarios.
true faith, and he did as he commanded him, and the spring of water became sweet, unto this our day.

"And they relate again that men of the schisms fell in with the reverend father Severus by the way, and grievous harm befell him at their hands, and they (? friends of Severus) cut off from him the cords [or (his enemies) despoiled him] and the cords [or the spoils] are with Abba Macarius unto this day."1

The circumstance that Severus appears in disguise and is waylaid by "schisms" (i.e., Gaianites or Julianists) seems to show that the visit described took place after the rise of the heresy in Scetis. Perhaps the journey was taken for the purpose of encouraging his followers in the monasteries.

After describing the outrage perpetrated by the Julianists, the History of the Patriarchs2 relates that "by the power and grace of the Holy Ghost, assistance came to the five monks who remained of the seven, and so they prevented the other monks from accepting the Tomarion." If, as appears likely, the outbreak in Scetis took place at about the time of Timothy’s death, "the assistance" which reached the five monks probably followed the elevation of Theodosius I as patriarch in 535.3 At this time Severus was hiding from the persecution of Justinian "at the house of a man named Dorotheus, who took care of the affairs of the aged monks who had rejected the error of Julian....And the said man was allowed to visit the governor of Egypt, Aristomachus,4 and begged him to take pity on the aged among the monks who were in the desert, by granting them the favour of authorizing them to build churches and towers, instead of those that had been taken from them by Julian and his companions....Accordingly the governor gave orders to Dorotheus to do as he wished...."5

This brief but pregnant statement can be supplemented from the Coptic Translation of the Forty-nine Martyrs, which states that in the seventh century the monks, alarmed at a theft of the body of Abba John and of the youth Dios, feared that they might lose all their saints, and so "carried them (from the cave of Piamoun where they had hitherto lain) to this Church of the South which the very excellent Aristomachus built,....and so laid them to rest in an enclosed place to the southeast of this church which Abba Theodosius....consecrated."6 There can be no doubt that this church, built by Aristomachus and consecrated by Theodosius, was one of the churches to which the History of the Patriarchs alludes as having been built for the dispossessed Severian monks. Aristomachus, then, must have

1 In the XI century a finger of Severus was preserved as a relic at the Monastery of El Baramis: see p. 364.
2 Ed. cit., p. 190.
3 Theodosius gave his name to the Phthartolarrae (followers of Severus), while the opposite party were called Gaianites, from Gaianus who was elected patriarch in opposition to Theodosius.
4 John of Nikiu (Chron., xcii) speaks of him as commander of the army. A further reference in the Hist. Patri. (ed. cit., p. 200) shows that he was a sympathizer with Theodosius; cf. also Liberatus, Brev., ch. xx.
6 Notices et extraits, xxxix, p. 353. This consecration must have taken place in 535-536 if Brooks is right in dating Theodosius' actual tenure of the patriarchate from July-Aug. 535 to Nov.–Dec. 536 (see Byz. Zeitschr., xi [1903], p. 497).
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

intervened to good purpose and his, no doubt, was “the assistance” which saved the Severian monks in their extremity.

3. The Theotokos or Duplicate Monasteries

There is reason to believe that the “churches and towers” built at this period constituted an important but little noticed class of monasteries. The removal of the bodies of the Forty-nine from the cave of Piamoun to the Church of Aristomachus took place in the seventh century when John was Hegumen of Scetis and Benjamin was patriarch. From that time the church was associated only with the Forty-nine, and the Synaxarium in referring to it says: “their Church is today in the cell (Falila) called by their name in Coptic ‘Bihima-absit’ (नेमेत-कपुर), that is to say, the Forty-nine.” Its original dedication therefore became obscured at an early period, and can only be inferred by analogy. What seems to be certain is that this church (with an accompanying “tower”) constituted a “duplicate” of the original Monastery of Saint Macarius, and as such it is to be regarded as one of a peculiar class. For it is a remarkable fact that each of the three other original monasteries of Scetis possessed such a duplicate. Two of these, the “Virgin of John the Little” and the “Virgin of Baramūs,” are noticed by Makrizi in his list of the Wādi ‘n Natrūn Monasteries; and in the narrative of Benjamin’s visitation in 1330, the “Church of Our Lady” is definitely distinguished from the Monastery of Baramūs proper. It may be objected that these two convents are only mentioned by writers of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and do not appear even in the eleventh-century list of Mauhub, while they are implicitly ignored in the reference to the “Four Monasteries” sacked in the patriarchate of Damian. May they not, then, be late foundations? This objection is overthrown by the fact that a third of these “duplicate” monasteries, the “Virgin of Abba Bishōi,” is mentioned as having been rebuilt (along with the Monastery of Bishōi proper) by the seventh-century patriarch Benjamin: it must consequently have shared the fate of the “Four Monasteries” in the time of Damian. There is no real difficulty in this. The “Virgin of Abba Bishōi” (and no doubt the same applies to the other “Virgin”

1 It must be observed here that a church and a tower (of refuge) constituted a monastery, since at this period they were the only permanent buildings, the cells of the monks being either caves or ramshackle huts lying round about these central buildings.

2 The Coptic Translation (Notices et extraits, xxxix, p. 348) makes this clear: observe also that Abraham of Phelbes (a disciple of John the Hegumen) is there mentioned as seeing a vision in the cave where the saints lay. The Synax. (ed. Basset, p. 668) is therefore wrong in stating that the church consecrated by Theodosius was built over the crypt in which the bones of the martyrs lay.

3 Ed. cit., p. 669. The “convent” here referred to is perhaps one of the four small ruined monasteries noticed by Makrizi in the neighborhood of the Monastery of

S. Macarius and shown in Butler’s sketch (Ancient Coptic Churches, 1, p. 295, fig. 19). At the present day the saints are housed in a church specially dedicated to them in the Monastery of S. Macarius itself (see Falls, Three Years in the Libyan Desert, p. 105).


5 The Book of the Chrism, B.N., Fonds arabe, No. 100, fol. 53.

6 See p. 360.

7 See p. 249.

8 Makrizi, ed. Wüstenfeld, op. cit., ch. iii, p. 48. That such a convent really existed and that Makrizi has not blundered, is confirmed by the evidence of scribal notes in mss. from the Wādi ‘n Natrūn: see p. 315 on the origin of the Syrian Monastery.

monasteries) was treated for practical purposes as an appanage of the original Monastery of Bishoi and not as an independent unit. And if one member of this homogeneous class can be traced back as far as the time of Damian, it is hardly doubtful that the others have an equally ancient history. And from the analogy of the other three members of this class of duplicates, we may infer with a good deal of probability that the church built by Aris- tomachus was originally dedicated to the "Virgin (Theotokos) of Saint Macarius."

We have, therefore, a group of four secondary monasteries, three¹ of which are distinguished by the following peculiarities: (1) They are dedicated to the "Virgin," that is, the Theotokos, or Mother of God.² (2) They retain the name of the patron saint of the original monastery. (3) Each duplicates one of the original "Four Monasteries."

The third peculiarity makes it tolerably certain that the whole group originated when the original "Four Monasteries" alone existed in Scetis. And the fact that the "Virgin of Abba Bishoi" certainly existed previously to the sack of the monasteries in the time of Damian, coupled with the homogeneity of the whole group, leaves little doubt that these "duplicates" came into being before about 580.

In what circumstances, then, were these monasteries founded? The dedications help us to a partial answer. First, the retention of the patron saint's name shows that the founders, while separating from the original monastery, were careful to perpetuate their claim on the favor of the eponymous saint; and secondly, the dedication is in every case to the Virgin (more exactly, the Theotokos). Probably only one explanation will fit these facts: the "duplicates" must have originated at a time of doctrinal controversy involving the status of the Theotokos, when the party maintaining the honor of the Mother of God separated from (or were driven out of) the existing monasteries, but refused to renounce their rights in their respective patron saints.

It might be thought that the period in which such a schism was most likely to have occurred was that of the Nestorian heresy, when the title "Theotokos" became the centerpoint of controversy. But though there seems to be no direct evidence on the attitude of the monks of Scetis towards Nestorianism, there is no doubt that they were whole-heartedly on the side of Cyril³; certainly there is no trace of a division in the monasteries on the subject of Nestorianism. Or, again, may not the great schism between Melkites and Monophysites have been the occasion? It is known that the latter taunted the former with being

¹ Since the dedication of the "duplicate" Monastery of S. Macarius can only be inferred, it cannot be used for the purpose of the following argument. That the church built by Aris tomachus really became the center of a monastery appears certain from the statement of the Synax. (quoted above) that when it was devoted to the cult of the Forty-nine it was in a "cell" (i.e., one of the "dependent cells").

² That "Theotokos" rather than "Virgin" is the true dedication of monasteries of this class is clear from the case of the "Virgin of Abba Bishoi" which became later the Syrian Monastery. A note in an Arabic codex in the Vatican (Mai, S.V.N.C., iv, ii, p. 149, No. lxxiii) speaks of this as "the Convent of Our Lady the Virgin, Lady of the Monastery of Abba Bishoi which is called that of the Syrian Fathers"; but in Syriac codices its style is more exactly given as "the Monastery of the Mother of God, of the Syrians, of Abba Bishoi" (see Wright, Cat. Syr. MSS. in B.M., p. 15, col. 1, No. xxi; cf. also Nos. xvii and cccclxxxiv).

³ See pp. 146f.
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

“Nestorians”¹; and, as we have seen, the controversy actually caused the building of a second church at Cellia.² But on the whole this is unlikely; for the Melkites in Scetis (where, unlike Cellia, the foreign element was small) cannot have been numerous enough to turn out the Monophysite majority. There remains only the period of the Julianist or Gaianite heresy, where we do, in fact, hear of the building of separate “churches and towers,” that is, of monasteries, for the dispossessed Severian monks.

Was there, then, anything in the Julianist position which would lead the opposite party to make the name of the Theotokos, as it were, their war-cry? As a matter of history, the Gaianites accepted the orthodox teaching on the Incarnation. Leontius of Byzantium³ writes of them: “The Gaianites confess that the Divine Word became incarnate of the Virgin completely and really; but they declare that after the Union (of Godhead and Manhood) the Body (of Christ) was incorruptible.” He goes on to state that in their view, this Body being immune from decay and suffering, Christ of His own will submitted to endure the Passion. Moreover, the heresiarch, Julian, in the third of his Anathemas⁴ denounces any who assert that the Incarnation was “phantastic.” But as often happens in controversy where strong feeling is aroused, the admission of the truth of the Incarnation was ignored or treated as disingenuous by the opposite party, which charged the Gaianites with being Docetic. Thus Severus in his Letter to the Monks of the East⁵ complains of what he has had to endure owing to him who declared the Body of Christ to be a phantasm; and, again, in his Confutation of the Atheistic and Phantasastic Doctrine of Julian⁶ he denounces the Gaianites as Manichees and “Phantasiasts.” Finally,⁷ he hurls at them a quotation from Polycarp: “if the Word of God did not suffer in the body and die (as you say), then it would be vain to speak of Him as born of the Virgin.” This important point is also urged by John of Damascus⁸: “if [the Body] was incorruptible, it was not of one substance with us, but was apparently (δοκήσει), and not really born... And if it was only apparently born, the mystery of the Dispensation (i.e., the Incarnation) is an imposture and a sham, and [Christ] was apparently and not really born Man.” Sincerely or insincerely, then, their opponents held that the Gaianites denied the truth of the Incarnation—a denial which involved a lowering of the status of the Virgin, who would then have been only apparently the Mother of Christ, so rendering the title Theotokos or Deipara (Mother of God) meaningless.

There is good reason, then, for holding that the “duplicate” monasteries arose at the time of the Gaianite heresy. They were founded to accommodate the Severian monks who

¹ See Ἀποψιβί, Πατρ., Phocas, i, quoted p. 222.
² ib.
³ De sectis, x.
⁴ See Assemani, B.A.V.C., tom. iii, p. 230.
⁵ ld., p. 229.
⁶ ld., p. 232.
⁷ Adv. Julianum, in Mai, Spicilegium Romanum, x, 199.
⁸ De fide orthodoxa, iii, 38. That the Phantasiast doctrine logically destroyed the Virgin’s title to be Theotokos is clearly put in Justinian’s manifesto (Chron. pasch., in Migne, P.G., xcii, col. 893): των φαντασών εισάκτυς, ἁμα-μένον δὲ τὴν ἐκ τῆς ἁγίας Ἀκαρθώνυν και Θεοτόκου Μαρίας ἀληθινήν σάρκων τιν Κυρίον.
GAIANITE HERESY AND RISE OF THE THEOTOKOS MONASTERIES

had been ejected by the Julianists, and what more natural than that, while refusing to cut themselves off from the patron saints of their original monasteries, they should dedicate their new churches to the Theotokos, whose title best symbolized what they believed, or affected to believe, to be the essence of the matter in dispute—the reality of the Incarnation?

Of the "duplicate," or Theotokos, monasteries not much is to be said. The Church of Aristomachus, "The Virgin of Saint Macarius" as we conjecture, became the sanctuary of the Forty-nine Martyrs, in the seventh century.¹ The "Virgin of Abba Bishôi" was purchased from the Coptic patriarch, possibly in the eighth century, and became the famous Syrian Monastery.² Makrizi mentions that the "Virgin of Saint John the Little" was occupied by Abyssinian monks in the fifteenth century when their own convent had become ruined,³ while the "Virgin of Baramûs," mentioned in the fourteenth century, was still existing when the topographer wrote.

¹ It was certainly in ruins in the time of Makrizi.
² See p. 315.
CHAPTER III

SCETIS AS THE METROPOLIS OF THE MONOPHYSITE CHURCH

1. Oppression of the Monophysites

FROM the time of Zeno down to the beginning of the reign of Justinian the Monophysites of Egypt as a body seem to have remained unmolested by the authorities; and there are some signs that during this period the religious feud had lost something of its bitterness.¹ This is illustrated by the Acts of St. Arethas,² where we are informed that the Emperor Justin I wrote to Timothy III, the Patriarch of Alexandria, urging him to induce Elesbaan, King of Ethiopia, to attack Dunaan, the persecuting prince of the Homeritae. In April of the third indiction,³ therefore, Timothy, "the most holy bishop...gathered all the orthodox and a multitude of the monks in Nitria and Scetis," and after holding a solemn procession and vigil, sent the Sacrament to Elesbaan of Ethiopia. When a "Chalcedonian" prince could make such an appeal to a distinctly Monophysite⁴ prelate, and when both the Orthodox and the monks of Nitria and Scetis—who were certainly largely Monophysite—could meet together in one common religious act, it is clear that fanaticism was then dormant. Indeed it is possible that what they suffered under Justinian and more especially under Heraclius, led the Copts to paint their whole earlier history in colors darker than the reality.

It was Justinian’s unfortunate penchant for theology that reopened and aggravated the old difference. The attempts made by this emperor to maintain the Orthodox Church in Egypt led indirectly to the aggrandizement of the Monastery of Saint Macarius. The only direct authority for this statement is the Melkite historian Eutychius.⁵

² Acta SS., Oct. x, p. 743.
³ I.e., in 525: see id., p. 746.
⁴ So true is this that in the text of the Acta by Metaphrastes (id., June v, p. 64*) the name of Timothy is replaced by that of a (probably mythical) patriarch, Asterius: on this point see id., Oct. x, p. 710.
⁵ Annales, ed. Pococke, ii, pp. 148f. Eutychius (Sa’id ibn Batrik), the Melkite patriarch and historian, flourished in the earlier half of the X century.
SCETIS AS THE METROPOLIS OF THE MONOPHYSITE CHURCH

Theodosius (says Eutychius) held the patriarchate for three years, and was then deposed in favor of Caius (i.e., Gaianus) “who was a Manichee and an archdeacon.” Gaianus was patriarch for two years and then made way for the restored Theodosius, who sat for five years more until he was summoned to Constantinople by Justinian and banished.¹ Therefore Justinian appointed three successive Melkite patriarchs. The first, Paul, was slain by the Copts after two years, while the second, Dalmius (i.e., Zoïlus), remained patriarch for five years, when he abandoned so dangerous a post and fled. Justinian then appointed Apollinarius, who combined the post of commander of the forces with that of patriarch. On his arrival, the soldier-prelate approached the church wrapped in his military cloak, but on entering threw off his disguise and commenced the service. The Monophysites met this ruse by stoning him out of the church, but were summoned three days later to assemble to hear an edict of the emperor read. Bodies of troops were stationed near at hand with orders to act upon a given signal; and when Apollinarius, after threatening the people and calling upon them to accept the Council of Chalcedon, was again stoned by the assembled people, the troops burst in and massacred all and sundry. “But”—continues Eutychius—“a great multitude of them took to flight to the Wādi Habīb, to the Monastery of Saint Macarius. . . . And since that time the [patriarchal] chair of the Jacobites has been in the Monastery of Abū Makār to this day.”

Can this massacre be regarded as historical? Eutychius, as a Melkite, no doubt regarded the deed as an act of righteous vengeance. But the same story is also found in the Refutation of Eutychius by Severus of Ashmunēn,² the stone throwing on the part of the Copts alone excepted; and the Chronicon orientale mentions the exploit twice over,³ stating that twenty thousand Jacobites were slain “in the very churches.” Makrizi⁴ repeats the account of Eutychius, estimating the victims at two hundred thousand. In the tenth century, therefore, the massacre was generally accepted as an historical event. But earlier authorities, such as John of Nikiu and the sources used in the compilation of the History of the Patriarchs, know nothing of this massacre; and it is strongly to be suspected that the story is in part based upon the perverted account of the Gaianite affray given in the Chronicon orientale and by Makrizi (where Apollinarius and the Tome of Leo take the place of Julian and his Tomarion),⁵ and for the rest is a mere doublet of the alleged massacre of Alexandrians which followed the murder of Proterius, the fifth-century successor of Dioscorus I.⁶

¹ Eutychius dates this—wrongly—in the first year of Justinian (527) and places the consecration of Theodosius in the second year of Justin I (519–520). The Hist. Patr., p. 204, makes Theodosius hold office for four years before his banishment (535–538/g).
² P.O., iii, p. 203.
³ Ed. Ecchellensis, pp. 100, 102.
⁴ Gesch. d. Copt., ed. Wüstenfeld, ch. iv, p. 44.
⁵ See p. 229, note 1.
⁶ For this massacre see Hist. Patr., p. 379; Synax. (Eth.), Nahase 23 (ed. Guidi, P.O., ix, p. 374); Michael the Syrian, Chron., trans. Chabot, ii, 124 f.
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

2. Evidence for the Transfer of the Patriarchal Seat

What, then, of the statement that “since that time the chair of the Jacobites has been in the Monastery of Abû Makâr to this day”? Two converging lines of evidence show that it is substantially true:

First, though there was probably no massacre and consequently no “flight” to the Wâdî Habîb, it is a fact that Apollinarius excluded the Monophysite hierarchy from Alexandria. In a notice concerning the Melkite patriarchs appointed after the banishment of Theodosius I, the History of the Patriarchs mentions Paul of Tinnis, and then (omitting Zoilus) declares that “they appointed in his stead Apollinaris, who also took possession of the church, by the prince’s (Justinian’s) authority; and he ordered that none of the believing bishops should be seen in the city of Alexandria.” Again, after an account of the circumstances in which Peter IV was elected (567) as Monophysite successor to Theodosius, the same authority states that Peter’s adherents “could not bring him into the city openly, through fear of the prince, and of Apollinaris, the patriarch of the heretics.” Lastly, this ban on the Monophysite prelates was not merely temporary; for it is recorded of Anastasius (patriarch, 605–606) that he ventured into the city although “the orthodox bishops were forbidden to enter Alexandria.”

The Jacobite patriarch and bishops, excluded from the city of Saint Mark, must have chosen a new ecclesiastical center—presumably in a place remote enough to secure their gatherings from molestation and from any coup attempted by the Byzantine authorities. The patriarchal residence, indeed, was during the late Byzantine Period at Enaton (otherwise Pihenaton or El Zajâj); Peter IV resided there at the Church of Saint Joseph, and Damian, his successor, at the Monastery of Mount Tabor. But it is extremely unlikely that such great assemblies as met together for the enthronement of a patriarch, the consecration of chrisms, or the celebration of Easter were held so near Alexandria, otherwise the Melkite patriarch might have easily arrested all the leaders of the Monophysite Church at once. The statement of Eutychius implies, of course, that such assemblies were held at the Monastery of Saint Macarius where there would be no fear of molestation.

Our second line of evidence tends to show that the Monastery of Macarius was, in fact, at one time such a patriarchal seat. This evidence consists in certain privileges—evidently historic survivals—claimed by the monastery in question in the early Arab Period and in the Middle Ages:

(1) A newly elected patriarch was required to go through a secondary ceremony of enthronement at the Monastery of Macarius after his consecration at Alexandria. The earliest recorded instance of this practice belongs to the tenth century, but since the ceremony is described as “customary” its origin was clearly much earlier. Thus it is stated that after

\[1 \text{ Page 205.} \]
\[2 \text{ Id., p. 206.} \]
\[3 \text{ Id., p. 214.} \]
\[4 \text{ Id., pp. 206 f.} \]
\[5 \text{ Id., p. 210.} \]
SCETIS AS THE METROPOLIS OF THE MONOPHYSITE CHURCH

election the Patriarch Menas I (931–954) “went through the customary proceedings in Alexandria and at the Church of Saint Macarius and at Mısır.”¹ The nature of these “proceedings” is partly explained in subsequent allusions to the custom. Macarius II was forced by the monks to celebrate his first Liturgy (after consecration at Alexandria in 1103) at the Monastery of Saint Macarius according to custom²; Gabriel II, returning from Alexandria in 1131, went to the monastery “that he might be proclaimed there according to the custom with the newly appointed patriarchs.”³ Lastly, Makrizi records that “a patriarch was not recognized by them (i.e., the monks of Saint Macarius) until they had made him take his seat in this monastery after he had sat upon the throne of Alexandria.”⁴ After the essential ceremony at Alexandria, then, the patriarch was enthroned and proclaimed at the Monastery of Saint Macarius, and celebrated his first Liturgy there.

(2) The patriarch spent Lent, or at any rate some part of it,⁵ in the monastery and celebrated Easter there, whereas in the time of Abba Daniel he used to keep Easter at Alexandria, where he was visited by the Hegumen of Scetis.⁶ This custom is first noticed in the history of Abba James (patriarch, 819–830), who went to the desert on the approach of the Forty Days to encourage the monks, and remained until Easter “as the custom of the patriarchs was.”⁷ Similar statements are made concerning other ninth-century patriarchs, such as Joseph, Michael II, and Shenûdeh I.

(3) One of the patriarch’s most sacred functions was the consecration of chrism in Holy Week. This rite was regularly celebrated through the Middle Ages at the Monastery of Saint Macarius,⁸ at first annually, but later at varying intervals of time. The custom is indeed first noticed in the history of Menas II (957–977), when we are told that extraordinary circumstances prevented this patriarch from going out to perform the rite (as usual)⁹; but it certainly is as old as the custom of keeping Lent and Easter in the desert. The Copts themselves state that “when disturbance and trouble came upon us, this rite was transferred to the Monastery of the holy Abû Makâr” (i.e., from Alexandria).¹⁰

In virtue of these privileges the Monastery of Saint Macarius became the peer in dignity of the Church of Alexandria itself; and in this connection it is significant that a Coptic ms. of the first half of the ninth century refers to “the Church of our Great Father Abba Makari” as “Catholic and Apostolic,”¹¹ and that this church contained a special sanctuary of Saint Mark.¹²

³ Ia., p. 226.
⁵ The length of time spent in the desert was gradually curtailed, and ultimately even the celebration of Easter there was dropped.
⁶ See p. 243.
⁷ Hist. Patr., p. 566. It is true that Mark III (799–819) went to El Zâjâj to live in retirement during the fast after his consecration (id., p. 520) but it appears that either before or after this (possibly at Easter) he went to the desert of Scetis: see the Synax. (Eth.), Nahase 29 (P.O., 10, p. 421).
⁸ This was positively enjoined, unless insuperable obstacles prevented it. See p. 374, on the consecration of chrism.
⁹ Hist. Patr., B.N., Fonds arabe, No. 302, p. 76.
¹⁰ The Book of the Chrsim, B.N., Fonds arabe, No. 100, fol. 9 f.
¹¹ See the Leipzig Cod. Tisch., xxiv, 23. “Catholic” is equivalent to our own term “cathedral,” i.e., episcopal; “Apostolic” implies close connection with the See of S. Mark.
¹² See p. 376.
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

How, then, and when did the Monastery of Saint Macarius acquire this exalted status? Renaudot\(^1\) suggests that it was bestowed by Benjamin I at the time of his consecration of the Church of Saint Macarius. But this suggestion fails to show any reason or intelligible motive for such a step. Benjamin had been generously treated by the Muslim conquerors; why then should he have chosen to transfer the most sacred functions of the patriarchate from Alexandria to the desert monastery soon after the Arab Conquest? Surely the two lines of evidence set forth above point unswervingly to some such conclusion as is embodied in the statement of Eutychius—that during the time of Byzantine oppression the Monophysite Church made the Monastery of Saint Macarius its patriarchal seat, assembling there for the most solemn and important rites in its Calendar.

All we need then to assume is that when the Arab Conquest left the Monophysite bishops free to enter Alexandria, the consecration of patriarchs in that city was resumed, while the Monastery of Saint Macarius was rewarded for the service it had rendered by a grant of the rights enumerated above. It need hardly be said that the whole transaction marks a new era in the national importance of the monastery, and accounts for its prominence, increasing from this time forward, in ecclesiastical politics.

The actual date of this transfer depends, of course, upon that of Apollinarius' appointment, which itself is very uncertain. Provisionally we may accept the direct statement of Victor Tununensis\(^2\) that it was in 551 that Zoilus was deposed for refusing to condemn the Three Chapters, and Apollinarius appointed by Justinian, or the view of Gutschmid\(^3\) that the latter held office from 550 to 569.

---

\(^{1}\) *Lit. orient. col.*, 1, p. 406.

\(^{2}\) *Chron.* (Migne, *P.L.*, lxviii, col. 959). An alternative date is directly asserted by Eutychius (ed. cit., II, p. 156), who assigns the “massacre” to the 15th year of Justinian (541) and indirectly implies in his statement (id., p. 172) that the Council of Constantinople (553) took place in the 13th year of the “prefecture” of Apollinarius. But the same author asserts (pp. 184–187) that Apollinarius died in his 15th year of office (i.e., in 559), which clashes with the evidence of Evagrius (H.E., IV, 39) that Apollinarius was still Melkite patriarch when Justinian adopted the doctrine of the “aphthartodocetae,” and of the *Hist. Patr.*, p. 207, where he is alleged to have survived the emperor.

For a minute discussion of the date of Apollinarius and his Melkite predecessors, Paul and Zoilus, see the *Dissertatio ad libatum*, cap. 1 (Migne, *P.L.*, lxviii, col. 1051 f.). The matter cannot be discussed in all its bearings here.

\(^{3}\) *Verzeichnis d. Patriarchen von Alexandrien* (Kleine Schriften, II, p. 469). John of Nikiu, *Chron.*, xciv, 8, asserts that Justinian appointed “Apollinaris, count of the Monastery of Banton (Pihenaton?), to be patriarch... in the city of Alexandria and the other cities of Egypt”; but in xcii, 10, calls him Apollinaris of the Monastery of Salama in Alexandria—a Theodosian, and of a gentle disposition (!).
CHAPTER IV
THE LIFE AND TIMES OF DANIEL THE HEGUMEN

1. Sources for the Life of Daniel

If we except the (probably) mythical Hilaria and Samuel of Kalamûn, whose connection is only partial, the history of Scetis in the Byzantine Period can show but one individual figure worthy of remark—that of Daniel the Hegumen. No formal biography of Daniel exists, and for our knowledge of his career we are dependent on a collection of anecdotes, extant in Greek, Coptic, Ethiopic, Syriac, and Arabic versions.¹ It is possible or probable that some of these anecdotes do not properly belong to the sixth-century Daniel,² and in the case of "genuine" episodes it is not always easy to be sure how much is fact and how much is fiction.³

2. Anecdotes of Daniel's Early and Middle Life

Daniel was born apparently in 485.⁴ His birthplace and original condition in life are unnoticed. Clugnet conjectures⁵ from the statement that a message delivered by Daniel to the monks of a monastery in Upper Egypt (probably Bault) was interpreted,⁶ that he was of Greek origin and knew no Coptic; but this is unlikely. Daniel, as a monk in Scetis from childhood and Hegumen of the Desert, must certainly have known Coptic, and the anecdote where there appeared to be a special reason for doing so.

Daniel was 40 years of age (ὅπε ἡ ἡμερα νεοτέρος εἶναι τεροναπατόντα: Clugnet, Vie de l'Abbé Daniel, p. 32) immediately before Eulogius found his treasure in 524 or 525 (see p. 242). Both Clugnet (p. iii) and Cauwenbergh (p. 19) perversely take the Greek phrase to mean that Daniel first met Eulogius 40 years before the visit recorded in the text. For νεοτέρος applied to a man of 40, cf. Palladius, Hist. Laus., ch. xvii, where Macarius the Great is said to have become a monk in youth at the age of 30 (τρικαλοντες ἀνελθὼν νῖος).

1 The Greek, Coptic, and Syriac versions are edited by Clugnet, Guidi, and Nau, respectively in Clugnet's Vie et récits de l'Abbé Daniel le Scétique (in the Bibliothèque hagiographique orientale), Paris, 1901, reprinted from R.O.C., v., pp. 49 f., 254 f., 370 f., 533 f. The Ethiopic version is edited by Goldschmidt and Pereira, Vida do Abba Daniel, Lisbon, 1897. For two additional incidents respecting Daniel, see John Moschus, Pratum spirituale, cxiv, and the Ethiopic Synax, for Hamlé I (P.O., vii, p. 211). These appear to be unknown to Clugnet.

2 See the discussion in Cauwenbergh's Étude sur les moines d'Égypte, pp. 23 f.

3 Id., p. 29. In the account given below of Daniel's life I have discussed only the historical value of an anecdote where there appeared to be a special reason for doing so.

4 Daniel was 40 years of age (ὅπε ἡ ἡμερα νεοτέρος εἶναι τεροναπατόντα: Clugnet, Vie de l'Abbé Daniel, p. 32) immediately before Eulogius found his treasure in 524 or 525 (see p. 242). Both Clugnet (p. iii) and Cauwenbergh (p. 19) perversely take the Greek phrase to mean that Daniel first met Eulogius 40 years before the visit recorded in the text. For νεοτέρος applied to a man of 40, cf. Palladius, Hist. Laus., ch. xvii, where Macarius the Great is said to have become a monk in youth at the age of 30 (τρικαλοντες ἀνελθὼν νῖος).


interpreation was, no doubt, from the Bohairic into the Sahidic dialect rather than from Greek into Coptic. John Moschus, at any rate, distinctly calls him an Egyptian.1

Daniel went to Scetis in childhood (ἐκ παιδόθεν ἀπετάξατο ἐν τῇ Σκηνῇ) 2; but nothing is known of his early monastic life save that he was thrice captured by the barbarians.6 On the first occasion he lived amongst the barbarians for two years, and then was ransomed by a charitable mariner. Not long after, he was again taken, but contrived to escape after six months of captivity.

When enslaved for a third time, Daniel killed his captor with a stone, but after making his escape, he became uneasy at the thought of the homicide he had committed, and consulted Timothy III, the Patriarch of Alexandria,4 as to what penance he should undergo. Timothy assured him that in killing the barbarian he had only slain a wild beast and that, though he should have left his deliverance for God to effect, he was not guilty of murder. Still unsatisfied, Daniel went, the story alleges, to Rome to interview the pope, but on receiving much the same verdict, consulted in turn the Patriarchs of Constantinople, Ephesus, Jerusalem, and Antioch. Finally he gave himself up to the civil authorities at Alexandria, but was dismissed by the magistrate with the wish that he had slain seven more barbarians.8 Unable to receive the punishment he felt he deserved, Daniel by way of expiation took charge of a cripple whom he lodged in his cell in Scetis and tended.

Next, perhaps, in order of date is the episode of Eulogius the Quarryman.6 After a visit paid to Eulogius, then more than one hundred years of age, Daniel was induced by his disciple to relate the man’s story. In his earlier life, it appeared, he had been remarkable for his hospitality to strangers and had entertained, amongst others, Daniel himself. Out of gratitude Daniel had prayed that Eulogius’ wealth might be increased, that so he might entertain yet more strangers. The prayer was granted on condition that Daniel himself should stand surety for the soul of Eulogius, and the quarryman became suddenly rich, having found a large treasure. Contrary to Daniel’s expectation, he went to Constantinople, where his riches secured him the favor of Justin I and his court. Daniel, greatly distressed at the alteration made by riches in the nature of Eulogius, and feeling himself liable to pay the promised forfeit, went to Constantinople to entreat the mercy of the ex-quarryman. Failing to see Eulogius, however, he committed the matter to God and returned to Scetis.

After the death of Justin, however, Eulogius became engaged in a conspiracy against Justinian (in 532), and had to flee from Constantinople, leaving all his wealth; he returned

1 Pratum spirituale, cxiv.
2 Clugnet, Vie de l’Abbé Daniel, p. 27.
3 There is no need to assume a barbarian raid on Scetis at this period. Probably Daniel was an isolated captive.
4 Timothy became patriarch in 518, and the consultation must have taken place after—probably shortly after—that date, possibly about 520.
5 Clugnet, op. cit., p. 28.
6 Id., pp. 30f. Eulogius found his treasure and went to Byzantium when Justin was emperor (518–527), and as the context clearly shows (id., pp. 33, 34, 36) two years and four months before the death of Justin, i.e., in 525.
to Egypt, where he resumed his former occupation, practising hospitality as in the days before his rise to wealth and greatness.

A third anecdote,\(^1\) which must be dated earlier than 535,\(^2\) shows that Daniel had become Hegumen of Scetis\(^3\) before that date. Daniel had gone up to Alexandria to visit the patriarch at the “Great Feast,” as was the custom with the Hegumen of Scetis, and there found a certain Mark who lived the life of a beggar and pretended to be an idiot. By his power of discernment Daniel perceived that this beggar was really a saint of great virtue, and bringing him before the patriarch, forced him to tell the story of his life. Mark then related that to atone for fifteen years of sinful life, he had lived for eight years at To Pempton (“Five Miles”) outside Alexandria, and for the past eight years in the city itself where, as a penance, he exposed himself to the jeers of men by pretending to be witless. After this confession, Mark was made to sleep at the patriarch’s residence, where Daniel was lodging; but on the next day it was found that the saint had died in the night. When Daniel was informed of this, he gave the news to the patriarch, who communicated it to the commandant or governor. All business was suspended in the city; and Daniel sent his disciple to summon the monks of the desert to attend Mark’s funeral. “And all Scetis went up, wearing white garments, with branches and palm leaves, likewise also Enaton (‘Nine Miles’) and Cellia, and they of the Mount of Nitria, and all the lauræ near Alexandria, so that for five days the remains were not buried. . . . And all the city with branches and candles, and bedewing the city with tears, carried forth the precious remains of the blessed Mark.”\(^4\)

Other incidents, which cannot be chronologically arranged, contribute something to our picture of Abba Daniel. He is represented as living in Scetis the ordinary life of a monk, laboring with his hands and carrying the baskets or mats made by him to Terenuthis and elsewhere in the Delta for sale.\(^5\) His preternatural powers were renowned: John Moschus\(^6\) relates that at Terenuthis he was besought by a young man to pray that his wife might bear him a child. When a son was born to the couple, ill-natured persons alleged that Daniel was the real father. Daniel bade the young man assemble his friends and relatives, and in the presence of the gathering, took the child in his arms and asked him who was his father. The baby, then three weeks old, pointed to the young husband and said: “This man.”

---

2 Unless we are prepared to admit that Daniel was a Melkite, the patriarch mentioned in this anecdote, who is on good terms with the Commandant of Alexandria, can hardly be other than Timothy III (who died 535). Theodosius I is unlikely, since his actual tenure of the patriarchate was both brief and troublesome; Peter IV (see p. 238) was not permitted to enter Alexandria and is, therefore, out of the question. But if Daniel could be shown to have been a Melkite, the patriarch in question might be either Paul, Zollis, or Apollinarius, who were appointed after the banishment of Theodosius. In that case the date of the incident would remain quite undetermined.
3 An Arabic version (B.N., Fonds arabe, No. 276, fol. 153, verso) of the story of Dulas (see Clugnet, op. cit., pp. 64 f.) states that Daniel was Superior of the Convent of Am el Madshah before he became Hegumen of Scetis.
5 John Moschus, *Praetum spirituale*, cxiv; Clugnet, op. cit., p. 32, ll. 22 f.
6 Loc. cit.
Daniel was specially famous for his gift of discernment, as shown in the case of Mark the Fool. Other instances of its use are given in the anecdotes of the nun who feigned drunkenness to conceal her devotion, and of the blind beggar who gave away the alms he received to the sick and helpless; and from the Synaxarium we learn that when the two priests Benjamin and Beyoka came to ask where their dead father had deposited the sacred vessels of the church at Tuna, he was at least aware of the reason for their coming and was able to direct them to a man who could reveal the secret.

Another well-marked feature in the disposition of Abba Daniel is the fondness for travel which is illustrated in almost every anecdote. In connection with the homicide which he had committed, Daniel, it will be remembered, travelled (if we may believe the story) to Rome, Constantinople, Ephesus, Antioch, and Jerusalem; and he paid a second visit to Constantinople in his anxiety on account of Eulogius. In Egypt itself he appears to have been constantly travelling: visits to Alexandria are recorded in the episodes of Mark the Fool, of the Beggar-Saint, and of Thomaïs; and he seems to have been frequently at the monasteries in the neighborhood of Alexandria, such as Oktokiaidekaton. Besides these instances, we find him at least once journeying into the “Upper Thebaid” in the neighborhood of Hermopolis Magna and into the “Thebaid” to the place where Eulogius dwelt. It is only difficult to see how with all this travelling Daniel’s protégés, such as the cripple and Anastasia, who were dependent upon him alone, can have continued to exist. If Daniel’s attitude towards current controversies were clearer, we might assume that Daniel was a Theodosian and that his absences from Scetis were due to the hostility of the Gaianite majority of the monks.

Perhaps the most famous anecdote related of Abba Daniel is that which tells the story of Anastasia. This personage was a lady of patrician rank who is identified in one document with Anastasia the Deaconess, the correspondent of Severus. Being troubled by the advances of the Emperor Justinian, she fled to Alexandria and there founded the Monastery of “the Patrician Lady” at To Pempton. After the death of the Empress Theodora (548), Justinian renewed his attentions; and Anastasia fled to Scetis where (according to a Coptic source) she prayed over the tomb of the Forty-nine Martyrs and was moved to go to Abba Daniel “who was Father of Shiêt.” To Daniel she confided her story, and was assigned a cell eighteen miles distant from Scetis itself. Here she lived as a recluse, visiting Daniel secretly once a week (probably to receive the Communion), and being supplied with water by one of Daniel’s disciples.

2 Id., pp. 15, 16.
3 (Eth.) *P.O.*, vii, pp. 210 f.
4 Clugnet, op. cit., pp. 12, 15, 17.
5 Id., pp. 18, 51, 57.
6 Id., p. 23.
7 Id., p. 30.
8 Id., pp. 28 f.
10 *Notices et extraits*, xxxix, p. 349; see also the references given by Clugnet, op. cit., p. xii. Cauwenbergh suggests that she may have been one of the religious who fled from Antioch with Severus in 518: cf. *Hist. Patr.*, p. 189.
11 *Notices et extraits*, xxxix, p. 349.
THE LIFE AND TIMES OF DANIEL THE HEGUMEN

Twenty-eight years after Anastasia's arrival in Scetis, Daniel's disciple found at her door an ostracon with the words, "Bring the tools and come hither." When Daniel received this message he knew that the recluse was at the point of death and, on visiting her with his disciple, was able to administer the Communion and receive her last words before she died. After burying her, Daniel revealed her history to his disciple. If Anastasia came to Scetis (as the story alleges) immediately after the death of the Empress Theodora, and lived in the desert for twenty-eight years, this incident must be regarded as covering the period 548–576; but, as we shall see, there is reason to doubt this dating.

The episode of Andronicus and Athanasia stands first in the series relating to Abba Daniel for human interest. Suspicion has been cast upon the sixth-century date of the incident; but there should be no hesitation in identifying the Daniel of this story with the well-known hegumen.

Andronicus, the silversmith, and his wife Athanasia were wealthy and charitable inhabitants of Antioch whose children had died suddenly. In their sorrow they agreed to adopt the monastic life and, leaving all that they possessed, departed on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. From that place they travelled to Egypt, where they visited the shrine of Saint Menas in or near Alexandria.

From Saint Menas, Andronicus went on alone to Scetis, where he visited each laura in turn. Hearing Abba Daniel spoken of, he contrived to meet the old man and told him all his story. Daniel bade him return to fetch his wife and place her in a convent of the Tabennesiote Order, promising to furnish them with letters to the superior. Thus Andronicus and Athanasia came to be separated, the latter remaining in the Tabennesiote convent, the former returning to Scetis, where Abba Daniel gave him the habit and taught him the rule of the monastic life.

After living for twelve years as Daniel's disciple, Andronicus asked to be allowed to go to visit the "Holy Places" (Jerusalem). While on his journey, he fell in with his own wife, Athanasia, who, dressed in male attire, was also making a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. The two journeyed together, and though Athanasia had from the first recognized her husband, Andronicus remained ignorant of the identity of his companion.

After their pilgrimage was ended, the two agreed to live together at Oktokaidekaton, and

1 It is noteworthy that Clugnet's A Text does not contain this important detail, which is found in the B and C Texts (Vie de l'Abbé Daniel, pp. 7, 8).
3 Delehaye, Analytica Bollandiana, xxii, p. 96, points out that certain mss. (unused by Clugnet) date the episode in the days of Theodosius, the Great King (378–395). A IV century date is impossible (at any rate for Clugnet’s recensions), for: (a) there is no Daniel eminent in Scetis in the days of Theodosius; (b) the details of the story are inconsistent with the earlier date, and point to the VI century. Such are the visits of Syrians to Egypt (common in the VI century), the reference to the larae of Scetis, the importance of Oktokaidekaton near Alexandria, and the general topography.
4 Cf. Clugnet, Vie de l’Abbé Daniel, p. 50: καταλαμβάνοντες τὸν ἄγιον Μηνᾶ τῆς Ἀλεξάνδρειας and p. 54: κ. τὸν ναὸν τοῦ ἄγιου Μηνᾶ ἐν Ἀλεξάνδρειᾳ; it must, therefore, be in the region of Alexandria and not the Menas Sanctuary found by Kaufmann. From id., p. 51, it appears to have been not far from Oktokaidekaton.
there resided for twelve years, being frequently visited by Daniel. At the end of that time Athanasia died and her secret became known for the first time. Shortly after her burial, which was celebrated with great honor, all Alexandria and Scetis being present, Andronicus himself fell sick and died and was buried, as he had wished, by the side of his wife.

3. Closing Events of Abba Daniel’s Life

The later events of Daniel’s life are recorded only in the Coptic and Ethiopic versions; one at least of these, the episode of the *Tome of Leo*, must be regarded as of extremely doubtful authenticity. When the Emperor Justinian sought to inforce a general subscription to the *Tome of Leo*, Daniel (who was at the time Hegumen of Scetis) was warned by a special revelation and exhorted his monks to stand fast in the trial which was about to overtake them. A detachment of imperial troops came out to Scetis with the *Tome*. “Our holy father Abba Daniel, the superior, went to meet them with many seniors of the holy monks with him. And when the old man met the soldiers, the ‘Tome’ full of impiety was brought; and they urged the old man saying: ‘The Emperor has commanded that you all subscribe to the formula of the Faith.’ Our holy father Abba Daniel, the blessed Superior, answered and said to the soldiers, ‘What formula of the Faith is this?’ They said unto him: ‘That of the great Council of Chalcedon, in which were assembled the 634 bishops.’ Our holy father Abba Daniel, full of the grace, took this ‘Tome,’ full of all impiety, and tare it, crying out and saying to the soldiers: ‘Anathema on the impure synod of Chalcedon, anathema on whosoever is in communion with it, anathema on whosoever holds a belief in agreement with it. . . . To the end of our latest breath we believe in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, consubstantial Trinity in one single Divinity.’ But when the soldiers saw the great firmness of our holy father Abba Daniel . . . they were filled with anger; they took him and inflicted great torments upon him, so that he was within a little of dying through the great cruelty with which they treated him. Also the old men suffered many tribulations and many punishments, so that they were scattered throughout all the land of Egypt.”

Daniel himself fled with his disciple and reached Tambok, “a little village of Egypt,” west of which he constructed a small monastery. Here he lived in great austerity for “many days,” until the death of Justinian (565).

It is obvious that this episode cannot be reconciled with the story of Anastasia; for if Daniel was driven from Scetis and lived for “many days” at Tambok, how could Anastasia, who was dependent upon him alone, continue to exist? We must, therefore, consider which, if either, of these two episodes is to be treated as historical. First as to Anastasia: the story of this saint uses that well-worn Coptic motif of a woman living in disguise as a

---

1 For the Coptic text (edited by Guidi) see Clugnet, *Vie de l’Abbé Daniel*, pp. 95 f.
THE LIFE AND TIMES OF DANIEL THE HEGUMEN

hermit which we have already twice encountered,¹ and therein is open to suspicion. But the combined facts that Anastasia seems to have been an historical personage,² and that she is recognized by the Greek Church, as well as the Coptic, go to show that her story has at any rate some foundation in fact.

It is a pity that as much can hardly be said for the episode of the Tome of Leo. As we have seen, it cannot be reconciled with the story of Anastasia, but there are further difficulties. Despite the ill names which the Emperor Justinian and the Prefect-Patriarch Apollinarius bear in Coptic sources, there is no clear evidence that any policy of coercion and intimidation was inaugurated by them in Egypt.³ Apollinarius, as patriarch himself, naturally objected to the presence of a Monophysite "pretender" in the archiepiscopal city of Saint Mark; but indirect evidence shows fairly clearly that he did not interfere with the Jacobites outside Alexandria. Peter IV himself resided unmolested at Enaton, nine miles only from Alexandria; could he have done so if the Melkite patriarch was forcing all and sundry to subscribe to the Tome of Leo? Also, the Monastery of Saint Macarius itself became at this time the official seat of the Jacobite patriarchate—surely because there was no prospect of molestation. Again, though arguments as to Daniel's dogmatic persuasion can be evenly (and inconclusively) balanced,⁴ what we know of him hardly suggests the raging fanatic of the Coptic episode. Age and hard experience do indeed bring about changes of attitude in such matters; but in youth, at any rate, Daniel is represented—rightly or wrongly—as showing a fine catholicity in consulting first the Monophysite Timothy III and then the orthodox Pope of Rome and the Patriarch of Constantinople. Clugnet⁵ also points to the contrast between the humane and gentle nature of Daniel as shown in the ordinary episodes and the furious bigotry exhibited in that under discussion.⁶ We must conclude, then, that the story of the Tome of Leo is apocryphal, and that it has been inserted in the Coptic version rather than deleted from the Greek under Orthodox influence. Probability is that it is a mere reflection from its almost exact counterpart in the history of Samuel of Kalamôn.⁷

According to the Coptic version Daniel returned to Scetis on the death of Justinian (565). We may disbelieve in any "return"; but it is certain that at about this date the monasteries enjoyed a period of prosperity. In a short notice of the earlier life of Damian,

¹ See pp. 117 and 224.
² See p. 244. Anastasia seems to have been married: she is called ἡ πρώτη σύζυγος (wife of a consular) and is perhaps identical with the mother of Georgia to whom Severus writes (Select Letters of Severus, trans. Brooks, Section x, No. 8).
³ On this matter see Clugnet, Vie de l'Abbé Daniel, p. xxv. It must be added, however, that if Justinian and his representatives did not persecute in Egypt it is hard to account for the bad odor in which he and they were held. John of Nikiu (Chron., ccxiv, 18) asserts that Justinian "published his edict on the faith in all the province of Alexandria," and "stirred up a severe persecution in the land of Egypt."
⁴ Clugnet discusses this question (p. xxiv) but inclines to hold that Daniel was orthodox. A further question for discussion is whether Daniel was a Theodorian or a Gaianite.
⁵ Vie de l'Abbé Daniel, p. xxiv.
⁶ Cauwenbergh, Étude sur les moniales d'Egypte, pp. 27 f., takes a different view and seems to consider that the episode is historical or at least not improbable.
⁷ See p. 255.
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

the *synclerus* of Peter IV, the *History of the Patriarchs*\(^1\) relates that "he (Damian) had been a monk from his youth in the wilderness of Wâdi Habîb, and was brought up by saints in the Monastery of Saint John (i.e., of John the Little), where he remained sixteen years... before he came to Pihenaton, to the Monastery of Mount Tabor, otherwise called Monastery of the Fathers. This was at the time of the rebuilding\(^2\) of the four monasteries in Wâdi Habîb, which were growing up like the plants of the field...; and to their inhabitants was brought all that they needed, and they worked industriously at the building." We can hardly be wrong in putting down this prosperity partly to the credit of Daniel whose fame, we must suppose, drew fresh recruits to the monasteries, attracted pilgrims, and brought to the desert the gifts and offerings of the faithful; and partly to the quasi-official status of the Monastery of Saint Macarius as the seat of the Jacobite patriarchate.

4. Meletians in Scetis

Prosperity, however, did not bring perfect harmony. The *History of the Patriarchs*\(^3\) continues as follows: "But there were among them (i.e., the monks of Scetis) the Meletians, I mean the followers of Meletius,\(^4\) who used to receive the Chalice many times in the night, before they came to the church. For this reason, when the Father Damian...was counted worthy to sit upon the evangelical throne, he wrote to the holy mountain and commanded that the Meletians should be banished from it."

Some fuller particulars of Damian’s struggle with these heretics are to be found in an account of this patriarch’s life contained in the *Synaxarium*\(^5\): “There were in the desert of Scetis at the Monastery of the holy Abba Macarius certain impious heretics, partisans of Meletius the Heresiarch. They used to drink wine in the night several times over and the next day receive the Holy Mysteries: they alleged that Our Lord... gave to His disciples two cups. The first He gave them without saying, ‘This is my blood’: He gave a second cup afterwards, and said to them, ‘This is my blood.’ But the holy Damian revealed their error and said: ‘The first cup was with the Paschal victim of the Old Testament, which was the sacrifice of the Old Law, but as for the New Law, the *Canons of the Apostles* excommunicate all who taste anything before the Sacrifice.’” Upon this, some of the Meletians were converted; others, persisting in their error, were banished.

---

1 Page 209.
2 Crum suggests that this should rather be rendered “this was at the time of the flourishing of the four monasteries... and their building was increasing... and their people built continually.” Building or rebuilding was the mere outcome of prosperity.
3 Page 209.
4 Meletius, Bishop of Assiût, was contemporary with Peter I of Alexandria (see Athanasius, *Contra Arianos*, Oratio, 1, 3). In *Aposth. Patr.*, Sisoes, xlviii, we hear of them in the Arsinoite nome. In the VI century they were strong in the Fayûm, to judge from the Petrie Papyrus (512–513 A.D.) from Gurob relating to the sale of a monastery by an ex-Meletian monk to a Meletian priest (see *Revue des études grecques*, 1890, pp. 131 ff.). They re-appear at a later period (*Hist. Patr.*, pp. 209 ff.). For new material relating to the Meletians, and for a history of the schism see Bell, *Jews and Christians in Egypt*, pp. 38 ff.
5 Ethiopic, Sanè 18 (June 12), P.O., 1, p. 630.
THE LIFE AND TIMES OF DANIEL THE HEGUMEN

Another notice in the Synaxarium relating to John, Bishop of Borlos, also deals with the suppression of these heretics. John had established a hostel for the sick and for strangers, but having met a monk who lauded the virtues of the monastic life, he gave away all he possessed and "departed for the mountain of Shihet; it was in the days of Abba Daniel, the Hegumen of the Desert." After living as a monk near Daniel, he became Bishop of Borlos. "In his days there were sectaries who communicated twenty times a day, and were insolent." John excommunicated them and forbade them to follow these irregular practices, and, when they disobeyed him, "he besought the Lord; and fire came down from heaven and consumed their chief. At this sight, they were seized with fear, and obeyed the Lord and became orthodox." This account suggests that John was a superior in Scetis, probably of the Laura of Saint Macarius, and, no doubt under Daniel, carried out Damian's order for the suppression of the Meletians.

5. The Fourth Sack of Scetis

After the notice on the Meletians, the History of the Patriarchs continues: "And after a short time a voice came from heaven upon that desert (Scetis), saying: 'Flee! flee!'" And when the inhabitants of the "Four Monasteries" had left them, they were laid waste. The Coptic version of Abba Daniel's life also describes this barbarian raid: "not many days after our holy father Abba Daniel was returned to Shihet, the barbarians entered into the holy mount, bringing desolation upon the place, slaying the old men and carrying some of them away into their country." When this occurred, Daniel with his disciple retired once more to Tambok.

Scetis was utterly devastated. Some fifty or sixty years later when Benjamin visited Scetis in his flight southwards, the monasteries were still suffering from the effects of this disaster. Other sources enable us to judge the completeness of the destruction. John Moschus, who travelled in Egypt after 578 and diligently visited monasteries, never speaks of a visit to Scetis (though he was at Terenuthis and Cellia), obviously because the monasteries had been utterly destroyed, or it was too dangerous to risk a visit to the few monks who may have still remained. On the other hand, he met in various places monks

---

1 Ed. Basset, pp. 410 f.
2 He is mentioned (with a disciple, John) in the Hist. Patr., p. 213 (P.O., 1, p. 477), with other bishops under Damian, "who tended the vineyard of the Lord of Sabaoth." Borlos is the Coptic ἀναγελλεῖν: see Amélineau, Géographie, p. 104.
3 This detail shows that the "sectaries" were Meletians. If John was indeed at this time a superior in Scetis, his biographer has misplaced this incident which is made to appear as an episcopal act.
4 Loc. cit.
5 Hist. Patr., p. 226, where it is again distinctly stated that the sack took place temp. Damian. The Hamburg Text (ed. Seybold, p. 98) however dates this raid under Athanasius (sic) (? Anastasius, patriarch, 605–616), probably confusing the destruction of Scetis with that of the six hundred "monasteries" at Enaton by the Persians, temp. Andronicus (patriarch, 616–622): see Hist. Patr., p. 221; Makrizi (Gesch. d. Öst., ed. Wustenfeld, ch. 111, p. 48) merely states that "the Monasteries" were destroyed temp. Andronicus, without specifying which they were. I am indebted to W. E. Crum for the reference to Seybold's text.
6 For the chronology of John Moschus see Cauwenbergh, Étude sur les moines d'Égypte, p. 50.
7 Pratum spirituale, liv. 8 Id., cxxiv.
who had once been in Scetis but had been scattered owing to the raid. Thus at Terenuthis he found Abba Theodore the Alexandrian who attributed the ruin of Scetis to the shortcomings of the monks themselves, even as the fathers had foretold.¹ Another monk of Scetis, Abba Irenaeus, told him that “when the Barbarians came to Scetis, I withdrew and came to the region of Gaza.”² A third, Abba Marcellus, confessed that in his early days only the recollection of the shame which befell a defeated charioteer in his native city of Apamea prevented him from leaving Scetis and returning to the world. He stayed, he said, in the desert for thirty-five years “until the barbarians came and sold me into Pentapolis and wasted Scetis”³—a welcome corroboration of the account given in the Coptic Life of Daniel. Not only, therefore, was the desert “wasted” (i.e., the churches, cells, and so forth destroyed), but of the monks many fled to places more or less distant and made no attempt to return; some were made captives and sold as slaves, others (according to the Coptic account) were slain.

There is nothing to fix the date of this raid precisely. Benjamin’s first visit (631) is said to have taken place “only a short time after the ruin which took place in the days of the patriarch Damian”—obviously an historian’s “short time.” If we are to regard Anastasia as having come to Scetis after the death of the Empress Theodora⁴ (i.e., in 548) and as having lived there until her death twenty-eight years later, then the raid must have taken place later than 576, about 580. This may possibly be right, but two further indications suggest a slightly earlier date. First, the History of the Patriarchs represents Damian’s action against the Meletians as the initial or a very early proceeding of his patriarchate, while the raid followed “after a short time,” that is, in 570 or 571. In agreement with this is the Coptic Life of Daniel, which dates the raid “not many days” after Daniel’s supposed return to Scetis on the death of Justinian (565). So far, then, as our somewhat flimsy evidence⁵ goes we may date the raid provisionally at about 570 with the reservation that it may have taken place ten or even more years later.

Abba Daniel seems to have died very shortly after the destruction of Scetis. After mentioning his retreat to Tambok, the Coptic narrative merely states that he lived anew

---

¹ Pratm spirituale, liv. ² Id., lv. ³ Id., clii. ⁴ In Clugnet’s A Text no reference is made to the death of Theodora. Did the B and C Texts charitably assume this event to save Justinian’s moral character? If so, Anastasia’s advent to Scetis may have been considerably before 548. All three texts assert that she lived in the desert 28 years, but it is not impossible that the figure was from the first exaggerated. ⁵ Much depends on the general agreement of the Coptic Life of Daniel with the Hist. Pats. The former is untrustworthy in the incident of the Tome of Leo, but is more reliable in its notice of the raid. That Daniel retires to Tambok, where he dies and is buried, suggests that here at any rate the biographer had something solid to go upon. (The earlier retreat to Tambok is a mere duplication.) So also the account of the raid itself is generally borne out by the entirely independent evidence of John Moschus. N.B. A passage in Payne Smith’s translation of the Ecclesiastical History of John of Ephesus (iv, 37–38) to the effect that a Jacobite priest, Theodore, was confined “in a monastery at the Natron Lakes” in 579–580 may be thought to show that the sack of Scetis was certainly not earlier than about 580. In reality this is a mistranslation and the passage should read “the Monastery of the House of the Silentiarius”—i.e., at Constantinople. I am indebted to N. McLean of Christ’s College, Cambridge, for this correction.
in "great mortifications" and was warned by an angel that the day of his death was at hand. This was on Bashans first. On the eighth day of that month\(^1\) he died with the words: "O my Lord Jesus Christ, beloved of my soul, into Thy hands I commend my spirit." His age is not stated; but if he was born in 485 and died soon after the sack of Scetis, he would have been between eighty-five and ninety years old at the time of his death.

---

\(^1\) Daniel is also commonly mentioned in the list of worthies of Scetis in the Anaphora.
CHAPTER V

THE HERACLIAN PERSECUTION (631–641 A.D.)

For some forty-five years after the barbarian raid the history of Scetis remains perfectly blank. We know that there were still monks in the desert during this period, but they were, even as late as 631, few in number, and subject to oppression by the barbarians.

It is with the Life of Samuel of Kalamün that our sources of information begin again. Samuel was born in 597–598 at Tkello or Dakiübbeh near a town named Pelhip, became a subdeacon at the age of twelve, and being bent upon leading the monastic life, refused to marry as his parents wished. At eighteen he was ordained deacon and was given charge of a church built by his father. Four years later the father died, and Samuel, aged twenty-two, decided to become a monk. In 615 (or 619), therefore, he set out for Scetis, and guided by an old man to the desert, reached the Monastery of Saint Macarius. From the top of a great and high hill between (the laura of) Apa Macarius and Apa John, his guide pointed out to him, in the midst of a crag, the cave of a holy monk named Agatho, a great monk, an anchoret. Samuel went, therefore, to Agatho’s cell and was readily received by him. The old man ‘when he had made a prayer over the habit and the cowl and the girdle of leather clothed him in them, saying: The God of our holy Fathers Macarius and

---

1 Agatho, the master of Samuel, seems to have been long in the desert before Samuel’s arrival there in 615 A.D.
2 H. Patr., p. 226.
3 The prime source of information respecting Samuel will be the complete Life in the Morgan Collection. As this is not yet available, I am dependent in the following pages partly on Cauwenbergh’s analysis (Etude sur les moines d’Égypte, pp. 88 f.) of the Morgan ms. and upon a few notes on the original ms. kindly supplied me by W. E. Crum, and partly on the Portuguese translation of the Ethiopic version published by Pereira (Vida do Aba Samuel, Lisbon, 1894). I have also used the notice in the SYNAXARION, (ed. Basset, pp. 329 f.). The Coptic fragments previously extant are edited by Amélineau in Mém. miss. arch. franç. au Caire, iv, pp. 770 f., but do not contain any Scetis material. Cf. also Journal asiatique, vol. xii, vii. Série, t. ii (1883), pp. 361 f.
4 So in Ethiopic: cf. Cauwenbergh, op. cit., p. 90 (who, however, states on the authority of the Morgan ms. that Samuel became a monk at the age of eighteen). According to the Coptic Life (id., pp. 88 f.), Samuel was 34 at the time of the persecution (631–632), a statement which gives the clue to his chronology.
5 There is none such. Between the two laurae there is a wide but low spur whereon are two or three conical knolls, not exceeding 15–20 meters in height. Possibly one of the latter is intended.
6 Morgan ms., p. 13.
THE HERACLIAN PERSECUTION

Antony be with thee and be thou their disciple!' And he taught him humility, and silence, and charity, and estimation (?), and to say 'Pardon me!'".1

After three years Agatho fell sick and, despite Samuel's careful attention, died. The disciple, left to himself, continued in the same mode of life, fasting twice a week, abstaining even from bread during Lent, and eating only herbs. During this period he gained a great influence over his fellow monks and, according to the Synaxarium,2 was ordained priest of the Church of Abba Macarius.

In 627 the Persians, who had occupied Egypt since 616–617, withdrew from the country, which became once more part of the Byzantine Empire. The history of past years had perhaps convinced Heraclius that his recovery of the provinces torn from the empire by the Persians3 could only be consolidated by effecting religious unity throughout his dominions. To effect such a reunion a compromise was to be made. The question whether the Nature of Christ was single or dual was to lapse, and stress was to be laid solely upon the Unity of Will and Operation in Our Lord. Cyrus, Bishop of Phasis in Colchis, was the man chosen to carry this design into effect in Egypt and he was consecrated (Melkite) Patriarch of Alexandria.

At this time Benjamin I (622–661) was the Coptic (Monophysite) patriarch. According to the History of the Patriarchs4 he received a supernatural warning of the imminent arrival of Cyrus together with an injunction to flee for safety. After charging his people and clergy to maintain the faith, and bidding the bishops hide themselves from the approaching troubles, Benjamin left Alexandria. The account of his flight (631) is particularly valuable as showing the real condition5 of the monasteries at this time: "And after that he went forth by the road towards Mareotis, walking on foot by night... until he came to El Muna. Thence he went to Wādi Habīb. And the monks there were few in number, because it was only a short time after the ruin which took place in the days of the patriarch Damian; and the Berbers did not allow them to multiply there. Then Benjamin went forth from the monasteries in Wādi Habīb, and departed to Upper Egypt; and he remained hidden there in a small monastery in the wilderness until the accomplishment of the ten years, as the angel of the Lord had told him."6

On his arrival, Cyrus, the Melkite patriarch, held a synod (631) at Alexandria, at which he put forth a scheme of compromise on a Monothelite basis in nine articles. The most

1 Pereira, Vida do Abba Samuel, p. 140.
3 On the history of this period see A. J. Butler's Arab Conquest of Egypt.
4 See p. 226.
5 The Life of Samuel does not suggest that the monasteries were in an evil plight; but that document was composed long after the period with which we are dealing, whereas the biography of Benjamin is based upon contemporary testimony, such as that of Agatho, his synkellos and successor (if we accept the document at its face value).
6 There is no doubt that Benjamin must (as Coptic writers assert) have fled at the approach of Cyrus. He at least could come to no terms with his Melkite rival without abdicating his patriarchate. The writer of the article, Coptic Church in the Dict. of Christ. Biogr., speaks of Benjamin's "cold refusal" to accept the compromise offered by Cyrus—I know not on what authority.
important was the seventh, which asserted that Christ "wrought the acts appertaining both to God and Man by one divinely human operation (μιᾶς θεανθρωπῆς ἐνεργείᾳ)." This document, known as the Πληροφορία, certainly caused great scandal to the Chalcedonian, or Orthodox party; and Sophronius in particular dramatically besought Cyrus to abandon it; on the other hand, the Jacobites (according to Theophanes) boasted that they had not submitted to Chalcedon, but Chalcedon to them. But for the time being it seems to have attained its object, though probably only in Alexandria and its immediate neighborhood. Cyrus at any rate wrote triumphantly to Sergius of Constantinople declaring that "all they of the creed of the so-called Theodosians in this Christ-loving city of Alexandria" of all ranks and classes had been united to the Catholic Church and had communicated with him by thousands on June third. Similarly we find Sergius writing to the Pope Honorius that Cyrus, "after many disputations and labors which with exceeding prudence and most salutary discussion he spent in this cause, by the grace of Heaven attained that which he aimed at."

Of this initial success—it seems soon to have faded—Coptic writers say nothing, and it is not possible to do more than conjecture why Cyrus had recourse to persecution. Perhaps the Monophysites of the country and minor towns, where there was no alien element, were less pliable than Cyrus found the Alexandrians. What seems to be beyond doubt is this, the Copts generally—the monks of Scetis are an example—were quite unconscious of the nature of the compromise offered them. It is certain that the document to which they were called upon to subscribe was the Plerophoria only: yet their writers consistently, and in perfect good faith, always call it the Tome of Leo. Either inability to comprehend, or suspicion that new Plerophoria was but old Tome writ large, wrecked the compromise so far as Egypt generally was concerned.

However this may be, it is evident that it was one essential part of Cyrus' plans to get the monasteries, as the most important centers of religious influence, to accept his formula. In the case of nearly all the convents in the neighborhood of Alexandria he was successful. The History of the Patriarchs, speaking of the Monastery of Metras, observes that "all the churches and monasteries which belonged to the virgins and monks had been defiled by Heraclius the heretic when he forced them to accept the faith of Chalcedon, except this monastery alone; for the inmates of it were exceedingly powerful, being Egyptians by race and all of them natives, without a stranger amongst them."  

---

1 For the text see Mansi, Concilia, xi, 564 f.
2 S. Maximus Conf., Disputationum cum Pyrrho (Migne, P.G., xcii, col. 333).
3 In Migne, P.G., cviii, cols. 677–80: οὖν ἡμεῖς τῆς Ἀλκηνίδος, ἀλλ' ἡ Ἀλκηνίδος μᾶλλον ἡμῖν ἐκοιμήθησεν, διὰ τῆς μιᾶς ἐνεργείας μιᾶν ὁμολογήσασα διὸνerve μεν Ἑρακλείου.
4 Mansi, op. cit., xi, 561–63.
5 Id., xi, 531.
6 The Edhesis (for text of which see Hardouin, Acta Conciliorum, iii, 792 f.), published in 638, no doubt was circulated, but only on the eve of the Arab Conquest. The letter of Cyrus to Sergius acknowledging receipt of this document (id., 802 f.) contains not a hint that he had been trying to impose the Tome of Leo; it may be taken as certain that he never did so.
7 Page 234.
8 For the significance of this statement see p. 221.
THE HERACLIAN PERSECUTION

The Coptic Life of Samuel gives the following account of the arrival of Cyrus and his effort to force the monks of Scetis to subscribe to the compromise.1 When Samuel was thirty-four years of age, “the unhallowed Cyrus entered Alexandria in order to pursue the holy archbishop Benjamin.” Cyrus sought to kill his Monophysite rival and to take his place as patriarch. Benjamin, therefore, fled, and Cyrus usurped the see—he had also received temporal authority over the country. Cyrus then put forward the Tome of Leo and sent a magistrianus2 with two hundred soldiers to the “mountain of Shiêt” to make all the monks subscribe to the Tome of Leo. On his arrival the imperial envoy occupied the great church of Abba Macarius and ordered all the monks of the holy mountain to assemble together with Abba John the Hegumen. He could not be found, since, while engaged in hiding the treasures of the church in the “inner marsh,” he was surprised by the barbarians and carried away captive into their country.3

The officer then read the Tome of Leo with the letter of the “Kauchianos” (Cyrus the Colchian) requiring the monks to accept the formula of Chalcedon, and bade a deacon ask aloud if they assented. Thrice the question was asked, and each time was met by a dead silence. When the magistrianus, enraged at the obstinacy of the monks, threatened them with punishment, Samuel arose and answered: “We do not accept this Tome, nor the Council of Chalcedon, and we recognize no other archbishop except our father Abba Benjamin.” Samuel then demanded that the Tome should be given him, and having received it, showed it to the assembly and anathematized both it, and the Council of Chalcedon, and Leo, and all who partook of this faith. Then he tore the document to pieces and cast it through the door out of the church.

Samuel, brutally ill-treated by order of the magistrianus, was carried away, half-dead, by his disciples, who were driven from the monastery by the soldiers. They carried the saint away to the “mountain of the south” and took refuge in a cave, where the unfortunate champion of the Monophysites was miraculously healed. From this spot he made his way to the Fayyûm with his followers and so passes out of the history of Scetis.4

What treatment was meted out to the remaining monks we are not told. It is possible that a number of them were expelled and settled elsewhere; for Abû Sâlih5 in his description of the Monastery of Nahyâ near Gizeh mentions that “outside and in front of the monastery there are a number of cells, which belonged to the monks when they came out from the monastery of Saint Macarius in the patriarchate of Anbâ Benjamin.” As we do

---

1 See Cauwenbergh, Étude sur les moines d’Égypte, p. 103.
2 For the title see p. 165. In the Ethiopic the title is corrupted into the proper name Maximianus (see Pereira, Vida do Abba Samuel, p. 142).
3 Cauwenbergh, op. cit., p. 87; Morgan ms., p. 21. In the Ethiopic, John is called Paul and is said to have fled.
4 He reappears, however, in the adventures of John the Hegumen (see p. 275).
5 Churches and Monasteries of Egypt, fol. 63 b (ed. Evetts and Butler).
not hear anything of a regular barbarian raid in the days of Benjamin,\textsuperscript{1} it seems best to connect this brief notice with the persecution of Heraclius. Nahyā may seem a strange place in which to seek refuge from the tyranny of Cyrus, but Samuel's own retreat in the Fayyūm was hardly less exposed (as experience showed). Most of the monks, however, must have submitted to the Melkite; for very significantly the Coptic \textit{Life of Samuel} remarks that after Samuel was driven out, "we will be silent as to what befell in Shiēṭ."\textsuperscript{2}

\textsuperscript{1} John the Hegumen was kidnapped while wandering in the desert, and not in a raid on the monasteries. But it is possible that the refugees at Nahyā may have left the Wādi 'n Natrūn owing to the oppression of the barbarians noticed by the \textit{Hist. Patr.} in connection with the flight of Benjamin. Or has Abū Sālih written \textit{Benjamin} in mistake for \textit{Damān}? If so, the monks at Nahyā would have been driven out during the great raid of about 570.

\textsuperscript{2} Morgan ms., p. 25.
CHAPTER VI

THE MOUNT OF NITRIA, CELLIA, AND SCETIS
IN THE BYZANTINE PERIOD

1. The Mount of Nitria and Cellia

In the Byzantine Period we hear little of Cellia and less of the Mount of Nitria. This can only mean that the two centers had fallen from their old supremacy, superseded by younger rivals. Those monks who desired to live in the utter desert now retired to Scetis, while the less hardy\(^1\) and more worldly settled in the numerous monasteries near Alexandria—To Pempton, Enaton, Oktokiaidekaton—which reached their zenith in the Byzantine Period.

The few facts which can be gleaned may here be set forth:

After the Council of Chalcedon adherents of both parties were to be found at the Mount of Nitria and Cellia. In the former, Monophysite aggression gradually forced the Melkite monks to withdraw and seek fresh abodes\(^2\); in the latter a second church had been built in order that either faction might communicate separately.\(^3\) Possibly, too, Cellia had become more compact, since it is now called a laura—apparently with more or less definitely defined limits.\(^4\)

No more is heard of either place until the sixth century, when at Abba Daniel’s summons the monks of “Cellia and they of Mount Nitria” come up to Alexandria to attend the funeral of Mark the Fool.\(^5\) About the same time the monks of “Nitria” also appear to join Timothy III in his intercession for the victory of Elesbaan.\(^6\) These references should deter us from overrating the decline in the two places. To this period, perhaps, belongs the anecdote, related by John of Ephesus,\(^7\) of the monk who, having stolen the goods of a

---

1 The disguised Hilaria is urged to go to Enaton rather than attempt to face the hardships in Scetis: see p. 225.
2 See p. 222.
3 lb.
4 Since the monk James occupied a cell “outside the Laura”: ib.
5 See p. 243.
6 See p. 236.
father at Enaton, met in his flight certain camel men journeying "into the desert lying within Libya, which is called Cellia," and on arrival "desired a cave which he might inhabit after the manner of a solitary."

At the close of the century John Moschus does not mention the Mount of Nitria, but seems to have visited Cellia, since he quotes the precepts of a monk residing there.\footnote{Pratum spiritalae, cxliv.} From a certain John of Cilicia he heard the following anecdote (to be dated back to about 550 A.D.) which throws a ray of light on Cellia.\footnote{Id., clxxvii.} A certain brother came to the Laura of Cellia and wished to dwell in the cell once tenanted by the fourth-century Evagrius. The priest vainly tried to dissuade him, saying that the demon who had seduced Evagrius into heresy still haunted the place. For the first week all went well and the newcomer duly appeared in church on the Sabbath and Sunday. But at the next "week-end" he was missing, and, when the priest went to look for him, he was found hanging in the ill-omened cell. We infer that though Cellia was now a laura, it was still an abode of solitary who met only at the church on the Sabbath and Sunday and whose superior was the priest.

The Mount of Nitria is mentioned (under its Copto-Arabic name, Gebel Barnûg)\footnote{The Coptic original doubtless read "The Mount of Pernoudj" (cf. p. 18).} for the last time in the seventh century when Benjamin I passed near it on his way to the Wâdi 'n Natrûn\footnote{Hist. Patr., p. 242.}; there is nothing to show whether it was then inhabited or deserted.\footnote{It may have been devastated (with El Muna) in the Persian Period. No restoration after the Arab Conquest is mentioned.} On the same occasion Benjamin halted at El Muna. If Cellia is to be identified with El Muna,\footnote{6 See p. 25.} it was restored along with the monasteries of Scetis after the Arab Conquest. The last reference to El Muna (Cellia) is in the patriarchate of Alexander II (705–730) when the Gaianites and Barsanuphian heretics there were "converted" by the ingenious John of Sà.\footnote{7 See p. 289.}

2. Scetis

While the Mount of Nitria and Cellia were declining, Scetis was flourishing. Largely, no doubt, this was due to the endowment of Zeno and the exalted status which the Monastery of Saint Macarius had acquired.\footnote{8 See pp. 238 f.} Scetis also enjoyed a great reputation for the quality of its monasticism; the sixth-century writer John Climacus, for example, insists that the Scetioites produced more "luminaries" than did the Tabennesiotes.\footnote{9 Scala, xxviii, 12 (P.G., lxxviii, col. 1105).} Yet we can recover but few particulars concerning life in this period.

In an anecdote recorded by John Moschus,\footnote{10 Pratum spiritalae, cxix.} John of Petra states that when he was young and lived in Scetis (about 550)\footnote{11 John of Petra probably fled from Scetis at the fourth sack (about 570): his youth may then be dated about 550.} there were there three thousand five hundred fathers. This we may accept; but what value, if any, is to be attached to the statement in the Syriac

\begin{itemize}
\item \textbf{258}
\end{itemize}
version of the story of Hilaria that there were then (between 474 and 491) three thousand "hermits" in the Monastery of Saint Macarius, is more doubtful.

There were now two classes of monks in Scetis, hermits, and those who lived in the monasteries or laurae; both hermitages and monasteries being mentioned in the narrative of the Gaianite heresy. The histories of Hilaria, Anastasia, and perhaps Agatho, the master of Samuel, may be taken as illustrating the lives of the hermits. They dwelt alone, at some distance from the laurae, associating rarely with the ordinary monks who lived therein.

In the episode of Andronicus and Athanasia, Andronicus journeyed to Scetis and visited "the fathers in each laura" (κατὰ λαύρας)—the Greek phrase showing that there were several laurae. John Moschus definitely mentions the "Four Lauroa of Scetis," and, elsewhere, refers to one of them as "the Laura of Abba Sisoes." The date of these references is about 550, and slightly later we find that the "Four Monasteries" of Scetis were sacked in the patriarchate of Damian. In a previous chapter we have seen that these four laurae are the direct parents of the four great monasteries of the Middle Ages, and the descendants of the four "congregations" mentioned in the history of the fourth century. They include, of course, the four "duplicate" (Theotokos) monasteries.

We can form a general picture of the laura at this period. At the center stood the church and "tower of refuge," with, perhaps, some other "common" buildings. Round about, irregularly spaced and at varying distances (though not far) from one another, were the cells of the monks, perhaps already interspersed with mansibubes—dwelling houses accommodating several monks who were disciples of a single "father." Presumably the cells were still quite primitive, but we know no more than that the cell of Abba Daniel had an inclosed court open to the sun before it. They may have resembled the contemporary cells attached to the Monastery of Epiphanius at Thebes.

The colony as a whole was governed by the "Hegumen of Scetis" (or "of the Desert"), such as were Pammo (?) who admitted Hilaria on her arrival in the desert, Daniel, and the seventh-century John the Hegumen. According to the History of the Patriarchs the hegumen was the senior priest (?) in the Monastery of Saint Macarius); his functions are nowhere defined and were probably traditional, but we know definitely that he could admit (and reject) newcomers, summon the whole body of monks on emergencies, and that it was customary for him to pay an official visit to the patriarch in Alexandria yearly at Easter.

1 Wensinck, Legends of Eastern Saints, ii, pp. 43 f. Certain expressions strongly recall Palladius' description of the Mount of Nitria (Hist. Laos., ch. vii) and this "information" may therefore be fictitious.
2 See p. 229.
3 See p. 245.
4 Pratum spirituale, CXIII.
5 1d., CLXIX.
6 See ch. vii.
7 A refectory and kitchen should most probably be added. From the Life of Samuel, Cauwenbergh (Etude sur les moines d'Egypte, p. 90) infers that storehouses also formed part of this "nuclens."
8 See Clugnet, Vie de l'Abbé Daniel, pp. 28 f.
9 See P.S.B.A., x, p. 194.
10 Page 336.
11 As for the obsequies of Mark the Fool, cf. p. 243.
12 Clugnet, op. cit., p. 12.
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

In addition each laura had its superior, one of whom, Abba Sisoes, is perhaps named. There must have been stewards and minor officers but these are never named in our sources. Probably any monk of regular standing and mature age could receive a disciple and perhaps "give him the habit." Agatho, who seems to have been a mere hermit, invests Samuel without any formal ceremony and without the intervention of the Hegumen of the Desert or of a superior (just as John the Little was invested by his master Amoi). But, on the other hand, Andronicus receives the habit from Daniel himself (though in this case Daniel may have been acting simply as a "father" and not qua hegumen); and Agatho the Stylite, who belongs to the beginning of the next period, only becomes a monk after a formal ceremony in the church in the presence of the Hegumen John.

The duty of the "father" was to instruct his disciple in the monastic virtues; Agatho teaches Samuel humility, silence, and other matters; and Daniel is pictured as imparting to Andronicus "the lore of the monastic life" (tà τοῦ μοναχικοῦ). Disciples might enter the monastic life at an early age. Daniel the Hegumen renounced the world from childhood or boyhood (ἐκ παιδόθεν ἀπεξάκουσεν); and Damian "had been a monk from his youth...in the Monastery of Saint John." Samuel became a monk at the age of eighteen or twenty-two. But there was no bar to the admission of men of mature age, such as was Andronicus. The period during which the relation of "father" and disciple lasted probably varied with the degree of intimacy between the two. Samuel stayed three years with Agatho, when the latter died; Andronicus continued to be Daniel's disciple for twelve years.

The prime duty of the disciple was to learn the lore of the monastic life, but he also acted as the companion and personal attendant of the older man. Daniel was constantly accompanied by his disciple, who performed various services such as summoning the monks of the desert to Alexandria, announcing his master, and even serving his meals.

Not much can be learned as to the religious observances in Scetis at this period; probably the practice of the fourth century remained unchanged here as at Cellia. There is no reference to any common observance of any of the hours; but John Moschus speaks of Marcellus of Apamea as "arising one night to perform the canon (night office)"—apparently in his own cell. The Syriac Life of Hilaria (of doubtful authority) asserts that

1 See p. 259.
2 On "taking the habit" see pp. 191 f.
3 See p. 252.
4 Clugnet, Vie de l'Abbé Daniel, p. 50.
6 See p. 253.
7 Clugnet, loc. cit.
8 Id., p. 27.
9 Hist. Patr., p. 209. Damian, according to John of Ephesus, was a Syrian and was offered in his youth by his parents, as was Simon I (689-701); cf. Hist. Patr., p. 281.
10 See p. 252.
11 Clugnet, Vie de l'Abbé Daniel, p. 50.
12 Id.
14 Id., p. 23.
15 Id., p. 31.
16 See p. 258, John Climacus, Scala, xxvii, 12 (P.G., lxxxviii, col. 1105), speaks of Scetics as engaged in mortifying their passions, spending much time and study in psalmody and prayer, or giving themselves to contemplation. But all these are private observances.
17 Wensinck, Legends of Eastern Saints, II, p. 43.
MOUNT OF NITRIA, CELLIA, AND SCETIS IN THE BYZANTINE PERIOD

"their [sc. the monks of Scetis] way of living is that each of them reciteth separately and in his own way and every one accomplisheth the holy service in his cell, which he leaveth not during the whole week. But on Sundays, at the time of the ministration of the holy sacrifice, they go to the church that is situated in the midst of the cells and partake of the holy sacrament."

The document just quoted gives the following account of the abstinence of the monks:

"Every one fasteth as he chooseth and according to his strength, some of them every second day, others every third day or fourth day. The conspicuous take food only once a week. This consisteth of dry bread and olives, sometimes they take also boiled vegetables, others feed upon herbs like the beasts." The ex-monks of Scetis met by John Moschus assured that author that in their early days (i.e., about the middle of the sixth century), the abstinence of the monks was marvellous. Theodore of Alexandria, whom John met at Terentius, complained that the ruin of Scetis was due to the degeneracy of the monks. "For believe me, my sons, as an old man, that great was the love among the Scetiotics and their asceticism and their discernment. I still found there old men who took no food at all (sic), unless someone visited them. Amongst these was a certain old man named Ammonius who dwelt near me. And knowing that he had this custom, I used to visit him on the Sabbath, that on my account he might take food. Now all alike observed this custom, that at whatever hour anyone visited them, they set them to offer up a prayer; and while they were doing so, they would lay the table and straightway partake of meat." The same author quotes John of Petra as declaring that inquiry was once made for a little vinegar for the use of a sick monk, but none could be found in "the Four laurae of Scetis"; such was their poverty and asceticism. These accounts are overcolored. It will be remembered that Abba Poemen declared that the Fathers generally had found the best course to be to eat a little every day; and it is probable that this rule was generally followed in the sixth century. As a matter of fact, we are told that Abba Daniel took his "little meal" (ρὸ μικρὸν φαγίων) at the eleventh hour (five P.M.), "for the old man kept this rule all the days of his life." To postpone the daily meal two hours was evidently regarded as an act of asceticism.

In the matter of manual labor, as in other matters, there is no real difference between Scetis of the fourth century and Scetis of the Byzantine age. Basket making was certainly still the normal mode of employment. John, leader of the Forty-nine Martyrs of Scetis, is called the basket maker (μανατιστής) apparently in derision; and baskets were certainly

---

1 This was at the third hour (9 A.M.): cf. id., p. 45.
2 Wensinck, Legends of Eastern Saints, II, p. 43.
3 Cf. Palladius, Hist. Laus., ch. VII: ἔχοντες πολλοὶ ἑκατὸν ὅς ἔδιδαν καὶ ὅς βοήθεσαν, which suggests that the account may be worked up from the Lausiæ History.
4 Praen. spiritu., LIV.
5 Id., cxvi.
6 See p. 200.
7 Clugnet, Vie de l’Abbé Daniel, p. 31.
8 The regular time for the monastic meal was at the ninth hour (3 P.M.): cf. p. 200.
9 See p. 200.

261
the handiwork which Abba Daniel and other monks carried to Alexandria, Terenuthis, and elsewhere in the Delta for sale. The virtue of basket making lay in this, that it did not distract the mind from meditation. But it was otherwise with gardening and agriculture, which seem still to have been regarded as dangerous and distracting occupations though they were practised.

The dress of the monks was probably unchanged, but it may be noted here that Anastasia was clad in a κεφώνη (perhaps the same as the κολόβων) and a φαρσκιδίων ἀπὸ σιβίνου (a garment—perhaps worn next the skin—woven of palm leaves or fiber). The monks of Scetis had the custom of wearing white garments (ἀσπρα φοροῦντες, λευκημονοῦντες) at funerals such as that of Mark the Fool or of Athanasia.

The monks were assembled by beating the κροῦσμα (Coptic, γεωσοςτ; Arabic, ناقوس), a wooden board which was struck with a mallet. Whether the Greek text is correct in stating that Daniel "shook the bell as was his custom about the sixth hour" to summon his disciple, may perhaps be doubted.

Noteworthy, also, is the importance attached by the monks of Scetis to relics. When Andronicus died, there arose, we are told, a great dispute between the monks of Oktokaidekaton and Scetis for the possession of his body, which was only settled by the firm attitude and threats of Daniel himself. The value attached to the remains of persons of eminent sanctity and purity of life is explained by the Scetiotes themselves, who desire "that his prayers may aid us," that is, against temptations such as might beset the younger men. For on that occasion, the monks themselves declare: "the old man is advanced in life and no longer fears the war (of temptation): but we, being younger, need the brother." That the assistance of a saint could only be obtained by near approach to his remains is clearly implied in the anecdote of the monk who was assailed by temptation and found deliverance only by going to Oktokaidekaton and praying at the tomb of Thomas.
SECTION III

THE EARLY ARAB PERIOD

641–880 A.D.
CHAPTER I

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PERIOD

WITH the difficult and obscure events of the Arab Conquest we have here no concern. But directly and indirectly the conquest profoundly affected the history of the monasteries of Scetis. Some attempt must be made to indicate the nature and direction of these changes.

The real meaning of the Arab Conquest for Egypt is not always rightly understood. We are apt to think only that a Christian country was thenceforward dominated by Muslim invaders, and that the Coptic Church was left like an island encompassed by the seas of an alien and hostile creed. Would not Christian Egypt have been in a happier position had she remained part of the Byzantine Empire? This is not the whole truth. Between the Copt and the Byzantine there lay the gulf which separates the Oriental from the Occidental—a gulf widened by bitter religious difference, persecution, and political oppression. When, therefore, Byzantine was exchanged for Arab rule, the instinctive feeling of the Copts was probably one of relief that they were free from a domination at once alien and heretical; if their new rulers were of another creed, they were at least not heretics, and were Oriental and therefore comprehensible. More important, perhaps, the fresh vigor of the Arabs commanded the respect of the Egyptians as dull, mechanical Byzantinism could not do. These considerations explain both the ease with which the conquest was effected and the comparative docility shown by the Egyptian Christians, despite the intermittent outbursts of harshness which came later.

At the outset the attitude of the Arabs towards the desert monasteries was, partly from motives of policy, partly from real veneration and awe, conciliatory. In the early eighth century, indeed, this attitude changed; but the alteration was probably due more to practical considerations than to anti-Christian feeling. Obliged to raise a definite amount

---

1 The Copt at this period probably regarded the Muslim "who had never known the way of righteousness" as infinitely preferable to the Melkite who was "worse than an infidel."
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

from the country in taxation, successive finance-ministers were tempted to force the
monks to contribute their quota despite the exemption which they claimed. As a result,
there was injustice and oppression, but it was doubtless exaggerated, and perhaps not
always intentional.

The “Chalcedonians” represented but a fraction of the Christian population in Egypt
and as owing allegiance to Constantinople were regarded with suspicion by the conquerors.
When, therefore, the Byzantine temporal power was overthrown, the ecclesiastical shared
its fall, leaving the Monophysite Church the dominant representative of Christianity in
Egypt. If it is a fact that the Monastery of Saint Macarius had been the seat of the Coptic
patriarchate in the latter part of the Byzantine Period, it is easy to understand the ecclesiastical
importance of the monastery in the Arab Period; the monastery surely shared
in the improved fortunes of the Church which it had sheltered.

As a result, great changes gradually transform the Monastery of Saint Macarius and
the other monasteries. The connection of the former with the patriarchate, originally
temporary, is made permanent, and fresh links are added until the office becomes almost
a monopoly of the monastery. The monks therefore exercise a deep, if somewhat elusive,
influence on ecclesiastical politics. Moreover, the ranks of the episcopate, in Lower Egypt
at least, are largely recruited from among them.

Ecclesiasticism begins to take the place of asceticism and devotion; and many a monk
must have sought the desert as the surest road to preferment rather than as an arena
for spiritual combats.\(^1\) And with changing ideals, outward circumstances also change. The
material wealth of the monasteries now and in the following period reaches its greatest
height,\(^2\) and a tendency to the grandiose becomes visible. Costly churches and other
buildings are erected.\(^3\) The monasteries, bent on having marvels to display, spare no effort
to recover the relics of their patron saints, and, having secured them, find that they have
gained an asset which augments their prosperity by attracting rich and presumably
generous pilgrims. So Scetus tends to become not so much a home of living saints whose
prayers are besought by the pious, as a nursery for ecclesiastics, a place of pilgrimage where
the devout and the superstitious seek the intercessions of the mighty dead.

This does not mean that monasticism suddenly became an empty, glittering shell. The
change was, of course, gradual; and it would be hard to rate too highly the faith, patience,
and courage of the monks in the ninth century who, living in very real peril, set themselves
to rebuild the devastated monasteries on the time-honored sites, never knowing when a
fresh barbarian inroad might undo their work.

It was this ever present danger of barbarian invasion which led to the gradual abandon-

\(^1\) Just as in an English university a college with
an attractive list of “livings” is sure of a good entry.
\(^2\) Yet here, as always, the financial and economic re-
sources of the monasteries remain obscure for lack of information.
\(^3\) As in Western monasteries fine buildings indicate the
beginning of a decline in spirituality.
ment of the solitary or semi-solitary mode of life. As a cloud of vapor condenses into isolated drops, so the scattered hermits of early days tended to draw closer or even to live together for mutual support. Possibly the change began quite early and was well advanced in the Byzantine Period. But it is in the eighth century that we first unmistakably find "dwelling-houses" or cells within the laura wherein a number of monks live something like a common life. At the close of this period the process was accelerated by the provision in every laura of a fortified citadel. Walled monasteries did not always and immediately result, but sooner or later the "dwelling houses" contract further into small fortified cells wherein the solitary life could only nominally be maintained. The change to what was practically cenobitic life is perhaps the most important feature of this and the following periods.
CHAPTER II

THE RESTORATION UNDER BENJAMIN I (641–660 A.D.)

1. The Monks of Scetis and ‘Amr ibn el ‘Asi

Once the Arab Conquest was definitely accomplished, the monks of Scetis lost no time in making the best of the new state of affairs. “If,” writes Makrizi,¹ “we believe the Christian writers, there went out (from Wādi Hābib) seventy thousand monks, each one having a staff in his hand, and they betook themselves to Terrāneh to salute ‘Amr ibn el ‘Asi on his return from Alexandria, and to implore his protection for them and for their monasteries. This general granted their request and delivered to them a charter which is kept among these monks. He granted them also a revenue to be levied on Lower Egypt. This right amounted one year to more than five thousand ardebs; but to-day it does not reach one hundred ardebs.”

The number of monks stated to have met the Arab general is, of course, grotesquely exaggerated;² for, as we have seen,³ the monks were few at the time of Benjamin’s flight, and the conditions of the next ten years were certainly not favorable for the monasteries.⁴ Nevertheless, there is no reason to doubt that a deputation of the monks actually met ‘Amr, and that it was highly successful. Elsewhere⁵ Makrizi refers again to the document received from ‘Amr: “Here (in the Monastery of Saint Macarius) is also the letter written by ‘Amr ibn el ‘Asi to the monks of Wādi Hābib about the treasurership of the northern districts, as it has been related to me by one who had heard of it from a man who had seen it there.” It is beyond doubt that the document treasured by the monks had to do with the revenue stated above to have been “granted” by ‘Amr; it was, in fact, a charter, and do not seem to have gone to Scetis until after the Arab Conquest—and this though one at least of them (Abraham) was then approaching middle age. Probably Scetis was dominated by Chalcedonians, and consequently would-be monks who were Monophysites refrained from going there until the state of affairs was altered.

¹ Quatremère, Mémoires, i, pp. 464 f.
² Cf. Synax., Barenhât 13, quoted page 80, where it is alleged that on the return of the Macarii from exile, “there came forth to meet him (sic) 50,000 monks, elders, bearing their staves.” Obviously one passage imitates the other.
³ See p. 253.
⁴ It is significant that the disciples of John the Hegumen
the five thousand ardebs were surely the proceeds or profits of "the treasurership of the northern districts." But it can hardly be supposed that this endowment (for it was continued annually, though the amount greatly declined) was instituted by 'Amr, and the inevitable conclusion is that 'Amr merely confirmed to the monks the revenues which they had enjoyed in the Byzantine Period—those revenues which, we have seen reason to believe, the Emperor Zeno first bestowed upon them.¹

2. The Rebuilding of the Monasteries

The policy of the Arabs towards the Copts was, in these early days, highly conciliatory. At the suggestion of a certain "believing duke," 'Amr issued a proclamation inviting Benjamin to return and administer the affairs of his Church.² Benjamin accordingly emerged from hiding in 644,³ and set about the work of reorganization and reconversion of those who had lapsed during the late persecution. The monasteries of Scetis were not forgotten: "by his intercession," says the History of the Patriarchs,⁴ "began the rebuilding of the monasteries of Wâdi Habîb and El Muna" (? Cellia). Fortunately we can gather from various sources some particulars of the restoration thus initiated. Makrizi,⁵ certainly copying from an earlier authority, records that Benjamin "rebuilt the Monasteries of Abû Bishâî and of the 'Virgin' of Abû Bishâî in Wâdi Habîb"; and the History of the Patriarchs⁶ mentions that "in the days of Abba Agathon was built the church which was dedicated in the name of the Father Macarius. And the brethren multiplied so that they built the cells near the Marsh;⁷ and they increased by the grace of the Lord Christ, and the believing brethren assisted them." The "cells near the Marsh" are apparently the monasteries situated in that part of the Wâdi 'n Natrûn called by Makrizi⁸ "Birket el Adireh." More notable, however, is Benjamin's connection with reestablishment of the Monastery of Saint Macarius.

3. The Translation of the Forty-nine Martyrs

The translation of the Forty-nine¹⁰ is certainly to be referred to the period of Benjamin's patriarchate subsequent to the Arab Conquest.¹¹ The slaughtered monks, it will be remembered,¹² were buried, together with the magistrianus and his son Dios, "in a holy cave near

¹ See p. 226. Note that Zeno's endowment amounted to 3,000 ardebs of grain and 600 measures of oil.
² Hist. Patr., pp. 231–232.
⁴ Page 236.
⁵ The Monasteries of Wâdi 'n Natrûn had lain more or less in ruins since the time of Damian.
⁷ Page 260. The text mentioned was carried out, of course, in the lifetime, not in the patriarchate of Agathon.
⁸ On the marsh see p. 32.
¹¹ The translation cannot have taken place in the earlier part of Benjamin's patriarchate, because the monasteries were still in ruins; moreover, the conditions in Egypt (Persian domination and Byzantine tyranny) were unpropitious.
¹² See p. 165.
the great tower which they call that of Piamoun.” Little is known of their history during the latter part of the fifth and the sixth century, save that they were the occasion of strife between the Gaianite and Theodosian monks,¹ and that their influence prompted the retirement of Hilaria and Anastasia to Scetis. The latter, indeed, is described as praying at their tomb and being there directed to apply for assistance in her need to Abba Daniel.² In the seventh century the relics still lay in the cave of Piamoun.³ For it was while sleeping “in the cavern, in the place of these saints” that a certain Abraham of Phelbes saw a remarkable vision.⁴ He saw the Lord descend accompanied by angels and saints with whom were “the fathers of this mountain” and Abba Macarius himself. One of these personages proposed that they should abandon the place “for assuredly the brethren toil not.” To this Macarius would not agree, quoting the proverb, “If there is one sound grape in a cluster, destroy it not; for the blessing of God is upon it.” When the wisdom of this verdict had been acclaimed by the rest of the saints, the vision disappeared.

In consequence of this marvel (it appears) pilgrims flocked to Scetis to pray over the remains of the Forty-nine.⁵ Amongst others, came certain men from Pathanon,⁶ bringing with them new white shrouds and choice incense (either as gifts to the monks or for sale). After making a banquet for the monks, these men secured the body of one of the Forty-nine and departed to their own village,⁷ travelling by way of Jijbér,⁸ where the body of Macarius the Great then rested. The stolen relic was deposited in the Church of Abba Uenofer (Onuphrius), and was there identified by the spirit possessing a certain maniac as “John the basket-maker, whose head was cut off at Shiêt by our friends the barbarians.”

Subsequently certain weavers from the Fayyûm carried off the body of Dios, the son of the magistrianus, who was killed at the same time as the Forty-nine. They placed the body in a sack and had carried it as far as the Lake of the Fayyûm, when the mouth of the sack opened, and the remains of Dios “flew in the air after the fashion of a shooting star, and alighted once more on the body of his father in the cave at Shiêt.”¹⁰

Alarmed by these thefts, the monks resolved to put the remaining bodies in a place of safety: “They went all together to the cave where they were. They took them up with psalms and benedictions and spiritual songs. They carried them into this southern church which the most illustrious Aristomachus built. They performed the service of the Mysteries

¹ See p. 229.
² Notices et extraits, xxxix, p. 332.
³ It is necessary to insist on this point, because the Synax. (ed. Basset, p. 668) incorrectly implies that the bodies were removed from the cave before the days of Theodosius the Patriarch: “when the convent was ravaged, the monks feared for the bodies and removed them from this place (the cave) to the side of the Church of Abû Makûr. They constructed for them a crypt over which they built a church in the time of the Patriarch Theodosius.”
⁴ Notices et extraits, xxxix, pp. 333 f.
⁵ Ibb.
⁶ The modern El Batânûn to the southeast of Tûkh en Nasara: see Amélineau, Géographie, pp. 306 f.
⁷ For this robbery compare the method by which Abbot Brinnoth secured the body of S. Witburga and carried it off from Dereham to Ely (Liber Eliensis, 11, 53).
⁸ Now Shabshîr in Menufiyeh: see Amélineau, op. cit., pp. 187 f.
⁹ The Synax. (ed. Basset, p. 668) adds that his body was subsequently recovered from Pathanon.
¹⁰ The Synax. (ed. cit., p. 668) adds that the monks often tried to separate the body of the boy from that of his father, but always found them reunited the next morning.
THE RESTORATION UNDER BENJAMIN I

for them... And so they laid them in an enclosed place to the southeast of this church which the most wise and holy mystagogue, Abba Theodosius, the Patriarch and Archbishop of Rakoti, consecrated in orthodox wise.”

After a digression on the Gaianite heresy, the Coptic narrative relates that “when these things were known of our father Benjamin, he sent² to Shiêt Abba John, the blessed hegumen with other spiritual fathers, saying: ‘Lo, we have not permitted heresies and troubles to spread in the Church; but as for the martyrs, build for them an oratory in the midst of the topos until I come... and we bury their remains...’ When our holy fathers received these orders, they built the martyrium for the holy Martyrs.³ And on the day answering to the day of these saints (Tûbeh twenty-sixth),⁴ our father the Archbishop came to Shiêt. And all the people in great joy went before him... The fifth day of Mechir of that year, our father Abba Benjamin took in his own hands, one by one, the bodies of these saints. He gave them into the hands of the priests and holy deacons. They carried them into the midst of the church: they buried them all in holy shrouds with choice incense; and the psalmists chanted psalms with joy. Thus they buried the bodies of the holy martyrs. And so, our father the Archbishop celebrated the office of the Anaphora with the holy bodies in the midst. He finished the holy office, he carried them (the martyrs) with singing of psalms, he laid them in the holy place on the fifth day of Mechir; and a number of cures took place in their oratory.”⁵ The Synaxarium⁶ further records that “their church is to-day in the cell (قايلة) called by their name in Coptic Bibima-absit (i.e., κυμή-αβσίτ), that is to say, ‘The Forty-nine.’”

4. Consecration of the Church of Saint Macarius

All such proceedings were thrown into the shade by Benjamin’s consecration of a new Church of Saint Macarius which took place when the patriarch was grown old and infirm, and is, therefore, to be dated later than the translation just recorded. In this case we have the advantage of possessing a contemporary narrative, the work of Agathon, Benjamin’s syncellus, who accompanied the patriarch in his visit to the desert and wrote down his superior’s narrative.⁷ This account may be quoted nearly in extenso:

“...When I was in my city of Alexandria... the festival of the Nativity of the Lord Christ

---

1 Notices et extraits, xxxix, pp. 344–345. It is hard to determine when this translation took place. If it was in the VII century, why did Benjamin presently order a special sanctuary to be built? And if it took place earlier, how came the relics to be in the cave again at the time of Abraham’s vision as above related?

2 This is obviously incorrect, since John was already in Scetis and to him Abraham had related his vision at a time when the Forty-nine still rested in their cave. But perhaps all that is meant is that Benjamin sent Abba John back to Scetis after a consultation.

3 Cf. Notices et extraits, xxxix, p. 335, where John is referred to as “he who built the tabernacle of healing of these saints in this martyrium.”


5 Notices et extraits, xxxix, pp. 347 f.

6 Ed. Basset, p. 669. Since this church was in a separate cell, it is not the existing “Church of the Sheikhs” which lies within the Monastery of S. Macarius and now contains the remains of the martyrs; see A.A.C.M., ii, v (11), §§ 2, 3. This cell was one of the many “cells” dependent upon the Monastery of S. Macarius (see p. 361), and is, therefore, one of the small ruined “monasteries” in the neighborhood of that of S. Macarius.

7 An Arabic version is incorporated in the Hist.PAIR. (pp. 240 f.). The remains of the Coptic original (two leaves and a fragment) are published in my New Texts, pp. 127 f.
arrived on the twenty-eighth of Kihak, and we assembled in the Church of the Pure Lady Mary. . . . And we offered many prayers. . . . Then I saw certain monks of calm and dignified appearance, like angels, who had entered into the midst of the congregation; and some of them were . . . from the desert of the holy Macarius; but they could not reach me on account of the multitude of the people.” When at length these monks were able to reach the patriarch, Benjamin asked them why they were come. In reply they begged him to make a journey “to the monastery in the Holy Mountain (desert), Wâdi Habib, the home of our father Macarius the Great, in order to consecrate the new church which has been built to him at the foot of the rock among the cells (الخلّلی); because many of the old and sick inhabit cells far away, which are near the water, and are wearied if they mount to the top of the rock.

“So we undertook this task; and we began our journey on the second day of Tûbeh. And when we arrived at Tarûgeh,² the inhabitants thereof met us with great joy. Then we reached the desert of El Muna, which is that of Abba Isaac, near the mountain of Barnûg; and the brethren who were there rejoiced greatly over us, and we remained there two days, after which they took leave of us; but some of them (the brethren of El Muna) accompanied us to show us the way leading to the desert and the mountain. . . . So they brought us to the extremity of the desert of the mountain of Nitria. Then we turned to the Monastery of Baramûs, or Maximus and Domitian, where we alighted at the Church of the Holy Isidore; and we abode there one day. Then the brethren . . . who had come to visit us in the city of Alexandria departed and made our arrival known to the monks of the Monastery of Saint Macarius. . . . And on the seventh day of Tûbeh,³ we visited the rest of the monasteries . . .

“Finally we proceeded to the Monastery of the holy Macarius. And when we drew near to it, the young monks met us with palm-branches in their hands; and after them came old men, carrying smoking censers, and a body of the clergy, chanting like angels. . . . Then all the monks, the priests and the brethren, went before me until I entered the newly built church of Christ. There I seemed to enter Paradise.⁴

“When the morrow arrived, the eighth day of Tûbeh, I said: ‘Bring to me the priest Agathon, who suffered with me for the faith.’ . . . So when thou camest to me, I said to thee: ‘O my son, bring forth the books which are requisite for the consecration’; and accordingly thou didst bring them forth for me. Then we began the prayers. . . . At that time, while I was thus performing the rite of consecration, behold, I saw an old man, with a great light and radiant brilliancy upon his face; and as I gazed upon him . . . I said within myself:

1 For the topographical importance of this statement see A.A.C.M., ii, i, § 2; ii, § 2.
2 For the places here named see above, i, ii, §§ 2–4.
3 Does this mean to the end of Gebel en Natrûn or to its beginning? Cf. pp. 20 f.
4 Note the time taken on this journey: the party left Alexandria on Tûbeh 2, and spent the night of the 2nd–3rd at Tarûgeh; the 3rd and 4th were passed at El Muna; the desert was crossed on the 5th; while the 6th was spent at Baramûs.
5 The account which follows is summarized in the Synax. for this day (ed. Basset, pp. 522 f.). A Sahidic fragment at Paris (B.N. Copt., 1294) relates that painted figures of the saints Antony, Paul, Pachomius, Macarius, Mark, Peter, Athanasius, Liberius, Cyril, and Dioscorus greeted Benjamin on his entry: see Crum in P.S.B.A., xxix, p. 393.
'This man is fit to be made a bishop.'... So, while I was thinking of this, I saw a seraph with six wings, who appeared to me... and he said to me: 'O bishop, why art thou thinking of this old man? This is Saint Macarius, father of the patriarchs and bishops and monks who have lived in this desert; and he has come for the consecration of this church.'... And I went up to the sanctuary, and said the prayer over the chrism, and took it to anoint the holy sanctuary. And I heard a voice saying: 'Observe, O bishop!' So when I marked the sanctuary with the chrism, I saw the hand of the Lord Christ, the Saviour, upon the walls, anointing the sanctuary...

"Agathon the priest says: 'At that time we had looked upon him, and he was like fire, and his face shone with light; and not one of us could speak a word to him... Then the Father Benjamin said: 'This is the tabernacle of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.' And he walked round the sanctuary three times, saying 'Alleluia!' Then he chanted the eighty-third Psalm, saying: 'How lovely are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts!...' And he finished saying the psalm to the end.

"Then when he had completed the consecration of the dome, he went out into the body of the church, to consecrate its walls and columns; and at the end he returned and sat in the dome... Agathon the priest says: 'The patriarch continued his narrative as follows. "When I had finished the divine service and communicated the clergy, I saw again a great grace... For when the old men (the monks) came up for communion, I saw a vapour of incense ascending like perfume from their mouths... Then the roof of the church opened, and that perfume ascended from it... So I was assured then that it was their petitions and their prayers.""

According to the same authority, the consecration was attended by a miracle. "There was," continues Agathon's narrative, "in the city of Nikiu a great and eminent official, whose custom it was to enter at all times into the holy monasteries in Wâdi Habîb... And it was the custom of this official to come to the monastery always at the feasts of the Nativity and of the Baptism and of Easter; and thus he was present on the day of the consecration together with his son." The son of this official, who was suffering from a severe disease, was sleeping in the church after the consecration, but suddenly startled all the people by loud cries. Being found to have recovered from his sickness, he was questioned by the patriarch himself, and related that in his dream "a tall old man with a light beard descending over his breast" had laid hands upon him, thereby causing his complete cure. There was, of course, no doubt but that this personage was Saint Macarius himself.\(^1\)

In the night following the consecration, Benjamin was bidden in a vision to draw up the following code of rules to regulate the conduct of priests and others in the new church. Since it is added that these rules are framed to restrain a vainglorious generation yet to come, and are not needed by the clergy of Benjamin's day, the canons are probably an interpolation, though they certainly stood in the ninth-century Coptic ms. of which fragments still survive.\(^2\)

---

THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

(1) No priest shall ascend to this sanctuary until he has put on his pallium first, before he carries the incense into the sanctuary.

(2) No priest or deacon shall communicate therein until he has vested himself in the epomis, or pallium.

(3) No priest or deacon shall speak in this holy dome any idle words, nor sit therein to read any book.

(4) No priest or monk shall enter into this dome unless he be appointed for the service of this sanctuary. 1

(5) If any of the priests belonging to this place bring a strange priest from Misr 2 or an official into this dome and holy tabernacle for the sake of human glory, let him be anathema.

(6) If any man shall persist in entering into this holy dome, the Lord Jesus Christ shall cast him out.

(7) And if any man transgresses in order that he may have a lot in this holy place by means of money or bribe, then let him, and anyone who assists him to enter it for the sake of human glory, be degraded. 3

5. Settlement of Habib in Scetis

It was during the patriarchate of Benjamin that the desert of Scetis or Shihet acquired right to a name by which it is very generally known in all later records until the fifteenth century—that of Wadi Habib. In speaking of the valley, Makrizi 4 states that “it takes its name (Wadi Habib) from Habib (or Hubaib) 5 ibn Mohammed of the tribe of Fezareh, one of the companions of the Prophet. He was present at the conquest of Mecca (? Misr), and retired to this valley at the time of the troubles raised against the Caliph Othman.” 6 Elsewhere 7 the same author quotes Ibn Abd el Hakam as including among the chiefs of tribes who took part in the conquest of Egypt “Habib ibn Mu‘kil (المعقل) es Suyutî el Mughfil (البغيل), who has given his name to Wadi Habib on the west of Egypt.” 8 The part of the valley in which Habib settled is apparently unrecorded and forgotten; nor do we hear what were his relations with the monks.

It may have been a few years earlier that the Syrian Anan Isho paid his visit to Scetis to gather the materials for his compilation, the Book of Paradise. 9

---

1 This regulation was still strictly observed in the XIV century: see pp. 395 and 397.
2 This surely is an anachronism: perhaps the Coptic was خليفة.
3 Michael III appears to have violated this rule by selling the stalls (?) in 882 to raise money to satisfy Ahmed ibn Tulun: see p. 335.
4 Quatremère, Mémoires, 1, p. 463.
5 Habib according to the more modern authorities appears to be the true form: see Guest, Journal Royal Asiatic Society, 1917, p. 843; Wright, Cat. Syr. MSS. in B.M., Preface, p. ii; Yakökt, Geographisches Wörterbuch, ed. Wüstenfeld, iv, p. 880; also p. 29 above.
6 These troubles belong mainly to the latter half of Othman’s Caliphate, i.e., to the period 651–656: see Muir, The Caliphate, Its Rise, Decline, and Fall, pp. 199 f.
7 Khitai, Part i, 296, trans. Casanova, p. 140.
8 So also Abd Sallih, Churches and Monasteries of Egypt, ed. Evetts and Butler, fol. 22 b, p. 77, where the name is given as “Habib ibn Mugaffal.”
9 On Anan Isho see p. 321. He appears to have visited Scetis before the expulsion of Rabban Nar sai, who became abbot of Beth Abhe in 628: see Thomas or Marga, Book of Governors, ed. Budge, vol. ii, Book ii, ch. xi, p. 175.
CHAPTER III

JOHN THE HEGUMEN OF SCETIS AND HIS DISCIPLES

1. John the Hegumen

The activity of Benjamin alone would hardly have availed to bring about the thorough restoration of the monasteries as pictured above; there was also energy and enthusiasm within, and this latter radiated from John, the Hegumen of Scetis. It is unfortunate that no full life of this remarkable man seems to exist, and that we are forced to reconstruct his history from scattered and not always consistent notices, the chief of which are a commemoration in the Synaxarium\(^1\) and a general account appended to the biography of the Patriarch Alexander II in the History of the Patriarchs.\(^2\)

Of John’s early life nothing is known save that he was a native of Jebromenesin.\(^3\) Owing to the uncertainty of his chronology it would be rash to conjecture that he was that John somewhat pointedly named as a disciple of John of Borlos.\(^4\) When and in what circumstances he went to Scetis, we do not know. In youth or middle age he suffered the same misfortune as befell Abba Daniel: “him the Berbers seized three times, and took prisoner; and they made him a slave, and ill-treated him and caused him to suffer. But the Lord looked upon his patience continually, and restored him to his holy monastery.”\(^5\) From the Coptic Life of Samuel we learn something more as to John’s captivity—presumably the third and last. When the Tome was brought to Scetis in 631, John was absent from the Monastery of Saint Macarius; he had gone away into the “inner marsh” to hide the treasures of the church, and was there surprised by the barbarians and carried away captive into their country.\(^6\) Some four years later, he was joined by Samuel of Kalamūn who, after his retire-

---

1 Kihak 30 (ed. Basset, pp. 465 f.).
2 Pages 336 f.
3 In the Hist. Patr., p. 336, this is rendered “Shubra Maisina (مَيْسِنَّا) or Arwāt.”
4 Hist. Patr., p. 213. This identification would carry John’s birth well back into the VI century, and so clashes with more sure chronological indications.
5 Id., p. 336.
6 See Cauwenbergh, Étude sur les moines d’Égypte, p. 87. When the envoy of Cyrus came to Shiêt he demanded to see the Hegumen of Shiêt who was called Apa John. But he had fled with the church vessels to the inner Ælós and there the barbarians caught him (Morgan ms., Life of Samuel, p. 21).
The History of the Monasteries

...ment from Scetis into the Fayyûm, had also been carried off by the barbarians; but while Samuel’s captivity seems to have been comparatively short, John remained a prisoner for “several years,”¹ and perhaps returned only about the time of the Arab Conquest.

“After this,” continues the notice in the History of the Patriarchs,² “he became hegumen, for he was a priest; and this was a rule in the desert of Wādī Habib, that every monk who attained the rank of priest was appointed hegumen.”³ John therefore became hegumen about 641, and as such, was instrumental in carrying out the Translation of the Forty-nine. There can be little doubt but that in the general restoration of the monasteries and in the building of the new church of Saint Macarius he also took a prominent part.⁴ His spiritual reputation was evidently high amongst the brethren. The History of the Patriarchs⁵ asserts that “he never communicated of the Holy Mysteries without seeing the Lord and Saviour in his vision, with our Lady the Virgin; and great secrets were made manifest to him”; and the Synaxarium⁶ gives the following example of his discernment and sound teaching. One day, while a priest of ill repute was coming to the doors of the church, John saw that the man was surrounded by a band of unclean spirits who had placed a bit in his mouth. When the priest entered the church, however, an angel drove away these spirits with a sword of fire; and it was only when the celebrant had put off his robes and gone forth from the church, that the unclean spirits resumed their control over him. From this John taught his disciples to differentiate between the priest qua priest and qua man; for the ministrations of a sinful priest are no less effectual than those of a righteous. A brief denunciation of avarice uttered by him is also preserved in the same passage.

When his end drew near, he was informed of the fact by divine revelation, and having assembled the brethren delivered to them his last message. He was then attacked by a brief illness of which he died after seeing a company of saints waiting to receive his soul. “The brethren carried him forth (for burial); and such was the greatness of their affection for him and of their faith in him that they cut his shroud to pieces. These pieces served to heal all those who suffered from any plague whatsoever. This father lived seventy (read

¹ See Synax., ed. cit., p. 467, and Vida do Abba Samuel, ed. Pereira, pp. 153 f., for accounts of the captivity of Samuel and John, who were employed as camel-herds.
² Page 336. This circumstantial and apparently contemporaneous statement is to be accepted rather than that of the later Coptic Life of Samuel (see Cauwenbergh, loc. cit.) which makes John hegumen when the “Tome” was brought to Scetis. Crum (P.S.B.A., xxix, p. 289) also regards John as hegumen before the Arab Conquest. In the Ethiopic Vida do Abba Samuel (ed. Pereira, p. 141) the Hegumen of S. Macarius at the time of the Heraclian Persecution was named Paul (doubtless an error).
³ The evidence is not clear, but it seems that the Hegumen of S. Macarius was also ex officio Hegumen of Scetis. John is called Hegumen of Scetis (قصص شهبات) only in the Synax., (ed. cit., p. 465), and is immediately after spoken of as having been “placed at the head of the Monastery of our Father Macarius.” In the Hist. Patr. and in the Translation of the Forty-nine Martyrs, John is called hegumen without qualification. He is not mentioned in the Liturgy of S. Basil (Renaudot, Lit. Orient. col., i, p. 18), though Daniel the Hegumen is commemorated—the John the Hegumen named is, as the context shows, the IV century John the Little; nor does he appear in the Rylands list of worthies of Scetis (Crum, Cat. Copt. MSS. in Rylands Library, No. 423, p. 195).
⁴ Strangely enough neither he nor any other monk of Scetis is named in Agathon’s account of the consecration of the Church of S. Macarius.
⁵ Page 336.
JOHN THE HEGUMEN OF SCETIS AND HIS DISCIPLES

ninety)\textsuperscript{1} years; his dwelling remains unto this day and it is marked by a sign as at Najij (read Bijij).\textsuperscript{2}

The general period in which John lived is not in doubt. He was captured by the barbarians at the time when the Tome of Leo was brought to Scetis (631–632), and seconded Benjamin in his efforts to restore the monasteries of Scetis after the Arab Conquest. But any approach to a more precise chronology is difficult, and can only be attempted by indirect means.

We must start with the fact that John lived for ninety (perhaps seventy) years, and endeavor to fix the approximate date of his death. Now John had a disciple, the illustrious Epimachus of Arwât, who lived, we are told, for more than one hundred years.\textsuperscript{3} This Epimachus is mentioned as Hegumen of the Monastery of Our Lady near Tinnis\textsuperscript{4} shortly before the end of El Kâsim’s régime (i.e., before 744);\textsuperscript{5} and again as Bishop of Faramâ (Pelusium) during the patriarchate of Michael I (744–768).\textsuperscript{6} Since it is implied that his life as a bishop was not unduly short, we shall not greatly err in fixing on 750 as the earliest likely date for his death. Epimachus would then have been born about 650, and his retirement to Scetis probably took place eighteen years later, about 668. If he was in any real sense John’s disciple he must have spent from five to seven years under the hegumen’s direction; and consequently John must have been alive until about 673 or 675, if not later. That he died at about this date is rendered probable by the fact that Zacharias, one of John’s disciples, who died before 684, was Hegumen of the Monastery of Saint Macarius before he was consecrated Bishop of Sais.\textsuperscript{7}

On this basis we can reconstruct the following chronology for the life of John. He was born about 585,\textsuperscript{8} and may have become a monk at Scetis some eighteen years later, about 603. He was taken captive for the third time in 631, returned to Scetis and became hegumen\textsuperscript{9} about 641, and died about 675.

The real greatness of John is best evidenced, perhaps, by the eminence of the disciples

\textsuperscript{1} Basset’s text (p. 467) gives سبعين, the reading of B.N., Fonds arabe, No. 256 (XVI century). The earlier ms (4869–4870) reading سبعين is to be preferred pending publication of collations with other mss.

\textsuperscript{2} نجح: see p. 280.

\textsuperscript{3} Hist. Patr., p. 336.

\textsuperscript{4} An island at the southwest extremity of Lake Menzîleh, 10 miles southwest of Port Said.

\textsuperscript{5} Id., p. 336. See Lane-Poole, History of Egypt in the Middle Ages, pp. 48–49, and note 1 for El Kâsim’s date.

\textsuperscript{6} Hist. Patr., p. 456.

\textsuperscript{7} See Menas, Vie d’Isaac, ed. Porcher, P.O., xi, pp. 313, 334, 342–343. Zacharias is called “priest and hegumen of the holy laura of Abba Makari” at the time of Isaac’s arrival in the desert. This is impossible—unless we suppose that John was then still in captivity. No doubt Zacharias is so styled by anticipation, just as in the Translation of the Forty-nine Martyrs (Notices et extraits, xxxix, p. 336) he is spoken of as “the most holy bishop,” certainly sometime before he attained that rank.

That John is included in the series of holy men appended to the biography of Alexander II (705–730) (Hist. Patr., pp. 333 f.) must not be taken as evidence that John lived on into the VIII century; it is expressly stated that these personages lived during the lifetime of Alexander—not necessarily in his patriarchate.

\textsuperscript{8} Or 605, if we accept 70 as the true figure for John’s age at death.

\textsuperscript{9} The date at which John became hegumen is doubtful, and if we were to accept the statement of the Coptic Life of Samuel that he was already hegumen in 631, we should have to reject the direct evidence of the Hist. Patr. and the indirect evidence drawn from the chronology of Epimachus (as above) and vice versa. May not John have been οἰκονόμος in 631, and the title have been corrupted into ἱγομενός?
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

whom he himself trained, and of those brought up in turn by his own spiritual sons. These may aptly be divided into two groups, the first characteristic of the old life of Scetis, and the second illustrating its new tendencies.

2. Abraham and George, and Agaibo the Stylist

The most famous of the first group of disciples are Abraham and George, who are significantly described as "the last of the great saints" of Scetis. Two main sources of information as to their lives exist: (a) an Arabic version of a wordy Life by Zacharias, Bishop of Sakhâ; and (b) notices in the Synaxarium, which supply several additional facts of importance.

Abraham's father was a wealthy man, remarkable for free and reckless charity; his mother, a God-fearing woman, was carried away captive by the Persians (الفارس), on a false accusation and reduced to slavery. Her deliverance—which perhaps took place after the victory of Heraclius over the Persians at Dastagerd in 628—is said to have been foretold her in a vision.

After his father's death Abraham, who was thirty-five years old, resolved to become a monk, and departed with his mother's blessing to Scetis. "There," says the Life, "he took up his abode with a holy and excellent old man...our blessed Father, Abba John, who had become chief of the priests and hegumen of the monastery of our Father Abba Macarius." John made his disciple undergo a rigorous training: "he did not allow his pupil to attach himself to anyone, nor to swerve to the right or to the left. But he (Abraham) walked always in one path, in one royal march: he was most obedient in all good works, and had perfect humility and right faith with all men." 6

So great was Abraham's progress in holiness, that to him was vouchsafed a vision long remembered in Scetis. "One day," says his biographer, "at the sixth hour on the third Friday of the Great Fast, while he was standing at prayer in his cell, he beheld, and lo, an opening was made in the roof; and...suddenly Christ, God the Word...descended into that chamber..., riding on a luminous chariot, and surrounded by Seraphim and Cherubim." 7 Abraham prostrated himself and begged the Savior to bless him. Our Lord granted this request and went up into heaven.

An angel of God, we are told, was appointed to guard and console the saint; and it is

1 B.N., Fonds arabe, No. 4888 (R.O.C., xiv, p. 276). This, however, does not contain much information as to George, and is adequately summarized in the Synax., Tûbeh 9. I am very deeply indebted to B. Evetts for a translation of this document.
2 Tûbeh 9 and Bashans 18, ed. cit., pp. 531, 1035 f.
3 So the Synax., ed. cit., p. 531, no doubt correctly.
4 The Arabic version of the Life of Abraham (ms. cit., fol. 184b) says she was made captive "when the barbarians made a raid on this district"; she escaped, but only to be betrayed by a certain man and retaken by the barbarians. Is "barbarians" or "Persians" the original?
5 Id., fol. 190b.
6 The Synax., ed. Basset, pp. 532 f.) adds that "in his cell a mark is found in memory of this." A similar "mark" appears to have existed in the cell of John the Hegumen: see p. 277. A further reference to this vision occurs in the Synax., Bashans 18; see below p. 279, note 6.
7 ms. cit., fol. 191b.
8 Id., fol. 192b.
recorded that this guardian took occasion to reprove his charge for entertaining “thoughts of blame” for a certain brother.\(^1\) After the correction of this fault, Abraham made such progress that, meeting a man possessed with a spirit of divination while travelling with “a truthful brother” to Misr he was able to cast out the spirit by marking the man “on both sides with the sacred sign three times.”\(^2\) It is recorded also that when he stood at prayer in his cell, the whole place seemed to be filled with fire.\(^3\) Zacharias, the saint’s biographer, records yet another vision on the authority of a certain monk who was well acquainted with the saint. “Once,” related his informant, “I rose early on a Sunday morning and went to the Senior, wishing to meet him with regard to a matter of necessity . . . before we should enter into the Church.”\(^4\) When this brother had knocked at the door of Abraham’s cell, the saint appeared in a state of great joy, and was with difficulty induced to explain the cause, which was that in the night, while he was standing at prayer “the holy Gregory, the brother of the great Basil” had appeared and discoursed with him.

Abraham’s name is closely linked with that of George, his intimate companion. Their meeting is described by Zacharias.\(^5\) These two saints lived remote from each other, Abraham “in the Monastery of Saint Macarius at Shīḥēt,” and George “on the mountain of Abba Uriūn (Orion).” By the providence of God Abraham had occasion to go to “the mountain of Abba Uriūn,” and was led straight to the cell of George. After conversing together, the two agreed to live as companions in the Monastery of Saint Macarius.

Abraham returned first to Scetis. George, after settling his affairs, followed him; but being in weak health and ignorant of the way, began to despair of finding the monastery. At that moment he found himself miraculously transported to his destination. From that day forward the two dwelt together.\(^6\) The peculiar veneration with which they were regarded is attested by the biographer of the Patriarch Alexander II\(^7\): “they walked in the way of the great Anthony, and brought it to perfection . . . and these two holy men beheld the baptized people in the church like white sheep, both young and old. But lo, one of the community became slothful . . .; and so these two old men beheld him with his colour changed to black . . . And when the priests had dismissed the brethren, those two went to the cell of that brother, and said to him: ‘Turn from thy sloth.’ And they exhorted him and comforted him. So on the morrow, when he came to the church, those two looked upon him, and he had become whiter than all the brethren.”

---

1 The stress laid by the Egyptian monks on the sinfulness of judging others is a remarkable ethical feature. A still more striking instance is that recorded in *Aphth. Patr.*, Paphnutius, 1 (quoted on p. 58, note 2).
2 ms. cit., fol. 195\(^a\).
3 1d., fol. 197\(^a\).
4 1d., fol. 197\(^a\). This passage implies that the Communion every Sunday morning was still the only service attended in Scetis.
5 1d., fol. 199\(^a\).
6 The Commemoration of George (*Synax.*, ed. Basset, Bashans 18, pp. 1035 f.) gives a somewhat different version. George, after living for ten years in the Monastery of Orion, went to the inner desert. After walking for two days, he reached Dērēr Rūm (Baramūs), and met Abraham there. The two then went together to the Monastery of St. Macarius and became disciples of John, Hegumen of Shīḥēt. Their dwelling is still known as Bīghē, and the window (?) where Christ appeared to them still exists.
Little else remains to be said of Abraham. It is practically certain that he is to be identified with that Abraham of Phelbes who saw the vision in the cave of the Forty-nine Martyrs. The latter part of his life was passed in sickness. According to the Synaxarium, when the Father Anba John (the Hegumen) died, the demons brought upon Abraham a sickness which lasted eighteen years. When his end drew near, he asked to receive the body of the Messiah. His father Anba John came to him in spirit and informed him that the Lord invited him to a great feast. He died in peace at the age of eighty (sic) years.” According to his biographer Zacharias, his death was not unmarked by marvels. “Many of the brethren who were with him from the beginning of that day, and enshrouded his body, were elect persons. And they saw Abba George, and testified with proof that they beheld in a vision the ranks of the angels, and our Father Abba John the Hegumen (here, John the Little), and Abba Macarius and Abba Bishōi with many of the saints, so that they formed a great assemblage. And they carried him away with them to the places of rest. He finished his course in a good old age when he was eighty-five (sic) years old, of which he had lived in the world thirty-four years, and had passed fifty-one years as a monk.”

Abraham’s chronology is dependent upon that of John the Hegumen. If he died eighteen years after his master (i.e., after 675) his life ended about 693. And since we know that he lived eighty-five (or eighty) years in all, his birth must be placed about 608. He became a monk then about 642 immediately after the Arab Conquest.

The Synaxarium refers more than once to the cell of Abraham and George, which was apparently one of the sights of Scetis. Of Abraham it relates that “his abode was near that of his spiritual father, Anba Yuannes (John): it is to-day the cell known by the name Lajblj (sic, لیبیس).” And again “his cell remains unto this day: they call it the cell of Abraham and George.” The Commemoration of George states that “their dwelling is still known as Bigeih” (پیسیس); and the account of John the Hegumen already quoted alleges that John’s cell showed a mark similar to that (in token of the appearance of Our Lord) at Najlj (sic, ناجیج). This is probably to be identified with the cell Bishish (پیسیس) mentioned in the history of the patriarchate of John V, and certainly with the cell Bijebij (بیجیج) which still flourished in the fourteenth century. The same cell or locality may be indicated in the form -datepicker occurring in a Coptic note transliterated into Greek characters, or in the لیسیس of an Arabic colophon.

1 See p. 270.
2 Ed. Basset, p. 533.
3 The Arabic Life omits this most important point.
4 George survived Abraham (Synax., p. 1037) and died at the age of seventy-two, having lived fourteen years in the world and fifty-eight years as a monk.
5 ms. cit., fol. 205a-b.
7 Ib.
8 Synax., ed. Forget, I, p. 201 [read بیسیس]. Basset’s text, p. 1037, however, gives بیسیس with the variant بیسیس.
9 See p. 362. Evetts suggests a Coptic original بیسیس.
10 The Height.”
11 The Book of the Chriism, B.N., Fonds arabe, No. 100, fol. 51r.
12 P.O., xiv, p. 320.
A cell traditionally—and no doubt correctly—associated with Abraham and George existed therefore in the Middle Ages down to the fourteenth century. Its name unfortunately is uncertain; but the variants seem to point to Bijlj which may possibly mean “summit,” or to Bijebj. The tomb of Abraham and George is mentioned in the Synaxarium as still existing when that document was compiled; in the fourteenth century it seems to have been regularly visited by patriarchs who came to the desert.

With Abraham and George we must class one of their disciples—Agatho the Stylite. This saint, a native of Tanis and the son of God-fearing parents, was from his early days fired with a desire to become a monk, but seems to have been hindered. At length, when he was forty years old, he left his town and went to Mareotis and from there “into the desert.” An angel of the Lord, disguised as a monk, accompanied him across the desert to the Monastery of Saint Macarius. There he became the disciple of Abraham and George, and remained with them for three years. “After that,” continues the narrative, “they caused him to stand up before the altar in the presence of the hegumen, Abba John; then they remained three days to pray over the garments with which they clothed him; they girded him with the heavenly habit.” Agatho then lived a life of great austerity, and was “continually engaged in prayer and in reading the life of Simeon the Stylite.” His study of the life of this ascetic so influenced him, that after ten years in Scetis he resolved to imitate his mode of life.

After consulting the fathers and gaining their approval, he left Scetis and settled near Sakha, where the faithful erected a column on which he made his abode. As a stylite he performed many miracles, and died at the age of one hundred; he had lived “in the world” forty years, ten years in the desert, and fifty years as a stylite. Since he became the disciple of Abraham and George at least three years before the death of John the Hegumen, his residence in Scetis cannot have been later than 672–682, and may well have been as much as ten years earlier.

From another source it appears that Agatho was responsible for an important change in the devotional life of Scetis. In the fourth century, as Cassian shows, two only of the canonical hours were observed by the Egyptian monks—vespers and noontimes. Agatho

---

1 See Crum in P.S.B.A., xxix (1907), p. 290 and note, where πυσιάσυς, or simpler, πυσίας, is suggested, reference being made to an expression in the Life of Macarius (A.M.C., xxv, p. 56). In a private communication Crum suggested πυςιας or πυσιας but subsequently withdrew this in favor of a proposed original πυσιοικος, surely far less plausible.

2 If this is the true form μυσαρχη or μυσαρκη may be the origin. This name (xoutis, a dry measure of about 1 1/2 pints) may have been given to the cell because of some resemblance in shape to such a vessel (cf. our own “pepper-box,” “pill-box”) or because of the cramped accommodation it afforded.

3 Ed. Basset, p. 533.

4 The Book of the Chrim, ms. cit., fol. 58v. Benjamin II (1330 A.D.) rode from the Monastery of S. Macarius on Palm Sunday to “the Cave of the Fathers,” then to “the Cemetery of the Father Monks” where “he prayed over the Tomb of Abraham and George.”


6 This passage is of importance in the history of “giving the habit”: see pp. 193 and 260.

7 See p. 209.
seems to have brought about the observance of all the canonical hours. For in the Life of John Kamê it is recorded that the Father Teroti taught that saint, among other lessons, “the Canon of the holy Synaxis of the Hours, that he should pray at every (canonical) hour, according to the commandment of our father Abba Agatho (Ἄγαθος) the Stylite.” And the existence of a special Nitrian “use” is testified by the heading of a ms. from the Monastery of the Syrians, which reads as follows: “We begin to write the Selection of the Psalms appointed for the times of the Prayers according to the Ordering of the Egyptians who are in the wilderness of Scete.” Whether or no this “use” is to be ascribed to Agatho cannot as yet be definitely stated.

3. Zacharias and Other Disciples of John the Hegumen

It is not without cause that the Synaxarium speaks of Abraham and George as “the last of the great Saints,” for their spiritual kinship with Macarius and other fathers of the fourth century is patent; they lived in the desert as in a world apart. But the second group of John’s disciples marks the beginning of a period in which monastic life was no longer an end in itself, but a stepping-stone to high ecclesiastical preferment. While Abraham and George and to some extent, Agatho, attained to eminence in sanctity, the other branch of John’s spiritual family is remarkable for the list of the dignities to which its members attained.

The earliest member in this group is Zacharias. Nothing is known of his earlier life, but it is probable that he came to Scetis at about the same time as Abraham (about 642). His rise in reputation must have been rapid, for when Isaac, the future patriarch, came to Scetis (about 652–654), he was at the head of a “monastery” (apparently a “dwelling-house” or cell over which he presided as “father”) and is described as “priest and hegumen of the holy Laura of Abba Macarius... a holy man who had visions and revelations.” He is associated with “the deacon Tichôi” (τιχώι) as one of the intimates of John the Hegumen to whom Abraham of Phelbes related his vision in the cave of the Forty-nine Martyrs. In the same passage he is spoken of as “he who built this great dwelling-house” (ὁ ἐπιλεκτὼς ταϊς ὑπόλυταις ἐκκλησίαις) and may, therefore, be regarded as the founder of a cell which long formed part of the Laura of Saint Macarius under the name of the Great Cell (Coptic, ἡ μεγάλη ἑρατή, Arabic, دينيشتري).
JOHN THE HEGUMEN OF SCETIS AND HIS DISCIPLES

We must take it that he reached the rank of hegumen on the death of John (about 675). During the patriarchate of John III (677–684) he was consecrated Bishop of Sâ or Sais, but does not seem to have held the see for long. Being overtaken by a sickness, which he was supernaturally warned would be mortal, he returned to Shiêt, and was there tended by his disciple, Isaac. When his end was near, he gathered his “sons,” blessed them, foretold the future greatness of Isaac, and so breathed his last. He was buried “in Shiêt, where his memory and the miracles he performed were long commemorated.”

His death is to be dated shortly before 684 (when John III died and was succeeded by Isaac).

The prolix Life of Isaac by Mena or Menas, Bishop of Pshati (Ibshadi, or Nikiu) must be summarily dealt with. Isaac, the son of the usual pious parents, was placed in the office of a relative who was chartularius of George, eparch of the land of Egypt, but, even while so employed, lived an ascetic life. His parents forced him into a betrothal against his will, but before the marriage the youth fled to Scetis and became the disciple of Zacharias, as related above. Fearing that the parents would take measures to recover charge of their son, Zacharias dispatched Isaac first to Terenuthis, and later, under the escort of an ascete named Abraham (probably the famous Abraham is meant), to “the mountain of Pamahö.”

Later the parents of Isaac acquiesced in their son’s choice, and he was able to reside openly in Scetis. His life there is described as exemplary. He watched for a great part of the night, made the fire for the brethren, served them, and prepared the table (?) later, by way of special discipline, Isaac was set to clean out the latrines (mangera) of the brethren.

In due time Isaac was chosen by the patriarch to be his synceillus and secretary; but so great was his dislike of quitting the desert, that only one month’s service a year was exacted from him, during which he assisted the patriarch in drawing up the customary Festal letter. The remainder of the year was spent in Scetis. This step in his career preceded the consecration of his master, Zacharias, as Bishop of Sâ.

Two points only in Isaac’s life at this period call for notice. During Lent it was his custom to retreat to a little cell outside the monastery and there spend the Fast in solitude. He was also visited by the famous ascetics Abraham and George, who were greatly edified by finding in his cell nothing but some bread and a little salt.

A month after the death of Isaac’s old master, the patriarch John, informed by revelation who should be his successor, summoned Isaac and kept him with him until his own death.

1 Menas, Vie d’Isaac, ed. cit., p. 36.
2 P.O., xi, pp. 299 f.
3 Arabic Banhâ in the Province of Gizeh: see Amelineau, Geographie, pp. 297 f.
4 These and other details show definitely that Isaac was living a semi-cenobitic life in one of the manshâhebs or dwelling houses above referred to. Indeed Isaac is else-where definitely called οικισμὸς ημῶν, “a son of community”: see Menas, Vie d’Isaac, p. 27 (P.O., xi, p. 325).
5 Id., p. 32. The meaning of mangera is obvious; Cauwenbergh is wrong in rendering it by “cells” (Étude sur les moines d’Egypte, p. 115, note 2).
6 Menas, Vie d’Isaac, p. 39.
7 Id., p. 40.
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

On the death of John III, Isaac was, after some hesitation, consecrated patriarch. The choice is said to have been decided by the breaking of a lamp in the Church of Saint Sergius (where the elective body was assembled), which drenched the monk with oil; whereupon the throng cried out: "He is worthy, he is worthy!" 1 But his life as primate was brief, and as having no reference to the direct history of Scetis, need not detain us. He died in 687 2 tended at the last by "his spiritual brethren of the Monastery of Shiêt."

Isaac's chronology, on which that of Zacharias depends, must be briefly discussed. His age at death is not stated—a fact which probably implies that he died comparatively young. If, then, we may assume that he was about fifty years of age at the time of his consecration (684) 3 and remember that he was of marriageable age (sixteen or eighteen) when he came to Scetis, we may place his birth at about 634 and his retirement to the desert at about 652–654—his death seems to have occurred in 687.

We have already mentioned 4 Epimachus of Arwat. His life in the desert of Scetis is a blank save for the fact that he was a disciple of John and a spiritual brother of Abraham and George, and that he was held in high repute. 5

The Synaxarium 6 commemorates on Hatûr seventh (November third) Menas, Bishop of Tmai 7 (😊), or Thmuis. He was a native of Samannûd, and being compelled to marry against his will, left his wife and went to the Monastery of Saint Antony. Here he became a companion of Abba Michael, afterwards Patriarch of Alexandria. The two friends left their convent and went to the "mountain of Saint Macarius," where Menas at any rate became the disciple of Abraham and George, 8 and by his virtues won their admiration. During the patriarchate of Simon I (689–701) he was consecrated Bishop of Thmuis, though "he wept, and afflicted himself, and lamented at quitting the desert." As bishop, he received the power of healing all diseases and was able to discern what was in the heart of any man.

The length of his episcopate is roughly determined by the statement that he was the spiritual father of four patriarchs: Alexander II (consecrated 701), Cosmas, Theodore, and Michael I (consecrated 743) and laid his hands on them at their consecration. 9 The date at which he removed to Scetis can be determined only by reference to the life of Michael I. That prelate dying "advanced in age" (? say ninety-five years old) in 768 would have been born about 673; and it is consequently improbable that he with Menas can have arrived at the Monastery of Saint Macarius much before 690. 10

---

1 Menas, Vie d'Isaac, p. 53.
2 See Nau, P.O., xi, p. 302, note 2. Amélineau dated Isaac's patriarchate from Dec. 4, 685 to Nov. 6, 688.
3 According to Nau's dating: see preceding note.
4 See p. 277 (on the chronology of John the Hegumen).
6 Ed. Basset, pp. 182 f.
7 So also in Hist. Patr., p. 360. In the Synax. Khatkh 30, ed. Basset, p. 465, he is called Bishop of Namai. (Basset's A Text has نمحي, the B Text نمحي.)
8 In the Synax., ed. cit., p. 465, he is named a disciple of John the Hegumen himself. Possibly this is due to confusion with his namesake, Bishop of Nikiu: see p. 285.
9 Synax., ed. cit., pp. 184 f. Menas took a prominent part in the discussions which preceded the election of Michael I: see Hist. Patr., pp. 360 f.
10 Probably Menas was considerably the older of the two men.
JOHN THE HEGUMEN OF SCETIS AND HIS DISCIPLES

Michael, who accompanied Menas from the Monastery of Saint Antony, must have been quite a youth when he reached Scetis, and this, perhaps, accounts for the fact that he is not mentioned in connection with Abraham and George. Of his life and career in the desert we have no information, save that he is described at the time of his election as “the holy and precious one, the priest Michael at the church of Saint Macarius, a pure virgin, brought up in the desert.” He was consecrated patriarch in 744.

Little is known of Menas, Bishop of Nikiu. Possibly he is to be identified as a disciple of John the Hegumen himself (since his namesake of Thmuis can hardly have reached Scetis until after the death of John). He became Bishop of Pshati or Nikiu on the deposition of John of Nikiu, the Chronicler, and is otherwise known as the author of the Coptic Life of Isaac mentioned above.

The last two figures in the spiritual family of John the Hegumen are those of another Zacharias, and of Ptolemy. Zacharias, belonging to a family of scribes, was employed in earlier life in the Diwān, where he became acquainted with another scribe, Ablatos (Ptolemy). After various difficulties the two friends fled secretly to Scetis to the Monastery of Saint John and there made rapid progress in the spiritual life. “This,” according to the Synaxarium, “took place in the period of Abraham and George (about 680): they (Zacharias and Ptolemy) went to find them, and consulted them in all their affairs.”

When the see of Sakhā fell vacant, the patriarch (Simon I, 689–701) caused Zacharias to be brought from the desert, and consecrated him bishop. Ptolemy, “who was his brother in the monastic life,” became Bishop of Upper Menūf under the same patriarch. Zacharias held his see for thirty years; and since his consecration cannot have been much before or after 695, his death may be dated about 725. There is no evidence as to the date of his birth, but about 660 might be conjectured. Ptolemy is likely to have been strictly contemporary.

Zacharias is specially noteworthy for his contributions to Coptic literature. The Synaxarium reports that “he composed discourses, sermons, and homilies; for he was eloquent and full of all grace and merit.” Of his works at least four specimens have come down to us, two sermons (on the Entry of Christ into Jerusalem and on the Penitence of the people of Nineveh), and two panegyrics or biographies—the Lives of Abraham and George and that of John the Little.

The foregoing summary of the lives of John’s more eminent followers illustrates to some extent the character of monastic life at this period, and the change from old ideals to new.

1 Hist. Patr., p. 365.
2 Hist. Patr., pp. 287 f.
4 Amelineau neglecting the Synax. notice, wrongly concep

85
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

The two generations of John's disciples furnished the Coptic Church with at least two patriarchs and six bishops,¹ but with only two great saints.²

¹ John III (of Samannûd) belongs in some sense to the Wâdi' n Natrûn (see below); and Cosmas I (730–731) “was a holy monk of the desert of S. Macarius” (Hist. Patr., p. 338). To the list of bishops we may add Peter, Bishop of Tarnût, “who had lived all his days in the desert of Father Macarius” (id., p. 361) and his contemporary, Moses, Bishop of Wasûm (id., pp. 360f.); according to the Synax., Misra 11, he had been a monk in Wâdi Habîb for eighteen years before his elevation. But whether any of these was under the influence of John the Hegumen or of his immediate disciples is unknown.

² Or three, if we admit the rather ostentatious asceticism of Agatho the Stylite.
CHAPTER IV

PROGRESS OF EVENTS BETWEEN 661 AND 774 A.D.

1. The Visitor of the Monasteries

JOHN the Hegumen is the last of the great hegumens who exercised authority over the desert of Scetis as a whole. Hitherto, as it seems, liaison between the monasteries and the patriarch had been effected through the hegumen, or "Father of Shiêt," who reported officially to the primate once a year at Easter. But since the Hegumen of Scetis was also hegumen of one of the monasteries—that of Saint Macarius—there must have been times when it was felt desirable that report on the state and needs of the monasteries should be made by some disinterested person.

When in the age of Justinian the patriarchal seat was transferred to the Monastery of Saint Macarius, the archbishop himself could exercise supervision; but after the Arab Conquest, Alexandria resumed its old position as the archiepiscopal seat, and this direct relationship could no longer be maintained. Yet Scetis, as a secondary seat and a "peculiar" of the patriarch, was to remain under the control of the primate. The rule of the hegumens, therefore, was not restored after the death of John\(^1\) (though the Superior of the Monastery of Saint Macarius remained titular Hegumen of Scetis),\(^2\) and the patriarch appointed a visitor to supervise the monasteries as his deputy.

The first (?) of these visitors is a famous man. The History of the Patriarchs\(^3\) relates that "Abba Simon (689–701) committed to Abba John, Bishop of Nikiu,\(^4\) the management of the affairs of the monasteries, because he was conversant with the life of the monks, and knew their rules; and he gave him authority over them.\(^5\) At this time the

---

1 Note that in his provisions for the enshrinement of the Forty-nine, Benjamin I gave his orders directly, and not through a deputy, to John the Hegumen.
2 The Psephisma for the election of a patriarch was regularly signed by the Hegumen of Scetis in the Middle Ages (see p. 348); but this personage seems to have possessed no other powers outside the Monastery of S. Macarius.
3 Pages 286 f.
4 The famous chronicler.
5 This phrase suggests that Simon originated this office.
monks were industriously rebuilding the cells, while the officials took charge of their maintenance. Then, however, some of those who were given up to their appetites, took a virgin out of her monastery, and conveyed her to Wâdi Habîb and committed sin with her secretly. When this was made known among the monks, there was great distress among them... So the bishop took the monk who had committed the sin, and inflicted a painful beating upon him; and ten days after his punishment that monk died." For his severity in this case, John was degraded by his fellow bishops and reduced to the status of an ordinary monk.

In spite of this incident, the office of Visitor seems to have remained permanent; for although no reference is made to John’s immediate successor, we find that a century later Abba Michael, Bishop of Misr, “was superintendent of all matters concerning the monasteries,” and in this capacity caused Mark III, elected to the patriarchate, to be brought from his retreat in the Wâdi Habîb and duly consecrated (799).  

How great an influence and attraction was exercised by the monasteries of the Wâdi ‘n Natrûn (Scetis) over the patriarchs is well illustrated by the account of the last days of Simon I. While at Hulwân, he was attacked by a sickness which he recognized as mortal and, though originally a monk of the Monastery of El Zajâj, his thoughts turned first to the desert. “So he said to his sons: ‘Let us travel to the holy valley, Wâdi Habîb, that I may receive the blessing of the holy fathers and the monks; for I shall not see them again after this time in the body.’... And he went down to Wâdi Habîb, and received the blessing of the holy fathers, the monks.”

2. The Monks and Taxation

The early years of the eighth century are represented as gloomy by the History of the Patriarchs, our main source for this period. Hitherto the monks seem to have been unmolested; but the time was bound to come when a Muslim government would awake to the fact that by permitting the monks of Egypt—no negligible fraction of the population—to go untaxed, it was foregoing a large part of its potential revenue. The inevitable change took place according to the History of the Patriarchs soon after Alexander II became patriarch. ‘Abd el ‘Azîz, governor of Egypt from 685 to 705, appointed his son El Asbagh wâlî and receiver of the revenue towards the close of his term of office. El Asbagh, who is described as a “hater of the Christians,” was under the influence of a Melkite deacon and monk named Benjamin, and so readily listened to various calumnies against the monks, such as that they did nothing but eat and drink. He sent, therefore, “one of his trusted friends, named Yezid, accompanied by another, and mutilated (i.e., branded) all the monks

---

1 Nothing is heard of any barbarian invasion about this time which could have caused the ruin of the cells. Probably all that is meant is that the restoration initiated by Benjamin was still not completed.

2 Hist. Patr., p. 520; cf. p. 293, below.

3 ld., p. 300.

4 Pages 304 f.
in all the provinces and in Wādi Habīb and on Mount Jerād and in other places. And he laid a poll-tax upon them of one dinar from each individual, and commanded that they should make no more monks after those whom he mutilated. Now this tax of the infidel El Asbagh was the first poll-tax paid by the monks."¹

The poll tax thus imposed continued to be exacted under succeeding governors. Yet for the orthodox Jacobite even such oppression occasionally had a brighter side. Under the emirate of Kurreh, who seems to have been appointed soon after the accession (705) of El Walīd as caliph,² a certain official named John (he was also the Bishop of Sā) obtained from the governor a commission to collect the taxes with the proviso that he should exact double from those who did not “believe in the faith of the Coptic Christians” and were not Muslims. Armed with this authority, John “went first to the diocese of Sā, which was his own diocese” and by means of the financial argument at his disposal “converted” a number of heretics. From Sā, John proceeded to El Muna “and baptized the monks there, after they had abjured their heresy; and thus the Gaianites and the Barsanuphians, who were there, were led by him into communion with the orthodox. When he left that place, he journeyed to Wādi Habīb, where also the heresy of the Gaianites had existed during a hundred and seventy years,³ from the time of the schism caused by Julian; and he brought them also back to the orthodox faith.”⁴

In 714 Usameh became superintendent of revenue and took certain measures which must have affected the monks of Scetis as those of other places. “He commanded the monks not to make monks of those who came to them. Then he mutilated the monks, and branded each of them on his left hand, with a branding iron in the form of a ring, that he might be known: adding the name of his church and his monastery, without a cross, and with the date according to the era of Islam. Thus there was, in the year 96 of the Hegira (714–715 A.D.), trouble among the monks, and oppression of the faithful.”⁵

These measures, which were designed partly to prevent evasion of taxpaying by pretended adoption of the monastic life, and partly to make an end of monasticism by depriving the monasteries of recruits, were strictly enforced, and “unregistered” monks were punished by the loss of a limb, or by blinding, or by death. Further, commissioners were sent to inquire into the state of the monasteries and “found there many monks who had no mark of a ring on their hands; so some of them were beheaded, and some died under the lash. Then he nailed up the door of their church with iron nails, and demanded of them a thousand dinars, and assembled the superiors of the monks, and tortured them, and required a dinar

¹ The date of this first levy is 704 or 705, since it took place between the consecration of Alexander II (April 25, 704) and the death of ‘Abd el ‘Azīz in 705. For the taxation of Egypt in the early Arabic Period see Lane-Poole, History of Egypt in the Middle Ages, p. 25.
² See Hist. Patr., p. 310. Lane-Poole (op. cit., p. 47) dates Kurreh’s appointment 709.
³ This gives 540 as the date of the Gaianite schism. Probably round numbers are given.
⁴ Hist. Patr., pp. 316 ff.
⁵ Id., p. 322.
from each one of them... So the seniors of the monks were troubled; and they longed for
death, and knew not what to do.”

This state of affairs continued until the accession in 717 of ‘Omār ibn ‘Abd el ‘Azīz, who
abolished the taxes on Church property and land. Under Yezīd II, the succeeding caliph,
however, the hated imposts were restored, and even grew heavier as years went by. How
burdensome the land and poll tax had become to the desert monasteries may be judged
from the account of the elevation of Michael I to the patriarchy: “Now the Lord... had already moved the superiors of Wādi Habīb for a certain cause; and they had come
forth from the desert with the aforesaid priest Michael in their company; and the reason
was that they had met together and taken counsel, saying: ‘El Kāsim, the tyrant, increased
our land-tax and poll-tax beyond our power to pay. Now a new governor is come, therefore let us go... and beg the governor to remove these unjust exactions from us.’” Though
the result of this petition is not recorded, it is probable that at least the illegal exactions
of the foregoing régime were abolished.

The taxation of the monks of Wādi Habīb is a subject which will recur again in the
course of this history.

3. Miscellaneous Events

From this point until we near the close of the eighth century little is to be learnt con-
cerning the Wādi Habīb, save that certain of the monks, including Athanasius, Archpriest
(Hegumen) of the Monastery of Saint Macarius, stood by the Patriarch Michael I, in the
sufferings which he endured at the hands of Marwān II, when that prince was driven to bay
by his Abbaside supplanter in 750. Indeed, the monks claimed that the victory gained by
the Khorassanians over Marwān’s followers in the neighborhood of Gīzeh was vouchsafed
in answer to their prayers. The History of the Patriarchs thus records the circumstances:
“... but when the deacon and reader of Bilbais saw our distress he hastened away to
the Monastery of Saint Macarius, in Wādi Habīb, and assembled all the holy fathers and
monks; and they began to fast and pray in the church night and day, crying to the Lord
Christ to look upon us... So the gracious God heard them... And the Khorassanians pur-
sued and fought them (sc. Marwān’s followers), and did not cease slaughtering them until
they reached Wādi Habīb, in answer to the prayers of the saints; for the army of the
Khorassanians crossed over the river [Nile] on the day on which the monks assembled in
the church, which was Saturday, the last day of Abīb.”

Michael, himself a priest of the Monastery of Saint Macarius, was succeeded by Menas I
(patriarch, 767–774), who is described as having been “a monk from his youth... the
PROGRESS OF EVENTS BETWEEN 661 AND 774 A.D.

spiritual son of the father Abba Michael, and superintendent of his habitation in the monastery of Saint Macarius."

Menas himself was followed by John IV (775–799), who had been a monk in the Wādī Habīb, and subsequently had become priest in charge of the Church of Saint Menas.¹

Under neither of these patriarchates does the History of the Patriarchs record any event relating to the Wādī 'n Natrūn; but from other sources we know that in the days of John IV steps were taken which must have greatly enhanced the status of two of the monasteries.

¹ Hist. Patr., p. 495.
CHAPTER V

TRANSLATIONS OF SAINTS TO SCETIS

1. The Translation of Saint Macarius

In the earlier period of the history of Nitria and Scetis, pilgrims made their way into the desert to be edified by the discourse of the fathers, to beg for their prayers, and to receive their blessing. Even in the sixth century Andronicus of Antioch visits Scetis "to be blessed by the fathers"; and the monks of the same period lay store by the possession of a saint's relics out of a belief that the saint's intercession would then aid them in spiritual warfare. In the seventh century a change seems to have come over both pilgrims and monks. The former seek out holy places believing that prayer there will, through the mediation of some departed saint, lead to a cure or to some other benefit; the latter are drawn more and more to realize the advantages presented to them by such an attitude, and come to look upon relics as an attraction bringing renown and wealth to their monastery. In proportion, then, as the sanctity of the living grew less remarkable, the veneration of the dead increased.

In the history of Scetis we may recognize in the healing of the youth at the consecration of the Church of Saint Macarius, in the remarkable cure of John of Samannud, and above all in the translation of the Forty-nine Martyrs to a specially prepared shrine, examples of both sides of this tendency.

It was in the patriarchate of John IV that Scetis developed into a great shrine for saints, when two of the greatest monasteries recovered their founders' remains. The first to return to his old home was Macarius the Great. It will be remembered that the saint's body had been stolen from Scetis before 480 A.D. and carried to Jibber. There it remained until A.M. 500 (784 A.D.), when a certain Joseph, Archon of Elmi, gained possession of the relics.

1 See Clugnet, *Vie de l'Abbé Daniel*, p. 50.
2 Id., p. 57.
3 See p. 273.
4 See *Hist. Patr.*, pp. 260 f.
5 See p. 271.
6 See p. 120.
The translation to Scetis must have followed soon after, for though it is not precisely dated, it is known to have been carried out during the patriarchate of John IV (775–799 A.D.) and to have preceded the translation of John the Little.¹

The whole story of the proceeding is related in the Synaxarium² as follows:

"On this day is the Translation of the body of Abba Macarius the Great to the desert of Scetis.

"After his death some men of Sasehir (sc. Jiibâr) came, stole the body of the saint, and built him a church in their town. He remained there until the Caliphs reigned over the town... Then they carried him to another town (sc. Elmi). He remained there until the days of Abba John the Patriarch, for four hundred and forty years.³ Abba Michael was appointed oeconomus of the Church of Saint Macarius. When the Patriarch was come up to keep the Great Fast to the Monastery of Abba Macarius, he cried out and said: 'As for me, I desire by our Lord Christ... that the body of the holy Abba Macarius may be in our midst in this Monastery.'

"A few days after, Abba Michael, steward of the Church, went away with certain old monks on the business of the convent. A spiritual thought stirred their hearts. They came to the sanctuary in which the body of Saint Macarius was, to carry it away. All the people of the village came together with the judge⁴ carrying sticks and swords, and prevented them from carrying off the body of the saint. The old monks went to sleep, sad and troubled in heart. That night Saint Macarius appeared to the judge and said to him: 'Why have you prevented me from departing with my sons? Suffer me to depart with them to my sanctuary, and do not prevent them from carrying me away with them.'

"In the morning the judge rose up in fear and trembling. He called the holy old men and gave them the body of holy Abba Macarius. They carried it off with great joy. They boarded a ship and came to the town of Tarnût (Terenuthis)... Then they carried (the body of the saint) into the desert. And while they were journeying, they reached midway across the desert and wished to rest themselves a little for their weariness. Abba Michael said to them: 'As the Lord liveth, we take no rest until the Lord show us and cause us to see the place where a Cherubim took the hand of our Father holy Abba Macarius.'⁵

"When the camel which carried the body of the saint was come to this place, it knelt

¹ See p. 295.
² Synax. (Eth.), Nahase 20 (Aug, 26) (P.O., IX, pp. 355 f.). The Arabic version is not yet published. See also Crum, P.S.B.A., xxix, p. 302. The source of the Synax. was a Coptic narrative whose three leaves, found by Tischendorf at the Monastery of St. Macarius, are now at Leipzig (Cod. Tisch., xxv, 22, 32, 24). These have been published in my New Texts, No. XXIII, d.
³ This is due to misunderstanding of the Coptic original which says: "For lo, four hundred and forty years are passed since our holy Father, Abba Macarius fell asleep."
⁴ Doubtless Joseph the Archon of Elmi, named in the Coptic.
⁵ Cf. A.M.G., xxv, pp. 75, 88 f. This may be identified with the place called in XIV century البيكاسورام, i.e., ميكتيريا: see B.N., Fonds arabe, No. 100, fol. 92f; Rev. d'hist. ecle., xvii, p. 510.

293
and did not rise and began to turn its head from one side to the other, and to lick the case in which was the body of the saint. The old monks recognized that this was the place in question... This spot is celebrated to this day. When they were near the convent, all the monks came out and went to meet the body of the saint with great joy, with psalms and chants. They had with them lighted torches (?) candles. They carried the body of the saint upon their heads. They sang psalms until they had brought it into the church with great pomp. The Lord wrought many miracles on that day."

2. The Translation of John the Little

Not long afterwards and still in the patriarchate of John IV (i.e., between 790 and 799) the body of John the Little was brought back to Scetis from Clysma (Suez). The notice accorded to this event in the Synaxarium¹ is as follows:

"On this day also is the Translation of the body of Abba John the Little to the desert of Scetis. It was, after his death, at the convent of Quelzem, that is to say, in the desert of Saint Antony. Now in the days of Abba John, patriarch of the town of Alexandria, this patriarch, the forty-eighth in number of our Fathers the Patriarchs, went to the desert of Scetis. The holy monks said to him, 'We wish that the body of the holy Abba John the Little might be in the Church of Saint Macarius, that we might prostrate ourselves before him.' Straightway the grace of the Lord moved him; he wrote a letter in his own hand to a superior of a monastery, called Cosmas, and he sent with him an old man of the country of Quelzem. When they were arrived, it was not possible for them to fulfil their mission for the moment, for the body of the saint was guarded by the Melkite Chalcedonians who dwelt in the sanctuary. The superior of the monastery and those who were with him recognized the sanctuary, took note of it, and going away met certain faithful and orthodox men who dwelt in the town, and told them the cause for which they were come.

"A few days after, a judge from among the princes of the Arabs was set over the country of Quelzem. He was a friend of Abba Michael, bishop of the town of Quelzem. The patriarch wrote a letter to the bishop with reference to the body of the holy Abba John and bade him contrive something and to give aid to his servants the old monks so that they might transfer the body far from the hands of heretics. The bishop rejoiced with a great joy. He related to the secretary of the judge, his friend; the secretary related it to the judge, and so the deputation of the old monks went before the judge. The secretary said: 'How shall we find a pretext for the monks to enter the sanctuary?' The judge said: 'Let the monks throw over their habits the garments of Arabs, and let them come with us to the sanctuary.' And they did so. The judge set out; with him were many horsemen and Arabs, and with him were also the old saints of the desert of Scetis; they arrived at Quelzem.

¹ Synax. (Eth.), Nahase 29 (Sept. 5) (P.O., ix, pp. 418 f.).
TRANSLATIONS OF SAINTS TO SCETIS

"The judge said to the Melkite bishop who sat in the sanctuary: 'Make all your men go out of the church, for I wish to enter the church myself and stay here this night.' The heretic did as the judge had commanded. The old monks made ready their beasts outside the town, entered by night and took the body of Abba John. They departed and came to Cairo, and from there to the desert of Scetis. The monks of the convent of Saint Macarius came forth and went to meet the body of the saint with crosses, gospels, torches, incense and amid singing of psalms and chants. They brought him near to the body of Saint Macarius,¹ and all the monks implored his blessing. They spread over him countless perfumes, and celebrated the Holy Sacrifice. At the moment when the Gospel had been chanted, there appeared a miracle and a great wonder—the whole church shone with heavenly light and gave forth an odor of a sweet perfume, the like of which there is not. So there was great joy. The body remained at the Monastery of Saint Macarius for seven days. When they carried it away and brought it to the Church [of Saint John], the monks, his sons, came to meet him, as the Hebrews went to meet our Savior, and cried before him saying: 'Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord’: and they placed him in his sanctuary. There were numerous miracles and prodigies wrought by him.

"After the death of Abba John (IV), Abba Mark, the Patriarch who was after him, went up to the desert of Scetis and entered the church of holy Abba John and prostrated himself before him. With him there were bishops and many nobles of the town of Alexandria and of all the country of Egypt. He uncovered the body of the saint and found it wrapped in palm fiber²; he implored his blessing, and shed bitter tears. When he uncovered the body of the saint, there was a great clap of thunder in the church, and all the people fell in fear and terror. The patriarch replaced over the saint the mat of palm fiber, and buried him in fine stuffs, while they glorified the saint with spiritual songs . . .

"The translation of the body of holy Abba John the Little took place in the year 520³ of the holy Martyrs (804 A.D.)."

The following acclamation⁴ to Saint John the Little refers to the events above described:

"Hail to the Translation of thy body to the dwelling which thou didst build

O John the Little, great through thy work!
When thy sons thought to bury thee in fine robes,
The lightning flash prevented them from removing
The garment of poverty, the hair shirt (sic) which was upon thee."

The translation of the third of the great saints, Abba Bishôî, which might have been expected to follow soon after that of Macarius and John the Little, did not take place until considerably later. The cause of this delay was primarily the extremely disturbed state of Egypt in the early ninth century, when one insurgent, Es Sarî, held Upper Egypt from

¹ The translation of Macarius to Scetis had therefore already taken place.
² I.e., wearing a tunic of this material.
³ This date must refer to Mark's attempt to unwrap the body, since John IV died in 799.
⁴ Synax. (Eth.), Nahase 29 (Sept. 5) (P.O., ix, pp. 418 f.).
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

Misr to Aswán, another, ʿAbd el ʿAzīz el Jawārī, dominated the eastern Delta from Shatnūf to Faramā, and western Egypt, including the regions of Alexandria, Maryūt, and El Bohaireh, was occupied by the Lakhmites and other tribes. These troubles culminated in the capture of Alexandria by the Andalusians or Spanish Arabs (who had settled in Egypt in 798) in alliance with the Lakhmites and Madlajahites in 815.¹ A second cause was the disaster which at this period once more overwhelmed the Monasteries of Wâdi Habīb.

Before this catastrophe is described, we may glance at the all too brief notice allotted to the Monastery of Saint Macarius by Epiphanius Hagiopolites in his Διηγήσεις.² The visit was clearly paid subsequent to the translation of Saint Macarius and earlier than 820 when the narrative was composed³; probably it took place in the first decade of the ninth century. “Six days’ journey to the south of Alexandria,” writes this traveller, “lies Saint Macarius the Great who drew near to Paradise. His monastery contains a thousand monks (ἀββαδάς) and a thousand cells. It is an isolated fortress (ἰδιώκαστρον); and from Saint Macarius, distant four days’ journey, are the thirty-six granaries of Joseph.”⁴

It seems that Epiphanius did not visit the remaining monasteries or did not consider them worthy of notice. But if the “thousand monks” belonged to the Monastery of Saint Macarius alone, the total population of the desert must still have been high. And from the statement that there were a thousand cells to accommodate a thousand monks, we may infer that the monks still lived in separate cells.⁵ As we shall see, the monasteries were not walled in until the end of this period; and consequently the ἰδιώκαστρον of Epiphanius must be identified as the tower of refuge with which the church and other communal buildings must have formed a close irregular mass.

¹ For these events see Hist. Patr., pp. 542, 544; Lane-Poole, History of Egypt in the Middle Ages, p. 36.
² Ed. Dressel, p. 6.
⁴ This shows that the translation of Macarius had already taken place.
⁵ The “Granaries of Joseph” are located by Benjamin of Tudela in the neighborhood of Fustât.
⁶ Though many of these must have been grouped together in “dwelling-houses.”
CHAPTER VI

THE FIFTH SACK OF SCEESIS (ABOUT 817 A.D.)

The disaster referred to above was the destruction of the monasteries by Arabs. The occurrence is thus described in the biography of Mark III:

"He (Satan) began to bring great trouble upon the desert of Wādī Habīb, which is a place where the Arabs dwell. Now the desert of Wādī Habīb had been like the Garden of Eden. But the Arabs plundered it, and took the monks captive, and demolished the churches and the cells there. And the holy seniors were scattered in every part of the world. When therefore the father, Abba Mark, saw such a calamity...he could not bear this grief." He cried out that "the joy of Egypt has ceased, and Wādī Habīb, the Holy of Holies, has become a ruin, the dwelling of wild beasts. The homes of our blessed fathers...have become the resort of the owl and the dens of cruel foxes, namely this foul tribe." So great indeed was Mark's grief that he died soon after the news of the disaster.

A somewhat fuller account of the devastation is given at the opening of the life of the Patriarch James (819–830), Mark's successor. "Before the decease of the holy father, Abba Mark, the holy desert of Wādī Habīb had been laid waste; and this devastation had so tried the said father, that he besought the Lord to remove him from this world...because of what they (the monasteries) suffered at the hands of the miscreant Arabs, through their having taken possession of them and driven out our holy fathers who dwelt there, and killed many, and burnt the churches and the mansūbehs, that is to say, the cells, with fire. In consequence of this slaughter, the monks were dispersed among the cities and villages and monasteries, in the various provinces of Egypt and the two Thebaids. Thus none was left in the cells of Wādī Habīb save a few persons, who chose death, that they might redeem the life of their brothers by their own life, and so inherit eternal life by their endurance. And God protected them, so that none did them any further hurt or injury.

1 Hist. Patr., pp. 552 f. 2 Id., pp. 554 f.
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

“At that time there was in the monastery of our father Macarius a priest, called Yaʿkūb (James). . . . When the devastation of the monasteries began, he quitted them and departed to a monastery in Upper Egypt,¹ that he might serve God there, while awaiting a time when he might return to the holy mountain of Mizān el Kulūb, or Wādi Habīb.”

A further notice of this raid is contained in the *Chronicon orientale*²: “In his (Mark’s) days barbarian Africans³ devastated the monasteries of Wādi Habīb and depopulated them, having burnt the churches and cells; and they remained forty years⁴ without monks and without any inhabitant.”

It was possibly during this raid that the ms. *Life of Maximus and Domitius* in the Morgan Collection was rescued from the monasteries, since a note⁵ states that it was brought from Scetis to the hospice at Alexandria at the time when the monasteries were destroyed, and that it remained there until the days of the Patriarch Michael⁶ (probably Michael III, patriarch 881–909), when it was restored by the deacon Eustathius to a monk of Scetis then living at Enaton.

In the accounts quoted above, the sack of the monasteries is represented as occurring very shortly before the death of Mark III (i.e., before April 17, 819). This might suggest that the disaster occurred in 818, but the recorded history of the priest James shows that the date was earlier than 817. As already stated, James fled after the raid to Upper Egypt and lived there for a certain time, which is not defined but must have amounted to some months. Then, as we shall see, he returned to Scetis, where he set about reorganizing and comforting the remaining monks and even made some progress in building a church. The interval between James’ return to Scetis and his election as patriarch after the death of Mark can, therefore, hardly be reckoned at less than a year and a half; and the Arab raid must have taken place either early in 817, or in 816.

---

¹ See Abū Sāliḥ, *Churches and Monasteries of Egypt*, ed. Evetts, fol. 80b.
³ Ecchellensis in his rendering translates “barbarian inhabitants of the west.”
⁴ This is wrong—as a subsequent entry in the *Chronicon orientale* itself and the narrative of the *Hist. Patr.* show. Probably the writer is confusing this with the fourth sack after which the monasteries remained desolate for a long period.
⁶ Cauwenbergh (loc. cit.) identifies him as Michael I (744–768) and assumes that the raid was that which took place in the VI century. The evidence for this identification (if any) is not stated; but in the absence of such it is far more probable that the book was removed at the time of the IX century raid.
CHAPTER VII

THE RESTORATION

1. The Work of Abba James

The Chronicon orientale, in defiance of its own previous statement, records that in the time of James "the monasteries were restored and the monks returned to them." In fact a gallant attempt to retrieve the situation was made more than a year before the death of Mark. While in his retreat in Upper Egypt the priest James had a vision of the Theotokos herself, who bade him return to Wádi Habib. He obeyed the injunction, and was cheered by the appearance of Saint Macarius who gave the priest assurance that through him the monks should "reassemble in their dwellings, from which Satan has scattered them." James therefore continued cheering the few monks who still remained in the desert, spending the nights in prayer and "working with his hands according to his custom." During this anxious time it was revealed to him that the Patriarch Mark III would die within a year.

On the decease of Mark, the choice of the bishops and laity fell upon this same James. "So they hastened, and came to the desert, to the church of Saint Macarius, and took the priest James suddenly, before he knew."

The new patriarch seems to have set about the task of reconstruction at once: "On the approach of the Forty Days, the holy fast, the father resolved to visit the desert of Saint Macarius, that he might comfort and console the brethren and monks, and remain among them till the feast of holy Easter, as the custom of the patriarchs was. When he reached the desert, the monks...met him, crying: 'Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.' And all the fathers and seniors came from their caves and from the mountains, running like deer which long for the waterbrooks...And this desert was like the Paradise of the Lord, through the prayers of the father patriarch and the assistance of the baptized Egyptians. The patriarch had a great affection for the desert, more than the monks had.

1 Ed. cit., p. 137.  
2 Hist. Patr., p. 556.  
3 Id., p. 560.
And he acted there as Cornelius did in his time; for he sent a message to all the fathers and to the cells, saying: ‘If anyone need anything for his cell, let him come and take it.’ For the barbarians had robbed them of all their goods, and wrecked the churches, and burnt the cells with fire. So when the monks came together again, they praised the Lord... The father also rejoiced, seeing that the doves had returned to their former nest. In the days of his priesthood he had begun to build a sanctuary in the name of Saint Sinuthius (Shenûdeh), to the south of the sanctuary of Saint Macarius; and there the monks began to assemble instead of in the ruined churches. Now he finished it, and restored the other churches.”

Still further progress was made after the end of the tyrannical ‘Abd el ‘Azîz el Jawâri in 825 A.D.: “At that time God looked upon the dispersion and separation of the monks, the sons of Saint Macarius, in every place, and so he brought them back to their holy dwellings... Now the father, Abba James, saw that the sanctuary of Saint Sinuthius was not large enough to contain the congregation of the monks; and therefore he rebuilt the church which is named after Saint Macarius, and which is the sanctuary of Benjamin. For it was in a state of decay, but Abba James adorned it with every kind of ornament, and, when it was completed, he consecrated it on the first day of Barmûdeh. And this edifice became a monument to the patriarch, and a glory to the Lord.”

2. Progress under Abba Joseph

James died in 830, and was followed by Simon II, a monk of Scetis, who died after a patriarchate of five months. Joseph (Yusâb), who is described as “priest and superintendent (القَبَّة) of the church of Saint Macarius in Wâdi Habîb,” became the next patriarch. He had been educated by “the deacon who had charge of the sons in the cell” in Alexandria, and even at this late date had been taught Greek. At his earnest request, he had been permitted by Mark to become a monk in the Monastery of Saint Macarius, where Paul the priest was then hegumen.

The deputation sent by the electors into the desert to secure Joseph found him standing at the door of his cell which he was about to close “after his sons, who had gone to draw water.” Much against his will, he was carried off to Alexandria, but as he left the valley he was comforted by a supernatural voice, which the company “heard behind them near the road of the Cherubim (طريق الشارع) on the top of the rock.”

Before the year 837–838, we hear of his visiting the desert of Wâdi Habîb in accordance with custom “in order to keep Easter in the monastery.” As we shall see further on, there is evidence to show that he took an active interest in reviving the greatness of the

---

1 Hist. Patr., pp. 566 f. By “the other churches” we are to understand the remaining three monasteries—S. John, Bishbî, and Baramûs.
2 Hist. Patr., pp. 573 f. On this sanctuary see A.A.C.M., 11, i, § 3; iv, § 5.
4 Hist. Patr., p. 594.
5 See p. 38.
6 Hist. Patr., p. 630.
monasteries. But the most active in continuing the restoration was Shenûdeh, the oeconomus of Saint Macarius.

“And there were,” says the biographer of Joseph,1 “in his days grace and peace...for he beheld the monasteries in every place grow and increase every day...above all the monasteries of the Wâdi Habîb were like the Paradise of God, especially that of Saint Macarius. And God’s assistance was with all the monks, and more than any with that oeconomus Sinuthius, the holy priest. . . For Sinuthius raised monuments in honour of Saint Macarius, vineyards and gardens2 and cattle and mills and oilpresses and many useful things that cannot be numbered...And there were in the holy monastery innumerable persons, not only the orthodox, but also heretics, on account of the wonders that were manifested in that church. This was the doing of this oeconomus Sinuthius, who hoped for a reward from God...And when Sinuthius saw the monks increasing in numbers...he began and built a church to the north of the Great Church, and named it after the Father-Disciples.3 And he completed it, and adorned it with every kind of ornament. And he invited our holy father, Abba Joseph the patriarch, to visit this church...and he consecrated it on the first day of Barmûdeh in the seventeenth year of his patriarchate (847). And the father did not cease to bless this oeconomus...and looked upon the monuments which Sinuthius made day after day, and especially this holy church, which was capacious in size, and beautiful in structure...And the father said to us...: ‘My sons, believe me, this brother has many monuments which he will make, and there is building of churches and chapels for him.’...We said to him: ‘Thinkest thou that he will build other churches on this mountain?’ And his words were like a prophecy, but we did not know it until there was manifested to us after that a thing that we will record.”4

The picture thus drawn is a bright one, but it had another side. Materially the advance of the monasteries was rapid; spiritually the monks had gone backwards. This is made clear in the account of monasticism in Egypt left by Dionysius, Patriarch of Antioch, who visited the country in 829–830, during the patriarchate of Joseph: “The study of the Holy Scriptures,” he writes,5 “has disappeared from among them and especially from among the monks...; for the most devout among them, discipline consists in handiwork and in the [or they neglect the] recitation of the Psalms which goes along with it.6 Those who aspire to sacred functions do not devote themselves to gaining the necessary lore and knowledge, but to amassing gold, the price of the dignity they are to receive. For less than two hundred or three hundred darics no one can attain to the episcopate.”

---

1 Hist. Patr., pp. 652 f.
2 See A.A.C.M., II, ii, § 3.
3 الأลาچية التلائمية. The “Great Church” is the (restored) “Sanctuary of Benjamin.” On the relation of the IX century churches to one another see A.A.C.M., II, i, § 3, and passim.
4 This promise unfortunately is not fulfilled.
5 Michael the Syrian, Chron., xii, 17, trans. Chabot, iii, p. 80; Bar-Hebraeus, ed. Abbé Lamy, i, col. 376. Though it is not stated, there is no doubt that Dionysius is referring to the monasteries of Wâdi Habîb. We may suspect that the restoration of the Syrian Monastery was in some way connected with this visit of Dionysius.
6 As in the IV century: see p. 198.
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

This, it must be remembered, is the criticism of a friend, and must be accepted as substantially just.

3. Restoration of the Remaining Monasteries

From the foregoing little information can be gathered as to the fortunes of the monasteries other than that of Saint Macarius, save that they too were restored by Abba James. Other sources help us in some measure to repair this defect.

First, the Monastery of Bishôï must have been fully restored in the time of the Patriarch Joseph; for under that prelate the body of the patron saint was brought back to that convent. The translation is thus briefly recorded in the Synaxarium: “When the time of the persecutions was finished, they removed the body of Saint Bishôï and that of Saint Bûla (Paul) of Tâmâu to the Monastery of Saint Bishôï in the desert of Scetis. The body of the saint worked many miracles and wonders: it is preserved intact to this day without any corruption.” The marvelous circumstances which attended this translation are related in the commemoration of Paul of Tamweh in the Synaxarium. Paul, who, “for the love that he bare the Messiah, in the excess of his devotion destroyed himself seven times,” was the associate of Bishôï (بيه) when he retired to Antinoë, and had received from God the assurance that his body should ever remain with that of Bishôï. When this zealot after his seventh suicide died finally, he was buried with Bishôï, and so remained until “they sought to remove that other (Bishôï) to the mountain of Shihêt... They took the body of holy Anba Bishôï and left that of Anba Paul. But the vessel in which the first was remained immovable and did not go forward. It was perceived that it was because of the body of the holy Anba Paul. They took him and placed him by the other, and carried them away to Shihêt where they are still together.” The same account is given in the Greek Life of “Paesius.”

The period in which this translation took place is determined by the following doxology on Bishôï in the Theotokia: “Joseph the high-priest of the great city Rakoti... In the days of thy high-priesthood did this great grace befall us—us the unworthy!—namely the coming to us of our cross-bearing Fathers Abba Pishoi and Abba Paul, the shining luminaries, the two that became for us a harbor of salvation. They illuminated our souls with their holy relics.”

The Monastery of John the Little also reappears at this time. The biography of the Patriarch Joseph informs us that it had shared in the general destruction in the day of monks was the body of a saint “as fresh and rosy as if alive”: see Travels, trans. Hunter, ii, p. 185.

3 Ed. Basset, pp. 108 (P.O., i, pp. 321 f.).

4 Save that the saints are carried to Pisidia instead of Scetis: see note 1 above. In the Arabic Life (B.N., Fonds arabe, No. 4796, fol. 166) the same story is told in connection with an earlier translation of the pair to Antinoë: see p. 159.

5 Curzon ms., No. 131, fol. 113; Psalmodia, Cairo edition, p. 113; Crum, Cat. Copt. MSS. in B.M., No. 865.
THE RESTORATION

Mark III. 1 Mentioning certain holy monks of this period, the author writes: “and there was a hermit among them whose name was Ammonius at the Monastery of Saint John. . . . And I, the mean and feeble one, visited him . . . He . . . had been a monk from his youth in the Monastery of Saint John. But when the desert was ravaged in the last days of the Patriarch Abba Mark . . . this monk took refuge in a church named after the Disciples in a certain village . . . And I, the mean one, was present with him, and he taught me writing; and that was in the tenth year of the patriarchy of the father Abba Joseph (740 A.D.).”

Before 850 the monastery had certainly recovered; for of Khael (Michael II, 850–852?), who succeeded Joseph as patriarch, we read that he “was hegumen in the Monastery of Saint John in the Wādi Habīb.” He had been a deacon, but during a severe sickness vowed to become a monk. God therefore “released him and suffered him to depart into the holy desert . . . He was accounted worthy to become hegumen, after being made priest at the hands of the father Abba Joseph.” 2

The Monastery of Baramūs shared in the general restoration and must have been reconstructed in or before the patriarchate of Joseph. For it is on record that a certain John, a monk of Baramūs, was consecrated Metropolitan of Abyssinia by this patriarch; and that when driven out of that country, John returned to Egypt “and took up his abode at the Monastery of Baramūs in Wādi Habīb, because he had first become a monk there.” 3

4. New Monasteries in Scetis

In the latter part of the sixth century the monasteries of Wādi Habīb are always referred to as the “Four Monasteries” or the “Four Laurae” (the duplicate Theotokos monasteries being regarded as inseparable from the parent foundations); but the biographer of the Patriarch Shenūdeh I, narrating certain events which occurred about 860, 4 speaks of the “Seven Monasteries.” Consequently, between the close of the sixth century and about the middle of the ninth, three new monasteries had made their appearance. These—as shown by the eleventh-century list by Mauhub 5—were the Monasteries of the Syrians, of John Kamē, and the Monastery (or Cave) of Abba Moses.

If these did not originate in the early ninth century, then they must have been restored in that period; in either case we have additional evidence to illustrate the strength of the renaissance. The circumstances in which the Monasteries of the Syrians and of John Kamē were founded (or assumed an independent existence) have been so little studied and are so difficult, that they must be reserved for consideration in the two following chapters. What little there is to be said concerning the Monastery of Moses may be reviewed here.

The Monastery of Moses is included as a distinct unit both in Mauhub’s list of the

---

1 Hist. Patr., p. 645.
2 Hist. Patr., B.N., Fonds arabe, No. 302, p. 1. N.B. Subsequent references are to the pages of this ms. I am most deeply indebted to B. Evetts of Oxford for generously allowing me to make use of his ms. translation of the History from this point onwards.
3 Hist. Patr., pp. 622 f.
4 See p. 324.
5 See p. 360.
Seven Monasteries and in the Coptic lists published by Amélineau—Makrizi mistakenly applies this name to the “Virgin” (Theotokos) of Baramûs, as distinguished from the original Baramûs. In the eleventh century the “monastery” must have been both small and remote; for Mauhub found only two monks there, and an eleventh-century abbot of the Monastery of Kamê threatens to retire to “the Caves of Father Moses” if his privacy is disturbed, as though to an ultima Thule.

Though the whole question is very obscure, it is perhaps best to apply the ninth- and eleventh-century references to the caves in which Moses dwelt when living in retirement as a solitary at Petra (the Rock of Shiêt) and to which reference is made in the Theotokia ("He bequeathed to us his body and his holy cave, that therein we might fulfil his reverend commemoration"). The identification, current in Makrizi’s day, of the Monastery of Moses with one of the two Monasteries of Baramûs would then be due to a combination of false etymology (Baramûs = Abba Mûsa) with the fact that Moses was actually connected in his later life with the Monastery of Baramûs, and his body was ultimately transported thither. It should be added that the scanty ruins, closely adjoining the existing Monastery of Baramûs and still distinguished as Dûr Anba Mûsa, doubtless represent the monastery noted by Makrizi, but are not so remote as to suit the earlier mediaeval references. So far as is known, there is nothing to indicate when this “monastery” was founded. The abode of the saint may well have been regarded as a holy place from the earliest times; but earlier reference to it is lacking. We can only say that it is not later than the last half of the ninth century.

1 *Geographie*, pp. 579 and 581. It is there called the Monastery of Moses the Black (mous nîgâma, mous nîgâma).
3 Curzon ms., No. 131, fol. 114a; Appendix v of this work; my *New Texts*, No. xxiv, 4, where the cave is definitely associated with “the high Rock of Abba Moses.”
4 The ode published in my *New Texts* (loc. cit.) alludes rather enigmatically to the translation (or periodical and temporary removals?) of the saint’s remains.
CHAPTER VIII

JOHN KAMÉ AND HIS MONASTERY

1. Sources

For information concerning the life and work of John Kamé we are chiefly dependent upon a Coptic Life or panegyric written somewhere between 966 and 1255. From this work the commemoration in the Synaxarium² and a fragmentary notice in the Ethiopic Miracles of the Virgin Mary³ are directly or indirectly derived. The History of the Patriarchs in its notice on the Patriarch Gabriel I gives a brief reference to the saint and his monastery which is apparently independent but, as it stands, too obscure to be of any value.⁴ A commemorative inscription preserved at the Syrian Monastery⁵ is invaluable for the saint’s chronology.

2. Life of John Kamé

John Kamé was a native of Jebromounson,⁶ a village in the nome of Sai (Sais). Even in youth he had begun to follow the excellent way, observing the commands of “our

---

¹ Cod. Val. Copt., No. lx, fol. 86 f., ed. M. H. Davis, in P.O., xiv, fasc. 2. Subsequent references are to the pages of this edition. An Arabic note at the end shows that the extant copy was written in 1255 for the Monastery of S. Macarius (whence it was brought by J. S. Assemani). It is therefore a transcript—immediate or otherwise—from an original belonging to the Monastery of John Kamé himself, where it was evidently read at the commemoration of the saint (cf. phrases like “he who is to-day in our midst” and “us his children”). The author, who was surely a monk of Kamé’s monastery, claims to be reproducing or utilizing a Life long lost but recently recovered (ed. cit., p. 48). He hints with some severity that the truth of his narrative had been called in question (id., p. 49); but the allusion to the events of 966, the references to Teroti, Agatho the Stylite, etc. show that he had a certain amount of genuine material to work upon. Cauwenbergh (Étude sur les moines d’Égypte, p. 1, note) speaks slightly of the Life and is quite at a loss as to the period to which Kamé belongs; but probably the Life is as trustworthy as any other composition of this class.

² Ed. Basset, Klhak 25, pp. 443 f. But this version differs slightly from the fuller Life.

³ Ed. Budge, ch. xliii, pp. 143 f.; Budge, One Hundred and Ten Miracles, pp. 147 f.

⁴ See p. 336.

⁵ See p. 308.

⁶ Unidentified. The Synax. (loc. cit.) has Shubra Mandu. A passage in the Hist. Patr. (ms. cit. on p. 303), however, seems to describe him as a Syrian and speaks of him as “brother of John in the monastic life”: في منشوبه هنالك يعرف بصورة الذي هو أبو كامه أخو وحنا في الراهنة—“...in a manshübeh there known as the Syrian, that is to say, Abū Kamé, brother of Yuhanna in the monastic state.” Is this a late interpolation intended to assert the Coptic origin of the Syrian Monastery? The monks of that monastery still assert that John Kamé was their founder.
God-fearing father, Abba John.”

So great was his asceticism that, even though forced into marriage, he persuaded his bride to consent to a life apart and to suffer him to withdraw into the desert. Directed by a vision, he went to Scetis, where he sought out “our father Teroti,”

the superior of a cell forming part of the Monastery of Saint Macarius, who received him gladly, invested him in the monastic habit, and assigned him a dwelling apart where he could be quiet. From Teroti he learned “the holy service of those who had become renowned in virtue, and the Canon of the holy Synaxis of the Hours, that he should pray at every hour according to the commandment of our father Agatho the Stylite.”

After an undefined period spent as Teroti’s disciple,

Kamé was bidden by an angel to go to the cell (παρθένος) of the great luminary Abba John (the Little): “go westwards, far from all habitations. There make a dwelling for thyself... I will gather to thee a multitude... and there shall be a holy community (κοινωνία) called by thy name... God shall make thee fruitful in these deserts, for thou hast walked in the footsteps of those renowned in this mount,... namely, Macarius the Great, Abba John, Abba Bishői and Maximus and Domitius... Thy name shall be called John Kamé (sic, χαμέ) until thy death.”

The saint then retired to the spot indicated and shut himself up in a cave. The Theotokos appeared to him, promising that a church should be built there dedicated to herself, that angels should visit his monastery, and that no plotter should ever breach its walls. In token of these promises the Virgin gave the saint three gold coins on which was signed the name of the Cross, directing that they should be laid up in the treasury of the diaconia (sic): “and there they are unto this day.”

In course of time the virtues of Kamé induced many—it is said three hundred—to become monks

and to settle near him. With their aid the saint set to work to build cells, angels—it is said—assisting; and “a great sea of dwellings and high towers and strong walls” came into being. Thus it was that John Kamé became the founder of “a fifth among the holy Sanctuaries (τόποις) which had arisen in Shihêt by the Lord’s bidding.”

---

1 In all probability this is S. John, and the reference is to 1 John 11: 7 f. 
2 For the name see Zoëga, Cat., No. LV, p. 107, ὑποτόμος (? X century)—but the two persons are not likely to be identical. 
3 According to the Synax. (ed. Basset, p. 445), Kamé’s solitary life began after the death of Teroti. 
4 Life of John Kamé, ed. cit., p. 26. The ms. consistently uses Χ (not Χ), and the same spelling (τόπος) is found in an early X century colophon in one of the Vatican ms.: see Zoëga, Cat., No. XXVII. Quatremeré (Recherches Crit., p. 123) rightly insists that Kamé is a proper name, not an epithet (“the Black”) as it appears in lists of the worthies of Scetis, e.g., the Coptic Liturgy of S. Basil, in Renaudot, Lit. orient. col., i, p. 18, and in the undated list of monasteries in Amélineau, Géographie, pp. 579, 581, where the name is written Χαμέ. In the Apophth. Patr. also, the name Χαμέ appears (under letter X). 
5 I have adopted the spelling Kamé, however, since this is used in the contemporary inscription recording the death of the saint: see p. 368. This form is supported by the Arabic transliteration Kâmá, كام، found in the Hist. Patr. and the Synax. A colophon, dated 1290, in an Arabic ms. at Oxford (Nicoll, Bibl. Bodl. Cod. MSS. Cat., Pars ii, No. 37) names the saint يحصين كام (Anba Yohannes Kama).

6 Life of John Kamé, ed. cit., p. 40. This implies that the monastery was from the first fortified. But in this the Life may be anachronistic. 
7 Id., p. 38.
For the guidance of his community the founder drew up "canons and holy laws and set up a place of meeting (i.e., a church) in which they (the monks) should meet together in the middle of the night, and should sing psalmody and spiritual songs until the light dawn. And he bade them moreover one and all that they should also pray each apart."  

On one occasion Saint Athanasius the Great appeared to Kamé while he was praying, greeted him and his spiritual sons, and before disappearing, foretold the favor which the community should enjoy. In memory of this event, Kamé "commanded his children that they should name the name of our father Abba Athanasius in the hymn of the Three Holy Children; and they do his bidding even unto this day."

Kamé's chief disciples were "our father Shenouti (Shenûdeh), the completion of the assembly of this congregation, my father Papa Mark, his successor, my father Colluthus after him, and my father the deacon George, and my father Antony, and my father George." The memorial inscription at Dér es Suriân also mentions a "spiritual son," Papa Stephanos, who died in the same year as Kamé.

After the establishment of the new community, Kamé was ordained priest (against his will) and so "went up to the Sanctuary and there celebrated Mass."

It is related that at the bidding of an angel he journeyed to the south "for the saving of many souls, even as our fathers Abba John and Abba Pishôî." Bidding his disciple Shenûdeh "stand at the head" of the brethren until his return, he reached a certain place where the people gathered about him and became his sons; "and the sanctuary (τῶπος) there they name that of Apa John Kamé, and so it is called unto this day." But during the superior's absence Shenûdeh, too literally obedient, remained standing upright until it was necessary for the brethren to pile stones about him to afford him support. It was only when an angel was dispatched to recall Kamé that the unfortunate Shenûdeh was released from his trying position.

When his end drew near, Kamé was duly warned by an angel. He fell into a short fever, and summoned his monks to him: "and all his children gathered unto him. And they said unto him, 'Father, speak a word unto us.' But he said, 'have no dealings with heresies, neither enter into houses with women, nor put your trust in rulers, nor lay up for yourselves

---

1 Life of John Kamé, ed. cit., p. 40. For one of the rules relating to psalmody at this monastery see p. 336 (on Gabriel I). Note that nocturns are now apparently regularly observed in public. By "prayer apart" we are probably to understand private observance of the other canonical hours.

2 Id., p. 41. Possibly the name of Athanasius was associated with those of Ananias, Azarias, and Misael. Or is the reference to the Ode of S. Athanasius (for text of which see the Cairo Psalmodia, p. 37), incorporated in the English Communion service?

3 The Rylands Difná above mentioned states that Kamé went to the "holy mount of the great Antonius" (איהנה הָאָב בֶּן אוֹפְיָט אָנְתוֹנִיוס). Is Antonius a corruption of Antinuous (Antinous)? If so, the Sanctuary of "Apa John Kamé" may be the existing Church of Abu Hennes (John) at Sheikh Abâdeh.

4 This is doubtless the Shenûdeh mentioned as a "son" of Kamé in the colophon of Cod. Vat. Copt., lxvi (Zoëga, Cat., No. xxvii, p. 45).
substance: let your handicraft suffice unto you.\textsuperscript{11} When he had said these things..., he lifted up his eyes and saw the companies that had come for him... And... he yielded up his spirit into the hands of the Lord and his soul was taken up to heaven by the angels that had come for him.\textsuperscript{2}

3. Date of John Kamé and His Monastery

A marble stela preserved in the Monastery of the Syrians definitely states that John Kamé died 575 A.M. (859 A.D.), and the statement is generally corroborated by circumstantial evidence.\textsuperscript{3} Unfortunately the age of the saint is nowhere stated, so that the remaining chronology of his life must remain uncertain. But the marked insistence in the \textit{Life} on the inviolability of Kamé's monastery\textsuperscript{4} must mean that it was built later than the fifth sack (817 A.D.); though Kamé may well have had a following before that date. The foundation, therefore, belongs to the general period of restoration. Doubtfully we may conjecture that the alleged visit to Upper Egypt was really a flight from the barbarian invaders; but there is nothing to show for how long before that date he had been a monk, and whether or no he was born in the late eighth century.

\textsuperscript{1} The dying message is surely derived from the single apopthegm ascribed in the Greek alphabetic \textit{Apophth. Patr.} to a certain Abba Khamai or Khamai. The \textit{P.G.} (lxv, col. 436) gives \textit{Xopai} in the text, but reports a variant \textit{χαμαί}. The Greek version is reproduced in the Latin: see Rosweyd, \textit{Vita e p. rum}, v, i, 18, p. 563\textsuperscript{a}. As these collections were completed before the end of the V century (see Butler, \textit{L.H.}, i, p. 214), and our Kamé lived in the IX century, it is best to assume that the panegyrist, or a predecessor to whom he was indebted, took for granted that the two persons were one and the same.

\textsuperscript{2} \textit{Life of John Kamé}, ed. cit., pp. 46 f.

\textsuperscript{3} For the Coptic text see \textit{A.A.C.M.}, iv, iii, § 5.

\textsuperscript{4} \textit{Life of John Kamé}, ed. cit., Introduction.
CHAPTER IX

THE ORIGIN AND EARLY HISTORY OF THE SYRIAN MONASTERY

1. Statement of the Problem

THE Syrian Monastery is not mentioned in the *History of the Patriarchs*—save by implication—until a comparatively late date. The earliest datable references to it are found in a group of “library notes” inscribed in Syriac mss. derived from this monastery itself and belonging to the second third of the ninth century. There is a further series of notes relating the circumstances in which the monastery was “founded”; and though unhappily no date for this event is given, there is good reason to believe that it was considerably earlier than the ninth century.

The best course will be first to state and consider the evidence for the existence of the monastery in the ninth century, then to relate the story of the “foundation,” and finally to determine, if possible, from other evidence the date or period of the event.

2. Earliest Dated References to the Syrian Monastery

If we set aside the very obscure passage in the history of Gabriel I (913–923)² and the Coptic lists³ of churches and monasteries in Egypt (date uncertain), our first direct reference to the Syrian Monastery in a formal record is in Mauhub’s list of the Seven Monasteries as they existed in 1088.⁴ But evidence less direct or less formal shows that it was already flourishing in the ninth century. For though Mauhub is the first to name the Seven Monasteries individually, allusion is made to them collectively early in the patriarchate of Shenûdeh I (i.e., soon after 859),⁵ necessarily implying that the Monastery of the Syrians was in existence by that date; and information derived from donors’ or librarians’ notes

---

¹ I.e., in the reference to “the Seven Monasteries” existing in the time of Shenûdeh I.
² See p. 336.
³ Amélineau, *Géographie*, pp. 579, 581. The monastery is there (p. 579) called Ṭoṣأθ(ο)κος Μαρίας Χριστοφορος, transliterated from the Arabic باليهان.
⁴ See p. 360.
⁵ See p. 324.
in various Syriac codices brought from this monastery to Europe, confirms its existence and enables us to determine with tolerable clearness the state and position of the monastery at that time.

These notes\(^1\) record the presentation of the volumes containing them by two monks, Matthew and Abraham of Tekrit. The two brothers are first mentioned in 816: “Mattai (Matthew) and Abraham, brothers uterine and spiritual in the monastic life, of the city of Tekrit, gladly gave this spiritual treasure\(^2\) . . . completed in the year of the Greeks 1127 (816 A.D.) . . . in the desert of Maris,\(^3\) in the holy Convent of Mar Michael.”\(^4\) In 816, then, Matthew and Abraham were not in Scetis but, apparently, at the Monastery of Mar Michael. Remembering that our date (817) for the fifth sack of Scetis is purely tentative, we may conjecture that they had fled from the Wâdi Habîb and were, in fact, amongst those who “were dispersed in the various provinces of Egypt and the two Thebaids.”

However this may be, a second note shows that the brothers, together with a third, were settled in Scetis at a date somewhere between 819 and 830. The text\(^5\) is as follows: “Mar Matthew and Abraham and Jacob,\(^6\) spiritual brethren of Tekrit . . . put this treasure in the desert of Scetis . . . . This book was given in the time of our blessed patriarchs, Dionysius of Syria (818–845), and James of the Egyptians (819–836), and Basilius, Metropolitan of the city of Tekrit (830); that by their pure and holy prayers God might send his peace and quiet into all the world, that is, his holy churches and monasteries . . . .”

The concluding words are surely significant, peace and quiet were not yet established; and the note is therefore almost certainly earlier than 827, when Ibn Tâhir expelled the Andalusians from Alexandria and rescued northern Egypt from anarchy.\(^7\) Further, it is noteworthy that no monastery is named, though, as we shall see, it is hardly doubtful that the Syrian Monastery was in existence in the eighth century. A possible explanation is that the Syrian Monastery, having been sacked together with the other monasteries of Wâdi Habîb, still lay in ruins, and it was as yet uncertain whether it would ever be restored. The ownership of the book might then well be defined in somewhat vague terms.

A third note\(^8\) contains the first explicit reference to the Syrian Monastery at a date somewhere between 851 and 859: “Let each who reads pray for Isaac and Daniel and Shalmun, chaste monks of Mar Junan (Jonah) of the Syrians that is in Maris, who gave this book, with nine others, to the Monastery of the Mother of God of the Syrians which is in the desert of Egypt . . . . They entered this monastery in the days of the holy, blessed, Patriarch Mar Cosmas of Alexandria (851–859) and Mar John of Antioch (846–873), and in the presence of the honored old man, the monk Bar ‘Idai, head of the Monastery.”

\(^1\) For translations of these and the following notes I am indebted to the Rev. A. S. Tritton, Litt.D.
\(^2\) I.e., to the Convent of Mar Michael, since no monastery in Scetis is named.
\(^3\) In Coptic, ṕaτ sucking “the Southern Region,” or Upper Egypt.
\(^4\) See Wright, Cat. Syr. MSS. in B.M., No. dccclii, p. 696.
\(^5\) Id., No. dccclxxx, p. 762.
\(^6\) On Matthew, Abraham, and their brothers, see Excursus § 2.
\(^7\) Lane-Poole, History of Egypt in the Middle Ages, p. 36.
\(^8\) Wright, Cat. Syr. MSS. in B.M., No. dccclxxxi, p. 766.
THE ORIGIN AND EARLY HISTORY OF THE SYRIAN MONASTERY

This Bar ‘Idai, the first known abbot of the Syrian Monastery, who was ruling about 855, appears to have transmitted his authority to Matthew and Abraham at his death. So much is implied in two successive notes\(^1\) which read as follows: “The monk Bar ‘Idai of Tekrit gladly put this spiritual treasure in the holy Monastery of the House of the Mother of God of the Syrians of Abba Bishoï\(^2\) that is in the desert of Scetis, for the salvation of his soul and for a memorial of his death\(^3\)...”; and again: “he appointed the monks Matthew and Abraham his brothers: each one who cries out at them and lies in wait for them\(^4\) may know that he has transgressed God’s word and every commandment.” If this means anything at all, it means that Bar ‘Idai delegated his authority to Matthew and Abraham, and perhaps appointed them his successors.

One reason for his so doing may be gathered from the next note,\(^5\) which is of capital importance: “This book belongs to the holy Monastery of the House of the Mother of God of the Syrians that is in the desert of Scetis. Matthew, Abraham, Joseph\(^6\) and Theodore, brothers of Tekrit, put this book in the Monastery—they who built and ordered this holy place aforesaid...”

At first sight this statement seems to mean that Matthew and Abraham with their brothers were the actual founders of the Syrian Monastery. But we shall see in due course that such an interpretation is impossible; the Syrian Monastery was not built by the Syrians but purchased from the Copts. There can be no doubt that what Matthew, Abraham, Joseph, and Theodore actually did was to rebuild and restore the Syrian Monastery ruined in the fifth sack of Scetis. The precise date at which they did this cannot be fixed; but from the evidence of the foregoing notes it must have been earlier—perhaps considerably earlier—than 859, and very probably later than 830. It is, indeed, very likely that the rebuilding resulted directly or indirectly from the visit of the Syrian Patriarch Dionysius to Egypt in 829–830.\(^7\) The restoration of the Syrian Monastery was therefore another feature of the great revival which signalizes the ninth century.

3. The Connection with Tekrit

There is a very remarkable feature in the notes quoted above. Matthew and Abraham with their brothers are Tekritans, so is Bar ‘Idai the Abbot. Many other Tekritans appear as benefactors; for example, a certain Papa bar Duma of Tekrit presents a book through Matthew and Abraham to “the House of the Mother of God of the Syrians of Abba Bishoï”\(^8\).

---

2 Note the title, which is most important.
3 This presumably implies that Bar ‘Idai presented the volume by bequest.
4 I.e., whoever challenges or seeks to overthrow their authority.
5 Id., No. dcccxciv, p. 1092.
6 Probably Joseph is to be identified with the Joseph who was abbot of the monastery in 11\(^{11}\) A.D. (i.e., at a date between 818 and 888 A.D.; see Wright, op. cit., No. ccxxx, p. 247). Probably the imperfect date should be 868 or 878. Joseph may well have been made abbot (as in succession to his brothers) in consideration of the evident wealth and standing of his family.
7 See p. 301.
8 Wright, *Cat. Syr. MSS. in B.M.*, No. xvii, p. 12.
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

the “sons of Duma Shatir, Tekritans of Callinice”\textsuperscript{1} do likewise; and “Mar George, son of Barni of Tekrit, and his son James the monk”\textsuperscript{2} also made their gifts. In the ninth century, then, Tekritans were for some reason specially interested in this monastery; and this interest was continuously maintained down to the opening of the eleventh century at any rate.\textsuperscript{3}

What was the nature of this connection? As the metropolis of the Syrian Jacobites, Tekrit would naturally regard Scetis with reverence, but not necessarily with any particular interest. The bond is rather between the monastery and Tekritans settled in Egypt. Now we have decisive evidence that there was in Egypt a colony of Tekritans, no doubt engaged in trade between that country and their native city. Thus in 932 Moses of Nísibis brought back to Egypt three books intended for the use of the Syrian Church at Fustât\textsuperscript{4}; a certain Simeon bar Cyriacus of Tekrit presented a book to the Church of the Tekritans at Fustât,\textsuperscript{5} in 1007 a ms. was presented to the Syrian Monastery by “the elder, venerable as Abraham, Abû ‘Alî Zakariya, the chief of the Tekritans, the son of the deceased John,”\textsuperscript{6} and another ms. from the same monastery contains a prayer for the same Abû ‘Alî styled “chief of the Tekritans in Egypt.”\textsuperscript{7} Again, El Macinus\textsuperscript{8} records that a Christian merchant of Tekrit, named Tib, came to Egypt, where he gained the favor of the Caliph El Hâkem and had special facilities for trading granted to him. And lastly the History of the Patriarchs\textsuperscript{9} relates that Bedr el Gemâlî ejected “a Syrian, Ibn et Tawil, who lived with a body of his countrymen (Tekritans?) at El Husainîyeh, outside the walls of the city (Cairo).”

There was therefore a Tekritan colony in the Egyptian capital, having its own church and presided over by a chief, or sheikh, of the Tekritans. It was this body, beyond all doubt, which maintained and supported the Syrian Monastery—a circumstance which partly, but only partly, explains the Tekritan connection.

4. Marûtha and the Purchase of the Syrian Monastery

We have still to explain why this Tekritan colony (and we may add, their connections in the home country) should have taken so warm an interest in the Syrian Monastery. The answer is that the monastery was—so far as it was Syrian—a Tekritan foundation. Once more this fact is derived from notes\textsuperscript{10} in Syriac mss. once the property of the

\textsuperscript{1} B.N., Fonds arabe, No. 27.
\textsuperscript{2} Wright, op. cit., No. cccxx, p. 149.
\textsuperscript{3} As traced by the gifts of books received from Tekritans in 886–87 (Wright, Cat. Syr. MSS. in B.M., No. DLXXVII, p. 464); in 906–907 (id., No. CLIV, p. 97); in 932 (id., No. CCL, p. 363; Zöstenberg, Cat. Mss. syr. B.N., No. 69, p. 37); after 936 (Wright, op. cit., No. CCCCLII, p. 1116); and in 1007 (id., No. CCCXIX). But this list is far from complete.
\textsuperscript{4} Wright, op. cit., No. CCCXXVIII, pp. 280 f.
\textsuperscript{5} Id., No. DCCXXI.
\textsuperscript{6} Id., No. CCCXXXI, p. 266; cf. id., No. CCCXXII, dated 1066, where he is called the “exalted chief Abû ‘Alî Zakariya, known as the Tekritan.”
\textsuperscript{7} Id., No. CCCXIX.
\textsuperscript{8} Hist. Sar., ed. Erpenius, p. 299.
\textsuperscript{9} B.N., Fonds arabe, No. 302, pp. 188 f.
\textsuperscript{10} I am most deeply indebted to Professor F. C. Burkitt who made the translations (from photographs of the originals) here published, and for his observations thereon. He is not, however, otherwise responsible. I have also to acknowledge the kindness of Abbé Joseph Ziadeh, for drawing my attention to the first and third of these notes.
THE ORIGIN AND EARLY HISTORY OF THE SYRIAN MONASTERY

monastery under discussion. The first of these (Pl. VI), which is of immense importance, reads as follows:

"... This book was given to the holy Convent in the Desert of Scete of Egypt by the sons of Duma [Sha]tir, Tekritans of Callinice (sic), for the salvation of their souls and for a memorial of the late Mar Zacchaeus who was buried in the same holy Convent; that the Lord may accept from them and pardon him and them and their departed ones and all departed believers, Amen. Everyone that reads, let him pray for them o•o and for their fathers •• and for the sinner that wrote. Of your charity, [Fath]ers of the Faith, pray, pray, and again pray [for everyone] who has been associated with the coming of these holy books, and again pray for the race of the Tekritans, i.e., Orientals who bought this Convent from the Egyptians for twelve thousand darics by the great zeal of the great noble Marutha, son of Habbib, whose [father was] at one time Secretary of the Governor (?) of Egypt, and he put him in authority [over] all Egypt, like upright Joseph. He, when he went out into the Desert to lighten the day of his tonsures (sic), arrived at the Convent of our Father..., and they received him with the honor that was due. And afterwards he asked the Egyptian monks [whether there were any] Syrian monks, as he wished to see them. And the Egyptians said to him: [There are] Syrian monks, but they are dispersed in the Convents. And he said to them: I wish [to see] them. And he sent and brought them; and when he saw them, he was glad, and asked them: To what [.....]? He (they) said to him: We have no convent here. And when he heard [this, he purchased] for them this Convent from the Patriarch in Alexandria [................] and over all [................ (half a line illegible)................]."

A second note, though less circumstantial, is invaluable as being based on independent epigraphic material; the inscription mentioned, however, is certainly only loosely cited. The full text is as follows:

"In the name of God Almighty. Sale of the Convent of the Syrians that is in the Desert, which we have found (recorded) in the Convent of Mar Moses that is in Syria in the year 1873 of the Greeks (1562 A.D.) in February.

"In the time of Prior Saliba and Rabban John, Senior, and Rabban Joseph, Senior, and Rabban Jacob, Brother, and Rabban Abraham, Senior, and Rabban John, Hermit, and his brethren Matthew and Saba, and Rabban Simon, and the rest of the monks; they wished to renew the vault (or dome) that is over the door of the Church, and when they dug they found a tablet written in Syriac and Egyptian: ‘Marutha and Habbib, Tekritans,
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

Notables deceased, those who bought this Monastery of the Syrians from the Egyptians for twelve thousand red dinars—we beg you, Brethren, who find the memorial to pray for them with discretion (sic), that God may hold them worthy of that habitation which is above, by the prayer of the Virgin Mother of God and of all Saints—Amen’...."

Thirdly, the colophon of a ms. at Cambridge\(^1\) contains the following statement:

"Ended and completed is this book...and the finishing of it was on the twenty-second day of May, before the Feast of Pentecost, on the Friday before it,\(^2\) in the year 1918 of the Greeks (1607 A.D.) in the desert of Asklt, in a place near the valley of the Natron pool (بركة النطرون) in the holy Monastery of the Theotokos Mary that is called or named by all nations the ‘Monastery of the Syrians’;—and it is truly theirs, inasmuch as we have found in the \textit{Hypomnemata}\(^3\) of the Convent that Tekritan merchants bought it for 12 thousand dinars of gold. Written by the hands of the unworthy Bishop Gregorius Behnam, ...by election over Jerusalem."

The relation of these three notes to one another is a matter of considerable importance. The second, loosely reproducing an inscription, is certainly independent of the first which probably reproduces a written narrative—perhaps the same "memoranda" mentioned in the third. In a word the story of the purchase has come down to us from two (but probably not three) distinct sources.

How far are these most important statements trustworthy? It must be admitted that they are not as early as we might wish. The date of all but the opening of the first note is uncertain\(^4\); and the second note is admittedly late. May they not all be spurious evidence manufactured by the Syrians at a period when the possession of the monastery was disputed with them by the Egyptians?\(^5\) That is possible, but on the whole unlikely, for: (1) The Syrians can hardly have taken possession of the monastery save by purchase. (2) The sale of churches was by no means unknown—Michael II sold a church at Kasr Esh Shema‘ to the Jews, as well as other church property\(^6\); and this monastery may very well have been disposed of by some Coptic patriarch to his Syrian coreligionists. (3) The circumstantial details of the notes and even their slight discrepancies can hardly be the work of a forger. (4) Had the evidence been forged, the Egyptians would no doubt have found means to refute it. There is, therefore, good reason for treating the statement in these notes as historical in a full sense.

We may now proceed to consider the information which these notices contain. First, the mysterious interest in the monastery taken by Tekritans is explained. The monastery had been purchased with Tekritan money, no doubt for Tekritan monks (the governance

---

1 University Library, \textit{Add.}, 3280, fol. 176 a = Wright, \textit{Cat. of Syr. MSS. in C.U.L.}, p. 851.
2 May 22, 1607, was in fact a Friday.
3 I.e., "memoranda" or "notes."
4 The hand of the second part of the note is apparently later than that of the first part: see Plate VI.
5 See pp. 414 f.
at any rate seems to have remained in the hands of Tekritans), and may well have been vested as a wakf in the Tekritan colony at Fustat mentioned above.

Secondly, it will be noticed that there is some discrepancy as to the purchaser. The first note speaks of "Tekritans, i.e., Orientals" as having bought the monastery, "by the great zeal of Marutha son of Habbib," but in the sequel says that it was Marutha who was the purchaser; the second note credits "Marutha and Habbib" with this act of munificence, styling them "notables"; the third says that the purchasers were "Tekritan merchants." But the divergence is really immaterial; Marutha, doubtless, was the leading spirit in the project and the chief contributor to a fund to which other Tekritans also subscribed.

Thirdly, what of Marutha, son of Habbib, and the official post held by his father? Makrizi has the following inadequate note on the former in his list of churches\(^1\): "Church of the holy Maruta in the district of Shumusta.\(^2\) This Maruta is greatly honored among them: he was a notable monk, and his bones are kept in a chest in the Monastery of Bû Bishôî\(^3\) (sic) in the plain of Shîbêt, and are visited even down to our time." But otherwise Marutha is quite elusive, and up to the present his father Habbib has not been identified among known Egyptian officials.

5. The Previous History of the Monastery Purchased by Marutha

The first note relating to the purchase assures us that the monastery was bought from the Coptic patriarch. At once the interesting question arises: which monastery was this? It was not one of the four great monasteries, nor, of course, was it either the Monastery of Kamê or of Moses. By process of exhaustion we are brought to the conclusion that it was one of those monasteries which were founded in the sixth century at the time of conflict between the Julianists and the Severians and which we have distinguished as "duplicative" or Theotokos monasteries.

This attains practical certainty as soon as we inquire what was the full and official name of the Syrian Monastery. In the Coptic Church lists it is called Ṭeōcokos mara πισερνος (sic),\(^4\) but colophons and librarians' notes in volumes from the Syrian Monastery are far

---

2 Shumustâ or Sumustâ, in the province of Beni Suêf, where Abû Sâlih (Churches and Monasteries of Egypt, fol. 90 b) records a Church of Abû Harûdeh the Martyr. Another Church of Maruta is mentioned by Makrizi at Ishmîn (in Wüstenfeld, op. cit., ch. viii, § 38). Both these may well have been of Syrian origin, but the dedication was probably to the IV century Maruta (for whom see Socrates, H.E.), or to the VII century Metropolitan of Tekrit (for whom see Bar-Hebraeus, Chron. ecb., II, 26; ed. Abbeoos and Lamy, III, col. 120 f.).
3 Rather the Monastery of the Theotokos of Abû Bishôî, i.e., the Syrian Monastery, where relics of Marutha were preserved at the time of Sommini's visit. But the relics of S. Marutha of Tekrit were also brought to Scetis (see p. 426), and it may be that Makrizi is confusing the two.
4 Amélineau, Geographie, p. 581. (The ma is probably due to transliteration from the Arabic.) The spelling with e is noteworthy; for in mediaeval Arabic documents the ordinary name of the monastery is invariably written اربيل, and not البرياني, the modern spelling according to Butler (Ancient Coptic Churches, I, p. 316, note) in his list of churches. Somers Clarke (Christian Antiquities, p. 202) gives the form البرياني but transliterates Souriáni. [Horner] (Coptic Version of the New Testament, III, p. xviii) gives "Sirian."
more illuminating as giving something like the full legal title. About the middle of the ninth century Bar 'Idai, the Abbot, refers to the monastery as “The House of the Mother of God of the Syrians of Abba Bishōi that is in the desert of Scetis.”¹ This title long persisted, as the following librarian's note in an Arabic ms. in the Vatican showsː “Our father Cyriacus the Metropolitan (i.e., Abbot of the Syrian Monastery) brought this blessed book to the Monastery and assigned it by sure and perpetual bequest to the Convent of Our Lady the Virgin, mistress of the Monastery of Abba Bishōi, which is called that of the Syrian Fathers.” A Syriac codex, now in the British Museum,⁸ states that: “This book was given to the Monastery of the Mother of God of the Syrians of Abba Bishōi”; while a second⁴ refers to the convent as “the holy Monastery of the Mother of God in the domain of Abba Bishōi” (Pl. V, b).

These formal recitations of the title of the Syrian Monastery make it clear that before the convent was sold to Marutha it was the Theotokos of Abba Bishōi, founded in the Gaianite Period and restored, together with the parent monastery, by Benjamin I. Miscellaneous evidence also shows that the monastery was traditionally connected with Abba Bishōi. It was during his visit to this saint that Ephraem Syrus left his staff outside the cell door, where it took root and grew up into the great tamarind tree⁶ which still flourishes, not in the Monastery of Bishōi, but in that of the Syrians.⁹ J. S. Assemani⁷ records that early in the eighteenth century he saw in the Syrian Monastery the dwelling place of Bishōi a narrow cell, known as the “Oratory” or the “Place of the Cross.” This cell, or sanctuary, still exists.⁸ It was, moreover, in the Syrian Monastery again that Benjamin II (in 1330) visited “the place where God appeared to our holy father Anba Bishōi.”¹⁰ This cell, or oratory, is still shown at the Syrian Monastery.

Before we leave this matter it is necessary to point out a serious error which has been widely accepted. Wilkinson¹⁰ has put it on record that “Dayr Suriāni was built by one Hrones, a holy personage, whose tree is still seen about a couple of miles to the southward, near the ruins of two other convents.” This account was copied by Cureton,¹¹ and from him by the writer of the article, “Nitria,” in the Dictionary of Christian Biography. Though the same story is current at the present day among the monks of Dër es Suriān, it is entirely unfounded; Hrones is but a clipped form of Yuhannes,¹² who is none other than John

¹ Wright, Cat. Syr. MSS. in B.M., No. ccxxiii; cf. Nos. xvii and ccxx.
² Cod. Vat. Arab., No. lxxvii (Mai, S.F.N.C., iv, ii, p. 149).
³ Wright, op. cit., No. xxii.
⁴ Id., No. cclxxiv, p. 305.
⁵ See Pl. LXXIV b in A.A.C.M.
⁶ See Thévenot, Voyages, ii, ch. lxxi. The legend is first (?) found in this work. Yet it must be far older than the XVII century. No doubt it was formulated by the Syrian monks to connect the great Syrian Father with their monastery and in some sort to vindicate their own claim to a place in the desert.
⁷ B.O., i, p. 41, note 1.
⁸ See A.A.C.M., iv, iii, § 4.
⁹ The Book of the Chrism, B.N., Fonds arabe, No. 100, fol. 53 b.
¹⁰ Modern Egypt and Thebes, i, pp. 391 f.
¹² Cf. Der Abu Hennys—the Monastery of S. John—at Antinoë.
THE ORIGIN AND EARLY HISTORY OF THE SYRIAN MONASTERY

the Little, and the tree is the famous Tree of Obedience which existed in the seventeenth century, and still exists to-day (Pl. V, a).

6. Probable Date of the Purchase

The date of Marutha's purchase is a matter of the greatest importance on which we have not touched as yet. The documents cited in previous sections offer no clue which can help to date the event. The Coptic patriarch who sold the monastery is not named, or his name is illegible; and Habbib, the father (?) of Marutha, has yet to be traced. We are driven, therefore, to turn to outside sources.

Makrizi in a well-known passage thus notices the monastery: "A monastery opposite to that of Bû Bishóí formerly belonged to the Jacobites, but for three hundred years has been in the possession of Syrian monks, and is now in their hands." Makrizi died in 1442. Supposing he made his statement about 1435, the figure he gives would make the acquisition in the régime of Bahram, a period of Armenian ascendancy during which Armenians and Syrians received special consideration in Egypt. Nevertheless, his date is clearly wrong; for the monastery was definitely Syrian in the first half of the ninth century. Either the topographer has copied the remark from an earlier author without altering the figure to correspond with his own age, or he is quoting a contemporary opinion which did not agree with that of the Syrian monks. Probably this opinion was held by the Copts, who seem to have aimed at the recovery of the monastery. That the Syrian story of the purchase of the monastery is ignored in Makrizi's statement, gives color to this explanation. But in either case Makrizi's date is useless.

In modern times Butler has suggested that the monastery originated early in the seventh century "when so much of Syrian life and learning was removed to Egypt under stress of the Persian wars." But this suggestion is based on the erroneous assumption that the screens in the church of the Syrian Monastery date from the seventh and eighth centuries; since these are now known to have been set up in the tenth century, Butler's suggestion is no more than a conjecture. More recently H.R.H. Prince John George of Saxony was informed by the abbot of the monastery that an inscription recorded the completion of the church in 671—a date which the prince accepts without giving particulars as to the inscription.

1 The monks of the present day, however, identify their alleged founder with John Kamé. In either case the story is intended to substantiate a Coptic (as opposed to a Syrian) origin of the monastery.
2 See Thévenot, loc. cit.
4 When Gregory Behnam (in the third note relating to the purchase) insists that the monastery was "truly theirs" (i.e., Syrian), he obliquely protests against this encroachment on Syrian rights. A note in a Syriac codex (Wright, Cat. Syr. M.SS. in B.M., No. dcxcv) from the Syrian Monastery complains that the Monastery of Paul, near that of S. Antony by the Red Sea, had been occupied by the Copts and the lawful Syrian owners driven out: "but there is none to examine them and release it from their hands." Moreover, in the early XVI century an intrusive Egyptian element appears at the Syrian Monastery and ultimately gains complete possession over it: see pp. 414 f.
5 Arab Conquest of Egypt, p. 95.
6 Die Fresken an Deir es Sarjáni (Oriens Christianus, N.S., III, 1913, p. 114). I suspect that this inscription is no other than the memorial of John Kamé.
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

If Marutha gathered together the Syrian monks "dispersed in the convents," he must have done so either during the restoration period, or at some time antecedent to the fifth sack of Scetis. The former may be ruled out at once; for it is not credible that Marutha would have bought a heap of ruins for so considerable a sum as twelve thousand dinars (say thirty thousand dollars)\(^1\); and the numerous book notes of this time do not mention Marutha or his purchase, though they have something to say of Matthew and Abraham and their work (of restoration). Consequently it is probable, and highly probable, that Marutha lived and died before the fifth sack of Scetis; and this will satisfactorily explain the remarkable fact that though among the Syrians books were a very common form of gift, and though the presentation was regularly recorded, no single book given to the Syrian Monastery by Marutha is known to exist. Unless we are prepared to maintain that Marutha was most exceptional and gave no books to the monastery, we must admit that the volumes with which the purchaser equipped the newly acquired convent\(^2\) perished in the flames when Wâdi Habib was ravaged early in the ninth century.

If the beginning of the ninth century marks the end of the period to which Marutha must be assigned, is it possible to determine its beginning? Certainly he is later than the close of the sixth century where the last reference is made to the "Four Monasteries"\(^4\); almost certainly he is later than the age of Benjamin I who restored the Monasteries of Bishôi and of the Theotokos of Bishôi (not yet qualified as Syrian).\(^4\) On general grounds then, Marutha must be regarded as belonging to the Arab Period.

There remains a single clue which may give us a probable terminus a quo. The monastery bought by Marutha was one of the Theotokos monasteries, one of a class which had a raison d'être only so long as the difference between Gaianites and Theodosians remained. Now we have already seen that in 710 the ingenious John, Bishop of Sâ, effected the "conversion" of the Gaianites in Wâdi Habib.\(^5\) As a result, Theodosians and ex-Gaiianites could communicate together once more, and the former presumably returned to the parent monasteries from which their predecessors had been ejected by the heretics one hundred and seventy years before. If this was the case, the "churches and towers" and whatever else went to make up a Theotokos monastery were left empty\(^6\) and the sale of one of them on excellent terms was a most natural proceeding. In short, while we have at present too little positive evidence for absolute proof, general circumstances point to 710, or the years immediately following, as the date of Marutha’s purchase and consequently of the beginning of the Syrian Monastery.

---

1 Though doubtless certain endowments were included in the purchase.
2 One of the first requisites of a new monastery was a set of copies of the Scriptures and of liturgical books for the Church service.
3 These included the four "duplicate" monasteries, but clearly no one of them had yet developed into a separate unit.
4 See p. 269. Benjamin would doubtless be too occupied with Egyptian monasteries to spend time on a foreign convent.
5 See p. 289.
6 In the more populous monasteries where the extra accommodation was needed, the Theotokos monasteries were presumably retained. At any rate, the Theotokos of Baramûs and of John the Little continued to exist down to Makrizi's time.
THE ORIGIN AND EARLY HISTORY OF THE SYRIAN MONASTERY

7. Previous History of the Syrians in Scetis

This chapter may be concluded with a summary of what is known concerning the Syrians in Scetis previous to the purchase of the Syrian Monastery. Owing to the geographical relation between Syria and Egypt, natives of the former are likely to have found their way to Scetis even in the fourth century. "Sarapion," indeed, asserts that disciples came to Macarius from Syria and Palestine, as well as from other quarters of the globe.¹ There is also reason to believe that the story of two historical Syrian saints has been incorporated in the developed legend of Maximus and Domitius.² Two other disciples of Macarius, Eunapius and Andrew, are said to have been Syrians and natives of Lydda.³

It is possible that Cyprian of Beth Magusha,⁴ who visited Egypt and "lived in the deserts of Egypt and Scete for forty years," was settled there in the fifth century.⁵ But it is not until the sixth century that we get unmistakable evidence of a Syrian element in the monastic population of Scetis. John Moschus⁶ records his meeting with a Syrian monk, Marcellus of Apamea, who had lived in Scetis for thirty-seven years prior to its devastation in the time of Damian, and who must therefore have settled there about 538. Andronicus also, a Syrian of Antioch, whose story figures in the cycle of anecdotes relating to Abba Daniel, lived for twelve years in Scetis.⁷ And Thomas of Mârqa,⁸ after naming certain authors who had recorded the life of Abraham of Kashkar (born 502, died about 600) writes: "now these writers say that he went to the desert of Eskîtê, where he received and took upon himself the order of the ascetic life. Afterwards (? after the fourth sack of Scetis)...he came and dwelt in a secret cave on Mount Izlâ." A Syriac ms. at Berlin⁹ also mentions a certain John of Kashkar who "journeyed to the desert of Scete where he saw Onesimus"; but the date of this monk is obscure (as is Onesimus the saint, whom he visited), unless indeed he is John the disciple of Abraham of Kashkar. More important still, the Patriarch Damian, himself, who, according to John of Ephesus,¹⁰ was a Syrian, was a monk in the Monastery of John the Little in Wádi Habîb.¹¹

For linguistic and other reasons, it is likely that Syrian monks settling in Scetis would gravitate towards one community rather than live scattered among strangers and there is positive evidence that already in the sixth century there was in Scetis a definite group of Syrian monks. A note in a Syriac codex at the Vatican¹² reads as follows: "This book was bought in the month Thamuz (July) on the thirtieth day, in the year of the Greeks 887 (576 A.D.), for the Monastery of Scetis¹³ in the days of the most religious Mar Theodore

---

THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

A Syrian community in Scetis in 376 A.D.

The VII century

... the Abbot, by the gift of God and his (sc. Theodore’s) own money. This book he bought together with others for the study, reading and spiritual progress of all those who shall open it. May God, for whose name’s sake he took pains to lay up this treasure in his own Monastery, reward him....” It is beyond doubt that Theodore himself was a Syrian and that the monks of his “monastery” were mostly if not entirely Syrians, since he was at pains to provide Syriac books. Here, then, we have a “monastery” of Syrians existing not long after the middle of the sixth century. This does not upset our conclusion that the Syrian Monastery was founded in the eighth century. The foundation of the Syrian Monastery in the sixth century is ruled out by the consistent allusions at this very period to the “Four Monasteries.” Doubtless the “monastery” of Theodore was a collateral ancestor of the Syrian Monastery (which seems to have inherited Theodore’s books), but by the term we are to understand no more than a “cell” or mansbūbe—a fraction of one of the four laurae or monasteries proper. Whether this “cell” was even at this period a part of the Monastery of Bishōi, or of another, we cannot tell; but it must be emphasized that, valuable though this note is as proving the existence of a community of Syrians in the sixth century, it must not be taken to imply that an independent Syrian Monastery was already in being. Theodore’s “monastery” was certainly blotted out in the fourth sack of Scetis, though one of his books somehow escaped destruction.

It is unfortunate that in the seventh century our sources narrow sharply in their range, and we hear very little of Syrian monks in Scetis—and this though, as Butler observes, there was during this period a great influx of Syrians into Egypt. Possibly the deplorable condition of the Wādi ‘n Natrūn after the fourth sack of Scetis and during the Heraclian Persecution deterred Syrian monks from settling there. Yet it is to this time that two Syrians connected with Scetis are to be referred. First, Rabban Hormizd of Shiraz (whom Budge assigns to the second half of the sixth and first half of the seventh century), having resolved at the age of twenty to become a monk, determined to go to Jerusalem and afterwards to retire to the desert of Scetis to live with the ascetic fathers there. Unfortunately he was stopped by “supernatural agency” when he had reached Mūsul. Secondly,

1 Assemani: “in suo Monasterio.”
2 Can he be identical with that Theodore whom Longinus and two other bishops wished to set up as patriarch in opposition to Peter IV in 367 a.d.? John of Ephesus (H.E., trans. Payne Smith, iv, 10) writes: “and on joining him (Longinus), they (the two bishops) travelled in his company to the desert of the hermits beyond the blessed Mar Menas, to a place called Rhamnis; and they found the abbot there to be an excellent man named Theodore, by birth a Syrian; and to him they addressed themselves, begging him...to consent to be made pope of Alexandria.” Schönfelder renders: “kamen sie mit einander in die Wuste der Einsiedler tiefer hinein als (das Kloster) des seligen Herrn Mennas, das Rammin heisset, und trafene einen Archimandriten daselbst, ein tugendhaften Mann Namens Theodoros,” etc.
3 Always assuming that Assemani (loc. cit.) has correctly transcribed this note. This point deserves to be verified.
4 See pp. 229, 248, and 249.
5 The fact that Damian was a monk of the Monastery of Johns suggests that the cell was possibly a part of that convent.
6 Arab Conquest of Egypt, pp. 94f. The patriarch, Simon I of Alexandria (688–700), was, according to Abū Sāliḥ (Churches and Monasteries of Egypt, fol. 33 a), a Syrian—a monk of El Zajāj or Enaton. This bears eloquent testimony to the strength of Syrian influence at this period.
7 See Thomas of Mārga, Book of Governors, ed. Budge, 1, p. clvii.
8 Can the real reason have been that on reaching Mūsul, Hormizd learnt of the sack of Scetis in 575? It must be remembered, however, that Hormizd’s period is conjectural.
according to Michael the Syrian, a monk of Scetis attained to the dignity of Patriarch of Antioch: "Theodorus of the desert of Scetis. He was called from the Monastery of Qennesre. Abraham, Metropolitan of Emesa, laid hands on him. He held the patriarchate for eighteen years" (from 649 to 667). Nor must we forget that it was probably in the first half of the seventh century (presumably after the Arab Conquest) that Anan Isho, compiler of the Syriac Book of Paradise, visited Scetis, as we learn from the following passage in Thomas of Mârga’s Book of Governors: “Now Abba Anan Isho having lived the life of an ascetic with all diligence...determined to go and worship in Jerusalem. And from there he went to the desert of Scete, where he learned concerning all the manner of the lives of the ascetic fathers, whose histories and questions are written in books, and concerning their dwellings and the places in which they lived.”

Though from the middle of the seventh to the beginning of the eighth century we hear nothing of Syrian monks in Scetis, we may be sure that there were Syrian monks there all through that period. Our ignorance is to be attributed partly to the failure of Greek authors as a source of information—a natural consequence of the Arab Conquest—and partly to the sack of Scetis in 817, which must have resulted in the destruction of practically all books accumulated by earlier generations of Syrians. Had these come down to us, the notes inscribed in them would doubtless have proved a rich mine of information.

The first note recording the purchase of the Syrian Monastery, rich as it is in information of every kind, is not least valuable for the account it gives of the Syrian monks in the eighth century. They had, as they sadly remarked, no convent, but lived dispersed among the monasteries. There may, indeed, have been a little group within each monastery forming a “cell” such as that over which the sixth-century Theodore presided, but we hear nothing of such an arrangement, if it actually existed.

Marutha deserves, therefore, a high place among the worthies of Scetis. To have established a national monastery in the desert where his scattered countrymen could live and worship according to their own usages and customs was much; but indirectly Marutha has benefited the modern world, for to him as founder of the Syrian Monastery we owe indirectly the wealth of Syriac literature which Europe has “conveyed” to itself, and the remarkable works of art which the monastery still retains.

1 Chron., Appendix, iii (ed. Chabot, iii, p. 449).
2 Possibly Theodore left Scetis at the time of the Heraclian Persecution. Bar-Hebræus (Chron. zccl., ed. Abbéloos and Lamy, i, col. 280 f.) states that Theodore went to Qennesre from Scetis, but does not say for what reason.
4 When Anan Isho returned from Egypt to Mt. Izlá, he seems to have found Narsai the Abbot already expelled: see Thomas of Mârga, Book of Governors, ed. cit., ii, p. 175.
5 Narsai became Abbot after 628: see loc. cit., note 5. On Anan Isho’s Paradise see further Thomas of Mârga’s Book of Governors, ed. cit., ii, pp. 189 f. It contained two parts, the histories of the fathers by Palladius and Jerome, and the questions and narratives of the fathers which he himself had collected. The work has been edited with a translation by Dr. Wallis Budge: The Book of Paradise, London, 1904, and the translation alone has since been issued separately: The Paradise or Garden of the Holy Fathers, London, 1907.
6 Ed. cit., ii, ch. xi, p. 175.
CHAPTER X
THE AGE OF SHENÛDEH I

1. The First Patriarchal Burial in the Monastery of Saint Macarius

The sixteen years (850–866) with which our period concludes are chiefly noteworthy for the circumstances which led up to the fortification of the Monastery of Saint Macarius and the acceleration of the change to quasi-coenobitic life, but other events of these years are by no means unimportant.

Michael II, described as “priest of the coenobium of the holy father John” (the Little), succeeded Joseph in 850 and died in 851 or 852 while on the customary patriarchal visit to Wâdi Habîb. The History of the Patriarchs thus records his end: “So when the days of the Fast arrived, the father Michael turned his steps to the holy desert, that he might keep the feast of Easter according to the custom of the fathers and patriarchs....And he went to his rest on the twenty-second of Barmûde (April 17) in the year 567 of the pure Martyrs....And they placed his body in the Church of Saint Macarius.”

The accident of the death of Michael in Wâdi Habîb introduced a custom which marks the growing ecclesiastical pretensions of the Monastery of Saint Macarius. As El Macinus remarks, “this was the first patriarch who was buried in that monastery,” and the interment of patriarchs in the desert church soon grew to be a regular custom. Even patriarchs long since dead seem to have been “translated” to the monastery. Thus the Ethiopic Synaxarium notes that Abî thirtieth is the day of the “Translation of the body of the Patriarch Timothy from Misr to the Monastery of Saint Macarius in Scetis.” In short, the monastery now claims an almost complete monopoly in the patriarchate.

2 B.N., Fonds arabe, No. 302, p. 1. According to the Coptic Calendar published by Malan (Calendar of the Coptic Church, p. 28), “this monk was made a saint.”
4 In the Calendar of Abû’l Barakât he is distinguished as “the Confessor,” and so is to be identified with Timothy Aelurus (458–480 A.D.).
2. Signs and Wonders at the Monastery of Saint Macarius

Michael was succeeded by Cosmas (851–859), who had been a deacon in the Monastery of Saint Macarius.¹ It is recorded that under this patriarch, “in the year 569 of the Martyrs (853 A.D.)” the following dread sign was manifested. All the monks, namely, who dwelt in the Monastery of Saint Macarius beheld the picture of the merciful Lord Christ in the Church of Saint Severus upon the Rock, with the side open, and blood flowing from it²... for (the Lord) manifested many miracles in this year, in that the eyes of all the pictures in the Wādī Hablb, in the Monastery of Saint Macarius and in the dwelling-houses, frequently shed tears like fountains of water.”³ These signs and wonders betokened, of course, a time of misfortune with which we shall deal below; for the present it is interesting to note the reference to the “Church of Saint Severus upon the Rock” which is here mentioned for the first and last time. Its whereabouts is unknown.

3. The Monasteries and Taxation

Cosmas was followed by Shenûdeh, the oeconomus of the Monastery of Saint Macarius. The circumstances of his election are thus related in the History of the Patriarchs⁴: “Now there was at that time at the Church of... Saint Macarius a steward named Shenûdeh... whose building of the church in the Monastery of Saint Macarius and other churches⁵ we have before described. He at this time (859) had come to visit Abraham the magistrate with reference to the taxes upon the church buildings... Then... he (Shenûdeh) departed in haste for the desert on the twenty-seventh night of Kīhak, that he might be in time for the feast of the glorious Nativity at his own Church.” It was on the following day that he was elected patriarch.

The new patriarch was a man of energy and resolution. In his first Festal letter (860), he had insisted on the doctrine that Christ suffered on the Cross in His twofold Nature, and thereby aroused opposition on the part of the bishops and clergy near Bulyanâ who held the Theopaschite doctrine that it was the Divine Nature in Christ that suffered. Shenûdeh took great pains to convert these erroneous teachers, but having done so, made the most of his victory by forcing them to recant publicly. The importance of the Monastery of Saint Macarius is well illustrated by the fact that it was chosen as the scene of the ceremony. “Then,” we read, “the Patriarch Shenûdeh did a good deed...; for he caused those bishops of Upper Egypt to stand in the midst of the congregation of the holy monks

² The phenomenon is not a rare one, being due to the Bacillus prodigious which in a warm and damp atmosphere flourishes and produces a bloodlike secretion. Paste, flour, and starchy substances are particularly favorable to its growth—hence the recorded instances of the “Bleeding Host.” A bleeding picture of the Heart of Jesus at Aix-la-Chapelle is chronicled in the Daily Telegraph of London of June 14, 1920.
⁴ ms. cit., p. 12.
⁵ i.e., the other monasteries in the desert. Unfortunately this account, though promised, is nowhere given save in the most general terms.
in the Church of Saint Macarius on the Sunday of holy Easter; and they made prostrations before the assembly, begging...the fathers to pray for them, and asking their pardon for the temptations into which Satan had led them.”

In matters other than spiritual the new patriarch had a harder task. We have already seen some of the relations between the monks of Wādi Habīb and the Arab finance officials, and have now to record that which was portended by the above-mentioned signs occurring in the Wādi Habīb in the patriarchate of Cosmas.

About 856 Ahmed Mohammed el Mudebbir arrived in Egypt as finance minister. Losing no time, this official “sent his officers to the monasteries in every place and counted the monks, and demanded of them the poll-tax, and the tax upon the rushes that grow in the marshes, and upon the palms and fruit trees planted in the gardens of their houses. So when this bitter tidings was brought to Abba Shenûdeh...he wept bitter tears, saying: ‘O holy mountain, O valley of Habīb...how has Satan raised up against thee this persecution which has fallen upon the saints who dwell within thee.’”

Less formal exactions followed. Our chronicle continues: “and the tyrant was planning what he could do to the Seven Monasteries,’ and to the patriarch and bishops. So...he sent his representatives to every place; and they visited the priests in charge of the churches, and made them produce the church furniture...that it might be carried away to the governor...Thus it was in these holy Monasteries; for the monks were forced to pay the taxes.” But this spoliating of church property was checked by the Caliph El Musta’in (862–866), who ratified a decree, approved, but not signed, by his predecessor, directing that all ecclesiastical and monastic property, church vessels and other goods should be restored, and that ruined churches should be rebuilt.

Such redress, however, was only temporary and the decree of El Musta’in was valueless after his deposition in 866. The financial burdens imposed on the monks were now so heavy as to discourage monastic life. In the words of the History of the Patriarchs: “Ibn el Mudebbir did not cease from his evil deeds, like Pharaoh in his time, especially against the monks in the desert, and continued to demand of them more than they could pay, so that none of them could endure it; and so they fell into the hands of tender women, and married, and quitted the heavenly Jerusalem, which is the desert of Saint Macarius.”

---

1 Hist. Patr., ms. cit., p. 12.
2 See pp. 288 ff.
3 See Lane-Poole, History of Egypt in the Middle Ages, p. 57. Makrizi dates his appointment after 298 a.h. (864–865 A.D.). Ibn el Mudebbir also placed under government control the working of natron—a step which may also have affected the monastic finances: see Makrizi, Kbitat, Part I, ch. 39, trans. Bourriant, p. 298.
4 These and the palm trees supplied the monks with material for basket and mat making. Sonnini (Travels, trans. Hunter, II, p. 171) notes that “the lakes of the desert of Nitria produce likewise a large quantity of reeds which form a considerable article of trade. The Egyptians gather them to make mats with their leaves, and pipistems with their stalks.” See Wilkinson, Modern Egypt and Thebes, I, p. 396.
6 Ib.
7 Sc. those of Macarius, John the Little, Bishōb, Baramūs, the Syrians, John Kamē, and Abba Moses.
8 Hist. Patr., ms. cit., p. 28.
9 Id., p. 38.
consequent depletion of the monasteries only ceased when a new and less oppressive finance minister was appointed\(^1\); for “God put it into his heart to do good to the monks, and especially he freed them from the poll-tax... And they returned to their monasteries in haste with joyful hearts, to the place of spiritual repasts.”\(^2\)

This exemption of the monks from taxation was due to a special appeal made to the Caliph, which is thus related\(^3\): “And a holy monk journeyed to the capital of the Empire (Bagdad)\(^4\) and prayed certain Christians... to help him in certain desires of his. And the caliph was afraid on account of the poll-tax and land-tax of the monks... And he wrote for the monk a decree. This decree the monk brought to Egypt, so that none of the monks was required to pay the poll-tax... And he (the Caliph) alleged proofs before all men from the Koran,\(^5\) that they who leave the world and dwell among the mountains must not be forced to pay either land-tax or poll-tax.” So ended, for a time, the financial troubles of the monasteries.

4. Fresh Incursions of the Barbarians

For half a century after the fifth sack of Scetis no reference is made to any trouble caused by the barbarians of the western deserts. After the experience of centuries, another sharp lesson was needed to teach the Copts that the monasteries of Wâdi Habîb could never be secure until they were adequately fortified. How it was taught is thus graphically related in the History of the Patriarchs\(^6\):

“In the eighth year of the patriarchate of Abba Shenûdeh (866), when the days of the blessed Fast drew near, he purposed going into the holy desert of Wâdi Habîb to pass the blessed Fast and the holy festival of Easter there. Then some of the faithful counselled him not to undertake the journey, through fear of the marauding Arabs, for it was the season at which they come down from Upper Egypt to the Delta after putting their horses and camels out to grass... But the holy Father said in his heart: ‘If I do as they advise, I shall cause Satan to rejoice because I shall be prevented from visiting the holy places, and the laity will hold back... and will lose the benedictions of the Saints.’ So he prayed to God for help, and made his way to the Wâdi.

“Now the Arabs knew the season at which the pilgrims assembled there, and accordingly they came from Upper Egypt in secret and took possession of the Church of Saint Macarius and of the fortified buildings (? the towers), and carried off all the furniture, food and other things that they contained. On the first day of Barmûdeh\(^7\) they made the round of the

---

1 Ibn el Mudebbir was superseded in 872 A.D.: see Lane-Poole, History of Egypt in the Middle Ages, p. 63.
3 Ib.
4 This is of course distinct from the mission of Moses of Nisibis undertaken for the same purpose in the X century; but the “holy monk” was probably selected from the Syrian Monastery.
5 IX, 29. Mohammed himself issued a decree protecting Christian churches, monasteries, and hermitages, and exempting monks from “all requisitions and all burdensome obligations”: see P.D., xiii, p. 611.
6 MS. cit., pp. 31-33; Synax., ed. cit., pp. 919, 938.
monasteries, robbing all the inmates and the visitors, and driving most of them out at the point of the sword. . . . Then the bishops and monks came together to him weeping and saying: ‘it was for thy sake that we remained here. We desire that thou hinder us not from departing lest we die by the hands of these miscreants.’ Now this was the Friday in Holy Week. . . . He answered: ‘Pardon me, my holy Fathers, we will not quit this place until we have finished celebrating the Feast of Easter, even if my blood is to be shed.’ Then when the monks saw his valor and courage, they envied his valor, and took heart and refused to allow Satan to vanquish them. And the Arabs began . . . to harass all the monks . . . For they drew their swords and stood on the rocks to the east of the church, and then they took any clothing that they found on the people, and if a man resisted, they wounded him with the sword. This was on the Thursday in Holy Week, the ninth of Barmûdeh. Those who escaped entered the church and began to shout and weep, saying: ‘Help us, our Father, these Arabs have assaulted us!’ Then when this holy man saw the distress of the people, he rose up and took in his hand his staff with the figure of the cross upon it, and went out to meet the Arabs, saying: ‘It is good for me that I should die with the people of God; or perchance, when they see me, they will refrain from their violence . . . .’ And he took courage in Christ, and went out to meet those miscreant Arabs. But by God’s mercy they had gone back and were not to be seen again on that day. . . . Now when the faithful officer Stephen son of Severus . . . heard of the calamity, he arose in haste and came to the monasteries, and met the father and the monks and the bishops . . . and put himself at their disposal, saying to the father: ‘I will devote myself to thee and to the Christian people until you have escaped from among these rebels.’

“When the father saw the timidity of the pilgrims, and that they were meditating flight, being in terror of the Arabs who surrounded them and who purposed seizing and killing them with the edge of the sword, he continued to encourage and comfort them. . . . So he bade them assemble all the pilgrims in the church on Sunday, that he might communicate them of the Holy Mysteries by night before dawn. . . . Then he arose at midnight and the bishops and monks and laity came together to him, and he began to celebrate the liturgy. . . . And they communicated of the Holy Mysteries before Easter, while the father wept over the desertion of the wilderness by the monks. Then he dismissed the pilgrims. . . . Thus by his prayers . . . God delivered the Christians from the hands of the Arabs that day. But he ceased not to weep when he saw the monks passing over to the land of the Delta in fear of the marauder, so that very few were left in the monasteries.”

This vivid picture of the Wādi Habīb at a time of festival and also of general alarm is finished with a significant touch. In anticipation, no doubt, of a fresh devastation of the

1 There are no rocks east of the church, and the northeast escarpment is fully a mile distant. There is, however, a low rocky ridge to the west and northwest.

THE AGE OF SHENÛDEH

The monks rapidly began to steal away to the Delta for safety. And indeed the position became more and more dangerous. “At that time,” the History of the Patriarchs records, “there arose a Muslim of the tribe of El Madlajeh, who inhabited Alexandria, with a large band of fighting men... And when the Arabs of the desert heard of him, they joined him in large numbers, and a body of working men was added to them, until they formed a large army... When they had grown powerful (they took) into their hands... all the buildings belonging to the Church of the martyr Saint Menas of Maryût and Mahallet Batreh, and likewise the buildings belonging to the Church of the martyr Saint Macarius.”

Presumably the event just described was the ‘Alide rising which took place in 869. Its result, as the History of the Patriarchs shows, was to place the monasteries in extreme peril: “the Arabs of the desert did not cease pillaging the cells of the monks and the monasteries, because their wives and their men settled there in the valley. So the monks took refuge in the keeps and in the sanctuaries, and built up the doorways of their dwellings. But the Arabs kept watch upon them till the time came for them to issue forth to draw water, and then they slew some of them, and robbed others of their garments that they had upon them, and of the water-skins in which they carried the water. And the monks continued to weep and to pray the Lord Christ to save them, and were exposed to heat and cold and continual terror.

“And the father (Shenûdeh) had an abundance of mourning and tears for the holy desert of Saint Macarius, and for the unceasing praises of God which had resounded there; for the monks were like the Angels who cease not from singing praises. But that desert had now been changed into a dwelling of assassins and marauders, and the saints who lived there had taken refuge wherever they could, and the good brethren, those shining lights, had been dispersed.”

5. Inclosure of the Monastery of Saint Macarius

The weakness was in the inadequacy of the safeguards with which the monasteries were provided. So long as a passing raid was all that was to be feared, the “towers of refuge” gave tolerable security to at least a proportion of the monks. But if, as in the present case, a blockade was established, surrender was inevitable, since there was no water supply. In some such light the case must have presented itself to the patriarch, and the remedy was obvious. As in the Pachomian monasteries of Upper Egypt or in Justinian’s Monastery on Mount Sinai, the churches, storehouses, and a water supply must be all inclosed in a ring-wall strong enough to be defended against attack.

---

1 See Lane-Poole, History of Egypt in the Middle Ages, p. 27.
2 Presumably in Wâdi Habib, though Macarius of Scetis was not a martyr; and the monks held the “churches and towers” at any rate. Perhaps “Mercurius” should be read.
3 See Lane-Poole, History of Egypt in the Middle Ages, p. 61.
4 Ms. cit., p. 35.
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

Shenûdeh proceeded with characteristic energy: “And in his great care for the holy desert,” writes his biographer,1 “the patriarch raised up at the Church of Saint Macarius an excellent monument; for remembering what God had done to the monks and to the church, he resolved to build a fortified wall round the principal2 church. This he did in order that...it might become an impregnable cave and fortress for the Christians. And he collected much stone, and pushed on the work until it was finished with its towers3; and he made in it chambers and sleeping-places in the shortest space of time, for he even labored among the workmen as one of them; and as he had been accustomed to work when he was steward of the holy monastery, so he did in the completion of this wall.” The wall inclosing the monastery to-day is largely that raised by Shenûdeh in the manner described.

Immensely important as this step is, its immediate results may possibly be overestimated. The passage quoted above proves that Shenûdeh’s aim was not to confine the monks within a fortified monastery, but to give them an adequate citadel to which they could flee and where they could hold out indefinitely in times of danger. Consequently, it must not be assumed that from this time onwards the monks dwelt within a limited area defined by four walls. In the eleventh century there were still seven hundred monks belonging to the monastery, and in the ninth century they numbered, probably, little short of a thousand; and it is not credible that such a host can have lived year in, year out, herded in the relatively small space covered by the existing monastery.4 We know in fact that for some five centuries after this date a number of cells “dependent upon the Monastery of Saint Macarius” continued to exist,5 showing that Shenûdeh did not effect a synoecium. It was with the decisive decline of monasticism in the second half of the fourteenth century6 that “dependent cells” were finally abandoned and the remaining monks were concentrated in the “fortress” of which the existing monastery is a part.

But when all allowance has been made, it must be recognized that from henceforth the monastery has a new and definite center of gravity. Probably from the first a certain number of monks dwelt permanently within the new inclosure which is to be identified with the “kastâlleh” mentioned in certain mediaeval documents.7 Henceforward the prevailing tendency in the monasteries becomes definitely centripetal.

We hear nothing of the remaining monasteries during this period, and nothing of their fortification; but the state of the “library-list” at the Syrian Monastery reflects the troubled conditions of the period.8 At what date were this and the other monasteries fortified? It is stated that Kamé built his monastery (before 859) with “high walls and strong towers”9; it is quite possible, therefore, that some of the smaller monasteries

1 Hist. Patr., ms. cit., pp. 39-40.  2 Literally “catholic,” i.e., archiepiscopal.  3 Presumably no more than the kâsr, or keep (a feature of every Coptic monastery), is meant.  4 Even though this represents only a half of Shenûdeh’s original inclosure: see A.A.C.M., xi, iii, § 1.  5 See p. 395.  6 See p. 400.  7 B.N., Fonds arabe, No. 100, fol. 51, and passim.  8 See Excursus, § 2.  9 See p. 306.
had anticipated the Monastery of Saint Macarius and were already fortified. The *Life of Kamē* is not contemporary and is possibly anachronistic in this detail; but it is certain that the Monastery of Kamē was fortified before 966, and the same is doubtless true of all the others. It is safest, then, to assume that they quickly followed the example set by the premier monastery and were walled in in the last quarter of the ninth century.

6. *Close of the Period*

This eventful period closes with an incident which throws a sinister light upon the character of monasticism at this epoch and is full of omen for the future. A certain Theodore, a monk of the Monastery of Saint John, having applied for ordination, was denied access to the archbishop, who was suffering severely from gout. Enraged at the supposed slight, Theodore wrote to the governor alleging that the patriarch “bewitches certain of the Muslims that he may make them enter the desert and baptize them and settle them in his religion.” He proposed that he himself should be dispatched into the desert with an escort to bring back certain of the supposed renegades. Having received a commission, the monk proceeded to the Wâdi Habîb, where he seized another monk of the Monastery of Saint John, against whom he bore a grudge, and had him conveyed to Misr. Though the prisoner showed that he was the child of Christian parents, and had always been a Christian, Theodore was able by means of false witnesses to maintain the suspicion which he had raised against the patriarch. Shenûdeh, despite his sickness, was brought to Misr, where attempts were made to extort money from him.

Ultimately, when the authorities were convinced of the falsity of the charge, Theodore fled into Maryût and thence to Wâdi Habîb once more, where he “tormented the monks, and took some of them to rob them of their money.” His career did not last for long. Report of his proceedings was brought to Alexandria by “certain well-known Muslim merchants, who used to pay visits to the monasteries to buy mats and other things,” and the authorities arrested the miscreant and cast him into prison.

The period on which we are about to enter will furnish several other instances of such treachery on the part of discontented monks.

---

1 The fortification of the smaller monasteries would have been a far less formidable task than the circumvallation of the Monastery of S. Macarius.

2 This passage is important as showing that the monks still followed their old handicraft of weaving palm leaves or rushes into baskets, mats, etc., and that their labor contributed substantially to their revenues. Makrizi (quoted by Quatremère, *Mémoires*, i, p. 463) states that among other products of the Wâdi ‘n Natrûn is “the papyrus (sic: no doubt the reeds mentioned above) which serves for making mats.”
SECTION IV

THE MEDIAEVAL PERIOD
CHAPTER I

MAIN FEATURES OF THE PERIOD

In the Middle Ages the tendencies which are occasionally visible in the preceding period harden into definite characteristics. In some sense this is an age of walled monasteries. The census of the monks made in 1088\(^1\) makes it practically certain that at the Monasteries of the Syrians, of Bishôî, Kamê, and Baramûs, all the monks lived within the inclosure walls. At the Monasteries of Macarius, and of John, the laura system still partly survived, but the "dependent cells"\(^2\) had now become walled, and outwardly at least were miniature monasteries. Perhaps, too, there is a tendency for these units to break away from the laura and to become independent.

Measured by their ecclesiastical power and influence, the monasteries probably never stood higher than in this period, and in external brilliance of pomp and ceremonial they can hardly have declined. Yet this prosperity was almost wholly outward. In the sixth century there were three thousand five hundred monks; in the eleventh only a few more than seven hundred. More important still, the faith and enthusiasm which are the soul of monasticism were fast dying or dead. Instances of disloyalty and treachery are frequent. We hear of monks who become renegades, of bitter quarrels and disputes in the monasteries, of dissensions between the monks as a body and the patriarch; the world—or worse, the world of ecclesiasticism and career hunting—now dominates the monasteries. There were, of course, many whose lives were blameless, but who were themselves lacking in the intensity of purpose which alone justifies the monastic life\(^3\); some even cherished the old ideals, but these seem to have become recluses, dwelling in the desert or creating their own monasteries within the monasteries.\(^4\) Thus the heart of monasticism was eaten out, and when, at the end of this period, it suffered a sudden shock, it survived indeed, but could never recover.

---

\(^1\) See p. 360.

\(^2\) I.e., the mansbâbêbs or, "dwelling houses," of the preceding period.

\(^3\) Bessus, the "muscular Christian" and "jovial monk" of this period, is an instance: see p. 353.

\(^4\) Such an one was Sem'an ibn Kallî: see p. 386.
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

Unfortunately the material available is only partly adequate. It illustrates admirably the pride of place and the demoralization characteristic of the monasteries. But we can learn little concerning the adaptation of life in Scetis to the new conditions in the walled cells and monasteries; we have no details of the economic position of the monasteries; and the nature of the disaster which ruined them can only be conjectured. The material, in fact, is largely occasional and anecdotal, which, though valuable as illustrating monastic life and the history of the individual monasteries, cannot be woven into a continuous story. It is possible to avoid sacrifice of valuable matter and at the same time to preserve chronological sequence only by adopting the broken and incoherent system of the annalist.
CHAPTER II

THE TENTH CENTURY

1. Current Events (881–923 A.D.)

The patriarchate of Michael III (881–909?), who succeeded Shenûdeh, opened unhappily. Representations were made to Ahmed ibn Tûlûn, the Lord of Egypt, that the new patriarch had command of great wealth; and Michael, summoned to the presence, was invited to surrender all the riches at his disposal on the ground that Christians needed no more than the bare necessaries of life. The patriarch vainly denied the charge of possessing wealth and was cast into prison, to be released only when he had signed a bond for twenty thousand dinars (fifty thousand dollars).

In order to raise this sum, Michael had recourse to the most ignoble shifts, some of which touched the monasteries nearly. According to the History of the Patriarches, on his release “the patriarch departed to Wâdi Habîb, and there sold the..., which are the places where the monks stand in church for the prayers; and he received one dinar from each monk for his place of standing.” Some two centuries later than this date there were about seven hundred monks in the Wâdi ‘n Natrûn; and we may conjecture that in the days of Michael they are not likely to have numbered more than one thousand. Consequently, no considerable part of the fine can have been raised in this way. But the Monastery of Saint Macarius had to contribute in other ways; for Abu Sâlih states that this patriarch not only sold a church at Kasr esh Shema‘ to the Jews and disposed of other Church property, but also sold the herds of camels belonging to this monastery.

Ahmed ibn Tûlûn died in 884 and was succeeded by his second son Khumâraweih. This prince appears to have been the first of the Muslim rulers of Egypt who visited the

1 ms. cit., p. 62.
2 Probably the reference is to the right of officiating in the “Sanctuary of Benjamin” at the Monastery of S. Macarius. The sale of this right is expressly forbidden in Article 7 of the Canons of Benjamin: see p. 274.
3 Churches and Monasteries of Egypt, fol. 44 a. The church is that of S. Michael, still in Jewish possession: see Butler, Ancient Coptic Churches, i, pp. 169 f., 232.
monasteries. His adventures on this occasion are thus recorded in the History of the Patriarchs:

"Then Khumāraweih heard reports of the Wâdi Habîb, and therefore he made a journey thither. And he entered the Church of Saint Macarius, and beheld his holy body, and asked questions concerning it. And answer was made to him: 'This is the body of the Founder of this Church.' Then he commanded that it should be loosened from its shroud, and took hold of the hair of the beard, and opened the eyes in the face. Thereupon he fell backwards and remained for an hour in a swoon; and so they carried him to his tent, and took oil from the lamp of Saint Macarius, and anointed his forehead with it. Afterwards another miracle was manifested to him in this church; for he passed by the door of the sanctuary on the north beside the..., and there he saw the picture of the martyr looking towards the west, and they told him that it was the picture of Saint Theodore. Now Khumāraweih had in his hand a bunch of scented herbs; so he threw this at the picture saying: ‘Take this, thou valiant knight!’ And a hand came forth from the picture and grasped the bunch of scented herbs, and they remained in the hand, so that all saw them. Therefore Khumāraweih, son of Ahmed ibn Tûlûn, was greatly afraid...and he commanded that a mark should be set upon that picture that it might be manifest for ever; so they painted another cross in the martyr’s hand, and that cross is in the hand of that figure to the present time."

The death of Michael in 909 (?) was followed by an interregnum extending over three or four years. When at length a synod of bishops was called, we are informed that "they proceeded to Wâdi Habîb with the help of God." Here they chose Gabriel, a monk of the Monastery of John Kamé. In recording this election, the History of the Patriarchs gives some interesting notes on the monastery: "When he (Gabriel) was a young man...he had entered the desert and become a monk in the Wâdi, at the Monastery of Saint Macarius, at a cell there known as 'the Syrian,' that is to say the Father Kama, brother of John in the monastic life; and his conduct in that cell was good: and the conduct of all the monks was laudable. Now there was in this cell an aged priest named Maximus, who said it was the established custom there that none should lead the chanting of the alleluia save those who knew the entire psalter by heart, without book. This caused all the monks to learn all the psalms by heart."

In his youth Gabriel sought to get the mastery over temptations of the flesh by fasting and penances of all kinds. When he became patriarch, he still found these troubles besetting him, and asked council of the older monks. These advised humiliation and toil as a remedy; and after the night office the patriarch, clad in the sleeveless colobium, used

---

1 ms. cit., pp. 64–65.
2 Query, "and the eyes opened."
4 Id., p. 66.
5 The context suggests that this was connected with the psalmody recited at the canonical hours: see p. 209.
to go round the cells\(^1\) of the monks and clear the latrines. By such menial employment continued during two years, he succeeded in attaining to freedom from his frailties.\(^2\)

The *History of the Patriarchs*\(^3\) records that “it is said of this holy man...that he spent the whole of his patriarchate in the Valley of Hablb, which he never quitted...He went to his rest on the eleventh of ‘Amshîr, and was buried in the Monastery of Macarius in the Wâdi Hablb.” Gabriel has therefore been cited as a signal example of the unwisdom of selecting patriarchs from the retiring monks of the desert. This is not quite just. Gabriel’s patriarchate coincided with a period of practical anarchy, when Fatimide and Abbasside forces were struggling in Egypt\(^4\); in all probability he would have shown more folly than heroism had he ventured into the chaos where his presence could serve no good end.

2. Moses of Nisibis

Gabriel was succeeded by Cosmas III (923–931), under whom nothing noteworthy relating to the monasteries is recorded. However, we know that Moses of Nisibis, abbot of the Syrian Monastery, flourished during this period. He is first definitely\(^5\) mentioned in a note,\(^6\) dated 1218 A.G.R. (907 A.D.), inscribed in a copy of *Ecclesiasticus*, which reads as follows: “Immanuel and Abbas and John and Saliba, the sons of Abdullah Abûl Bashhar of Tekrit, gave this book to the Monastery of the Mother of God of the Syrians which is in the desert...He (? they) entered this Monastery in the year 1218 of the Greeks and the 294 of the Arabs, in the presence of Moses of Nisibis the sinner...”\(^7\)

In 914 Moses appears definitely as abbot, and also as a benefactor of his monastery. This we learn from the Syriac inscription\(^8\) on the frame of the doors set up by him separating the *baikal* from the choir in the principal church of the Syrian Monastery.\(^9\) Again in 927 in a similar dedicatory inscription\(^10\) Moses recorded his erection of the screen separating choir and nave.

Probably the most important event in the career of Moses was his diplomatic mission to Bagdad as representative of the desert monasteries. Makrizi\(^11\) devotes the following notice to the occasion: “And in the year 313 (925–926 A.D.) the Vizier ‘Ali Ibn Isa Ibn al-Jarrah

---

1. Apparently still *manskûbeh*.
3. MS. cit., p. 67.
4. Lane-Poole, *History of Egypt in the Middle Ages*, pp. 79 f.
5. In Wright, *Cat. Syr. MSS. in B.M.*, No. *DCCXXXVIII*, p. 668. But an undated note refers to “Moses and Aaron, priests and directors of the Convent of the House of the Mother of God...of the Syrians.” If the Aaron here mentioned is the same as the donor of Wright’s No. *MXV* (p. 1196), which was presented in 879 A.D., the Moses is almost certainly he of Nisibis, and his monastic career must have been begun in the IX century.
7. The rendering is by Dr. A. S. Tritton. According to Wright (loc. cit.) Moses entered the monastery at this date, bringing the book with him. But since Moses was already abbot in 914 (see below) it is hardly conceivable that he entered the convent only in 907. There can be little doubt that in 907 Moses was abbot, and that he had entered the monastery at some date in the second half of the IX century; see foregoing note.
8. The Syriac text with translation by Dr. Baumstark is given by Strzygowski, *Der Schmuck der älteren el-Hadra-kirche im syrischen Kloster, Oriens Christianus*, 1 (1901), pp. 365 f.
10. Strzygowski, op. cit., p. 367; *A.A.C.M.*, iv, iii, § 5.
came to Egypt; and he searched into the condition of the country, and imposed the payment of a tribute upon the bishops, and monks, and infirm Christians, and they paid it. Some of them, therefore, went to Bagdad, and petitioned Al-Muctadir-Billah [the Caliph]. He accordingly wrote to Egypt that tribute should not be taken from the bishops, and monks, and the infirm.”¹

That this taxation was imposed in 927, and that Moses was instrumental in securing its removal is made clear by the series of notes written by the abbot himself or under his direction, in mss. once belonging to the library of the Syrian Monastery. One of these notes² states that: “the holy, chaste Mar John...gave this book to the holy Monastery of the Mother of God, etc. He entrusted it to the hands of Moses called of Nisibis, head of the aforenamed Monastery, in Bagdad, the royal city, whither he had come by reason of the poll-tax which was exacted from the monks in the year one thousand and 238 (927 A.D.); and he raised it, from them...” (Pl. VII).

Moses then set out for Bagdad in 927 and returned, as we shall see, in the fifth year after, in 932. Exemption from payment of taxes was by no means the only fruit of this journey. After securing his immediate object, Moses, who seems to have been a man of means, travelled in northern Mesopotamia and acquired, partly by purchase and partly by gift, sufficient books to provide his monastery with an adequate library.³ This fact is recorded by Moses himself in notes⁴ in many of the mss. which he brought back with him to the desert.

If Moses was already abbot in 907, as we have seen reason to believe, he must have been advanced in age at the date which we have now reached. The last mention of him is in a donor’s note,⁵ dated 943, where he is spoken of as “Mar Moses, our glory and the ornament of all the Church, the head of this Monastery.” The words rather suggest that the old abbot’s course was well-nigh run; and it is probable that he did not live to the middle of the century.

3. Current Events (931–1005 A.D.?)

Cosmas III was succeeded by Macarius I (933–953),⁶ a monk of the Monastery of Saint Macarius. Nothing is known to have occurred during his patriarchate which has any bearing on the history of the monasteries; but the statement⁷ that after his election “he went through the customary proceedings in the city of Alexandria and the Monastery...quests, the most considerable of which comprised only eighteen volumes: see Wright, op. cit., No. dcccclxix.

² Wright, Cath. Syr. MSS. in B.M., No. dclxxix, p. 740.
³ The Syrians seem to have laid stress on the importance of study: see the criticism passed by Dionysius on the Coptic monks, p. 301. Up to this time the library must have been inadequate to meet the needs of the brethren. So far as we know it was made up of casual gifts or bequests, the most considerable of which comprised only eighteen volumes: see Wright, op. cit., No. dcccclxix.
⁴ E.g., Assemani, B.O., i, p. 576 (Cod. Ecch., xvi); ii, p. 118, where text and translation are given.
⁵ Wright, Cath. Syr. MSS. in B.M., No. dxiv, p. 394.
of Saint Macarius and at Misr,” aptly illustrates the proud position held by the Monastery of Saint Macarius. After the brief primacy of Theophanius, Menas II (957–977) was elected patriarch. Like certain other fathers of the desert, he had in his youth been forced to marry, but had persuaded his wife to treat their marriage as nominal and to permit him to retire to the Wâdi Habîb. Arrived there, he became a monk and “dwelt in the...cell, namely Deranba, with a holy old man who was the father of the cell and taught him the fear of God.” When the patriarchate became vacant, the electors had fixed upon the (unnamed) superior of the cell Deranba, but on finding him too old and infirm, accepted his suggestion that Menas, his disciple, was better fitted to become primate.

The patriarchate of Menas was signalized by a terrible famine which followed on the low Nile of 967. Menas himself was supported by the bounty of a wealthy woman in the Delta; but the situation was such that he “remained a year without entering Alexandria or the Wâdi Habîb to consecrate the chrism” —a ceremony which was celebrated in the Monastery of Saint Macarius.

This neglect of the normal patriarchal routine was probably due to the disturbed condition of western Egypt in consequence of the famine. Makrizi records —though the date does not quite correspond with that furnished by other evidence—that “in the year (of the Hegira) 351 (962 A.D.) foodstuffs became dear. There were troubles at Alexandria and in El Buhira because of the invasion of the Maghribis.” The Wâdi Habîb itself, as we learn from the Life of John Kamê, was infested by bands driven desperate by famine. In illustration of his assertion that the Virgin had promised her protection to this monastery, the author of the Life quotes the following incident: “It befell in the time of the great famine that was in the year 682 of the Holy Martyrs (966) that there was great affliction over all the land because of the hunger which prevailed. And some treacherous men gathered together...that they should break into the community of our holy Father and despoil it. And having taken ladders, they set them up against the wall that they might descend and slay the old men and despoil the Sanctuary. O, the great wonder! Suddenly there appeared great black serpents...and rushed upon them....And immediately they were afraid and came down quickly from thence and betook them to many other

1 For the relations between the monastery and the patriarchate, see p. 350.
2 I.e., one of the “dependent cells” in the Laura of Macarius.
3 Hist. Patr., ms. cit., p. 71. The name of the cell is uncertain: Evetts renders it Deranba; Renaudot (Hist. Patr. Alex., p. 351), Dernaba; the Book of the Chrism, Dernâbâb. For this and other “dependent cells” see p. 362.
4 So states Lane-Poole, History of Egypt in the Middle Ages, p. 101.
5 Hist. Patr., ms. cit., p. 76.
6 See pp. 239, 350, 374.
8 Ed. M. H. Davis, p. 52. The inclusion of this incident shows that the author of the Life had access to at least some authentic material.
9 No doubt these were desert Arabs, who tried to reach the supplies of food stored in the monastery.
10 Note that the monks were concentrated within the walls.
places of the wall, and they saw the serpents pursuing after them...and they departed in fear.”

The restoration of the Syrian Monastery in the ninth century and the mission of Moses of Nisibis to Bagdad, together with the wealth he seems to have had at command, are indications of the importance and influence of the Syrian colony in Egypt at this time. Testimony to the same effect is given by the fact that the patriarch, Abraham or Ephraem (977–981), the successor of Menas, was a Syrian. He is described as a merchant who had been high in the favor of Mo‘izz, the Fatimide caliph, wealthy, pious, and charitable. As a Syrian he was naturally interested in the national monastery in the Wâdi Habîb; and the History of the Patriarchs\(^1\) records a visit paid by him to the desert: “When he was a layman, he visited the Monastery of Saint Macarius\(^2\) in the Wâdi Habîb to pray there; and he went to the caves to ask for the blessing of the hermits, and entered into conversation with one of them, in whose company were two of his fellows.” We also find that Abraham, when patriarch, presented at least three volumes to the library of the Syrian Monastery.\(^3\) But it is likely that Abraham, a rich man of business rather than a man of letters, benefited the monastery in other ways. When, for example, it is stated that after his consecration he gave away all his property to the poor and to the monasteries,\(^4\) it is reasonable to suppose that the Wâdi Habîb benefited considerably. Another evidence of close relations existing between this patriarch and the monks is to be found in the assertion that, when challenged by the Caliph Mo‘izz\(^5\) to verify the promise made to Christians that by faith they could “move mountains,” Abraham summoned certain monks of Wâdi Habîb, who were then at Misr, to join him in praying that power to perform the required miracle might be granted.\(^6\)

It is worth while to note that shortly after the miracle of moving the mountain, the Sheikh Abû‘l Yemen Kuzmân “gave two thousand dinars to the monasteries in the desert of Saint Macarius, and he begged the monks to remember him in their prayers...”\(^7\)

Abraham is reputed to have been poisoned by a Coptic notable whom he had excommunicated. After his death the see remained vacant for six months before a synod was held at Misr for the election of a successor. At the outset the assembly agreed upon a certain John who “was a monk at the Monastery of Saint Macarius, at a cell named Daker Kufra.”\(^8\) When this person was found to be too old for the post, his disciple Philotheos was chosen in his stead and duly consecrated.

\(^1\) MS. cit., p. 82.

\(^2\) No doubt the Syrian Monastery is meant. Similarly Gabriel I (see above) is called a monk of the Monastery of Macarius, though the sequel shows that he was actually in that of Kamê.\(^8\)

\(^3\) See Wright, Cat. Syr. MSS. in B.M., Nos. cccxliv, cclii, dccxiv.

\(^4\) See the Life of Abraham, ed. Leroy in R.O.C., xiv, p. 381.

\(^5\) Mo‘izz, however, died in 975, whereas Abraham was consecrated in 977 when 'Azlî Bilâh was caliph. Abû Sâlih (Churches and Monasteries of Egypt, fol. 35 a) rightly dates this miracle in the reign of El 'Azlî.


\(^7\) Abû Sâlih, op. cit., fol. 36 a.

\(^8\) Hist. Patr., ms. cit., p. 84. Renaudot (Hist. Patr. Alex., p. 373) transliterates Zekar el Fakara.
THE TENTH CENTURY

It is to the patriarchate of Philotheos that the story of El Wâdîh,\(^1\) the son of Rija, belongs. El Wâdîh was a notary of Misr, a Muslim who had given proof of his fanaticism by an act of brutality to an apostate from Mohammedanism condemned to execution. The bearing and words of this unfortunate had made an impression on El Wâdîh; and while journeying not long after to Mecca, he twice had a vision of “an aged monk in shining raiment standing beside him, who said: ‘Follow me, that thou mayest gain profit for thyself.’” On the return journey the youth was accidentally left behind by his caravan and was in sore straits, until a young man on horseback girt with a golden girdle took him up. By this mysterious apparition he was borne swiftly through the air and deposited in the Church of Saint Mercurius in Misr.

In consequence of this miracle, El Wâdîh became a Christian and was baptized in the name of Paul. His intention was to become a monk in Wâdi Habîb, but before he could carry it into effect, he was recognized by his own friends. To avoid scandal his relatives decided to allow him to depart. “So he departed to the Valley of Habîb, and remained there with a monk who taught him the paths of God, and introduced him to the monastic life. But when he had stayed there a short time, one of the monks who had no understanding, said to him: ‘God will never accept thy conversion unless thou wilt go to Misr and declare what thou hast done in the place where thou art known.’”

El Wâdîh therefore returned to Misr, where he suffered cruelly at the hands of his family. Supported in his affliction by a vision of Saint Macarius himself, he refused to recant, and was therefore denounced to El Hâkem, the caliph, as a renegade. Owing, probably, to the caliph’s changed religious views,\(^2\) the charge preferred against the young man was not pressed to an extremity; and he returned to Wâdi Habîb, where, after two years, he was ordained priest “in the holy Sanctuary of Benjamin.” It is recorded that this remarkable convert was greatly distressed by the demand for the now customary bakshish claimed by the patriarch, and refused to satisfy it.

That his son should have become not only a Christian, but a priest, so incensed El Wâdîh’s father that he bribed certain nomad Arabs to make an end of his son. The monks, hearing of this, dispatched their convert to a place of safety in the Delta, where he died two years later.\(^3\)

An interesting passage in a synodical letter written in 987 by Philotheos of Alexandria to Athanasius VI of Antioch shows that, at this time at any rate, the Monastery of the Syrians was under the patronage and protection of the Egyptian patriarch. After conveying to Athanasius the greetings of various prelates, he adds those of “the Father of the monks of thy Monastery (sc. the Syrian), who is amongst us, and of the brethren dwelling therein.

---

\(^1\) El Macinus (Hist. Sar., ed. Erpenius, p. 246) gives his name as Shahid, “the Martyr.” For a fuller narrative than the present see Renaudot, op. cit., pp. 374 f.

\(^2\) See De Lacy O’Leary, A Short History of the Fatimid Khalife, pp. 179 f. But if this is so, the latter part of El Wâdîh’s story must fall in the last years of El Hâkem’s reign (about 1017).

\(^3\) Hist. Patr., ms. cit., pp. 85–95.
And thou art to know that we are most willing to take care of these (monks) and to nourish them according to thy injunction."

We hear little or nothing about the official relations between the Coptic patriarch and the Syrian Monastery; and whether the convent was in any way subject to the control of the See of Alexandria must remain an open question. The passage cited above only shows that Philotheos had been asked to assist the monks in their temporal needs; presumably the Syrians as strangers in a strange land sometimes met with difficulties in furnishing their convent with provisions.

The only other event in the patriarchate of Philotheos to our purpose is the consecration of Daniel, a monk of the Monastery of Saint Macarius, as Metropolitan of Abyssinia.¹

¹ Hist. Patr., ms. cit., p. 96: Renaudot, Hist. Patr. Alex., pp. 381 f. To this period, however, belongs a personage famous in his day for holiness—Anba Paphnutius who lived for thirty-five years as a monk in the Monastery of S. Macarius, was consecrated bishop by Philotheos, and died thirty-two years later in the odor of sanctity: see Synax., ed. Basset, Bashans 11, pp. 1015 f.
CHAPTER III
THE ELEVENTH CENTURY (I)

1. A New Church of Saint Macarius

The external magnificence and inward corruption singled out as characteristic of the Mediaeval Period are illustrated by the dramatic story of how a new church came to be built in the Monastery of Saint Macarius soon after the beginning of the eleventh century.

Early in the patriarchate of Zacharias (1005-1032) a certain Menas, Bishop of Tamah, died. By continued and successful malpractices this prelate had amassed a fortune of ten thousand dinars which with Oriental prudence he had buried in four separate hoards. As he lay on his deathbed, the old man wished to communicate to his brother Macarius, Bishop of Upper Menuf, information as to where the four treasures lay hidden. Macarius, however, proved long in coming; and the dying bishop, feeling his life fast ebbing away, chewed and swallowed first one, and then another, and then a third of the notes containing the secret of three of the four caches. At the last moment Macarius arrived only just in time to learn where the fourth treasure was concealed: thereupon he “took the money and built with it a sanctuary named after Saint Macarius in Wâdi Habîb, and that is the handsome sanctuary to the south of that of Benjamin; and he spent upon it 3000 dinars.”

2. Persecution under El Hâkem, 1011-1017 A.D. (?)

The fierce persecution of the Christians by El Hâkem,³ “the mad caliph,” casts a lurid light upon the moral and spiritual degeneracy of the monks and the corruption of the Church as a body, and also brings out very clearly the importance of Wâdi Habîb as an “Isle of

1 For the relation of this to the historic “Sanctuary of Benjamin” and to the other sanctuaries see A.A.C.M., ii, i, § 5. The new church may have been in honor of Macarius the Alexandrian, or Macarius of Tkoûw.
2 Hist. Patr., ms. cit., p. 100.
3 El Mansûr Abû ‘All el Hâkem bi’amarillâh (996-1021 A.D.). In his later years El Hâkem represented himself as an incarnation of the Godhead. As the originator of a religious revolution he affords a partial parallel to Akh-en-Aten (Amen-hotpe IV): his temporary success goes far to explain that achieved by the old Egyptian king.
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

Refuge” in time of persecution; perhaps, too, it marks the addition of a new and most important privilege to those already enjoyed by the Monastery of Saint Macarius.

The incident which was the immediate cause of El Hâkem’s persecution is very frankly related in the History of the Patriarchs.¹ “A monk named Jonas, a priest of the sanctuary of Saint Macarius, was residing at the Church of Saint Onuphrius,² at the sanctuary which is to the north of the Church of Saint Macarius.” This person, endowed with means more modest than his ambitions, wished to become a bishop. Unable to produce two or three hundred dinars, the sine qua non in candidates for the episcopate, he approached the patriarch with a request to be consecrated to some titular or depopulated see. Zacharias, easy-going man, would have granted this artless request, but Michael, Bishop of Sakhâ, who held complete control over the patriarch, dismissed the would-be bishop with scant courtesy.

Thereupon Jonas drew up a complaint against the simoniacal practices of the patriarch and forwarded it to the caliph. But the petition happened to pass through the hands of certain Christian officials employed in the diwân, who, fearing the results it might produce, delayed the memorial and recommended Zacharias to satisfy the demands of Jonas. The patriarch, who was at the time in Wâdi Habîb, showed the communication sent by these officials to Michael of Sakhâ, who, resolved to stop the mouth of the clamoring Jonas by other means, “sent for the Arabs who act as diggers³ for the monasteries, and gave him (sc. Jonas) up to them; so they took him and cast him into a well, and stoned him with stones…. But he found a cleft in the wall into which he entered and lay hid.”

In his own good time, Jonas emerged, and could be pacified only with a promise of elevation to the next bishopric vacant. But when two bishoprics had fallen vacant and had been filled, presumably, by richer candidates, he lost patience and presented a memorial to El Hâkem in which he accused the patriarch of gaining large sums of money by the sale of bishoprics. Zacharias was summoned to the presence of the caliph and, after imprisonment for three months, was (we are assured) cast to the lions.⁴ But as in the case of Daniel, the lions did no hurt to a man so obviously holy; and Zacharias presently regained his liberty.

¹ ms. cit., p. 102. The exact date of the persecution is hard to fix. Hist. Patr. gives the date 727–36 A. M. (1011–1017 A.D.) which is accepted by Renaudot (Hist. Patr. Alex., p. 394). According to Lane-Poole (History of Egypt in the Middle Ages, p. 127) it began in 1005 and raged from 1007 to 1012 A.D. (at least). For a further discussion of the period of the persecution see De Lacy O’Leary, A Short History of the Fatimid Khalifate, p. 180, where a date 1009–1017/18 A.D. is favored. Another account of the cause which led to this persecution is given by Bar-Hebraeus (Chron. dynast., pp. 215 f.).

² The Coptic enenōp or eneōfep, Arabic “Abû Nufār.” For his story see Budge, Coptic Martyrdoms in the Dialect of Upper Egypt, 205 f., 455 f. This “church” was probably a “side chapel” attached to the Church of S. Macarius; the only other reference to it seems to be that in the rubric added to the Martyrdom of Theodore the Oriental (Cod. Vat. Copt., No. LXIII, fol. 28) directing that the ms. should be read on Khoiak 12 “in Abba Benöpher” (pen abba eneōfep)—a phrase which puzzles the editors (Hyvernat and Balestri, Ada Martyrum, p. 6).

³ Renaudot (Hist. Patr. Alex., p. 389) represents them as Arabs hired to guard the monasteries.

⁴ This occurred in 1011 according to a note in Abû’l Barakât’s Chronicle; see Renaudot, op. cit., p. 391.
THE ELEVENTH CENTURY

At this time, or perhaps earlier, El Hâkem ordered that Christian churches everywhere should be destroyed and their property confiscated. For some reason (which Coptic authors explain more suo) the monasteries of Wâdi Habib were unaffected by this decree. “When, therefore,” the History of the Patriarchs relates, “the patriarch was set free, the Christians... advised him to remove into the desert to the Wâdi Habib... So Zacharias accepted their advice and started forthwith for the Wâdi Habib. There he remained for nine years, because the churches there were secure from destruction. For El Hâkem had sent an officer from Misr with workmen and shovels (?)... to pull down all the churches in the desert. But when they reached Tarnût (Terenuthis), they said: ‘We are afraid of the Arabs, because they are so numerous among the hills.’ Thus God brought their devices to naught, as well as by a miracle... And all the churches in the desert were preserved; for it is related that the martyr George appeared to them and repulsed them and terrified them so that they went back.”

The immunity which the desert churches enjoyed made them the center of ecclesiastical life. We read further that “most of the bishops also resided in the Wâdi Habib with the patriarch... The majority of the Christians, too, used to visit the desert twice a year, namely at the Festival of the Epiphany and at the Festival of the Resurrection, which is Easter.” The latter part of this statement is strikingly confirmed by a piece of contemporary evidence. A Coptic ms., derived from the Monastery of Saint Macarius, and now in the Vatican, contains a long note written at this period by a certain Joseph, son of Macarius, a deacon. The relevant passage is as follows: “For by the grace of God I came to this Holy Monastery in great affliction at that time when he, that is to say, the son of Isaas (El ‘Azîz), who is called Palhakem (El Hâkem), destroyed (?) the churches and also the monasteries of the Fayûm. But, my holy Fathers, for our sins all these things befell us... I came to this monastery because of the Body of Christ, that I might partake of it (the Communion). For in no other place do men meet together with confidence before His Throne, and according to His commandment, except (in the place of) our Father Abba Macarius in the Desert.” This note is dated in the year of Diocletian 730 (1014 A.D.).

The exceptional importance which the desert monasteries had thus assumed must have come to an end when El Hâkem reversed his anti-Christian attitude and ordered the restoration of all church property. But it at least is possible that one of the most notable privileges enjoyed by the monks originated in this time of persecution.

Shortly after the retirement of Zacharias to Wâdi Habib, a Turkish officer “took possession of the head of the Father and Evangelist Saint Mark,” and on learning that the

1 ms. cit., p. 111.
2 lb.
3 Cod. Vat. Copt., No. LXXVIII (Mai, S.V.N.C., v, ii, p. 165) = Zoëga, Cat., No. LIV, p. 106. The translation here given is after the Latin version of Quatremère (Recherches Crit., pp. 249 f.).
4 According to Renaudot this was in 737 A.M. (1021 A.D.), but it was early in this year that El Hâkem met his mysterious end. The exact date of the persecution is not here an essential matter, and no attempt is here made to extricate it.
5 See p. 350.
Christians would pay him a large sum for the relic, brought it to Misr. Here it was purchased by a wealthy Copt for three hundred dinars and carried to the patriarch: “and it is now”—adds the biographer of Zacharias—“in the Monastery of Saint Macarius.”

How long the relic remained there is uncertain. The lives of the patriarchs from Michael III to Shenûdeh I were compiled by Michael, Bishop of Tinnis, who wrote his account of the last named (and probably the whole series) in 1051 and implies that the relic was then in the desert. On the other hand, it is not mentioned in the list of relics seen by Mauhub in 1088 and is elsewhere spoken of as being preserved in the house of a certain Yahye, son of Zachariah, in the patriarchate of Christodulus, at a date not later than 1057. The relic must have been surrendered by the monks, then, between 1051 and 1057.

The history of this period would be incomplete without mention of the belief that the terrible caliph, El Hâkem, was not assassinated on the Mokattam Hills as generally believed, but was converted and ended his life as a monk in Wâdi Habib. Bar-Hebraeus records this pious belief as follows: “Because the murder of Hâkem took place in such circumstances, many believed that he had departed into the desert of the Asketes (Scetis) and was made a monk and ended his life there.... I myself.... when living at Damascus, heard from some Egyptian katibos that when Hâkem persecuted the Christians, the Messiah appeared to him, as to Paul; and he believed and retired to the desert and died there.”

1 Hist. Patr., ms. cit., p. 111.
2 Id., p. 135.
3 Id., p. 134.
4 Id., p. 190; see p. 364.
5 See Renaudot, Hist. Patr. Alex., p. 430. According to Makrizi (Quatremer, Mémoires, ii, p. 262) the Venetians obtained possession of the head of S. Mark in 822 a.h. (1419 a.d.).
CHAPTER IV
THE ELEVENTH CENTURY (II)

1. Connection between the Monastery of Saint Macarius and the Patriarchate

THE history of Shenûdeh II (1032–1047), the next patriarch, contains only one notice relating to the Wâdi Habîb, but that conveying a fact of some importance. After the death of Zacharias, “the bishops assembled together with the superiors of Wâdi Habîb... and a person was mentioned who had become a monk at the age of fourteen years, named Shenûdeh. He had become a priest at the Sanctuary of Macarius... and he was a native of Bulyanâ and had embraced the monastic life at a cell called Danhabeh.”¹ This is the first intimation we get that the monks of Wâdi Habîb had anything to do with the election of a patriarch, and the fact is one of such importance that some space must be devoted to its consideration.

The histories of the patriarchs who follow Shenûdeh make it clear that the right of election was at this period exercised alternately by the Church of Alexandria and that of Misr² together with the monks of Wâdi Habîb. The further instances in which the monks are stated to have taken part in patriarchal elections are as follows. (1) Cyril II: “it was the turn of the clergy and chief laymen of Misr and the monks of the Monastery of Saint Macarius to appoint the patriarch.”³ (2) Macarius II: “it was the turn of the people of Misr and the monks of the Monastery of Saint Macarius to elect his successor.”⁴ (3) Mark IV: “and it was the turn of the monks (sic). So the people of Misr took Mark....”⁵ (4) During the vacancy of the see after the death of John VI we hear that the priest David contrived that four copies of the tezkieb should be drawn: one

² When this alternation between the two Churches began is unknown. Zacharias was clearly an Alexandrian nominee; but Abraham was elected by the Bishops of Upper and Lower Egypt, the scribes of the Diwân of Misr, and the priests of Alexandria, i.e., by representatives of the Egyptian Church as a whole. Possibly the arrangement began as far back as the time of Michael III.
⁴ Id., p. 208.
⁵ Id., p. 256. Evett considers that the mss. are defective and that the customary reference to the people of Misr, as well as to the monks, was made.
for the bishops, another for the priests (of Misr), a third for the chief laymen (of Misr), and a fourth for the monks.\footnote{Hist. Patr., ms. cit., p. 310.} Subsequently (as an afterthought) a fifth copy was prepared for the Alexandrians. It is stated that the tezkieh sent to the monks received forty signatures.\footnote{Ib.}

What was the nature of this right? It is clear that in all cases the monks are those of Saint Macarius, or perhaps of all the monasteries of Wādi Habib.\footnote{3 The “superiors of Wādi Habib” are named in connection with the election of Shenṭiḥ II; but this may be a loose equivalent for the “senior monks of S. Macarius,” just as the latter expression may cover the monks of all the monasteries of Wādi Habib. Since patriarchs were chosen from other of the Nāṭrān monasteries besides that of S. Macarius, all alike may have shared in the right of election. But the point is uncertain and of no great moment. Lit. orient. col., I, p. 370.} But are they to be regarded as exercising a \textit{jus suffragii} in the same sense as did the representatives of the Churches of Alexandria and Cairo? Renaudot pronounces against such a view and considers that the monks were only called in as “expert advisers,” because they alone had adequate knowledge and could inform the electors as to the character of the monks under their charge.\footnote{Ib. The actual words of the Συνταγλή (id., p. 462) are: “Cum autem certam notitiam habeamus illius probitatem iuxta testimonium omnium sese qui sunt in deserto, et qui eum ad nos adduxerunt veluti dignum, testimoniumque de eo perhibuerunt tanquam idoneo….”} In support of this he notes: \textit{(a)} a phrase in the instrument of election to the effect that while the bishops, clergy, and notables consented to the election, the monks merely gave assurance of the spiritual progress and holy conversation of the future patriarch; \textit{(b)} that if the monks took any part in the actual decision, the \textit{psephisma}, or instrument of election, should be signed by three monks,\footnote{Ibid., p. 371.} as it is by three priests and three deacons of Alexandria, whereas it is actually subscribed by the Hegumen of Scetis alone of the monks; \textit{(c)} that canonical writers, such as Ibn Assal and Abūʾl Barakāt, do not refer to any share taken by monks in the patriarchal election.\footnote{Ibid., p. 363.}  

The evidence which RENAUDOT cites to prove that the monks possessed no real \textit{jus suffragii} is less strong than it appears. To his first point we may reply that in the Elogium which follows the reading of the \textit{psephisma} in the rite of consecration, the electoral assembly is described as consisting of bishops, priests, deacons, “most pious monks, and most famous hegumens,” and all the people of Alexandria and of Lower Egypt—\textit{the order being exactly the same as that of the subscriptions to the \textit{psephisma}.} Secondly, the Hegumen of Scetis alone (and not three monks) signed the \textit{psephisma}, because he was officially \textit{sui generis}, and it would be derogatory for him to sign along with two of his titular subordinates. He therefore subscribed the document as representing the monks of Scetis (or of the Monastery of Macarius) as a body. As for RENAUDOT’s third point, the silence of Ibn Assal and Abūʾl Barakāt\footnote{9 For the subscription to the \textit{psephisma}, see id. I, p. 460; Denzinger, \textit{Ritus orientalis}, II, p. 43.} is not surprising. Cyril III made the Monastery of Saint Macarius subject to the Church of Misr, besides making certain mysterious
THE ELEVENTH CENTURY

"arrangements," imposing equally obscure "conditions," and putting a stop to certain "bad customs." After the days of Cyril III we hear no more of any part taken by monks in the patriarchal elections, and it is to be suspected that the subordination of the monastery to the Church of Misr deprived the former of its jus suffragii.

The real weakness in Renaudot's position lies in this, that he took into account only two patriarchal elections in which the monks were concerned—those of Macarius II and of Mark IV. He was naturally inclined, therefore, to regard these cases as exceptional. But in the five instances on record (the elections of Shenûdeh II, Cyril II, Macarius II, Mark IV, and the abortive election of the priest David) it cannot be supposed that when the historian speaks of the monks as sharing in the election, he means only that they attended as advisers—though even this would have been a most important privilege. And the effort of the priest David to secure the patriarchate surely furnishes positive proof that the monks did exercise a real jus suffragii, since one of the four original copies of the tezkīb was sent to them and was returned with forty signatures. It is impossible, then, to deny that when the election belonged "to the Church of Misr," four distinct bodies took part, the bishops, the clergy of Misr, the notables of Misr, and the monks of Saint Macarius.

When the monks gained this privilege is a less important, though an interesting, question, and one which can only be answered by a conjecture. We start with the known fact that it is in the case of Shenûdeh II that we first hear of the monks ("the superiors of Wâdi Habîb") as concerned in the election of a patriarch. Is it a mere coincidence that during the preceding patriarchate Wâdi Habîb had rendered signal service to the Church as providing an asylum to which the patriarch, the bishops, and apparently the whole hierarchy of the Church fled from persecution? May not a share in the patriarchal election have been granted as a return for the shelter thus afforded? Conjecture may be pushed yet further. The reasons alleged in the History of the Patriarchs for the immunity from destruction of the desert churches cannot be taken seriously. By some more prosaic means the authorities were induced to abandon their intention of demolishing the desert monasteries; and the immemorial custom of the East suggests that this was effected by means of timely bakshîsh. To save their churches and monasteries from destruction (and so to preserve inviolate the last refuge of the Coptic Church), may not the monks have consented—on terms—to forfeit some substantial part of those ancient revenues which they drew from Lower Egypt? This conjecture has at least the merit of providing a plausible explanation of the reëndowment of the monasteries by Cyril II at the expense of certain bishoprics. In a word, may not Wâdi Habîb have saved the Church during the persecution of El Hâkem,

1 See pp. 387 f.  
2 Lit. orient. col., 1, p. 370.  
3 So in 169 A.H. (785-786 A.D.) the Christians offered 'Ali ibn Suleimân 50,000 dinars to induce him to spare the churches of the Ward of Constantine: see Makrizi in Abu Sâlih, Churches and Monasteries of Egypt, ed. Evetts, p. 327.  
4 See p. 268.  
5 See p. 358.
and have received in return, first, a share in the election of the patriarchs, and secondly, and at a later date, material compensation for the sacrifice involved?

Here we may sum up the various points of connection between the monastery in Wâdi Habîb and the patriarchate. These are partly historical in origin and partly the result of mere accretion.

I. The politico-religious situation in the later Byzantine Period made it necessary to transfer the official seat of the Jacobite patriarchs from Alexandria to the Monastery of Saint Macarius.¹ After the Arab Conquest, though Alexandria resumed its historic rights, the connection between the patriarchate and the monastery was maintained, possibly to commemorate the past period of difficulty and danger.²

At first perhaps customary, it ultimately became obligatory for a newly elected patriarch to be formally proclaimed at the monastery and to celebrate the Liturgy there immediately after his initial celebration at Alexandria. The ceremonies observed on such occasions may be here summarized.³

On the approach of the patriarch, the monks go out to meet him and thrice prostrate themselves before him. Descending from the ass on which he rides, the patriarch in turn prostrates himself before the monks. The obeisance having been returned by the monks, the Hegumen of Saint Macarius places the edge of his pallium on the neck of the ass, and leads the patriarch to the monastery, while the priests sing hymns, until he reaches "the altar of Benjamin in the Greater Church where lie the bodies of the saints." Here the patriarch prostrates himself before the altar, and, when the Prayer of Absolution has been read over him by the hegumen, proceeds to the altar and celebrates the Liturgy. Finally he worships the relics of the saints (sc. of the three Macarii), invokes their blessing, and retires to the Cell of the Patriarchs,⁴ subsequently visiting (if he wishes) the remaining desert monasteries.

The patriarch was expected to spend Lent and Easter (or at least the latter part of Holy Week) at the monastery, and to preside at the celebration of Easter.⁵ It was during this annual visit that the patriarch consecrated the chrism on Holy Thursday or Good Friday in the Church of Saint Macarius.⁶ It was perhaps in virtue of the close association thus constituted, that Wâdi Habîb was treated as a "peculiar" of the patriarch and was subject to his jurisdiction alone.⁷

¹ See p. 238.
² Renaudot (Lit. orient. col., 1, pp. 404 f.) conjectures that the custom dates from the visit of Benjamin to consecrate the Church of S. Macarius; but this fails to explain why the visit should have been paid by a newly consecrated patriarch, and why proclamation should have been made there.
³ See Renaudot, op. cit., 1, pp. 404 f., following the account of Ibn Assal.
⁴ The patriarchs had a special cell or residence at the monastery: see Renaudot, Lit. orient. col., 1, p. 410.
⁵ See Hist. Patr., p. 452, and passim.
⁶ Hist. Patr., ms. cit., p. 175. Renaudot (Hist. Patr. Alex., p. 355) regards this custom at any rate as a survival from the period of Byzantine persecution. On the consecration of chrism see p. 374; Wansleben, Hist. de l'église d'Alexandrie, p. 87; and Butler, Ancient Coptic Churches, 11, pp. 330 f.
⁷ Renaudot, Lit. orient. col., 1, pp. 433 f.
II. Other points of connection probably resulted from the commanding position which the monastery enjoyed. (1) From the eighth century onwards most of the patriarchs were chosen from among the monks of Wādi Habīb, and from the time of Michael I to Shenūdeh I the desert monasteries enjoyed a virtual monopoly in the supply of primates. Subsequently—perhaps owing to the alternative exercise of the right of election of the Churches of Alexandria and Misr—the excessively privileged position was somewhat altered, but the balance still remained decidedly in favor of the sons of Saint Macarius. So usual as it was for a patriarch to be chosen from the ranks of these monks that in the instrument proclaiming the election of a patriarch the electors announce that in order to find a suitable nominee, “we determined to send to the holy deserts of Shiḥet, of the Mount of the Natron and turned our eyes upon . . . the most devout monk dwelling in the noble Laura . . . of our pure Father Abba Makari of Shiḥet” (sic). (2) As we have already seen, the monks took a real part in the election of the patriarch, and the psephisma or instrument of election was subscribed by the Hegumen of Scetis (i.e., by the abbot of the Monastery of Saint Macarius representing the whole body of monks). (3) After the time of Michael II it gradually became customary for the patriarch’s body to be translated from its original burial place to the Church of Saint Macarius.

Such intimate relations between the patriarchate and the Monastery of Saint Macarius tended to give the monks an undue sense of their own importance and correspondingly to lower in their eyes the patriarchal dignity. Either this, or the growing demoralization of the Coptic Church will explain the insolent and defiant attitude of the monks towards the primate as shown in circumstances now to be related, and on subsequent occasions.

On the death of Shenūdeh II in 1047, the right of election belonged to the Church of Alexandria, and naturally a patriarch belonging to the Alexandrine sphere of influence was sought. At first the Hegumen of the Monastery of Severus at Enaton was proposed; but when his name was withdrawn, the choice fell upon a certain Christodulus, “who had been in his early youth in the Monastery of Baramūs in the Wādi Habīb. He had also a brother in the monastic life named James, who had become Hegumen of Baramūs and had performed many miracles, for he was a great saint. Then Christodulus left the desert, and proceeded to a hermitage by the sea at Nesterweh, called Nafweh.” After his enthronement at Alexandria, the new patriarch proceeded according to custom to the Monastery of Saint Macarius “where he was consecrated.”

1 See Abū’l Barakāt, B.N., Fonds arabe, No. 209: μακαριος εστον ιτε μητων ιτε πιστων μισιγους (Arab. شبيهات الذي هو مَجِيل الطوئِن) ... εὐλαθεντας μισανακος γεγος ιτε πλατα εονεος ιτε πιστων εστον ιτε μακαρι (مقابر عروس) ιτε مينت (Iols. 147 b and 148 a) ιτε πιστης (الاسفلي); Renaudot, Lit. orient. col., I, p. 380; Denzinger, Ritus orientalium, II, p. 51.

2 See the original document translated by Renaudot, op. cit., I, p. 487; id., Hist. Patr. Alex., pp. 488 f.

3 Hist. Patr., ms. cit., pp. 173, 194, 238, 253. All these instances are quoted below in due order. For the burial place see p. 398. 4 See pp. 372, 373, 381, 383.

5 Hist. Patr., ms. cit., p. 136. It is to be inferred that though an ex-monk of Wādi Habīb, Christodulus had become identified with the Alexandrine interest.

6 Hist. Patr., ms. cit., p. 137.
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

The monks, jealous (we may suppose) of any encroachment upon their privileges on the part of a patriarch elected by an alien interest, seem to have been ready to resent anything like interference by Christodulhus. Such is the inference to be drawn from the following incident narrated in the History of the Patriarchs.1 Some years after his consecration, Christodulus paid a visit to the Wâdi Habîb:

"In those days the patriarch journeyed to Damanhûr and on the morrow directed his steps to Dimru,2 whence he proceeded to the Monastery of Saint Macarius in the Wâdi Habîb. Now the monks of the monastery and the clergy of Alexandria used to reserve some of the eucharistic bread, and keep it covered up from the Sunday of Olives (Palm Sunday) to Great Wednesday....And the father patriarch disapproved of their practice with regard to the eucharistic bread, and reminded them of the danger that...it might grow mouldy, or be changed, or be eaten by insects...and he charged them to discontinue this practice....But the monks withstood the father patriarch and brought him the iron keys,3 and said to him: 'Thou art not more virtuous than the fathers who preceded thee!' So he arose in anger, and went out to his cell; and there was great disorder. Then the father patriarch brought out of the library of the monastery a homily which expressed this very opinion of which they disapproved; and Abba Michael his secretary read it before the assembly."

2. Bessus, the Abbot of the Monastery of John Kamê

Mauhub, the author of that part of the History of the Patriarchs which begins with Christodulus, relates several anecdotes concerning a monk with whom he was acquainted, a certain Bessus, the Superior (apparently) of the Monastery of John Kamê. These narratives are particularly welcome in a period barren, as this, of definite personalities, and throw valuable light on the general conditions of life at the monasteries and on historical events.

One of these anecdotes, though intended to illustrate the miraculous powers ascribed to Bessus, is more valuable as showing monastic scribes at work and exhibiting the monasteries once more as places of refuge: "With regard to the holy Bessus, I was informed by the deacon Abû Habîb Michaël, son of Apater of Damanhûr...that he was in hiding with him once at the monastery, and with him were several Christian brethren hiding themselves there.4 And he saw him put oil into a lamp and bless it, and kindle it for them; and he remained fifteen nights copying books in company with the aforesaid brethren,

---

2 The only known place of this name is about 10 miles east of Sakkâ, a little north of the center of the Delta.
3 The significance of this is obscure to us.
4 The date of this incident is probably 1057 when the Christians were subject to persecution: see Renaudot, Hist. Patr. Alex., p. 431; Lane-Poole, History of Egypt in the Middle Ages, pp. 143 f.
each night until midnight, while Michaël observed the lamp... and it was never empty, nor did it diminish in brightness."

A second episode, related with the same object, presents a picture of social relaxation in the monasteries, and contains several other particulars of interest. Mauhub’s narrative is as follows:

“There was in the desert, at the Monastery of Abû Kama in Wâdi Habib, a holy monk named Bessus upon whom much grace and the gift of the Holy Ghost had descended; and in him I beheld, and from him I heard many wonderful things. For instance, when we heard the reports of him... we all went out to the monasteries... in the 778 of the Martyrs (1062 A.D.), and we received the blessing of another holy monk, also called James, hegumen of the Monastery of Baramûs... and then we proceeded to the Monastery of Abû Kama and passed the night there with the holy Bessus, we being eleven in number. So we ate of what he set before us; and he brought us a small wine jar, evidently full, and blessed it; and so we all drank of it until we were not far from intoxication; and yet the jar was only half empty.

“In the morning Bessus prayed us not to allow any of the officials from Misr such as come out into the desert for the Feast of the Immersion, to pay him a visit, for he said that if one of them came, he would depart to the Caves of Father Moses, and leave his monastery. Then we took leave of him and went away to the Monastery of Father Macarius, where we found a large body of the principal officials of Misr, who had come out to visit the monasteries that year. Among them was the sheikh, Abû’l Bedr... who was desirous of visiting the Father Bessus; and therefore we informed him of what the monk had said to us.... Now I was obliged to journey with my cousin... to the Monastery of Father John (the Little), for the sake of a vow.... So I left my cousin in the Monastery of Father John, and went to the Monastery of Father Kama, where I had an interview with the holy Bessus and informed him of what had taken place, and I continued to persuade him, until it was settled that he should visit the sheikh at the Monastery of Father Macarius. Accordingly he left his monastery an hour after sunset, while I returned to the Monastery of Father John and passed the night there.... In the morning I went to the Monastery of Father Kama... and the porter told me that he had returned at midnight, and beaten the wooden gong there until the monks arose for their psalmody according to custom....

Then he said: Neither sun nor moon dwells there, but wine-flasks have been brought thither today,”

1 Such moments were not rare if we may judge from the lines of Ibn ‘Amir, quoted by Makrizi: see Abû Sâlih, *Churches and Monasteries of Egypt*, ed. Evetts, p. 324:

“O monk of the monastery! whence the brightness and the light? it shines from that which is in thy monastery At-Tûr. Doth perchance the sun dwell there, forgetting his zodiacal signs, or has the moon removed and hidden herself therein?


3 Id., pp. 156–158.

4 The brother of Christodulus above mentioned.

5 I.e., the *κροίσμα or ἰδής*: see p. 262.
Thereupon I suspected that he had never been to the Monastery of Saint Macarius, because the distance thence to Saint John Kama involves a journey of more than four hours.”

Mauhub ultimately learned that Bessus—marvellous man!—had arrived at Saint Macarius at nightfall and left at midnight—the precise hours of his departure from the Monastery of Kamé and his return thither!

A third narrative is of value for the reference it contains to the internal arrangements of the vanished Monastery of Kamé. “I was told,” writes Mauhub,1 “by Abû'l Tidur Peter . . . that a young monk met with an accident in the marsh of the desert of Saint Macarius, which brought on paralysis and dumbness; so they carried him to the holy Bessus at the Monastery of Saint Kama, and he placed him in the Church of our Lady in the keep, where he remained three days. And the youth declared that he saw three forms coming out through the door of the sanctuary, and two of them said to the other who was their leader: ‘Fulfil the request of Bessus with regard to this youth.’ So he pushed him with his foot, saying: ‘Arise.’ And the youth arose at once, sound and free from paralysis and able to speak.”

Bessus is destined to reappear more than once in the subsequent history of this period.

3. The Great Famine and the Foray of the Lewâtis

In the year 1065 portents of disaster were observed in the Wâdi Habîb. Two comets appeared, and tears flowed from the eyes of certain pictures in the churches. “This,” our author asserts,2 “I was told by Macarius the monk, the disciple of the holy Bashus (Bessus) in the Monastery of Abû Kama, so famous for his sanctity and virtuous life.” Further on,3 Mauhub mentions a still more remarkable prodigy which is to be assigned to this same period:

“Among the many miracles that took place in the days of the father and patriarch Abba Christodulus, was the flowing of blood from the picture of Saint Menas the martyr, which is in the sanctuary of Saint Macarius; and behold the mark of it remains to this day. But Macarius told me that he doubted concerning the blood which issued from that picture because he was very young at that time. In his own words: ‘I went in to cover up the furniture of the sanctuary. And there were there many monks, Copts and Syrians. And one of the Syrians adjured me to go up to the picture to see the blood. So I approached it, though full of doubts . . . for my heart said that men tell lies concerning God. But when I looked at it, behold it was blood indeed without any doubt. Thereupon the ground seemed to rise up over me and the wooden roof to descend to the earth, and the walls to close together . . . and I fell down in a faint.’”

The calamity thus heralded was a great famine which followed the “low Nile” of 1065 and, aggravated doubtless by the chaos prevailing in the Delta, continued for seven years.4

---

2 Id., p. 151.  
3 Id., pp. 164-165.  
4 Lane-Poole, History of Egypt in the Middle Ages, p. 146.
In the “calamitous year” with which this famine began (1066), Bessus reappears in a nobler light than hitherto, for Mauhub records that in these days of famine he fed many of the nomad Arabs of the desert who were starving.

But the monasteries were to be yet more nearly touched. Under the Caliph El Mustansir, internecine strife had broken out in the army. The Turkish troops, jealous of the favor shown by the “Black Dowager” to the Sudanese units, attacked these latter and drove them into Upper Egypt in 1062, with the result that war raged during the ensuing years between the two military factions. In 1069 the Turkish leader, Nāṣir ed Daula, was overthrown by his party and fled from Mīr to Alexandria, where he gained the support of certain Arab tribes and of the Lewāṭeh Berbers. These last overran the Delta and, according to Mauhub, made havoc of the monasteries of Wādi Habīb. “Now the Lewāṭis,” so his account runs, “since their deeds of violence had begun against the monasteries in the Wādi Habīb, had pillaged them, and slain the monks except some who escaped and fled to the Delta and other parts; and the buildings were wrecked.”

This doleful account is surely exaggerated. The church of the Syrian Monastery, built, as we have seen, in the ninth century, still stands and retains its early fittings and decoration, while a very considerable part of the library of the same monastery which has survived, dates from long before this period. The libraries of other monasteries also escaped destruction. These facts make it clear that though wanton havoc was doubtless wrought, and though certain monasteries may have indeed suffered severely, the Wādi Habīb was certainly not sacked; books and fine woodwork do not survive when the buildings containing them are “wrecked.”

Another anecdote concerning Bessus belongs to this troubled period. Possibly the incident related preceded the Lewāṭeh foray, and the eighteen objects of Bessus’ muscular Christianity were some of El Mustansir’s black soldiery. If so, the occurrence may have taken place somewhere between 1062 and 1069. The story is thus told by Mauhub:

“And the deacon John, one of the spiritual sons of the holy Bessus, told me that he was present one day when Bessus was on the top of the keep praying. And eighteen blacks entered the monastery and took possession of it, and seized one of the monks and began to maltreat him. Thereupon the Father Bessus came down from the tower to them, and, grasping their leader by the back of his neck, pushed him outside the door of the monastery.

1 Lane-Poole, History of Egypt in the Middle Ages, pp. 145 f.


3 Mauhub himself states that when he visited Wādi Habīb in 1088, he found certain historical documents at the Monastery of S. Macarius. From the same monastery come the (still existing) Vatican Codices, Nos. LVII (IX century), LXI (dated 962), LXXI (between 921 and 933), LXVIII (dated 957). Moreover, No. LX in the same collection was written by a monk of the Monastery of Kamī

(to which presumably it belonged) in 918—as was part of No. LXVI. It is clear therefore that the destruction was very far from being complete.

4 Possibly the external buildings (of which there were probably many) were pillaged, and not the walled inclosures. The list of Shenudeh’s improvements implies that the monks had many outbuildings, olive mills, and the like. Yet there is distinct evidence that most of the churches needed extensive repairs and refitting in the Fatimid Period.

5 Hist. Patr., ms. cit., pp. 159 f.
And so he went on taking them one by one by the back of the neck until he had pushed them all outside, when he fastened the door. And those blacks swore that their eyes were blinded, and that his hand upon their necks was like a heavy stone."

In 1073 the calamities which had so long afflicted Egypt began to pass. An abundant harvest put an end to the famine; and the leader of the Turkish military faction, Nâsîr ed Daula, was assassinated in the same year. At its close, the general Bedr el Gemâlî, invited by El Mustansir, landed in Egypt with an army, and by an unscrupulous stroke deprived the Turkish party of its chiefs. In 1074 Alexandria was regained for the caliph, and the Lewâtis cut to pieces or subdued. In the two following years the black troops and Arab tribes who had dominated Upper Egypt were overcome, and order was once more restored to the whole country.¹

4. Current Events, 1074–1088 A.D.

The last quarter of the eleventh century is a period of considerable and varied interest in the history of Wâdî Habîb. That the monasteries soon recovered from the damage inflicted by the Lewâtis is apparent from the first two incidents which we have to record—the visit of the Armenian patriarch, Gregory II Vahram, and the election of Cyril II as Patriarch of Alexandria.

The restoration of order in Egypt was followed by consequences of great political importance. Bedr el Gemâlî stayed on in Egypt as the caliph’s vizier, and his troops stayed with him; both general and troops were Armenian.² The year 1074 therefore inaugurates the period during which Armenians were all powerful and correspondingly prosperous in Egypt. It was at this juncture that Gregory II Vahram, ex-Catholicos of Armenia, came to Egypt; and though we are given to understand³ that this visit was of the nature of a pilgrimage, it is hardly doubtful that he came by invitation either of Bedr el Gemâlî himself, or of the Christian Armenians in Egypt.

In the year of the Armenians 518 (1069–1070 A.D.) Gregory, who had been consecrated in 1065–1066, renounced his ecclesiastical dignity in order to lead the solitary life, declaring his intention to visit Rome and “to traverse all the desert of Egypt.”⁴ This resolve was carried into effect in the year 523 (Armenian) or 1074–1075 A.D., and Gregory set out for Constantinople and thence proceeded to Rome. “Then he passed over into Egypt, where he visited the desert which the ancient fathers had inhabited.”⁵ There he fulfilled the desire of his heart; he established there his patriarchal throne, and made

¹ See Lane-Poole, History of Egypt in the Middle Ages, p. 151.
³ By Matthew of Edessa: see below. Mauhub does not mention this visit, possibly because the Armenians and Copts had not yet come to an understanding. In a memorandum attached to an epitome of the Commentaries of Ephraem and John Chrysostom on The Acts, Gregory speaks of himself as having been driven out by the Scythians (Seljûks) and coming to Constantinople in 1076–1077 A.D., where he had the Commentaries of Chrysostom translated. This he carried with him “having painfully traversed the vast extent of Libya”: see Dulaürier, Recherches sur la chronologie arménienne, pp 298 f.
⁵ Sceis is obviously meant.
vigorously the institutions of the Holy Church. He was treated with great consideration by
the King of the Egyptians (i.e., the Caliph El Mustansir)—much more than if he had been
the Emperor. A throng of Armenians came to join him; for there were at this period in
Egypt about 30,000 people of our nation.”

From this and from a subsequent notice it appears that Gregory—regretting, it may be,
his resignation of the patriarchate of Armenia—had constituted himself, or had been
constituted, patriarch of the Armenians in Egypt. For how long he remained in Egypt
we do not know, but a later reference shows that he had left the country before 1088. For
our present purpose it is specially important to notice that at a time when the
Armenian Church in Egypt was being organized, Armenians were fully alive to the venera-
able associations of the desert of Scetis. This point must be kept in view when we come to
inquire into the origin of the Armenian monastery there.

It is tolerably certain that when Gregory visited the desert monastic life there had
resumed its normal course. The same thing is made clear by the record of the circumstances
attending the election of Cyril II.

Christodulus had died at Misr in 1078, and “after a time his holy body was translated
to the Monastery of Saint Macarius in the Wâdi Habîb.” The account of the choice of
his successor is interesting from more than one point of view and not least as giving us one
more incident in the life of Bessus:

“When,” writes Mauhub, “the father Abba Christodulus died...it was the turn of the
clergy and chief laymen of Misr and the monks of the Monastery of Saint Macarius, to
appoint the patriarch. Therefore an assembly of bishops was formed...and they proceeded
to the Monastery of Saint Macarius and stayed there two months enquiring who might
be fit for the office of patriarch, but they could not agree. Then some of the bishops arose
and, accompanied by Sharut, archdeacon of the Monastery of Saint Macarius, visited the
Monastery of Saint Kama in order to take that saint of God, Bessus....But when they
were about to seize him, he cried out against them, and took a stone with which he struck
his breast....Then he exclaimed: ‘I am the son of a slave. Will you make me patriarch?
Seek neither me nor Macarius the doorkeeper, who has fled from you and hidden himself.
Trouble not yourselves, for behold your patriarch is among you in the sanctuary of the
Monastery of Saint Macarius.’”

The monk thus indicated was a certain George, who was duly elected and took the name
of Cyril. Soon after the formalities of consecration were completed, the new patriarch
went out to spend Easter in Wâdi Habîb according to custom. “And when he went out
to the Great Fast,” writes Mauhub, “one of the bishops who was with him there told me

1 Matthew of Edessa, Chronique, cviii.
2 See p. 365.
3 See p. 366.
5 Id., ms. cit., pp. 173 f.
that when he raised the vessel of the holy chrism in the sanctuary of Saint Macarius on Great Thursday, the contents of the vessel overflowed upon his hands and upon the altar.”

To this period in all probability belongs an interesting note in a Syriac codex from the Monastery of the Syrians. This note, which is appended to the signature of a certain John, Bishop of Jerusalem, states that the prelate named “came to this desert at a time when there were in this convent seventy Syrian monks.” The normal number of the brethren at the Syrian Monastery was probably about sixty—the figure which Mauhub gives in his list of the monasteries in 1088.

The explanation of this rise in the number of the monks in the Syrian Monastery is furnished by a note, dated 1084, in another codex now preserved at Paris. This relates that the Turks having invaded and devastated Syria and Asia Minor, many monks of these countries came and took refuge in the desert of Scetis, where they found an asylum in the convent of the Syrian monks. Amongst these refugees was a young man of Tela Mar‘ash named Bar Sauma, distinguished for his virtues and knowledge, who lived for some time in the convent. Here he employed himself in putting the library in order, since most of the volumes were in a bad state, with bindings broken, leaves detached, and quires scattered all over the monastery. It is likely that these supernumeraries were only temporary residents since even the monk Bar Sauma mentioned above lived in the monastery only for a time; possibly they belonged to that class distinguished at a later date from the regular inhabitants as “faithful strangers.”

From the time of the Arab Conquest when ‘Amr confirmed the monks in the enjoyment of the revenues assigned to them by the Emperor Zeno, we have heard nothing as to the financial status of the monasteries. Whether the monasteries had paid heavily for their immunity during El Hâkem’s persecution, or whether economic laws or other causes had brought about that decline in the revenue derived from El Bohaireh of which Makrizi speaks, we cannot tell. But it appears that the Monastery of Saint Macarius was now in need of considerable financial support. For Mauhub records that about 1086 Cyril II made certain arrangements for the endowment of the monastery: “the revenues of certain sees he conferred as an endowment upon the Monastery of Saint Macarius, namely Damireh, Abusr Bana, Damahûr, and El Ahnâsiyeh; and these endowments he made out in writing ... and handed the documents over to the monks in charge of the said monastery.” It is no doubt to be understood that a certain part and not the whole of the revenues of these

---

1 Hist. Patr., ms. cit., p. 175.
2 Wright, Cat. Syr. MSS. in B.M., No. dccccl, p. iii. Wright states that the note is by an XI century hand, and the bishop named is probably to be identified with that John of Jerusalem who was consecrated by John XII of Antioch (patriarch, 1080-1081): see R.O.C., v, pp. 668, 614; Michael the Syrian, Chron., Appendix III, 39 (ed. Chabot, iii, p. 475).
3 See p. 360.
4 Zotenberg, Cat. MSS. syr. B.N., No. 27, p. 12.
5 Wright, Cat. Syr. MSS. in B.M., No. cxxviii, p. 171.
6 See p. 268.
7 Hist. Patr., ms. cit., p. 177.
bishops was to be thus diverted. If there is ground for suspecting that the material prosperity of the Wâdi Habîb was beginning to wane, the monks still retained their hold upon the higher offices of the Church. This is well illustrated at this time in the case of the bishopric of Misr which became vacant in 1088 by the death of Abba James—evidently a man of note.

Some account of his early life is given in the *Synaxarium* for September eleventh: “On this day,” we are informed, “died the pure virgin and holy father Abba James, bishop of the town of Cairo. This ascetic desired in his soul from his youth to clothe himself in the habit of the holy monastic estate. . . . He left his town, went to the desert of Scetis, that is to say, to the Monastery of the holy Abba Macarius, and dwelt in a ‘cave’ which was part of the ‘caves’ (monastery) of holy Abba John the Little. . . . He was appointed archdeacon of the Church of holy Abba John . . . .” From the *History of the Patriarchs* we learn that he held the see for twenty-four years (i.e., 1064–1088).

It is significant that at his death no attempt was made to look for a successor elsewhere than in the desert monasteries. As our authority records: “then the chiefs of the laity met together to choose his successor from among the monks of the monasteries; and their choice fell upon two, either Sanhût, the deacon in the Monastery of Saint Bishôi, or Poemen, the archdeacon in the Monastery of Saint John.” Both the selected candidates went through the form of hiding; but the former, being the more carelessly hidden, was in the event consecrated. It may not be amiss to anticipate somewhat and to notice in this connection that when Sanhût died in 1117, one of the persons nominated as candidate for the See of Misr was another monk of Wâdi Habîb, a certain Michael the Singer (psalmodist) of the Monastery of Saint Macarius.

1 *Synax.* (Eth.), ed. Guidi (*P.O.*, ix, pp. 459 f.).
2 The expression is used conventionally, as often, since James was a monk of the Monastery of S. John the Little.
4 Abû Sâlih (*Churches and Monasteries of Egypt*, fol. 80a)

notes that Sanhût fell into schism and was obliged to flee from Michael IV to a monastery at Akfahs, where he remained for three years.

CHAPTER V
THE ELEVENTH CENTURY (III)

1. The State of the Monasteries in 1088

In a preface to his own section of the History of the Patriarchs, Mauhub states the whereabouts of the documents from which that record was compiled, and in this connection mentions a visit he paid to Wâdi Habîb in 1088, when he found at the Monastery of Saint Macarius a series of Lives of ten patriarchs (from Michael III to Shenûdeh II) written by Michael, Bishop of Tinnis. Happily he has added a list of the monasteries and the number of the monks dwelling in each. His statement is as follows:

"In the said desert at that time there were about seven hundred monks, of whom four hundred were at the Monastery of Saint Macarius, and one hundred and sixty-five in the Monastery of Saint John (the Little), and in the Monastery of Saint Kama twenty-five, and twenty in the Monastery of Baramûs, and forty in the Monastery of Saint Bishôi, and sixty in the Monastery of the Syrians, and in the cave of Saint Moses two monks, a Syrian and Copt, besides the holy hermits, whom we did not see or know."

This list may be rearranged in tabular form so as to show the relative strength of the seven monasteries:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monastery</th>
<th>Number of Monks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Macarius</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Syrians</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bishôi</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kamé</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baramûs</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cave of Moses</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>712</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Two Coptic lists of undetermined date name the same monasteries in the following

1 Ms. cit., p. 219.
2 Excluding hermits of unknown number.
3 Published by Amelineau, *Géographie*, pp. 577 f.; see also Crum, *Cat. Copt. MSS. in Rylands Library*, Nos. 453, 454.
4 The omission of the Monastery of John the Little is purely accidental.
order: Macarius, Bishōi, Our Fathers the Greeks, Maximus and Domitius (sc. Baramūs), Moses the Black (ⲡⲟⲩⲧⲟⲩⲧⲟ, ⲣⲟⲩⲧⲟⲩⲧⲟ), John the Black (ⲡⲟⲩⲧⲟⲩⲧⲟ, sc. John Kamē), Mary the Theotokos the Syrian.

In Mauhub’s list we have indisputable evidence of the extent to which monasticism had declined even at this favored center. In the sixth century there were three thousand five hundred monks in Scetis, but at the end of the eleventh, only seven hundred and twelve monks and a few hermits. Moreover, by giving us the names of those “Seven Monasteries” alluded to in the time of Shenûdeh I, it enables us to distinguish the three secondary from the four primary monasteries, and also to assign the foundation of monasteries other than those seven to dates later than 1088. At the same time, Mauhub’s list is summary, and this explains his omission of reference to the “duplicate” or Theotokos monasteries. When he mentions the Syrian Monastery, he gives us no hint of what this originally was, and the Theotokos of Baramūs is not mentioned. The Theotokos of Saint John the Little also is ignored—no doubt because it was regarded as an inseparable adjunct of the greater monastery; but that this “duplicate” actually existed in 1088 is certain, not only from Makrizi’s later reference to it, but also from the number of monks assigned by Mauhub to the Monastery of Saint John—a number which, as more than double of that of any other normal monastery, surely postulates a secondary establishment.

2. The Dependent Cells

Mauhub also ignores another very remarkable feature in the economy of Scetis—the class of cells dependent upon the Monastery of Saint Macarius, certain of which have already been named in the history of this period. Since the four hundred monks at the Monastery of Saint Macarius cannot all have lived in the fortress, the “cells” were situated outside the inclosure. Indeed, our fourteenth-century authorities make this quite clear, and even show in one instance that the cells were architecturally miniature monasteries having a chapel and other buildings surrounded by an inclosure wall. The ruins of these structures seen by Makrizi and subsequent travellers, still remain. These cells, occupying the area of the fourth-century settlement, developed directly from mansūbebs (dwelling houses) of the late Byzantine and early Arab Periods. Several, as we shall see, date from the seventh century, but others may have marked sites consecrated by the memory of earlier fathers.

Prominent among these was the cell called Bihima-absit in memory of the Forty-nine Martyrs. Originally a church built by Aristomachus to accommodate the monks ejected

---

1 See p. 306, note 4.  
2 See p. 258.  
3 For these later monasteries see Makrizi’s list on pp. 405 f.  
4 The Monastery of S. Macarius was of course quite abnormal: see below.  
5 In the Hist. Patr. (p. 555) they are mentioned as “the mensūbebs, that is to say, the cells” (المنشيب اعتنى).  
6 See pp. 395, 397.  
7 See p. 405, and Part v, passim; Butler, Ancient Coptic Churches, i, p. 295, fig. 19; A.A.C.M., ii, i, § 5; ii, § 2.  
8 See p. 105.  
9 See pp. 267, 282.  
10 See p. 164, and references.
by the Gaianites (and so to be identified as the Theotokos of Abba Macarius), it was transformed in the days of Benjamin and of John the Hegumen into the sanctuary of the Forty-nine and from the notice in the Synaxarium appears to have become a center at which a certain number of monks dwelt. It does not appear to be otherwise mentioned unless under another name.

The cell of Abraham and George known as Bijlj, or (perhaps better) Bijeblij, possibly meaning the “Height,” has already been discussed. It was still existing when the Arabic Synaxarium was compiled, and in the fourteenth century, but was certainly deserted in the time of Makrizi.

A third cell was distinguished as the Great Cell (Arabic “Dinishtiri” = Coptic ẖwpt ẖnpt). Though this is mentioned only in connection with Michael V (1146–1147), its existence two centuries earlier is known from scribal notes in Coptic mss., the first of which states that the volume was written in 957 at the instance of “our beloved brother Theodosius . . . Priest of the Great Cell.” If our authority is not anachronistic, it originated in the seventh century, since Zacharias of Sais is distinguished as the builder of “this great mansbōpi.”

When John Kamé retired to the desert, he entered the mansbābeh of Abba Teroti. This was clearly inclosed (the only entrance being a gate), but no further details concerning it are known. Probably it was a typical “dwelling-place” of the period, and was not rebuilt after the sack of the monasteries in 817.

Five other cells are barely noticed in the History of the Patriarchs. In the tenth century Menas II was a monk in a cell called Deranba or Dernaba. It is mentioned again in the fourteenth century as Dernabāba (درنابا), the name being possibly transliterated from the Coptic ẖpri ẖmān, “The Cell of the Papa” (i.e., patriarch).

Shenūdeh II was trained in the cell Danhabeh; the name may possibly be a perversion of the foregoing.

Philothoe̊s came from a cell named Daker Kufra in the Monastery of Saint Macarius; it is nowhere else mentioned.

In the days of John VI (1186–1216) monks of the cells of El Birbirhos and Saksik are mentioned. The former name may be a corrupt rendering of the Coptic ẖprẖprẖc, in which case the cell would be identical with Dernabāba; Saksik, however, appears to be a personal name.

A colophon in the third volume of the History of the Patriarchs in the Patriarchal Library at Cairo states that the ms. was copied and collated in 991 A.M. (1275 A.D.) at the “Cell

---

1 See p. 271.
2 See p. 380.
3 Cod. Vat. Copt., No. lxviii, in Mai, S.V.N.C., v, ii, p. 164; No. lxii (dated 962 A.D.) in Mai, op. cit., p. 157, where a deacon Menas is described as a “Son of the Great Cell.”
4 See p. 282, and references.
5 See p. 339.
6 B.N., Fonds arabe, No. 100, fol. 51.
7 See p. 347.
8 See pp. 381, 383.
THE ELEVENTH CENTURY

of the Damanhûrians” in the Monastery of Saint Macarius. We must therefore infer that this cell was reserved for monks drawn from the town of Damanhûr, just as in the El Azhar Mosque at Cairo each nationality occupies its own riwâk.¹

Further additions are made by the Book of the Chrism. In 1330 Benjamin is recorded to have visited the following cells, all apparently—though not certainly—dependent upon the Monastery of Saint Macarius: El Sedîrî (فلاني السدير)²; Barsînî (برسيني) or Barhînî, together with neighboring cells³; the cell of ‘Aużîlî (عوزيلى) or Ghûrîlî.⁴ In connection with the visit of Peter, who succeeded Benjamin, two more cells are named: the cell of Dâkûnîîhî (دكرنيه)⁵ perhaps from the Coptic *φοινική*; and the cell of Biltaus (بلتوس) “named after Saint Philotheos.”⁶

Were the other monasteries surrounded by similar satellites? The Monastery of John the Little, second in point of numbers only to the Monastery of Saint Macarius, owned a certain number of such dependencies in the fourteenth century and doubtless earlier; for in the narrative of Benjamin II’s visit to the desert mention is made of “the Abyssinian monks who dwelt in the said Monastery (of John) and in the neighboring cell.”⁷ One of these is mentioned at a much earlier period. A note dated 1199 in a Coptic ms. mentions “the cell Pehîout” (لاهود نيقير) in the Laura of John the Little.⁸ It is noticed again in the fourteenth century under the name Behût (بيوت) as inhabited by Abyssinians.⁹ Since it also included a Church of Elîas, it is to be identified with the Monastery of the Abyssinians, or of Elîas, whose ruins were seen by Makrîzi in the early fifteenth century.¹⁰

No cells are mentioned in connection with the remaining monasteries. When Benjamin II visited the Monastery of Bishôî in 1330, “the monks were only aware of him when he was already arrived at the gate”¹¹—that is, there were no outlying cells. The “cell at Adari,” to which Samuel the Hermit belonged,¹² is perhaps the Syrian Monastery itself. None are mentioned in connection with the Monastery of Baramûs, though in the eighteenth century Sicard speaks of the ruins of ten or twelve “sacred edifices” in its near neighborhood.¹³

The little that is known of the economy and general arrangements of these cells is noticed in various connections and is too unimportant to be assembled here.

3. The Relics Preserved in Wâdí Habîb

It was perhaps in 1088 that Mauhub made his list of the relics to be seen in the Wâdí Habîb.¹⁴ Careless and incomplete as this catalogue is, it is of some value as showing what attractions the monasteries held out to the devout pilgrim. “In the monasteries of

1 I owe both the information and the parallel to S. E. Marcos Pasha Samaika.
2 Book of the Chrism, B.N., Fonds arabe, No. 100, fol. 51.
3 lb.
4 Id., fol. 58b. Ziadeh reads the former, Villecourt the latter.
5 Id., fol. 73b.
6 Id., fol. 85b.
7 Id., fol. 52a.
8 The passage is quoted p. 368.
9 See p. 396.
10 See p. 405.
12 See p. 371.
13 See p. 426.

363
Wâdi Habîb,” he says, “I saw the bodies of the three Saints Macarius, and at the same place the relics of Abisit, and Zeno the Prince and his son, and Saint John, and Saint Bishôî, and Saint Kama, and Saint Moses, and James the Persian who was cut in two (sic), and the tomb of Hilarion, and Saint Paul, and Thomas, and at the Monastery of Baramûs I saw the finger of Saint Severus.”¹ Mauhub unfortunately does not always make clear in which monastery these relics were to be found, and his list calls for some explanation in other ways.

The three Macarii were, of course, to be found in the Monastery of Saint Macarius. The translation of the founder of Scetis has been narrated above, but this is the first reference to the presence there of his two namesakes. One of these was Macarius of Alexandria; the other is probably Macarius, Bishop of Thôou.

The “relics of Abisit” are certainly those of the Forty-nine Martyrs (Bihima-absit), with whose history we have already dealt. “Zeno the Prince and his son” is a blunder for the magistrianus and his son, who perished at the same time as the Forty-nine.

John (the Little), Bishôî, Kamé,² and Moses (the Robber) were to be found in the convents bearing their names.

Of the body of James the Persian “part” is still preserved at the Syrian Monastery; the notice devoted to him in the Synaxarium³ implies that it was formerly at Behnesâ (Oxyrhynchus). If Hilarion is Hilarius,⁴ the “daughter of Zeno,” her tomb was presumably near by the Monastery of Saint Macarius, but it is otherwise unnoticed. Saint Paul is doubtless he of Tamweh, and if so was enshrined in the Monastery of Bishôî, his inseparable companion.⁵ Thomas again is likely to have been the pride of the Syrian Monastery, since his remains were long preserved at Edessa, whither they attracted pilgrims as early as the fourth century.⁶ When, if ever, they were brought to the Wâdi ’n Natrûn is unknown; according to another account they were translated to Chios in 1258.⁷

The finger of Saint Severus at Baramûs also passes unnoticed elsewhere, but the bonds (?) with which Severus was bound on one occasion are said to have been preserved in the Monastery of Saint Macarius.⁸

The omission of all reference to the patron saints of Baramûs, Maximus and Domitius, does not speak highly for the completeness and accuracy of this list. Nor does our author

---

¹ At Der es Suriân, Assemâni (XVIII century) found relics of Marutha of Tekrit, and at the present day there is preserved there a collection of small relics representing Saints Severus, Dioscorus, Cyriac and Julietta, James the Persian, John the Little, Moses the Black, the Forty Martyrs of Bastla (Sebaste) and the hair of S. Mary Magdalené: see A.A.C.M., iv. iii, § 5.
² The body of John the Little was subsequently removed to the Monastery of S. Macarius, no doubt when his own monastery was ruined, and is still preserved there. The relics of Kamé are now at the Syrian Monastery.
³ Ed. Basset, pp. 266 f.
⁴ On Hilari see pp. 224 f.
⁵ See p. 302.
⁶ Gregory Bar-Hebraeus (Chron. eccl., ed. Abbeleo and Lamy, i, col. 66) states that the body was removed from “India” to Edessa: see Peregrinatio Sileiae, ed. Geyer, chs. 17, 19.
⁷ See the Catholic Encyclopedia, xiv, p. 659, s.v. Saint Thomas the Apostle. It is just possible that the saint at Scetis is not Thomas, but the chaste Thomas: see p. 262. Or can this be the Egyptian martyr, Thomas of Shentalet? On whom see my New Texts, pp. 94 f.
⁸ See p. 231.
mention the body of Marutha, Bishop of Tekrīt, which was brought to the Syrian Monastery when Mesopotamia was overrun by Persians and Arabs—presumably at the time of the Seljūk invasion. We cannot, however, be quite sure that these relics had yet reached the Wādī Habīb.

4. The Monasteries of the Armenians and Abyssinians

According to Mauhub there were seven monasteries only in Wādī Habīb in 1088. But in the same year an event occurred which heralded, if it did not actually cause, the foundation of one, perhaps two, new national monasteries—those of the Armenians and of the Abyssinians.

We have seen that the ex-Catholicos of Armenia, Gregory II, visited Scetis; assumed the function of Armenian patriarch in Egypt, and organized a national church there. He left the country before 1088 when the arrival of his successor is thus recorded:

"In the month Abīb, in the year 803 of the Martyrs, a ship arrived at Alexandria containing a young man.... This young man was said to be the patriarch of the Armenians, named Gregory.... A holy Armenian monk, named Manâkēs, had come to this country before him, and had entered the desert of Saint Macarius, and associated with the holy monk Bessus." The newcomer stated that his uncle (Gregory II) had resigned the patriarchate (of Egypt) to him and sent him thither. From Alexandria he went on to Misr, where he was cordially received by the commander-in-chief, Bedr el Gemâlī, and had an interview with the Coptic patriarch, Cyril, at which "the true orthodox faith, which is ours, was confessed before him by the assembly of the Jacobites. On that day news was spread abroad of the agreement of the Copts, Armenians, Syrians, Abyssinians and Nubians touching the orthodox faith."[2]

The mention of these nationalities can hardly fail to recall the fact that (taking Abyssinians and Nubians as one) these four nations were, on Makrizi's showing, all represented in Wādī Habīb. Is it possible then, to fix the date or period when the monasteries of the Armenians and Abyssinians were established in Wādī Habīb?

1 See Assemani, B.O., 1, p. 179, quoting the tradition current among the monks in the early XVIII century. Is this correct or were the remains those of the forgotten purchaser of the Syrian Monastery?

2 Makrizi calls each a "monastery" (dhar) but this need not imply that they were independent; they may have been merely reserved "cells" in the Laura of John the Little.


4 This Gregory is not to be confused with Gregory III (the grandnephew of Gregory II) who was born in 1092 A.D. and became Catholicos of Armenia in 562 A. ARM. (1113-1114 A.D.) as Gregory III Bahlavanii: see Matthew of Edessa, Chronique, trans. Dulaureir, cxxiv. Little else is known of this Armenian patriarch in Egypt: in 1117 he was present at the funeral of Sanhūt, Bishop of Misr (Hist. Patr., ms. cit., pp. 212–213), and is subsequently mentioned as residing at Ez Zuhri, between Cairo and Misr (id., p. 222). Later he appears to have left the country, but returned in 1134 or 1135 to visit his brother Bahram, the vizier, and died in Egypt (id., p. 239) when a certain Ananias succeeded him. Matthew of Edessa (op. cit., cxxvi) states that at the death of Gregory II in 1105-1106 there were in all four Armenian catholics, one of whom was in Egypt, but at the close of the same chapter speaks of six catholics, two of whom were in Egypt.

5 Renaudot (Hist. Patr. Alex., p. 461) represents him as being led by the monk Manâkēs to Wādī Habīb, but this is not directly stated, though surely implied, in the passage quoted above from the Hist. Patr.


Mauhub makes no reference in his list to an Armenian monastery in Wâdi Habîb. He does indeed refer to an Armenian monk who dwelt there, but says expressly that he “associated” with Bessus, that is, he dwelt in the Monastery of John Kamé. Presumably, then, there was there no Armenian monastery in 1088. On the other hand, Makrizi, writing before 1441, mentions a “Monastery”¹ of the Armenians in the neighborhood of the Monastery of Saint John, but says that it was “destroyed.” The convent in question was therefore founded, carried on existence, and perished between 1088 and 1441 (or 1330, since it is unmentioned in the narrative of the patriarchal visit of Benjamin II).²

In all but formal proof it is certain that the foundation of the Armenian Monastery (or Cell) was not later than the twelfth century. The evidence for this is twofold: first, there are extant two polyglot mss. and two fragments,³ all derived from the Wâdi ‘n Natrûn. Each page is divided into five columns presenting the text in Armenian, Arabic, Coptic, Syriac, and Abyssinian (Pl. VIII). One of these—the Milan Epistles—dates in part from the twelfth century. When this ms. was written there was surely a regular Armenian community established in Scetis. Secondly, political events practically confine the date of foundation to the end of the eleventh and first two thirds (at most) of the twelfth century.

Bedr el Gemâlî, after his appearance in Egypt in 1074, had become all powerful, and Matthew of Edessa shows how large was the number of Armenian settlers soon after.⁴ Bedr died in 1094 and was succeeded by his son, El Afdal, who was vizier until his assassination in 1121. Subsequently El Afdal’s son, Abû ‘Alî Kattifât, was set up by the army (mainly, it must be remembered, Armenian), but fell in 1131, though his place was taken by Yanis, an Armenian slave of El Afdal. Finally, an Armenian Christian, Bahram, was set up as vizier by the troops in 1134. Under his régime the Armenians and Christians generally rose to the greatest height of their power, and the History of the Patriarchs⁵ admits that “during his term of office (the Christians) had much influence and power, and in their hands were the best posts in the great divans.” How privileged were the Armenians at this time may be understood from a single example: the Armenian Bishop of Atfih was invited to court to give historical lectures to the Caliph Hâfiz, and had the right of appearance at the caliph’s levee on Mondays and Thursdays.⁶

But the days of Armenian supremacy presently drew to a close. In 1136 Rudwân, Governor of El Gharbîyeh, headed a rising of Muslims who were naturally indignant at the

¹ Yet this may not have been an independent monastery: see p. 365, note 2.
² See p. 395.
³ They are the following: (1) The Barberini Psalter (Barb. Orient., 1), XIV century. For its romantic history see P.O., x, p. 217. A facsimile is given by Tisserant (Spec. cod. Orient., Pl. 80). (2) The Milan Acts and Epistles (Milan, Ambrosiana), XII and XIV century: see Horner, Coptic Version of the New Testament, iii, p. xvii. As the Arabic note on fol. 150b (Pl. VIII) shows, this ms. once belonged to the Syrian Monastery. (3) S. John (1:31-45), a single leaf (B.M. Or. 1240), XIII or XIV century, from the Monastery of Baramûs. (4) S. Luke (viii: 37-39, 42-44), a single leaf (Bodl. ms. Copt., C. 2), brought from the Monastery of Baramûs by A.J. Butler. The two fragments perhaps represent a single copy of the Gospels.
⁴ See p. 357.
⁵ ms. cit., p. 232.
⁶ Abû Sâlîh, Churches and Monasteries of Egypt, fol. 2b (ed. Evetts and Butler, p. 4).
existing state of affairs. Despite the entreaties of his Armenian troops, Bahram refused to be a party to civil war, and offered no resistance to the insurgents. Consequently “the Muslims burned down the Armenian Monastery, known as that of Ez Zuhri, and killed the Armenian patriarch (Ananias, successor of Gregory) and all the monks that they found with him in the monastery.”1 Bahram himself retired “to the White Monasteries, where he remained in one of them.” He was summoned thence by the successful Rudwân, but only to be kept in honorable captivity.

Even so, Armenian prosperity had not shared the fate of their political prééminence. At a later date the Caliph Hâfiz invited Bahram, though in vain, to become vizier once more, and it was not until somewhat later that the Armenians definitely sank into insignificance. Abû Sâlih8 records that when the Ghuzz and the Kurds took possession of the land of Egypt in the year 564 (1168-1169 A.D.) “calamities . . . overtook the Armenians, who were then settled in Egypt. Their patriarch, together with the Armenian monks, was driven away from that monastery” (El Bustân). And again: “on account of the ruin brought upon the Armenians by the Ghuzz and the Kurds, their patriarch left Egypt and departed to Jerusalem.”4 This latter event took place in 1172.

This outline of the Armenian fortunes in Egypt makes it highly probable that the national convent was founded before 1168 and most probably before the loss of political ascendancy in 1136. The foundation may even have taken place in or immediately after 1088. (1) It is evident that the Armenians shared with the Copts in their veneration for the Wâdi Habîb; for Gregory II visited the desert “which the ancient fathers had inhabited,”8 and in 1088 we hear of an Armenian monk (probably not the only one of his nation) settled in the Monastery of Kamé.6 (2) We may be sure then, that the Armenians would have been glad to obtain a footing of their own in Wâdi Habîb. At the time of Mauhub’s visit in 1088 they had not yet done so,7 no doubt because up to this time the Coptic and Armenian Churches had not come to a mutual understanding.8 (3) What is more probable than that the monastery was founded as a direct outcome of the concordat between Copts and Armenians, as a symbol of that agreement between the various nationalities “touching the true, orthodox faith”? The youthful Patriarch Gregory (assisted, no doubt, by the monk Manâkês) would then be the founder of the Armenian Monastery.9

2 According to Abû Sâlih (op. cit., fol. 84 a) Bahram retired to the Monastery of Shenûdeh, “the White Monastery” at Sohag. But the Monastery of Bishâri also was known as “the White Monastery”: see p. 431, note 1. May not Bahram, therefore, have fled to the Wâdi ‘n Natrûn?
7 Though no allusion is ever made to the subject, it is hardly doubtful that a new monastery could not be established in Wâdi Habîb without the patriarch’s sanction, which could not be secured for the asking. Doubtless the monasteries already established had a say in the matter.
8 For this reason, perhaps, the visit of Gregory II to Egypt is ignored in the Hist. Patr.
9 It may be conjectured that the new patriarch had been directly commissioned to establish a monastery in Wâdi Habîb, since his uncle (Gregory II) was a well-known lover of monasticism: see Tournebize, Histoire politique et religieuse de l’Arménie (R.O.C., ix, p. 110).
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

It is probable, therefore, that the Armenian Monastery was founded between 1088 and the end of the eleventh century (say about 1090). A date later than 1132 is to be regarded as unlikely, and one later than 1168 as practically out of the question. But doubtless there were Armenian monks here this settled in the regular Coptic monasteries.¹

The evidence for the foundation of the Abyssinian Monastery at this period is far slighter. From the earlier part of the polyglot Epistles at Milan² we presume that an Abyssinian community existed in the twelfth century. This is established as a fact by the following donor’s note in one of the Curzon Coptic mss.³: “Apa Stauros, a monk of the Laura of our great and righteous Father Abba John, a son of the cell Pehôout, took great pains with this holy book and gave it to the holy Church of the holy Elias, the great Prophet.” This gift was made in 1199.⁴ Since the Monastery of John had a strong Abyssinian connection⁵ and the cell Pehôout is known to have been occupied by Abyssinians, and since Makrizi shows that the monastery of the Abyssinians was dedicated to Elias, we shall not err in dating the foundation of the Abyssinian Monastery before the close of the twelfth century and not earlier than the last twelve years of the eleventh century.⁶ Within this period no occasion so plausible as the concordat between the four nationalities is recorded. It is probable that the Abyssinians did not build for themselves a new monastery, but occupied by grant or by purchase the above-mentioned cell of Pehôout, since the name is Coptic.

Neither of the monasteries whose foundation has just been discussed is known to have played any considerable part in the history of Wâdi Habîb. The Armenian Monastery, indeed, is only mentioned in the fifteenth century when it was already ruined⁷; of the Abyssinian Monastery—or rather of the Abyssinian monks—we shall hear something in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.⁸ Nevertheless, dwelling as they did as neighbors,⁹ Copts, Syrians, Armenians, and Abyssinians must have established a certain relationship to one another. This opens up an interesting question.

All the communities were, of course, in communion, and there is evidence for believing that fairly intimate relations were cultivated between them. In the case of the Copts and Syrians this is not surprising, and the fact is established by various incidents recorded in the History of the Patriarchs, such as the consultation of Joseph “the Syrian Saint” prior to the election of Gabriel II to the patriarchate,¹⁰ or the presence of Syrians along with King George who died 1158. Such an object would hardly be dedicated in a monastery which did not in some sense belong to the Nubians. If we may assume that they shared with the Abyssinians in possession of the monastery of Elias, we have in this inscription further evidence that the monastery in question was existing in the XII century.

¹ See p. 366 and note 9 there.
² For this ms. and its contents see my New Texts, Appendix II, p. 273.
³ See p. 365.
⁴ For the text, see T.S.B.A., IX, pp. 110 f.
⁵ See p. 365.
⁶ In the Monastery of the Syrians is preserved a circular marble altar “tray” (A.A.C.M., IV, v, § 2) bearing a Greek and Nubian inscription commemorating a Nubian

368
THE ELEVENTH CENTURY

Copts in the Church of Saint Macarius to witness the portentous bleeding of the picture of Saint Menas.¹ Nor again, is it surprising to find traces of intercourse between Syrians and Armenians as we do in some of the mss. from the Syrian Monastery.²

The fine and elaborate polyglot mss. above mentioned were certainly not prepared for any trivial purpose.³ Three points are to be remarked: (a) all are Biblical; (b) they come, not from one, but from three of the greater monasteries of Wâdi Habîb; (c) all apparently belong to a period when the Armenian and Abyssinian monasteries were still in existence. The inference to be drawn is that these mss. were written for the use of foreign monks visiting the greater monasteries (probably at festivals), to enable them to follow the lections and psalmody in the offices,⁴ each ms. being perhaps intended to be used jointly by four monks, an Armenian, a Syrian, a Copt, and an Abyssinian, standing in a group.

The principal occasions when such a congress of the various elements in the Wâdi 'n Natrûn took place would be the great patronal festivals of Macarius, Bishôï, Saint John, etc.⁵ But there were also other times when Coptic and alien monks met together, such as patriarchal visits to the foreign monasteries. One such occasion is actually on record and must be quoted here, though once again we are compelled to anticipate. When Benjamin II visited the Monastery of John the Little in 1330 we are told⁶ that "the Abyssinian and the Copt spread abroad the praises of God and his glorification, praising the said father (patriarch)." It is not unreasonable to believe that in the services which followed copies of these polyglot mss. were produced and used.

These manuscripts, then, survive as witnesses to reunions, whether frequent or occasional, of the monks of all nations in the Wâdi Habîb.

It is possible that the foundation of the small Monastery⁷ of Saint Anub should be assigned to the end of this century or the beginning of the next; though no more is definitely known as to its history than that it was not yet founded in 1088, and was ruined before Makrizi wrote.⁸

1 See p. 354. The apparent quarrel between Syrians and Copts as to the ownership of the Syrian Monastery belongs to a later period.
2 In Wright, Cat. Syr. MSS. in B.M., No. DCCCCLIII, p. 1117, the Armenian alphabet has been jotted down with a Syriac transcription while Armenian characters occur here and there in others of these mss.; another ms. (at Leningrad) has been repaired with a scrap of an Armenian ms.: see Wright, op. cit., Preface, pp. xv f.
3 They were certainly not textbooks to aid foreign monks in learning Coptic and Arabic.
4 That these mss. were used in public services is proved by a rubric in the Milan Epistles (on II Cor. 1: 1) directing that the passage was "to be read on the Great Sabbath, early, according to the Syrian rule": see [Horner], Coptic Version of the New Testament, iii, p. xvii. Similar rubrics appear in the British Museum fragment: see Crum, Cat., No. 757.
5 The foreign monks were interested almost equally with the Copts in the saints at Scetis, and the library at the monastery of the Syrians contained a full assortment of the available literature relating to them. Particularly noteworthy is the Office of Macarius, Bishôï, John, Maximus and Domitius: see B.M. Add. 17246 f., 23b f., 14708 f., 133a f.
6 Book of the Chrism, B.N., Fonds arabe, No. 100, fol. 52a.
7 It is, however, by no means certain that it was truly a monastery (i.e., a self-governing community). It may have been no more than a "cell" forming part of the Laura of S. John. If so, it would not have been mentioned by Mauhub, and the date of its foundation would then be altogether indefinite.
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

The patriarchate of Cyril—a period not unfruitful in material relating to the Wâdi Habîb—was now drawing to a close. Mauhub notices that in 1092 he delayed his "entry into the desert of Saint Macarius," because he was closely engaged in a study of the Gospels in Coptic. On his death in the following year, he was buried at Misr, "but afterwards his body was translated to the Monastery of Saint Macarius in the holy valley of Wâdi Habîb." 1

1 Hist. Patr., ms. cit., p. 194.
CHAPTER VI

THE TWELFTH CENTURY (I)

Current Events down to 1131 A.D.

AFTER the death of Cyril, the right of nominating his successor belonged to the Church of Alexandria; but so difficult was it to find a suitable person, that the electors were obliged to journey to the Wâdi Habîb in search of a new patriarch. When the assembly was gathered in the Church of Saint Macarius, the names of several monks of the desert were suggested, though without meeting general approval. Finally, one of the bishops suggested a man “named Samuel, the hermit, in the cell at Adari; and he was a Syrian.” 1 The electors then left the Monastery of Saint Macarius and proceeded to Adari—only to be informed while on their way that Samuel was a man of unsound doctrine, holding that the Body of Christ was consubstantial with His Divinity. Ultimately, a certain Michael, priest and hermit of the cell of Sanjar, was elected patriarch, 2 and after consecration at Alexandria, proceeded to Wâdi Habîb in accordance with the established custom.

Nothing relating to the Wâdi Habîb is recorded in the history of his patriarchate save that, when the King of the Abyssinians sent a request to the vizier, El Afdal, that a metropolitan might be appointed for his country, Michael was bidden to choose and consecrate a fit person. The man selected—a monk of the Monastery of Saint Macarius, named George—was presently sent back from Abyssinia in disgrace. 3

When Michael died in 1103, it was again “the turn of the people of Mîr and the monks of the Monastery of Saint Macarius to elect his successor”; 4 but since it was harvest time the

---

1 Hist. Patr., ms. cit., p. 195. This Samuel is probably the Samuel bar Cyriacus, described as a monk (or priest) and styliste, who wrote certain mss. preserved in the library of the Syrian Monastery. He first appears in 1081, when he was in the Monastery of the Theotokos in Gazarta, near Alexandria (Wright, Cat. Syr. MSS. in B.M., No. DCCCLIII), and is last mentioned in 1102 as a priest and styliste at Nikiu, “not far from the desert of Scete, and from Cairo and Alexandria” (id., No. DCCCV). See also Excursus, § 6.
4 Id., p. 208. For another notice of this election see the Synax., ed. Basset, Tôt 4, pp. 16 f.
assembly could not be gathered until after the Feast of the Cross. Being assembled at length in the Church of Saint Macarius, the electors considered the names of "certain anchorites and holy men of that desert and hermits dwelling in towers." After long disagreement, they resolved to elect either "the holy Macarius, the priest in the Monastery of Saint Macarius, known as the Painter" or John, the deacon, described as "the son of Sanhût," and therefore probably a monk at the Monastery of Bishôi.

Macarius was finally selected and consecrated at Alexandria. Though himself a monk of Wâdi Habîb, he seems to have contemplated a step which provoked the furious indignation of the monks. From Alexandria he proceeded direct to Misr, where it was supposed that he would be proclaimed. Thus the most cherished privilege of the monastery was in danger. What ensued may be related in the words of the History of the Patriarchs:\footnote{1} "but some of the monks of the Monastery of Saint Macarius met together and said: 'He will not celebrate the Liturgy after having celebrated it at Alexandria except in the Monastery of Saint Macarius according to the custom of his predecessors!' They added: 'If thou shalt break this rule, and say the Liturgy to-day in this church in Misr before saying it at the altar of Saint Macarius, there shall be no further intercourse between us and thee, and thy name shall not be commemorated in our sanctuary, and we will not allow thee to enter it or say the Liturgy in it at any time, even if we are all to be killed.' And there was disorder among them and tumult and much speaking and shouting. So the patriarch did not say the Liturgy that day. And he remained at Misr without saying the Liturgy\footnote{2} until after the Feast of the Bathing. Then they departed to the Monastery of Saint Macarius in the middle of Tûbeh (1104), and he said the Liturgy in the sanctuary in the Church of the holy Macarius on Sunday the twenty-third of that month."

Save for this incident—very significant as being the first attempt on the part of any patriarch to break through the web of privilege woven by the monks of Saint Macarius—the record of this patriarchate adds nothing to our story.

---

\footnote{2} Apparently Macarius submitted to the protests of the monks: see El Macinus, Hist. Sar., ed. Erpenius, p. 298. Yet the Synax. (loc. cit.) states that "his investiture (i.e., the reading of the Proclamation) took place in the Church El Mo'allakeh at Misr, in Greek, Coptic, and Arabic."
CHAPTER VII

THE TWELFTH CENTURY (II)

THE MONASTERY OF SAINT MACARIUS AND LITURGICAL MATTERS

1. Election of Gabriel II

Once more, though the right of nominating the new patriarch now appertained to Alexandria, the electors had to seek for a fit person in Wādi Habib. From the Monastery of Saint Macarius, as the History of the Patriarchs records, "they were conducted by the sons of Macarius to visit Abba Joseph, the Syrian saint in the Monastery of the Syrians, that they might consult him." This seer—evidently a person of considerable repute—informedit them that Gabriel of the Monastery of Saint Macarius, who was then absent at Misr, was the right man to choose as patriarch. It is stated further that the same Joseph had spoken similarly of the patriarch Macarius before his election.

2. The Eucharistic Confession

The twelfth century seems to have been a period of some liturgical activity. Certain provisions and regulations as to ritual made by Macarius II, are not known to have affected the monasteries of Wādi 'n Natrūn; but the main interest of Gabriel's patriarchate (1131–1146) from our point of view was ceremonial. At the outset he was involved in a controversy over a point of this kind with the monks of Saint Macarius. The incident is thus narrated:

1 MS. cit., pp. 226 f.
2 Possibly he was Abbot of the Syrian Monastery, but cannot be identified with the Abbot Joseph, mentioned in the scribal note to Wright's Codex, No. 11139, who belongs to the XIII century. On the other hand, in Wright, Cat. Syr. MSS. in B.M., No. 11139, p. 736, there is a note, dated 1139, stating that some lines are in the handwriting of Rabban Joseph of the Syrian Monastery. That this fact should be recorded suggests that he was highly esteemed at this period. It is therefore probable that this Joseph is identical with the seer mentioned in the Hist. Patr. Since he was a monk at the time of the election of Macarius II, he may also be identified with one of the two Josephs named in the list of the Syrian monks contained in a scribal note dated about 1100 in a Syriac codex at the Vatican: see Auguste, B.O., 1, p. 565.
3 For these see Renaudot, Hist. Patr. Alex., pp. 409 f.
The ritual of the Coptic Church as a whole was codified in 1411 by Gabriel, the eighth-eighth patriarch.
“At this time there was a discussion concerning the sense of the Confession said in the presence of the Sacrament before Communion. The words are: ‘I believe and confess that this is the Body of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who took it from the Mother of God, the Virgin Mary, and made it one with his Godhead.’ But some of the monks of the said monastery denied the doctrine contained in the expression ‘became one with his Godhead’ because it was an interpolation, which they declared that they were not accustomed to repeat. But the patriarch defended it, for he had recited it on the day of his consecration, as the bishops found it who appointed him. And he would not give it up… So there was a controversy on this point… Finally, however, it was settled that the other words should be added which now follow those that were objected to, namely: ‘and it became one with his Godhead without division or confusion or mixture.’ Thus the patriarch made this concession to the monks and declared it; and these are the words still used.”

3. Translation of Macarius II

In the following year (1132) Gabriel found occasion to indulge his penchant for ritual in another direction. The body of his predecessor had been buried at Misr, but was now translated to the Monastery of Saint Macarius. In this there is nothing unusual; but it is further stated that Gabriel caused the body to be wrapped in a veil or pall of silk, which was afterwards used to enshroud the body of Saint Macarius himself, and ordered “that the same custom should be established for similar cases.”

4. Consecration of the Chrism

Furthermore, in 1133, Gabriel drew up a special ritual for the consecration of the chrism—a ceremony which, as we have seen, was performed at the once annual but now occasional visit of the patriarch to the Monastery of Saint Macarius. This we learn from an Arabic notice in a Coptic codex at the Vatican, the text of which is as follows: “What hath been transcribed from the Book of the Consecration of the murūn in the Monastery of the holy Abū Makār, from the copy of the writing of the holy father Anba Gabriel the Patriarch (may God make peaceful the years of his priesthood!), unto whom is due the procedure at the raising up of the holy murūn in the Monastery of the holy Abū Makār, on Great Thursday of the year (of the Martyrs) 849 (1133 A.D.).”

---

1 See Liturgy of S. Basil, Renaudot, Lit. orient. col., 1, p. 23. The Coptic (see the Cairo Euchologion, p. 77) is as follows: ἥν ἐγερσίαν τεκμερίστας ἥν ὀρατάται ἄρη τοματάτων τοῦτο τοματάτων τοῦτο τοματάτων.
3 The exact nature of the custom is not quite clear: either the veil used on this occasion was to be used to enshroud the bodies of succeeding patriarchs, or a new veil was to be used on each occasion, and afterwards to be laid upon the body of S. Macarius. At the present day the swathed body of S. Macarius (and of his two namesakes) is covered with a loose silken pall.
4 See p. 350.
5 Cod. Vat. Copt., No. xlvi, fol. 90. I am greatly indebted to W. E. Crum for the following version made from a photograph generously supplied by Dr. Guidi.
6 Mai (S.V.N.C., v, ii, p. 147) wrongly gives the date as 649 A.M. (933 A.D.) and ascribes the authorship of this ritual to Gabriel I.
THE TWELFTH CENTURY

The consecration of the chrism is a ceremony so peculiarly associated with the Monastery of Saint Macarius, that some further notes upon the subject must be added.

The general term "chrism" is here somewhat loosely used to include (a) the μῦρον, μυνᾶ, or chrism proper, a highly composite substance, and (b) ἁγιον ἑλαιον or ἡγιλλη- ἑλαιον, the "oil of gladness" or "oil of the catechumens" (olive oil), both of which were consecrated on one occasion.¹

According to Coptic tradition,² the consecration was originally held in the Church of Saint Mark at Alexandria, but in 390 A.D., the Patriarch Theophilus, in obedience to the command of an angel, ordained that the ceremony should be performed in the Church of Saint Macarius on Friday in the sixth week of the Great Fast.³ The ingredients to be used in the composition of the chrism were prescribed at the same time and by the same authority.⁴ This tradition appears to have no early authority whatever, and it is practically certain that the consecration in Wâdi Habîb dates from the period of Byzantine persecution, when the Jacobite patriarch could no longer enter Alexandria.

According to the Egyptian Canon, Friday in the sixth week of the fast—the day on which, according to tradition, Our Lord baptized his disciples—was the day appointed by Saint Mark for the consecration; though elsewhere this regulation is ascribed to Theophilus. In the tenth century, however, the date was changed. Macarius I consecrated on Maundy Thursday, Menas on both days, but the Syrian Ephraem or Abraham "followed the custom of his country" and permanently established Maundy Thursday as the day for the consecration.⁵

For the text of the rite of consecration, reference must be made to the usual authorities.⁶ But a general account of the ceremony as it was performed in 1167 by the Patriarch Mark ibn Zera‘ah, is here quoted in full,⁷ partly for the sake of the complete picture of the proceedings which it furnishes and partly for the references contained in it to the various sanctuaries and other parts of the Church of Saint Macarius.

"The wonted manner of making the holy chrism at the Monastery of the holy Abû Makâr the Great in the desert of Shîhêt, called Mîzân el Kulûb on Thursday in Holy Week.

"Two altars of wood are set up about the altar of Benjamin, the one on the right of

¹ On the distinction between the chrism proper and the "oil of the catechumens," see Butler, Ancient Coptic Churches, II, pp. 330 f.
² See Book of the Chrism, B.N., Fonds arabe, No. 100, fol. 9 f., where the X century Macarius, Bishop of Menîf, is quoted; Wansleben, Hist. de l'eglise d'Alexandrie, p. 87.
³ Yet elsewhere the Book of the Chrism asserts that this change took place at a time of "disturbance and trouble," i.e., of persecution—as we have conjectured above: see pp. 238 f.
⁴ According to the Vatican ms., Coptic xliv (Mai, S.V.N.C., v. ii, pp. 143 f.), § 20, the ingredients were olive oil (which had not been stored in skins), cinnamon, cassia, storax, grains of spices, cariophyllum, oil of balsam, aloes, and saffron. The mode of preparation is described: see id., § 24. See also Rev. d'hist. ecle., xvi, p. 514; xviii, pp. 5 f. (Dom Villecourt's analysis of the Book of the Chrism).
⁵ Book of the Chrism, ms. cit., fol. 10; Wansleben, Hist. de l'église d'Alexandrie, p. 88.
⁶ Cod. Vat. Copt., No. xliv, §§ 21, 22 (Latin rendering in Denzinger, Ritual Orientalium, i, pp. 248 ff.); Tuki, Euchologion, i, pp. 296 f.
⁷ From the Book of the Chrism, fol. 15 f., translated by the Abbé Louis Villecourt. [The translation of this part only, folios 1–77, has appeared in the Louvain Le Museum, t. xi (1928), pp. 1–32. W.H.] For a less perfect account see Wansleben, Hist. de l'eglise d'Alexandrie, pp. 231 f.
the altar, and the other on the left. The three altars\(^1\) are draped with black hangings. The patriarch and bishops also put on black robes. The patriarch takes the chrism in his right and the galileon in his left hand, and places them both on the altar of Mari Marcos the Evangelist and Patriarch in suchwise that the chrism is on the south, to the right, and the galileon on the north, to the left. Then he places the *Mystagogia*,\(^2\) which is the Creed, between the two. He says the Thanksgiving and the Prayer of Incense at the altar of Mari Marcos. They read the epistle of Paul, the catholic epistle, and *The Acts* at the lowest step of the altar within the veil. The patriarch reads the Gospel, offers incense and takes the *Mystagogia* in his bosom.

"He goes out of the sanctuary (baikal) of Mari Marcos, four deacons bearing a white canopy over him, before him twelve priests all with censers in their hands, twelve deacons also with crosses and ‘cherubims’ in their hands, and twelve deacons carrying lighted candles. The singers chanting walk before him from the Sanctuary of Mari Marcos to the nave of the church. Arrived at its extreme end, that is, the west, they go out into the arcade (nave) of the sanctuary of Benjamin. The clergy and the singers pass along it facing eastwards. When they reach the sanctuary of Benjamin, the clergy enter into the sanctuary before the patriarch, and the singers remain without to chant. The patriarch places the *Mystagogia* upon the synthronus.\(^3\)

"Then he returns with the pomp described, enters into the sanctuary of Mari Marcos by the sanctuary of Benjamin, and takes the chrism from the sanctuary of Mari Marcos. He places it in his bosom (resting on) his right hand, and the oil of gladness on his left hand, if he can carry them both... He goes out with the pomp described to the midst of the sanctuary of Benjamin. Then he goes forth... to its end, to the west. Then he goes out into the arcade of Abû Makâr and enters into the tabernacle (askene). Thence he enters into the sanctuary of Benjamin, and places the chrism upon the southern shrine and the galileon upon the wooden shrine to the north.

"And the father patriarch puts on the chasuble of consecration different from the chasuble which he wore before, which is black. He goes forth from the sanctuary of Benjamin and enters into the sanctuary of Abû Makâr, and from there into the sanctuary of Abû Shenûdeh to consecrate the water and wash the feet of the bishops and priests. When he has finished washing the feet of the clergy, he enters by the sanctuary of Abû Shenûdeh into the tabernacle of the sanctuary of Abû Makâr, and from there into the tabernacle of the sanctuary of Benjamin to consecrate the chrism first and the galileon afterwards.

"He leaves them both upon the altars (of wood). He carries the Offering to the altar of Benjamin, and says the Mass. When he has said the Prayer of the Gospel, he sits upon

---

1 The word used is baikal, properly a sanctuary, but, as the context shows, here “an altar.”
2 I.e., the Creed as delivered by Christ to the Apostles. The text of this is given in the *Book of the Chrism*, fol. 12.
3 For the treatment of the architectural material contained in this description see *A.A.C.M.*, II, i, § 5 and iv, §§ 3 f.
the _synthronus_ of Benjamin, and gives the _Mystagogia_ to the senior of the bishops present on this day to read from the ambo. When he has done reading, the patriarch reads the Gospel from the _synthronus_. He comes down from there, and goes up to the altar, and finishes the Mass in the usual manner. When the bishops, clergy, and people have communicated and Mass is ended, he gives the chrism and the galileon to the porter, who is the sacristan, if he is priest or deacon, to take and place under the altar of Benjamin, until the third day of the Feast.

“And when he is ready to take them (away) on the third day of Easter, the patriarch says Mass in the sanctuary of Benjamin....He directs the porter to bring out...the chrism and the galileon. The patriarch receives them both and puts them in reserve in the place intended for them.

“It was thus that the Father Abba Mark called Ibn Zera’ah did...when he consecrated the chrism at the Monastery of the great saint Abū Makār in Wādi Habīb in the year 882 of the Martyrs” (1166 A.D.).

5. _Accusations against the Monks_

The subject of the chrism recurs once more in the history of this patriarchate, but in very different circumstances.¹ There was in the Monastery of John Kamé a monk named Halus, who was “steward of the revenue derived from the oil of balsam, that is, the chrism.” Probably his official capacity had brought this monk into collision with the monks of Saint Macarius; but whatever the cause, Halus presented a petition to El Hāfiz² “calumniating the monks and declaring that they understood by their magical arts what would happen to princes...and that they collected dinars and other coins by making gold and silver and goldsmiths’ work (? alchemy).” He added that the monks “possessed the image of a water-wheel,² made of crystal, such as could not be found in the palace of any one of the kings of the earth. So he summoned chamberlains and soldiers and took them and went up to the monasteries in Wādi Habīb, and gave the monks into their power; and they mocked the monks and burnt and pillaged and plundered and stopped their work. Thus the monks suffered severely from them. Then he took certain aged monks from among them, and went back with them to Cairo. But not a single point in his report was verified. ...But this man Halus, when he took the officers with him into the Monastery of Saint Macarius, burnt the screen of the holy sanctuary, the sanctuary of Benjamin in that monastery. And he and his companions violently entered it and examined the whole sanctuary. It was said of him that he kicked the screen with his feet in his scorn and pride; and therefore God struck him in his foot with a malignant corrosive ulcer.”

² The date of this incident is therefore between 1131 and 1149.
³ This object reappears later: possibly it was intended for magical purposes.
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

6. The Book of the Passion

Yet another liturgical arrangement was made under Gabriel’s auspices. In the Preface to a collection of lections for Holy Week, entitled the Book of the Acts of the Passion, it is stated that whereas the Apostolic Canons enjoin that in Holy Week the whole of the Old and New Testaments shall be read, and whereas men’s worldly duties do not permit them to carry out this precept, Gabriel b. Tarik, the patriarch, issued a decree touching this matter. And “certain learned, skilful, and wise men, as also many monks of the Monastery of Saint Macarius, compiled a book (of passages) from the Old and New Testaments, and named it The Book of the Passion; and it was used yearly for the celebration of Easter in the church.”

7. Ritual Peculiarities at the Monastery of Saint Macarius

In this context mention may be made of certain peculiarities in matters of ritual at the Monastery of Saint Macarius; though the evidence is not enough to prove the existence of a definitely local “use,” comparable to any of the “uses” current in the English Church in the Middle Ages. (1) As we have seen, there is reason to believe that even so late as the end of the seventh century the rite of taking the habit as practised in Sclis differ greatly from that followed by the Coptic Church at a subsequent period. (2) That a special arrangement of the psalms for use at the canonical hours was followed, is definitely established by the title of a Syriac version. (3) In a Coptic ms. containing a Sermon by Theophilos on the Three Children and an Encomium on the same by Cyril I, a rubric directs that “these two Sermons are to be recited on alternate years during the office of the Doxology in the Southern Sanctuary”—where the concluding direction shows that the rubric has a special and local application. (4) An Arabic ms. at Rome contains a ritual for the “Blessing of the Table” (sc. the altar) “according to the Rite of the Monastery of Saint Macarius.” (5) The disputes of Gabriel II and John V with the monks concerning certain additions to the Eucharistic Confession, show that the latter had a jealously guarded tradition of their own, and were slow to trim it into conformity with usages prevailing elsewhere. (6) Two minor points may also be noticed here: (a) according to Abu’l Barakât the monks of Saint Macarius did not wear the chasuble (καμυσιον, el burnûs) in the service of the altar, but only at public prayers; (b) when Arabic had long since come to be used

---

1 Dillmann, Codices Aethiopici, No. xxvii, p. 30. This ms. does not quite represent the original version, but an enlarged recension prepared by Peter, Bishop of Behnesia.
2 See p. 260.
3 Wright, Cat. Syr. MSS. in B.M., No. ccxxiv. Other copies of this “Selection” are id., No. ccxxvii, and Zoteberg, Cat. MSS. syr. B.N., No. 178—the latter being the most complete of the three copies. On this order see p. 282.
4 Zoëga, Cat., No. xvi, p. 107 = Cod. Vat. Copt., No. lxxi. This ms. was written by Chael, son of Matoi, a monk of S. Macarius.
5 I.e., of the Church of S. Macarius.
6 Cod. Vat. Arab., No. ccxi (Mai, S.V.N.C., iv, ii, p. 584). This ms. contains (a) twenty-six canons collected by John, XCVI patriarch (earlier half of XVI century), from three very ancient copies preserved in “the desert of S. Macarius”; (b) the rite in question, the date of which is not stated; (c) certain ascetic precepts addressed by the Virgin to S. Macarius.
7 See p. 373.
8 See p. 380.
9 See Renaudot, Lit. orient. col., i, pp. 162 f.
in certain parts of the synaxis everywhere else in Egypt, the monks of Saint Macarius still refused to allow anything but Coptic to be read in their church.\footnote{Renaudot, *Lit. orient. col.*, 1, p. xcv. It may be added that the Monastery of S. Macarius had a calendar of its own: thus in the *Synax.* (ed. Basset, p. 39) the Feast of the Birth of Our Lady is assigned to Tūt 10, "in accordance with the reckoning of Abū Makāry and of other (monasteries) in Upper Egypt." Wansleben (*Hist. de l'église d'Alexandrie*, pp. 56 f.) records that the plain chant used in the Coptic Church was invented by a monk of the Monastery of S. Macarius, who was once a potter. At what date this monk lived and what value is to be attached to the tradition, I cannot say.}

How far the other monasteries of the desert had developed similar peculiarities, we cannot tell. But if in the tenth century the Monastery of Kamē had already established something of a ritual tradition of its own,\footnote{See p. 336.} the three original Monasteries of John, Bishōi, and Baramūs are not likely to have lagged behind. In the foreign monasteries the monks presumably followed their own native uses, as witness the rubric in the Ambrosian polyglot *Epistles* directing that the passage be read "on the Great Sabbath, early, according to the Syrian rule."\footnote{The Syrian *Liturgy of S. Athanasius* also appears to have been not only used in the Syrian Monastery, but to have originated there: see Baumstark in *Oriens Christianus*, 11 (1902), p. 92.}
CHAPTER VIII

THE TWELFTH CENTURY (III)

Current Events to the End of the Century

CYRIL died in 1146, and the names of no less than three monks of Wâdi Habîb were considered by the electors—John of the Monastery of Saint John, Solomon of the Monastery of Baramûs, and Michael, a monk of the Monastery of Saint Macarius who lived in a “cell called Dinîshîri” (the “Great Cell”). The third of these was elected, and the fait accompli reminded certain of the old monks that one Abû’l Khair, “the psalmist in the Monastery of Saint Macarius,” had foretold that the Great Cell would produce a patriarch.¹

Michael’s patriarchate was of the briefest. After three months he fell sick—the result, it is alleged, of poison administered by the monks of the cell of John ibn Kidrân²—and retired to the Monastery of Saint Macarius, where he died soon after.

As successor to Michael, John, a deacon of the Monastery of Saint John, was elected. In his patriarchate comparatively little is heard of the monasteries; but once more we hear of a dispute on a liturgical point, in which the monks of Saint Macarius displayed their old conservatism. Certain monks of “the cell of Bishîsh³ belonging to the Monastery of Saint Macarius” with their superior, Salmân, seem to have visited Samannûd, and there to have come under the notice of Macarius, bishop of that place. By him they were accused of making an interpolation in the Eucharistic Confession, namely the Coptic word enreftankbo (енретанбю), “life-giving.” This epithet was attached to the word “Body” in the Confession.⁴ A synod was summoned to consider the legality of the use of such an expression, and decided that, being literally true, it was inoffensive and therefore need not be forbidden. When this decision was promulgated by the patriarch, the phrase was every-

² It is not clear whether this cell was in the Wâdi Habîb or elsewhere.
³ On this cell see p. 280.
⁴ See the Cairo Euchologion, p. 33; or Renaudot, Lit. orient. col., 1, p. 23.
THE TWELFTH CENTURY

where accepted, and “by all the monks of the monasteries, except the priests of the sanctuary of Saint Macarius.” As an excuse for their obstinacy, these last urged that the epithet was an innovation and unknown to their predecessors.

In a period which abounds with incidents illustrative of corruption and treachery on the part of the monks, it is a remarkable fact that the Monastery of Saint Macarius produced a martyr whose heroism should be recorded. During the struggle between the vizier, Shâwar, and Asad ed Dîn (Shirkûh), the Ghuzz fell upon the Christians, Armenians, Turks and blacks of Misr, and the Armenian Church of Ez Zuhri was destroyed. In these disturbances Shenûfa, a monk of the Monastery of Saint Macarius, was seized by the rioters, who offered him the alternative of death or Islam. On his refusal to apostatize, he was put to death, and an unsuccessful attempt was made to burn his body. It was subsequently recovered by the Christians, who buried it in the Church of Saint Sergius (Abû Sergeh) at Misr. This incident may have occurred in the last years of John V.

It is recorded that certain persons unnamed suggested the translation of the body of Gabriel to the Monastery of Saint Macarius. To this John replied that one should come after him who would remove Gabriel’s body and his own to the desert. This forecast was fulfilled; for both were translated together to the Monastery of Saint Macarius in the patriarchate of Mark, son of Zera‘ah, in the fast (Lent) of the year 1170.

Nothing in the recorded history of the next patriarch, Mark, son of Zera‘ah (1166–1189), has any reference to the monasteries, save the statement that at the time of his election the right of nomination belonged to the monks, and that he consecrated the chrism at the Monastery of Saint Macarius in 1167, but the patriarchate of his successor, John VI (1189–1216), is signalized by more than one incident which proves how far Egyptian monasticism had declined. The first of these relates to a monk named John “of the Monastery of Saint Macarius, from the cell of El Birbirhos (أبيببرحوس).” This monk became a renegade, but after living for three years as a Muslim, repented and was allowed to return to his monastery without suffering the usual death penalty. Encouraged by this, another renegade sought to abjure Mohammedanism, quoting the case of the monk John as a precedent; but El ‘Adil, brother and (practically) successor of Saladin, directed that this recusant should be tortured until he died or recanted, and sent a mameluke to the Monastery of Saint Macarius to arrest the monk John and give him the choice between death and Islam.

The unhappy monk’s moral fiber seems to have been worn out, and he apostatized again. Not only that, after El ‘Adil had departed to Damascus (1198–1199) he approached 1169; but if Shenûfa was martyred then, the event does not actually belong to the patriarchate of John V.

1 For the general history of this period see Lane-Poole, History of Egypt in the Middle Ages, pp. 184 f.
2 Hist. Patr., ms. cit., p. 250. The date is given as 808 A.M. (1092 A.D.), which is obviously wrong. Abû Sulîh (see p. 367) dates the disasters to the Armenians in 1168.
El Kâmil (El ‘Adil’s son and viceroy in Egypt) and declared that the monks had dug a well in the Monastery of Saint Macarius, and had found there “a treasure, and vessels, and many objects of goldsmith’s work. And the monks had brought in a Muslim, and he dug the well for them and built it.” This assertion was made in the hope that El Kâmil would seize first the vessels of Saint Macarius and then those of the other monasteries. Unhappily for himself, however, John had declared that the treasure was one dating back to the time of the Romans.

Hereupon officials were sent with the renegade John to the Monastery of Saint Macarius. For a while they were unable to find even the ordinary church vessels, “because they were hidden underground and no one knew the spot except the superior of the Monastery and another man among the trusty seniors.” But when torture had been applied, the superior acknowledged that there were no vessels “except a silver chalice, and a silver paten, and a silk veil which we hang before the sanctuary at the time of Mass.” These objects, he stated, were gifts from Christians, and had the donors’ names inscribed upon them. They were then produced and taken to Cairo, where they were shown to El Kâmil; amongst them was “a water-wheel of crystal\(^1\) of wonderful workmanship and a network of pearls.”

A renegade Copt was then brought in to read “the Coptic inscriptions on the chalices and patens and crosses and spoons”—which proved to give the names of the donors, just as the monks had asserted. The scale was turned in favor of the monks after El Kâmil had questioned the mason who had dug and built the well, and had been reminded by the judge, Abû Shâkir, that information had been brought to Saladin concerning these objects,\(^2\) and that, when they had been brought to him, the mendacity of the informer had been discovered. Hereupon, the vessels and other objects were returned to the monks and the incident ended.\(^3\)

In this connection we must record the undated story of Michael of Damietta, who occupies a place between the above-mentioned monks Shenûfa and John. The Coptic Diñâr (Hatûr eleventh)\(^4\) thus relates his history:

“O come, all ye faithful...that we may glorify...this honored martyr, the faithful priest the great Michael of Tamiat. He was a monk in the Monastery of our Father Abba John in the mount of Shîhêt. By the wile of the Enemy he went to the City of Victory (Cairo), and forsook the faith. He became one of the Hagarenes (Muslims) and took to himself a wife of the daughters of Ishmael. He dwelt with her eight days ere he recovered his soul. He confessed, weeping, to a holy monk...He went unto the King of Egypt and made profession before him, and he (the King) enticed him with (offer of) great honors.

---

1 See p. 377.
2 lb. Halus the monk of the Monastery of Kamé was then the informant.
4 Rylands Library, Copt., 21, fol. 32 b f. = Crum, Cat., No. 435.
THE TWELFTH CENTURY

When (Michael) did not harken unto him, he burned his body with fire, and he received the incorruptible crown in the kingdom of the Heavens."

Subsequently another monk, ‘Abd el Masih, “the painter, from the cell of Saksik,”¹ came to El Kâmil from the desert of Saint Macarius and alleged that the patriarch received large sums every year from the bishops, and that his predecessors had expended a part of their annual revenue upon the fleet. This attempt to create fresh trouble was, however, ignored by El Kâmil, who sent the monk back to his monastery and apparently let the matter drop.

The moral to be drawn from these and earlier incidents of the same character is clear: the inward spirit of monasticism was so far dead, that a monk with a real or fancied grievance let no scruple of religion, or honor, or loyalty prevent him from seeking to be revenged on his fellow monks or upon the patriarch.

The series of notes on the monasteries at this period may be concluded with an estimate of the strength of the Syrian Monastery at the close of the twelfth and opening of the thirteenth century. As evidence on this matter we have two notes in Syriac mss. derived, as usual, from the Monastery of the Syrians.

The first of these² states that in the year of the Greeks 1505 (1194 A.D.) “there came to this monastery, which is in the desert of Scetis, a monk with many companions,” and continues with an account of the repairs effected by this stranger in the library. The second note³ runs as follows: “In 1517 (1206 A.D.) in the month Nisan we, twelve brethren from Syria, entered the Monastery of the Syrians in the desert of Scetis.” Both the monk “with many companions” and the twelve brethren who followed him were probably refugees from Syria. Their importance for us lies in the fact that with such additions to its numbers at frequent intervals the Syrian Monastery cannot well have numbered less than sixty or seventy inmates, as in the eleventh century.

¹ See p. 362.
² Wright, Cat. Syr. MSS. in B.M., No. dcxxv, p. 497; see further, Excursus, § 7.
³ Id., No. xxiii, p. 15.
CHAPTER IX
THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY

1. The Vacancy of the Patriarchate

JOHN VI died in 1216. The date is an important one for more reasons than one. First, before his death John directed that his body should be buried at Misr, and not translated to the Monastery of Saint Macarius. May we not regard this as another symptom of revolt against the excessive prerogatives of the monastery which claimed the primates of the Egyptian Church both living and dead? Secondly, from 1216 to 1234 the See of Alexandria remained vacant, while rival factions and interests made the election of a new patriarch impossible. Since the Wādi Habīb was a “peculiar” of the patriarch, this long period of vacancy seriously affected the monasteries. What part, if any, was played by the monks in the intrigues of these years we have no means of knowing.

2. The Monks and Taxation

Ever since the days of the Emperor Valens the privileges and exemptions conferred by the monastic life had been a matter of intermittent dispute between the monks and the governing powers in Egypt. Once again the subject crops up in this period. Unhappily the occasion of this, as of many preceding troubles, was the treachery of a renegade, an ex-monk of the Monastery of Saint Macarius.

Either to gratify some personal malice or to curry favor, this man (1225–1226) alleged that certain of the monks “made the monastic life a pretext for not paying the taxes, and that they had money due to the Government, and inheritances that belonged to the diwan.” The meaning appears to be that certain persons had become monks, or pretended to be monks, to avoid payment of current taxes and of arrears of taxes due to the government and at the same time they contrived to secure any legacies which might be left to them.¹

¹ This seems to have been illegal until El Kāmil remitted the claim of the treasury to such inheritances: see p. 385.
THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY

The sultan sent a certain Ibn Sirawin to the monasteries to inquire into this matter. "And," the historian complains, "what he carried out was no inquiry; but he seized the monks and beat them and hung them up and tortured them, until he had imposed upon them a tax of six hundred\(^1\) dinars." Of this fine, four hundred dinars were paid down, and the monks agreed to raise the remainder before the commissioner's return. Taking advantage of this respite, "a company of the senior monks" made their way to Cairo and complained to the sultan of the treatment which they had received. As a result, El Kâmil, after examining the case, ordered that the money thus extorted should be returned to the monks.\(^2\) Whether or no anything was done to prevent further abuse of the immunity from taxation enjoyed by the monks is not stated.

3. *El Kâmîl's Visit to the Desert Monasteries*

Possibly it was in consequence of the preceding episode that El Kâmîl paid a visit to Wâdi Habûb. The event is thus complacently recorded in the *History of the Patriarchs*:\(^3\)

"In these days, at the end of Kihak, the Sultan El Melik el Kâmîl returned from Alexandria and made his way to the Monasteries of Saint Macarius in Wâdi Habûb. He lodged in them, and the monks entertained him and all his suite, giving them abundantly of the best of that which was to be found in their dwellings. And the sultan bestowed his favor upon them, and presented them with five hundred ardebs of provisions—three hundred of wheat and barley, one hundred of beans, and one hundred of flat peas. And he treated the monks with honor, and allowed them to approach him, and drew aside the curtain that screened him from them." As a result of the interview which followed, the sultan delivered to the monks a charter providing (a) that poll tax should not be levied on those who became monks; (b) that when a monk died "his inheritance\(^4\) should belong to the monks" (i.e., to the monastery to which he belonged).

The monks also represented to the sultan the deplorable effects on their monastery of the vacancy of the patriarchate: "there were," they complained, "in this monastery more than eighty priests; and to-day there are only four here because no one has been found to appoint their successors." To this El Kâmîl could only reply that when the Christians themselves could agree as to whom they wished to have as their patriarch, he would give effect to their wishes.

The vacancy of the See of Alexandria had resulted therefore in reducing the clerical element in the Monastery of Saint Macarius almost to nothing, probably because the patriarch alone could hold ordinations there. This need not necessarily have led to any wholesale reduction in the number of monks here and in the other monasteries. The senior of the

---

\(^1\) If we may assume that one dinar was exacted from each monk, we have here evidence for the population of the desert at this period.


\(^3\) Id., pp. 353 f.

\(^4\) The meaning is not clear. Did the monastery inherit the actual property of the individual monk merely, or his rights of inheritance also?
priests in the Monastery of Saint Macarius automatically became hegumen; while, therefore, a single priest remained alive there was a hegumen who could (and doubtless did) admit new monks as in normal times. We must not therefore assume that the ecclesiastical deadlock led to practical depopulation of the monasteries, but merely to a large reduction in the clerical element.

Presumably it was in 1216 that there were eighty priests at the Monastery of Saint Macarius. If we assume (as is reasonable) that the priests were to the lay monks and monks in inferior orders as one to five, the number of monks at the monastery in 1216 must have been about four hundred—the figure at which it stood at the time of Mauhub’s census towards the close of the eleventh century. This, it may be added, is in agreement with the figure suggested by Ibn Sirawin’s levy recorded above.

4. Further Questions of Taxation

In 1235 the immunity of the monks from taxation again led to trouble—though it is not clear how far the Wâdi Habîb was affected. We hear that certain young men at this time had begun to assume the monkish garb in order to evade the poll tax, while they continued to live as they pleased in the towns. To check this abuse, El Kâmil directed that any monk not living in a monastery or in the desert should be made liable to pay the poll tax. This decree gave the revenue officials an opportunity which they were not slow to seize; monks both real and pretended were arrested, and more than one thousand dinars were raised in poll tax, more especially in the province of Gharbîyeh “which is the country containing their property and their monasteries.”

Once again, a deputation of monks from the monasteries appeared before the sultan and laid their grievance before him. A modified decree was then issued permitting the monks to live as before on condition that (a) they should not shelter or conceal anyone from whom poll tax was due; (b) that no one should be admitted as a monk until notice has been given to the dîwân; (c) that only those worthy of the monastic life should be admitted, and not those who merely sought to evade taxation or to escape embarrassments. It is likely that these provisions applied to the monks of Wâdi Habîb as well as to those of other regions.

5. Sem‘an ibn Kalîl of the Monastery of Saint John

The sordid aspect of monastic life has been so much in evidence in the story of this and of the preceding century that it is almost with surprise that we hear of one for whom monasticism was not a cloak for ambition or mere sloth. This is a certain Sem‘an ibn Kalîl ibn Makâra. El Macinus describes him as a zealous scribe or civil servant, who in

1 I.e., to ascertain whether the treasury had any outstanding claim against the man.
3 Hist. Sar., ed. Erpenius, pp. 299 f. This Sem‘an was remotely connected with Tib, the Tekritean merchant mentioned above, p. 312.
1173 attracted the favorable notice of Saladin and received from that prince an allowance for his support. For reasons which are not stated, Sem’an threw up his career “and adopted the religious life in the Monastery of John the Little in the desert of Askit, that is, in the Wâdi Habîb. He shut himself up in a certain place, which he had constructed in the midst of the monastery, for a period of thirty years and more. He lived a glorious life and was of great renown.”

A few further particulars concerning this personage are to be gathered from another source. He made his profession as a monk in the Lunar Year 603 (603 A.H., or 1206–1207 A.D.) and from his mode of life in the desert came to be known as the “recluse-monk” (الراهب الحبس). During this retirement he applied himself to literary work and wrote a treatise in rhymed prose (Arabic) on the virtues essential to the monastic life, entitled The Garden of the Solitary and Consolation of the Anchoret. This work, containing a preface and twelve sections, or chapters, each dealing with a virtue such as prayer, fasting, patience, charity, humility, and the like, enjoyed some popularity, as is shown by the number of mss. extant. He also produced an edition of the Psalms with prefatory and other matter (extant in ms.) and a Commentary on the Gospel of Saint Matthew.

If Sem’an became a monk in 1206–1207 and lived (according to El Macinus) in the Monastery of Saint John for thirty years or more, his death occurred somewhat later than 1237. But El Macinus rather implies that he became a monk some three years after 1173, and if this is correct the date 1206–1207 should probably be regarded as that of his death.

6. End of the Vacancy and Its Results

After nearly twenty years of intrigue David ibn Lklak was elected patriarch and took the name of Cyril. On his consecration, Cyril remained for a while in Alexandria and then set out for the Monastery of Saint Macarius, where he is stated to have “ordained priests and deacons and made certain arrangements.” He also visited the other monasteries in Wâdi Habîb, spending one or two days in each.

In the following year (1236) Cyril journeyed to the Monastery of Saint Macarius in Lent according to the regular patriarchal custom. Though our information is unsatisfactory, there is reason to regard this visit as momentous.

The consecration of the chrism was, as so many foregoing references have shown, one of the most important features in the proceedings of Holy Week at the monastery; and from the fact that the monk Halus of the Monastery of Kamé is described as steward of the revenue derived from the chrism, we infer that the privilege enjoyed by the monks of Wâdi Habîb was not entirely a barren one. Actuated either by avarice or by desire to

---

1 See de Slane, Cat. MSS. arabes B.N., No. 43.
2 lb. But the year is there given as 703 (703 A.H., 1303 A.D.)—with an evident error of a century.
3 Id., No. 193. This work is unpublished.
4 lb.
6 Id., pp. 375 f.
7 See p. 377.
break through the ring of monastic privilege, the patriarch brought out with him some oil of balsam which he had received from the sultan as a personal gift, and consecrated it in the Church of Saint Macarius on the Thursday in Holy Week according to custom. Presumably Cyril received the whole of the profits derived from the disposal of this hallowed oil.

The patriarch was accompanied on this occasion by a number of the clergy of Cairo, Misr, and other places, and to gratify these, he declared his intention of giving them "authority over the sanctuary of Benjamin." Whatever its exact nature, this step provoked the furious resentment of the monks. "Then," as the History of the Patriarchs relates, "the monks were indignant at this step, and brought their staves, and broke some of the lamps of the church." This lively disapproval had little effect; undeterred, the patriarch "finished his work (whatever that may mean) and went out to his cell, where he passed the night, and in the morning said the prayer of the first hour according to the Office of the Great Week." The monks, making the best of what they could not cure, then assembled and begged pardon for their recent show of feeling. Forgiveness was vouchsafed to them as the price of their acceptance of "all the conditions that he laid upon them"; for, we are told, "they had bad customs to which he put a stop." Having thus carried out his purpose, Cyril "came to the church and was consoled, and finished the celebration of the Festival." Before his departure, this reforming prelate ordained those who wished to be ordained; "only," adds his biographer, "the customary fee had to be paid."

For whatever reason, the author of this part of the History of the Patriarchs is extraordinarily reserved in writing of Cyril’s proceedings. What were the "conditions" imposed, and what the "bad customs" which were ended? These can only be understood, if at all, in connection with the subordination of the sanctuary of Benjamin to the Church of Misr. The latter must mean that Cyril abolished the independence of the Monastery of Saint Macarius. And by making it subject to the Church of Misr, he must have deprived it of its privileges,¹ which would be transferred to the superior church. We believe, then, that the monastery was now dethroned from its privileged position; and though Cyril’s measures were subsequently revoked, at least in part, the proceeding as a whole constituted a formidable attack upon this privileged position.

This attack was instigated, no doubt, by the Church of Misr. As the Church of the capital, including at once the wealthiest and most influential members of the Coptic community, this body must have viewed with envy the position of the desert monastery, while the monastery was naturally jealous of any encroachment upon its cherished rights. Traces of the antagonism between the two bodies are not wanting. The Canons of Benjamin I expressly forbid the admission of a strange priest or a priest from Misr into the sanctuary of Benjamin²; in 1103 Macarius II (doubtless under pressure) sought to celebrate the vital "first Liturgy after his consecration" at Misr rather than in the

¹ As enumerated above, pp. 347 f.
² See p. 274. This proviso is thought to be an interpolation.
sanctuary of Benjamin, and was only deterred by the threats of the monks; and again, the pointed direction of John VI, that he should be buried at Misr rather than in the Monastery of Saint Macarius, is significant of the rivalry between the two bodies.

The moment chosen for the attack was favorable. Owing to the long vacancy of the see, the priesthood at the Monastery of Saint Macarius had almost disappeared and could only be restored by the patriarch; the monks might clamor and break lamps, but obstinate resistance would end only in the extinction of their line of priests and consequently of the monastery itself. After an initial show of indignation, therefore, the monks submitted, and the Church of Misr was for the time victorious.

Nevertheless, there is reason to believe that these as well as others of Cyril’s proceedings were abrogated wholly or in part. Later in this century the secondary ceremony after the enthronement of the patriarch reappears; and at the end of the thirteenth and beginning of the fourteenth century chrism was consecrated in the monastery, but with this most significant change that the ceremony was performed alternately at Misr and in the desert. If Cyril’s proceedings were as wide in scope as we have supposed, and if they were subsequently abrogated, may not the innovation just mentioned be the one privilege which the Church of Misr was able to retain?

7. *The Syrian Monastery in the Thirteenth Century*

With the story of Cyril’s visit to the Monastery of Saint Macarius the Wâdi Habîb disappears almost entirely from the *History of the Patriarchs*, our main source of information hitherto. What we can gather as to the subsequent history of the monasteries is derived from a miscellaneous array of narratives, scribal and other notes, and casual sources.

Yet the information so gleaned is often both interesting and useful. For example, a scribal note in a Syriac ms. gives us a brief but illuminating view—the first we have had—into the interior life of the monks at the Monastery of the Syrians. This note states that the first two quires of the volume in which it is inscribed were written by Rabban Mattai of Tûr ‘Abdîn, “who dwelt in this Monastery in the time of Rabban Joseph... And he wrote them from a copy of another book, the pair of this book, which was at that time in this Monastery in the days of Constantine the Abbot—the former, not the latter; for there were two abbots named Constantine. This one when he was fed up (sic) with his abbacy, that is, the dangers and insults from the monks who were of an evil spirit, departed, that is, fled, to the Monastery of Abba Antonius and took the book of Mar Isaac with him to

---

1 See p. 372.
2 Wright, *Cat. Syr. MSS. in B.M.*, No. dxcxvi, p. 580, where the note is stated to be by a XIII century hand. The Abbot Joseph referred to governed the monastery at some date later than 1222 (see Appendix ii); the two

Constantines probably followed him directly and were dead before 1254 when Yeshua was abbot. The troubles referred to may have therefore taken place about 1235–1245.
read and delight in it and then return it to this monastery. It chanced that he fell sick in the Monastery of the glorious Mar Antonius and died there; and the book, the pair of this, remains there to our day. Further, he took with him a cross of silver from this monastery, and it remains there to our day. God pardon him! For he did not take them as a thief, but to read and use them for a time and to return them or bring them back hither. But his end came upon him and he died and left them in the monastery.

"Let the Syrian brethren who come after us to this monastery know that in the Convent of Abba Paulus, beside the Monastery of Mar Antonius, which belonged to the Syrians like this, there are many Syriac books still. But because of what was to come (?) the Syrians were driven thence: the Egyptians took it, but...there is none to examine them and release it from their hands."  

There were, then, feuds and heartburnings abroad in the Syrian Monastery during this period; and there is other evidence that there were monks "of an evil spirit." For written in a fourteenth-century Psalter\(^2\) is the following helpful recommendation: "Take mustard-seed, and put it into a new earthenware pot, and fill it with water; repeat over it this Psalm (Ps. Clx) for three days; then pour it out before the door of thy enemy, and, by the permission of God (sic), he will die."

As a piece of folklore this is delightful, but it sounds strange when we recall the "love and charity" for which the Scetiotes were once famous.

There is some reason for believing that about 1,254 refugees, fleeing probably before the western advance of the Mongols, once again found a refuge in the Wâdi Habib. The evidence, such as it is, is found in two scribal notes in Syriac codices from the desert. The first of these\(^3\) records the completion in 1254 of the volume in which it is inscribed, by a monk, Behnam, "who is from Sigistan, a city in the land of Persia." Behnam wrote the volume "in the holy monastery of Abba John the Little, Father of the Solitaries," but presented it to the "Monastery of the holy Mother of God, Mary, that is in the desert of Scetis, called the Monastery of the Syrians, beside the Monastery of Abba Bishûi, illustrious in glories." Possibly Behnam was at the Monastery of Saint John waiting to be admitted to the Monastery of the Syrians, where at this time other refugees seem to have been housed; for in the same year an aged scribe, Bacchus, in an apostrophe\(^4\) to the various elements of which the Syrian community was composed, mentions a distinct class of "faithful strangers," which cannot well be anything else than a fairly considerable group of refugees.

At this time, therefore, the number of monks at the Syrian Monastery must have been comparatively large; and additional evidence to this effect may be found in the same note.

---

1 I am indebted to Dr. A. S. Tritton for the translation of this note.
2 Wright, Cat. Syr. MSS. in B.M., No. Cxcvii, p. 137. But the note is apparently somewhat later than the ms. itself.
3 Id., No. Cxlviii, p. 94.
by the monk Bacchus, who speaks of the “mighty host and assembly of chaste monks and priests and chosen solitaries”—though the expression is possibly only conventional. That the circumstances of the convent were tolerably good may be inferred from the satisfactory list of accessions to the library at this period.\(^1\)

8. Current Events during the Remainder of the Century

In 1264 the Mameluke sultan, Beybars el Bundukdârî, paid a visit to the monasteries, which is thus recorded by Makrizî\(^2\): “he went towards Terrâneh (Terenuthis), then to the Valley of Habib, and came to lodge in the monasteries. From there he made his way to Teroudjeh (Tarûqeh),\(^3\) then to Hamâmât and at length to Akabah.” Apparently the visit was no more than a halt at a convenient resting place and so is of little significance.

Somewhat more important is the notice devoted in the *Synaxarium*\(^4\) to Gabriel III (patriarch, 1268–1271). Gabriel, after spending many years at the Monastery of Saint Antony, migrated to Scetis—probably during the vacancy of the see or under Cyril III. “After he had been in the desert of Scetis at the Monastery of Saint Macarius, he became superior of the Church of Our Lady Mary at the Monastery of Saint Marmos (sic for Barrmos = Baramûs): he practised asceticism, and restored this monastery.”\(^5\)

For reasons which are not stated, Gabriel left Scetis and settled, first at Jerusalem, and afterwards at Misr. After twice failing to secure the patriarchate, he retired to his old home, the Monastery of Saint Antony; and here certain of the monks had visions foreshadowing his ultimate rise to the primacy: “Some of them,” we are told, “had seen him (in visions) going up to the desert of Scete to the Monastery of the holy Abba Macarius to be ordained there.” We must understand, then, that the “secondary consecration” at the Church of Saint Macarius was still observed in spite of the changes made by Cyril III. Possibly the ceremony was resumed when the general proceedings of that patriarch were annulled. In any case we cannot doubt that Gabriel III actually did “go up to the desert of Scete” to be ordained there in 1268.

So much has been said of the corrupt state of monasticism in the Middle Ages that it is with something of surprise and relief that we find at the end of this century, as at its beginning, a monk who had some higher ideal than the purchase of ecclesiastical preferment. This was a certain Macarius, a priest of the Monastery of John the Little. Of his early life and monastic career nothing seems to be recorded; but he must have retired to the desert in the last quarter of the thirteenth century. He is known, in fact, only for what was evidently his life work—a volume entitled *Nomocanon* in which he had codified

---

1 See Excursus, § 7.
3 On this place see p. 25.
4 *Synax. (Eth.)*, Hamlê 11 (P.O., vii, pp. 312 f.).
5 Some of Gabriel’s work can still be identified: see *A.A.C.M.* v, iii, § 1.
the whole body of Coptic canon law. The material for this compilation was derived from a number of books preserved in the monasteries of the desert and at Cairo and the author is said to have completed his work after many years of laborious toil,\(^1\) apparently slightly before 1088 A.M. (1332 A.D.).\(^2\) Macarius is therefore to be regarded as a worthy of the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries.

1 See de Slane, *Cat. MSS. arabes B.N.*, No. 251.
2 See Mai, *S.V.N.C.*, iv, ii, pp. 275 f. (*Cod. Vat. Arab.*, Nos. cxcix and cl), where the ms. (dated 1332 A.D.) is stated to have been written by a strict contemporary of the author.
CHAPTER X

FROM THE FOURTEENTH TO THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

1. Introductory

Next to the fourth, the fourteenth century is the most momentous period in the history of the monasteries. The former witnessed the beginning of monasticism in Scetis and the origin of the four great monasteries, during the latter the monasteries fell swiftly and tragically, and the Wâdi Habîb ceased to be a living force in the affairs of the Coptic Church. The story of the catastrophe is, so far as we know, nowhere related, but that the monasteries were overtaken by disaster in the second half of the fourteenth century is certain. Until 1346 their condition was unmistakably flourishing. After that date a period of almost unbroken silence intervenes and in the earlier part of the fifteenth century the Wâdi Habîb reappears in a state of ruin with many of its monasteries abandoned and the remainder tenanted by a handful of monks. From this disaster only one monastery—the Syrian—seems to have made any real recovery.

The documents relating to this period are not very ample. For the first fifty years, indeed, we have the narratives of patriarchal visits to the desert comprised in the Book of the Chrism, which prove the flourishing condition of the monasteries at the time; in the first half of the fifteenth century we have Makrizi’s well-known account of the valley, proving no less definitely their ruinous state at that period. For the subsequent history of the monasteries down to the end of the Middle Ages we are dependent upon a few scribal and other notes relating mainly to the Syrian Monastery.

2. Consecration of Chrism in the Earlier Fourteenth Century

In the preceding chapter it was suggested that Cyril III stripped the Monastery of Saint Macarius of its privileges, but that these rights were subsequently restored, at any rate Gabriel III went through the time-honored ceremony of secondary enthronement in the
monastery in 1268. Probably the restoration was qualified by a compromise and the privileges in dispute were shared by the rival Church of Misr and the Monastery of Saint Macarius. This is most distinctly suggested when we turn to the Book of the Chrism\(^1\) and its record of consecrations in the early fourteenth century.

In 1299 the patriarch Theodosius consecrated the chrism at Cairo in the Church of Saint Mercurius (Abû Sefên)\(^2\); in 1305 the ceremony took place in the Monastery of Saint Macarius\(^3\); in 1320 it was celebrated in the Church of El Mo'allakeh at Misr (Old Cairo)\(^4\); in 1330 again in the Monastery of Saint Macarius.\(^5\) The probable inference is that an arrangement had been made by which the chrism was to be consecrated alternately in the desert and in one or other of the Cairene churches. Whether this arrangement was made by Cyril III himself, or was a modification of a wholesale transfer by him to the Church of Misr, is a question which we cannot answer. The one important fact is that the Monastery of Saint Macarius had been forced to surrender a share of its privileges; and the reality of this is not impugned by the successive consecrations in 1340 and 1346 held in the desert.\(^6\)

3. The Visits of John VIII and Benjamin II

In 1305 the Patriarch Anba John VIII visited the desert to consecrate the chrism. Though the narrative describing this event contains several important references to the topography of the Monastery of Saint Macarius and is of value for its description of the ceremony of consecration, it contains nothing which throws light on the general condition of the monasteries and need not delay us here.\(^7\)

From Abûl Barakât,\(^8\) however, we learn a fact of considerable importance; that during the persecution of the Christians in the days of the same Anba John, the churches of Misr and Cairo and then the churches throughout all Egypt were closed, except those of ‘‘the Four Monasteries in the desert of Abû Makâr.’’ As in the early years of the eleventh century, therefore, Wâdì Habîb became once again the citadel and refuge of the Coptic Church.

The narrative of the visit of Benjamin II is of first-rate importance as presenting a tolerably complete picture of the condition of all the monasteries at this period.\(^9\)

---

1. B.N., Fonds arabe, No. 100. Dom Louis Villecourt, O.S.B., has already issued a preliminary study and analysis in the Louvain Rev. d’hist. eccl., xvii-xviii. For the compilation of this history an analysis and partial translation specially prepared by Abbé Joseph Ziadeh has been used. Subsequently Dom Villecourt most courteously gave me the loan of his translation of the entire work.

[Dom Villecourt was never able to publish his edition of this work, but the translation of the first part only, folios 1–27, appeared posthumously in the Louvain Le Musion, t. xli, pp. 1–32. W.H.]

The author was Gabriel, Bishop of Ahnâssieh, aided by a certain scribe or redactor, Yuhanna, nephew of the Patriarch John; and the series was completed in 1346 at the end of the second consecration by the Patriarch Peter in the Wâdì Habîb.

The consecration in 1299 is also recorded in a Vatican ms. (Cod. Vat. Copt., No. xliv, § 24); but whether the narrative there given is identical with that of the B.N. ms. cannot here be stated.

3. Id., fol. 32b f.
4. Id., fol. 36b f.
5. Id., fol. 44a.
6. Id., fol. 69b f.; 92a f.
7. For a summary of the architectural information see A.A.C.M., 11, i, § 5.
9. It is impossible to give in the following paragraphs any adequate summary of Benjamin’s proceedings; in particular, descriptions of ritual have been necessarily omitted. Reference should therefore be made to Dom Villecourt’s article above cited.
FROM THE FOURTEENTH TO THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

In 1330 Benjamin II resolved to visit the desert mainly on account of a disaster which had befallen the Monastery of Anba Bishōi, white ants having destroyed its woodwork, so that the church and other buildings threatened to collapse. The patriarch, fearing that the community would disperse and the name of the saint be forgotten, determined “to occupy himself with the state of the said monastery and to repair what had been destroyed by the creatures and to destroy these last from heaven and earth.” He was detained, however, by the necessity of repairing the Church of Abū Shenūdeh, “which is situated on the North Road in Mīsr the Protected,” some considerable portion of its walls having collapsed.

On Baremḥات ninth, however, he set out for the desert, and having passed the night at Terrāneh, made his way to the Wādī Habīb. When he drew near the Monastery of Saint Macarius, he was received by the monks, who conducted him with much circumstance to the church.¹ After the Absolution had been read over him by the hegumen according to custom, the patriarch saluted the relics of the three Macarii and then said the office of none. This done, he went to “the cell known by the name of The Council, between the sanctuaries” where preparations for the compounding of the chrism were going on, and subsequently attended Mass.

On Thursday he visited “the cell El Sedri” and subsequently “the cell known by the name of Dernabâbâ.” The next day was spent in “the kastālieh of Abu Makar”—that is, the fortified inclosure, the cells being dependent thereon. On Saturday he took a meal at “the cell of Bijebij . . . after the chiefs (of the monks there) had made prostrations,” and on the Fourth Sunday in Lent at the “cell of Barsini,” from which he visited “the neighboring cells” before returning to the kastālteb.

On Monday Benjamin set out for the Monastery of Saint John in response to an invitation from the monks of that place. At the Path of the Angels, طریق الپلاکو، he halted, repeated the Lord’s Prayer, and made three prostrations. As he advanced further, the monks of the Monastery of Saint John met him and, receiving him with much ceremony, conducted him to their convent. In this connection special mention is made of “the Abyssinian monks who dwell in the said monastery and in the neighboring cells.”

The Monastery of Anba Bishōi was visited on the following day. After inquiry into the affairs of this monastery, Benjamin proceeded on Wednesday to “the Monastery of Our Fathers the Greeks, known by the name of Baramûs,” and on the following day to “the Monastery of Our Lady,” that is, to the Virgin (or Theotokos) of Baramûs.

On Friday the Monastery of the Syrians, دير السريان, was visited. The patriarch was conducted to the church, where he saluted the relics “and the bodies of the saints which

¹ For this and for other details see Villecourt’s article above cited.
² This is the earliest known mention of the Angels’ Path, unless it is the same as the “Road of the Cherubim” mentioned on p. 300.
were found there,” and also visited the place “where God appeared to our holy Father Anba Bishōi.”

The main tour of inspection closed on the following day (Saturday) with visits to the Monastery of Abu Yuhanna... (probably John Kamé), and to the “cell Behūt,” an Abyssinian cell, probably identical with the Abyssinian Monastery and in the vicinity of the Monastery of Saint John. The “cells outside” the latter were also inspected.

Benjamin then returned to the Monastery of Bishōi and set about the restoration which he had planned.²

The time at which the monks “are obliged to go on their business”³ was now approaching, and Holy Week was near at hand. The patriarch, therefore, went with the bishops to the Monastery of Saint Macarius, from which he revisited the “Monastery of Dernabābâ” and the cell El Sedři.

On Palm Sunday, after the morning office had been said, the patriarch went in solemn procession about the church. Then, passing out of the “fortress,” he mounted. “The canopy was raised over his head: before him were carried ‘cherubim,’ crosses and gospels, while the priests raised their voices to glorify Christ, crying out: ‘Hosanna in the Heavens! Blessed is he who cometh in the name of the Lord’. . . .” Thus escorted, Benjamin rode to the “Summit of the Cave of the Fathers” and thence to the “Cemetery of the Father Monks,” where he prayed over the tombs of Abraham and George. He returned to the monastery “on the opposite side and entered upon his beast, passing under the arch which remained from the old monastery, following in this the practice of the patriarchs his predecessors.”

After the close of the rites for Palm Sunday, the patriarch visited yet another dependent cell, the cell of ‘Auzfâl (عزیزال).⁴ The following days were all spent in the Monastery of Saint Macarius in performing the appointed offices and in the preparation of the chrism. On Maundy Thursday the chrism was consecrated with the usual elaborate ceremony and was followed by the symbolic washing of feet [?] by the patriarch.

The celebration of Easter followed. On the Tuesday following the patriarch left the monastery at the ninth hour, and after sleeping in the desert for two or three hours before midnight,⁵ reached the Monastery of Nahyâ at the eighth hour on Wednesday. From Nahyâ he proceeded to the Church El Mo’allakeh at Misr and there bestowed the chrism in certain hiding places located in an adjunct of that church.

1 On this cell see p. 363.
2 See A.A.C.M., III, i, §2. In the appendix to the Hist. Patr. (Vatican ms. E, 686), it is briefly recorded that Benjamin “restored the Monastery of the holy Abba lḥsān (sic) in Shihāt.”
3 Presumably to attend to the management of their estates in the Delta.
4 Whether this is a personal name or otherwise is not clear.
5 To journey to and from the Wādi Habib partly by night (for the sake of coolness) seems to have been a regular practice.
FROM THE FOURTEENTH TO THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

4. The Visits of Peter V in 1340 and 1346

In 1340 and 1346 there were successive consecrations of the chrism at the Monastery of Saint Macarius, the violation of the recent arrangement for consecration alternately in Cairo and in the desert being probably due to the danger of interruption by fanatics in the city.

In 1340 the Patriarch Peter V¹ and his suite travelled by water to Abû Nishâbeh (hard by Khatâtbeh, the modern railway junction) and from there into the desert as far as a spot named El Biyâdes (البياض) where he was formally received by the monks. On reaching the cell named Daknûnîa (دكنونية), situated (as the context shows) near by the main monastery, the company halted while the patriarch read over them the Absolution, as was usual before entrance into the Church of Saint Macarius. Advance was then made to the gate of the monastery itself; the patriarch entered, saluted the bodies of the three Macarii, and then sat with the assembly of bishops while the hegumen, Anba George, read over him the Absolution “according to the custom of the Monastery of Saint Macarius.”

On Palm Sunday, the patriarch went in solemn procession “about the inclosure of the monastery, until he came opposite the fathers the holy patriarchs” (i.e., the place where they were interred). After prayer, the procession advanced “to the cave, the burial-place of the holy monks Abraham and George,” over which the patriarch read the burial office.

On Maundy Thursday the chrism was consecrated with the customary rites, and the ceremony of foot washing at “the Place of the Basin” performed. Easter also was duly celebrated.

On the Tuesday following, the patriarch was requested by two priest-monks of “the cell of Biltaus (بلاطوس), named after Saint Philotheos” to consecrate the church of their cell. Stress is laid upon “the fine paintings, the beauty of the building, its dazzling whiteness and the new wall² of this structure,” which “after having been destroyed by reason of the multitude of years, had been rebuilt suitably and decorated.” The patriarch therefore went to the cell, “walking with pomp and veneration between the cells,” and thanking God for granting “peace and quietness, the building of churches and their repair in all places.” After consecrating the new church he returned to the kastâlîb.

Wednesday brought “the sons of the Monastery of Abû Yuhannes accompanied by the archpriest (hegumen) and a group of monks,” who requested to be ordained. Of these, eleven were ordained deacons and eighteen priests—a number which is highly significant.³

In the record of the remainder of the visit there is nothing further of special note, save that on Sunday the patriarch made special provision for the saying of Mass in the sanctuary of Saint Macarius; “for the Mass must not fail to be said there particularly on Sunday.”

¹ This being the third year of Peter’s patriarchate, he succeeded Benjamin in 1338.

² Note that this cell was a miniature walled monastery, and cf. p. 361.

³ See the following section.
A second consecration at the Monastery of Saint Macarius was performed in 1346, the seventh year of Peter's patriarchate. The patriarch's suite journeyed as before by water to Abû Nishâbeh, where they lodged in "the dwelling of the monks which is there." The patriarch himself, detained on certain business near Terrâneh, set out from Abû Nishâbeh when a third of the night was passed and after sleeping for a while en route, reached a spot (apparently in the desert) known as El Bîkhârûbim, doubtless the place where the "Cherubim" took the hand of Saint Macarius. There the patriarch was met by "the archpriest Anba Daniel, also called George"; and the march was continued to El Biyâdes, the cell Dâknûnîleh, and ultimately the Monastery of Saint Macarius.

The usual rites were performed; and the narrative contains only a few points of novelty. Thus mention is made of a sanctuary of the Three Children (otherwise unknown) in the monastery. Moreover in the Palm Sunday procession we learn that the patriarch "advanced...as far as the west wall, one of the walls of the blessed monastery. He alighted, and prayer was offered up in memory of the father patriarchs interred within this wall"—a welcome piece of information as to the burial place of the patriarchs at this period. Subsequently the cemetery and the tomb of Abraham and George were visited.

5. Condition of the Monasteries in the Fourteenth Century

The foregoing summaries give us a fairly clear idea of the condition of the monasteries in the first half of the fourteenth century. With the exception of the small Monastery of Anub, the remote Cave of Abba Moses (probably regarded as mere "cells") and the Monastery of the Armenians, each and every convent is mentioned—and that without a hint that any one of them was depopulated or in serious straits.

Nay more, the kastâlîth, or main monastery, of Saint Macarius was surrounded by a number of dependent cells. Some of these were certainly of fair size and importance, comprising a church and other buildings surrounded with a wall like the "main monastery." Some, if not all, were governed by a superior and contained a considerable number of monks. It is clear that the Monastery of Saint Macarius was nearly, if not quite, as large as it was when Mauhub visited it in 1088.

In wealth also this monastery must have been considerable. The imposing processions described in the Book of the Chrism imply that the sacristy of the church was full of crosses, censers, "cherubims" and other ritual objects. Ruinous buildings like the cell of Biltaus

---

1 Thems has for (مَطَرُوسُ) and (مَطَرُوسُ). See above on the translation of S. Macarius.
2 By 1409 the bodies appear to have been removed: see p. 402.
3 They are mentioned only in descriptions of processions—in one case to support a canopy: see Book of the Chrism, ms. cit., fol. 63b. That they were flabellas, as Butler (Ancient Coptic Churches, 11, pp. 48 f.) holds, can hardly be maintained. A "cherubim" used by the Melkite Church of Alexandria is figured by Butler (op. cit., fig. 9); another type is illustrated by Goar. "Cherubim" are also mentioned in the Syriac list of monastic property lent to monks.
or Philotheos were rebuilt in handsome style, and the maintenance of so large a body of monks\(^1\) bespeaks the command of a considerable revenue.

The same applies to the Monastery of John the Little. If eleven monks were ordained deacons and eighteen priests on a single occasion, the total number of monks in the monastery must have been a high one, and it is consequently not surprising to hear of dependent cells in connection with this convent also.

Specially interesting is it to learn that there was already a considerable Abyssinian element dwelling in this monastery and the neighboring cells—a notice which perhaps corrects Makrizi’s implication\(^2\) that it was only after the ruin of their own monastery that the Abyssinians retired to “the Virgin of John the Little.” As we have seen, the cell Behût, adjoining the Monastery of John and inhabited by Abyssinians, is probably no other than Makrizi’s “Monastery of the Abyssinians.”

No reference whatever is made to the Armenian Monastery. The silence of the *Book of the Chrim* and of another of our sources for the period\(^3\) strongly suggests that the house in question had already been dissolved—perhaps in consequence of the overthrow of Armenian political influence in the twelfth century. The evidence, however, is entirely negative.

As for the other monasteries nothing very definite can be stated. No dependent cells are mentioned, though reference is made to the Monastery of Our Lady (i.e., the Theotokos) of Baramûs; but since we do not hear anything to the contrary, it is likely that they were normally prosperous.

In short, down to the year 1346 there is every indication that the monasteries were at least relatively populous and wealthy.

6. *Western Visitors to the Monasteries*

The general truth of the picture outlined above is confirmed by the earliest European notices of the desert monasteries.

In a description of Egypt\(^4\) Marino Sanuto refers generally to the desert of Scetis which he misnames the desert of the Thebaid. After mentioning “Joseph’s granaries” he continues: “Two leagues from them are the ruins of the city of Thebes [Memphis]... Adjoining this is the wilderness of the Thebaid [Scetis], where in the days of old there was a multitude of monks.” But more important is the original map of Egypt and the Holy Land illustrating this work (Pl. III)\(^5\). Here the position of the monasteries is indicated with a reasonable approach to accuracy by three conventional representations of churches described as *Abbatiae in deserto versus Occident* (Abbeys in the desert towards the West); and the identity of these with the monasteries of Wâdi Habib is placed beyond doubt by

---

12 Twelve priests and twelve deacons take part in one of the processions. The lay monks were doubtless far more numerous.
33 See p. 400.

---

\(^1\) *Secrets for True Crusaders*, trans. Aubrey Stewart, p. 60.
the indication of a series of pools—the Natrūn lakes—near by, labelled *Collectio aquarum sub Abbatis*.\(^1\)

That a European traveller, *who of course was neither archaeologist nor historian, should have marked these remote monasteries on a map intended for practical purposes is testimony to their importance at this period.

Some twenty years later,\(^2\) Ludolf, Rector of Suchem in the diocese of Paderborn, actually visited the valley. In a work entitled *De iunere Terrae Sanctae*\(^3\) the following passage occurs: “Moreover, in the deserts of Egypt there stand to this day so many cells and hermitages of holy fathers, that in some places, as I believe, one could shoot an arrow from one to the other over a distance of two or three miles. Here to this day live Indians,\(^4\) Nubians,\(^5\) and Syrians of the Order of Saint Antony and Saint Macarius. In these wastes God has wrought many wonders by the hands of the holy fathers, and particularly in the place which is called Stichis (sic), through Saints Antony and Macarius, as is told in the *Lives of the Fathers*."

It is beyond question that Ludolf is describing the Wâdi Habîb and that he had actually visited the valley. The places where for two or three miles there is a cell or hermitage at every bowshot are the region in which stood the Monastery of Saint Macarius with its numerous dependent cells, and the area to the south of the Monasteries of Anba Bishôî and of the Syrians where the Monastery of John the Little and its dependencies, of John Kamé, of the Abyssinians, of the Armenians, and of Anub clustered together. It is literally true that many of these ruins are within easy stonecast of one another.\(^6\)

Ludolf therefore brings us entirely independent testimony as to the prosperity of the monasteries, and it is interesting to note that while he notices the Syrians, Abyssinians (“Indians”), and Nubians, he says nothing of Armenian monks. His silence and the silence of the *Book of the Chriism* probably—but of course not certainly—means that the Armenian Monastery had already come to an end.

7. *The Fall of the Monasteries*

In the preceding sections stress has been laid on the prosperity of the monasteries from 1299 to 1346. After 1346 an almost unbroken silence follows, and when in the fifteenth century we get definite information concerning the monasteries once more, we find them in a pitiable state.

---

1 The general accuracy of Marino’s map shows that he (or the person who supplied him with the map) had actually visited the Wâdi Habîb. It should be noted that traces of Western visitors are to be found in MSS. from the Syrian Monastery: thus in Wright, *Cat. Syr. MSS. in B.M.*, No. 4xxxix, p. 1199, the names of two Europeans, William, a merchant of Mainz (apparently), and a certain Ser Georgio are written in Syrian, no doubt by compliant monks (date, 1332?). In id., No. lxxv, p. 36, is a Latin version (earlier than the XII century) of *Psalms* xxii: 1–2, presumably penned by a Western visitor.

2 Ludolf was in the East 1336–1341; his work was written in 1350.

3 Ch. xxxiv, in ed. Deycks (Stuttgart, 1851), p. 61.

4 Abyssinians?

5 This statement is the more interesting since a Nubian inscription shows unmistakably that there were Nubian monks in the valley.

6 *See A.A.C.M.*, iv, vi, § 1.
FROM THE FOURTEENTH TO THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

Between 1346 and about 1400, then, the Wâdi Habîb was overtaken by some very serious disaster. Yet we have no knowledge of any new irruption of barbarians, or of a raid by the Muslim Government or by irresponsible fanatics; indeed, the survival of so much ancient woodwork, books, and other objects down to our own times almost forbids such a supposition. But the date at which this ominous silence begins is highly significant and leaves us little doubt as to the shock which overthrew the monasteries.

In 1348–1349, two years after the last recorded consecration of the chrism at the Monastery of Saint Macarius, the Black Death swept over Egypt. Makrizi¹ has recorded its ravages in Cairo, where—it is said—from ten thousand to twenty thousand persons perished in a day, and whole streets and quarters were left empty. The scourge can scarcely have failed to reach the Wâdi Habîb, and the resultant mortality must have been frightful. Moreover in 1374 a famine, followed by pestilence, so ravaged the country that, according to Makrizi,² Misr was steadily going to ruin between that time and 1388.

The mortality among the monks resulting from the Black Death and, possibly, the plague of 1374 must have been a staggering blow to the monasteries, but perhaps it was not that alone which brought about their ruin. As in Europe, so assuredly in Egypt, the Black Death was even more disastrous in its after-results than in its immediate ravages. No inconsiderable proportion of a population, almost entirely agricultural, was swept away and consequently vast tracts of land must have gone out of cultivation. This area was probably increased still further by the inability of the surviving population to maintain the irrigation works essential to Egyptian agriculture. If the plague of 1374 necessitated the survey for reassessment carried out in 1375–1376 under Sha’bân,³ how much greater must have been the need after 1348–1349!

It is suggested, then, that the ruin of the monasteries was due to the economic results of the Black Death, aggravated by the subsequent famine and plague of 1374. The decimated population could not spare men to refill the monasteries; the ancient endowment connected with the names of Zeno the Emperor and ‘Amr, the Arab conqueror, shrank almost to nothing⁴ in consequence of the shrinkage of cultivation; and the wealth of private persons as well as the revenues derived from attributed bishoprics⁵ must have been so diminished that they were unable to come to the rescue with subventions. In such circumstances what wonder that decaying monasteries were abandoned and fell to ruin, and, that the few remaining monks quitted the outlying cells to concentrate within the walls of the main monasteries alone?

Had such a disaster occurred in the fourth century Scetis might well have recovered, but in the fourteenth century it was a very different place. Christianity had been losing

² Loc. cit.
³ See Casanova’s note on Makrizi, loc. cit.
⁴ As Makrizi shows: see below p. 405. The fact that this endowment did not altogether disappear makes it unlikely that the economic ruin of the monasteries was due to confiscation of their estates.
⁵ See p. 358.
ground in Egypt for centuries, and its decline was never so marked as in the Middle Ages, when its waning forces were harassed by periodical outbursts of persecution, as in 1301 and 1321. Monasticism, as we have seen, had entirely lost its old strength and spirit. Doubtless there were many who were sincere in their profession, but their sincerity rested rather on a placid acquiescence than on a living and ardent faith. They were not the men to bring about a revival in spite of material difficulties. The ruin of the monasteries was so nearly complete because the monks lacked recuperative power—active spiritual energy; and was not quite complete because the patient endurance, so characteristic of their predecessors and of Egyptians generally, and a certain instinctive devotion, saved them.

8. The Opening of the Fifteenth Century

The darkness which closed round the monasteries is broken—it is said—in 1384 when the Florentine Niccolo Frescobaldi visited Egypt and left the following notice on the Church of Saint Macarius: “Below the island of Roseto (sic) and Cairo, at a short distance from the river, is the Church of Saint Macarius, covered with lead, and his *tribuna* rests (?) upon certain columns of stone; and in this place is his body.”¹ But it is a false dawn; the church is surely that of Saint Mercurius (Abû Sefên) which is “below” the island of Rhoda and Cairo and at no great distance from the river.

The first real reference to the Monastery of Saint Macarius is next in 1409, when the Patriarch Matthew I died. “After his burial”—so runs the story in the appendix to the *History of the Patriarchs*²—“God showed forth signs and wonders... For instance, on the night on which he died, there was a stir among the bodies of his brethren, the patriarchs who lie in the Monastery of Saint Macarius. And the monks who inhabit the monastery heard amidst the stir of the bodies a voice from the coffins, calling them and saying: ‘Arise, go forth, open the door! For our father Matthew is here, and is standing knocking at the door.’ And when the brethren went out³ and opened, and found no one, they marvelled. And they were in ignorance of what had happened, until the news reached them from Misr that this father had died in the night on which he visited them for the sake of his brothers the holy patriarchs... This was the reason why those bodies stirred, because they knew that the world had lost that day a great teacher. For on account of the great stir among the bodies, the lamp which was kept burning before them fell to the ground and was extinguished, but was not broken.”

We hear nothing, indeed, about the condition of the monastery; but the anecdote possesses an unusual element of ghostly romance.

In the fifteenth century the Monastery of the Syrians reappears once more, when it had come to the very verge of extinction. How this once prosperous convent had come so near

---
¹ *Viaggio di Lionardo di N. Frescobaldi... in Egitto*, p. 88.
³ This suggests that the monks were now concentrated in the *kastāleb* alone, the “cells” being abandoned.
to ruin, we are not told; but the causes are hardly doubtful. The great plagues of the fourteenth century must have affected it as disastrously as the others, but this was not the only cause. The Syrian Monastery was intimately connected with northern Syria; from there it drew its recruits, from there came a great number of the volumes which enriched its library, and from there, probably, its revenues were directly or indirectly derived. But from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century northern Syria (and Syria generally) was suffering untold miseries as wave after wave of Mongols, Turkmans, and Tartars swept over it. The Syrian Monastery, deprived of its resources, gradually declined.

The process is reflected in the records of the library at the monastery. In the first three quarters of the thirteenth century the list of dated accessions is fairly continuous; in the last quarter only one dated addition is known—and that a service book written in the monastery itself. In the fourteenth century we hear indeed of a Bishop Abraham and certain monks of Natpha who came to the monastery in 1319, possibly to settle there; but, on the other hand, only a single book is known to have been acquired by the library during this period. Evidently the friends of the monastery who in happier times would have brought their gifts to the convent were ruined or slain, and the remaining monks were so few that it was not worth while for them to add to the library by their own labors.

In the fifteenth century the same phenomenon is continued: the library list for the first eighty years is all but blank; and it was only in the last two decades, when, as we shall see, some degree of prosperity returned, that the list becomes full again. Significantly enough, the one book known to have been written in the monastery (in 1404) was not finished until 1687, when it was no longer in the Wādi 'n Natrûn. Did the scribe abandon his monastery in despair and depart elsewhere, carrying his unfinished work with him?

So far our evidence for the decline of the monastery has been presumptive only; in 1413 we come to hard fact in the shape of the following note inscribed in a Syriac ms.: “I, John, a desert monk from the Convent of the house of Mar Simeon of Kartamin, read in this book of stories of the Saints... I, John, entered this Monastery (the Syrian) in the year 1724 of the Greeks (1413 A.D.). I only found one single monk in this Monastery, Rabban Moses of Husn Kifa: God pardon him!” To such a state had this once prosperous convent been reduced!

In his description of the Wādi Habīb, Makrizi before 1441 writes that the Monastery of the Abyssinians was then in ruins, but does not say when this misfortune had taken

1 No doubt Syrians in Egypt still helped to maintain the convent; but it is probable that they too were impoverished by the interruption of trade between Syria and Egypt.

2 The capture of Bagdad by the Mongol Hulagu in 1258, followed by the conquest of Syria in 1260; and the sack of Damascus, followed by the devastation of northern Syria in 1401, may serve as landmarks in this age of calamity.

3 See Excursus, § 8.
4 See note in Wright, Cat. Syr. MSS. in B.M., No. DDCXXXIII, pp. 1070 f.
5 Zotenberg, Cat. MSS. syr. B.N., No. 246, p. 201. This book (Ethics of Gregory bar-Hebraeus) was written in the monastery in 1391.
6 Id., No. 210, p. 161.
7 See Wright, Cat. Syr. MSS. in B.M., No. mXXXII, p. 1199.
place.\footnote{See p. 405.} Evidence which shows that the monastery was still existing in 1419 is therefore of some importance. This is furnished by a copy of certain rules for the guidance of the Abyssinian monks at “the Monastery of Elias in Scetis,” written at the end of an Ethiopic ms. of the Pauline \textit{Epistles} in the year of Grace 79 (1419 A.D.).\footnote{See Zotenberg, \textit{Cat. MSS. thb. B.N.}, No. 46, p. 45.} The decay of this monastery falls therefore between 1419 and 1441.

9. Makrizi’s \textit{Account of the Wādi Ḥābīb}

The full extent of the disaster which had befallen the monasteries becomes apparent only when we turn to Makrizi’s survey written at some date between 1419\footnote{Since in 1419 the Monastery of Elias still existed, but was ruined before Makrizi wrote; Makrizi himself died 1441–1442. Makrizi (see below) mentions the information of (a) Christian writers, (b) some person who had visited the monasteries. There is nothing to show he had personally travelled to the valley.} and 1441. This description may here be quoted in its entirety:\footnote{After Quatremerre (\textit{Mémoires}, I, pp. 462 f.), who combines ms. arabe 673 c, t. i, fol. 144\textsuperscript{b} and t. iii, fol. 228\textsuperscript{a}–229\textsuperscript{a}. Quatremerre’s version of the second notice contains some important particulars which are not found in Wüstenfeld’s edition (\textit{Gesch. d. Copt.}, pp. 199 f.). Such passages are marked **. Matter to be found in Wüstenfeld, but not in Quatremerre is distinguished thus ††.}

“The Valley of Ḥābīb is situate in the western part of Egypt, between Maryūt and the Fayyūm. It takes its name from Ḥabīb ibn Mohammed of the tribe of Fezareh, one of the Companions of the Prophet. He was present at the conquest of Mecca (? Misr = Egypt), and retired to this valley at the time of the revolts raised against the Caliph Othman.\footnote{Cf. Wansleben’s narrative, p. 419. Elsewhere (\textit{Khita}, Part i, 272, trans. Casanova, p. 61) Makrizi states that in Baremha (Feb.–March) “they begin to collect the natron and to transport it from Wādī Ḥabīb to the sbuneh of the Sultan (at Terrāneh).” The natron was first placed under government control by Ahmed ibn el Mudebbir: see p. 324.} This valley is also called the Valley of the Kings (Wādi al-mulk), Valley of the Natrūn (Wādi al-natrun), Desert of Shithēt (Biria Shīhāt), Desert of Askūt (Biria ‘实景q), Balance of the Hearts (Mitān al-qalūb).

“This region contains several precious substances, such as the natron, which brings in considerable sums\footnote{Le Sieur Granger states that he saw three abandoned glass-furnaces in the Wādī: see p. 426. An ancient glassworks named Za’agia is marked on the 100,000 Survey Map some distance north of Baramūs and in the region of the lakes.}; the anderānī salt, and the sūlānī salt (i.e., red natron). The latter is found in the form of slabs which are like marble. In this desert there is to be seen an ancient glass-furnace.\footnote{I could hear nothing of such a spring.} Amongst its other products are to be reckoned papyrus (reeds) which is used for making mats, zinc, black kohl, the eaglestone, and masîkēb, which is a lump of yellow clay, enclosed in a black stone: powdered and dissolved in water this alleviates maladies of the stomach.

“In this valley is to be seen a spring, called the Raven’s Spring,\footnote{Makrizi is evidently quoting some earlier writer.} which forms a kind of basin fifteen ells long and five wide. This spring, whose water is sweet and clear, exists in a grotto in the heart of the mountain: none knows whence it comes, nor whither it goes.

“Formerly there were to be counted in this valley a hundred monasteries. Of these there now remain only seven\footnote{On Ḥabīb see p. 274.} which extend towards the west along the desert which separates
FROM THE FOURTEENTH TO THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

El Bohaireh from the Fayyum. All this extent is covered with barren sands, salt marshes, and fearful deserts destitute of water. The monks of this district drink water from wells only. The Christians of Egypt bring them alms and the bread necessary for the celebration of Mass. To-day these monasteries are greatly fallen from their former splendor. Indeed, if we are to believe the Christian writers, there came forth from them seventy thousand monks, each with a staff in his hand, who went to Terrâneh to salute ‘Amr ibn el ‘Asi on his return from Alexandria, and to beg his protection for them and for their monasteries. This general granted their request, and handed them a charter which is preserved amongst these monks. *He also assigned them a revenue to be levied on Lower Egypt. This right amounted in one year to more than five thousand ardebs, but to-day it does not reach one hundred ardebs.*

"The most famous of these monasteries is that of Saint Macarius the Great (دير بومقار). Outside are to be seen the ruins of a great number of other convents. Formerly the monks of Saint Macarius enjoyed the right of refusing to recognize the patriarch if he did not come (i.e., until he came) to be enthroned in their monastery, after having been consecrated at Alexandria. They say it formerly held fifteen hundred monks who dwelt there: to-day only a small number is to be found there. Three saints of the name of Macarius are enumerated. The most famous is he who founded this monastery. Then comes Macarius of Alexandria, and lastly Macarius the Bishop. Their bodies are laid in three coffins of wood, which the Christians come to visit with great veneration. To this day there is preserved in the monastery the writing of ‘Amr by which this general granted to the monks of Wâdi Habîb a due to be levied on Lower Egypt.† So I have been assured by eye-witnesses. †Saint Macarius the elder received the monastic rule from Saint Antony, who was the first among them to wear the monkish cap and the askîm, which is a band of leather with which the monks gird themselves, and whereon hangs a cross (?). He met Antony on the eastern mountain range where the Monastery of el ‘Arabeh is, and remained for some time with him; and then Antony clothed him with the monastic habit and bade him go to the Wâdi ’n Natrûn and there take up his abode. He did this, and a great number of monks assembled round him. They relate of him many noble deeds.... Saint Macarius the Alexandrian wandered from Alexandria to the aforesaid Macarius, and became a monk through him. Then came Macarius the Third who was a bishop.†

"The Monastery of Saint John the Little (دير بويحنس القصير) is said to have been built in the time of Constantine, son of Helena. †This Saint John possessed notable qualities and was one of the most famous monks.† It was formerly very flourishing, and a large number of monks were found there; but to-day there remain no more than three.

"The Monastery of Saint John Kama (دير يحنس كيما) is near that of Elias (دير الياس). This latter belonged to the Abyssinians. But the woodwork of these two buildings having

† "On the collection of the tithe of the northern district" (El Bohaireh)—Wüstenfeld.
been eaten by the worms (white ants), they both collapsed, and now show nothing but ruins.

“The Abyssinians withdrew to the Monastery of the Virgin, our Lady of John the Little (دير سيدة بويحس), which is a fine monastery situated near the Convent of Saint John the Little.

“The Monastery of Saint Anub (نوب, دير انانوب), which stands in the neighborhood, is to-day in ruins. †This Saint Anub was a native of Samannûd, and was put to death at the beginning of Islam, and his body is placed in a house at Samannûd. †

“Not far from there is to be seen the Monastery of the Armenians (دير الايرمن) which is also ruined.

“Quite close to this last is situated the Monastery of Saint Bishôi (Bishâî, دير بو بشاي), which is very large and greatly reverenced among the Christians, because Bishôi is one of the most famous solitaries, and is ranked with Saint Macarius and Saint John the Little.

“Opposite the Monastery of Saint Bishôi another convent is to be seen, which formerly belonged to the Jacobite Christians, but for about three hundred years² has been in the possession of the Syrian (سريان) monks.³ The district in which these convents are situated is known by the name ‘Lake of the Monasteries’ (بركة الأديرة).

“The Monastery of Our Lady of Baramûs (دير سيدة بروموس) is dedicated in the name of the Virgin Mary. It contains some monks. Opposite to it is the Monastery of Saint Moses (دير موسى الاسود) or Moses the Black (دير بروموس): †this monastery is dedicated to the Virgin of Baramûs, so that Baramûs is the name of the monastery. †

“It is related that Maximus and Domitius, sons of an Emperor of the Romans, had a master Arsenius.⁶ This man having left the court, retired to the desert of Shihêt, where he embraced the monastic life and dwelt until his death. While he was in this desert, the two young princes, of whom we have spoken, came to join him and placed themselves under his direction. After their death, their father caused the Church of Baramûs to be built and dedicated to them. Saint Moses the Black, who was a Berber by race, was a robber who had committed many murders. When he became a Christian he embraced the monastic life, and composed a great number of works. He was one of the solitaries who passed the whole of Lent without taking any food.”

Makrizi’s account shows us how terrible was the ruin which had overtaken the mona-

---

¹ For S. Nûb see Acta martyrum, ed. Hyvernat and Balestret, pp. 123 f.; Synax. (Eth.), Hamlê 24 (July 31), where it is stated that his body was taken to Samannûd, but that he was martyred under Diocletian.

² On this figure see p. 317.

³ The name of the monastery is written دير السريان in a X century note in Wright, Cat. Syr. MSS. in B.M., No. LXIII, p. 41, and in all mediaeval documents.

⁴ Cf. the phrase “sea (μελανος) of dwellings” in the Life of John Kamê, ed. M. H. Davis, p. 40.

⁵ On the relation of these two monasteries see p. 303.

⁶ For the bearing of this passage on the origin of the name Baramûs and the legend of Maximus and Domitius, see p. 101.
FROM THE FOURTEENTH TO THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

steries. In the first place the revenue derived from Lower Egypt had depreciated (if Makrizi’s figures are right\(^1\)) to two per cent of its former value. Secondly, out of a total of eleven monasteries named, Makrizi records that four—the Monasteries of Kamé, Anub, Elias (the Abyssinians), and the Armenians—had fallen into complete ruin; and to these must be added the ruined monasteries (i.e., dependent cells) in the vicinity of the Monastery of Saint Macarius. The “Virgin of John the Little,” too, was presumably uninhabited when it was occupied by the homeless Abyssinian monks. And again, the still surviving convents had reached the lowest possible ebb: at the Monastery of Saint Macarius were a “few” monks; in that of John the Little three only; in the Monastery of Baramús there remained “some” monks. Probably the other monasteries were equally enfeebled.

Lastly, the Monastery of Saint Macarius had now (apparently) lost its historic privileges. Makrizi puts it beyond doubt that the “secondary enthronement” of a new patriarch in the monastery was now a thing of the past. His silence suggests that the consecration of the chrism also had been discontinued. Certainly we hear no more of the ceremony in the desert; and though this might possibly be due to the absence of all sources of information, Wansleben\(^2\) shows that in the seventeenth century the ancient custom had long been discontinued. From this period onwards the once great monastery has little left to it but the fading memories of its brilliant past.

In 1517—as it appears—under John XIII, at a “time of great distress in the world and in the state,” the fortunes of the monastery appear to have sunk yet lower. For in that year the monks fitted up the three “upper churches” in their keep, dedicating them to Saints Michael, Antony, and the hermits or anchorites, vainly hoping that the monastery “might be protected and built up by their prayers and supplications.”\(^3\) It is obvious that this second blow, which was well-nigh fatal, was in some way connected with the conquest of Egypt by Sultan Selîm and the Turks.

10. Revival of the Monastery of the Syrians

Since 1413, when the monk John found only one monk there, practically nothing is heard of the Monastery of the Syrians until we approach the end of the century, for Makrizi’s notice does no more than show that the place was still in Syrian possession. That the monastery continued to be in a state of extreme depression is to be inferred from the fact that between 1404 and 1482 not a single book is known to have been added to the library.\(^4\)

In 1482, however, signs of a change became apparent, and from 1484 onwards the list of books written in the monastery is pretty continuous.\(^5\) One of the volumes written at

---

1 Zeno’s endowment (see p. 225) is said to have produced 3000 ardebs of grain and 600 measures of oil.
2 Hist. de l’église d’Alexandrie, p. 88.
3 See A.A.C.M., II, iii, § 2.
4 See Excursus, § 8.
5 Id.
this period is of some interest, since the scribe, Moses, states that he wrote the first part at the Monastery of Saint John, and finished it in 1493 at the Monastery of the Syrians.\footnote{Zotenberg, \textit{Cat. MSS. syr. B.N.}, No. 239, pp. 192 f.} The Monastery of Saint John is never again referred to as being inhabited\footnote{The colophon (dated 1602) to John of Nikiu's \textit{Chron. CXXXIII. 9}, states that the translator, Gabriel the Egyptian, was “a son of the martyr (sic) John Kolobos.” This seems to imply that the monastery survived down to the beginning of the XVII century; but the reading appears to be doubtful. Dr. Charles retains the above in the text of his translation, but in his Introduction renders it without remark “son of John of Kaljób.” Yet the monastery must have been abandoned long before 1657 when Thévenot records that it was entirely ruined.}; and it seems likely that this date marks its final desertion. This is the only one of the four original monasteries in Scetis which has not survived to the present day.

In the extreme paucity of material for this period, we are fortunate in possessing some information which throws light on the revival of the Syrian Monastery. Ignatius XI, otherwise John bar-Sila, Patriarch of Antioch (1484–1493) is recorded to have “conferred many benefits upon the monastery in Scetis where the Syrian monks dwelt.”\footnote{Gregory bar-Hebraeus in Assemani, \textit{B.O.}, II, p. 386. The statement is probably an addition, as it does not appear in other \textit{mss.}: see the edition of Abbeleos and Lamy, II, p. 841, and note.} Further, a note in a Syrian ms. at Cambridge\footnote{University Library Dd., 3, 8, 1 – Wright, \textit{Cat. Syr. MSS. in C.U.L.}, p. 982. It is perhaps this Ignatius who has left a graffito at the Monastery of S. Macarius: see \textit{A.A.C.M.}, II, iii, § 2.} informs us that Ignatius went to Scetis to venerate all the holy fathers, Macarius, Bishôi, John, etc. He stayed there for six months. Some years later, he went again, and he even paid a third visit, apparently buying some books there. It is clear, then, that Ignatius was deeply interested in the monastery, and it is natural to connect him with the revival which takes place at this period.

There is also reason to suspect that the Mount Lebanon district now played much the same part as patrons of the monastery that the Tekritans had done in the eighth, ninth, and tenth centuries. Not only was the scribe Moses, lately referred to, from Mount Lebanon, but the abbot who ruled the convent from 1492 to 1516, Severus or Cyriac, also belonged to the same region.\footnote{See Appendix II on the abbots of the Syrian Monastery. It is noteworthy that Ignatius XI was succeeded by Noah of Mount Lebanon (Ignatius XII). The district seems to have played a leading part in the history of the Syrian Church at this time.} In 1510 Paul, Bishop of Hamat, Tripolis, and Hardin in Mount Lebanon, visited the convent\footnote{Note in Wright, \textit{Cat. Syr. MSS. in B.M.}, No. DCCCCLIII, pp. 1141 f.} ; and in 1516 we hear of a priest, Thomas of Damascus.\footnote{Zotenberg, \textit{Cat. MSS. syr. B.N.}, No. 74, pp. 44 f.} Southern Syria seems to have taken the place of northeastern Syria as patron of the monastery, and from there the means to revive the national convent in Scetis probably proceeded.

One very significant feature of the revival remains to be noticed. A scribal note in a \textit{ms.}\footnote{2 lb.} written at the Monastery of the Syrians in 1516 states that at the time of writing, Cyriac (Severus) of Mount Lebanon being abbot, there were in all forty-three monks, of whom eighteen were Syrians, eight of them classed as notables, that is priests or clerics, and twenty-five Egyptians. So far as we know, never before does an Egyptian element appear in the monastery; its presence marks the beginning or an early stage in a process.
of more or less peaceful penetration which ended in the next century with the elimination of the Syrian element altogether.

The Abbot Cyriac, or Severus, is known to have been a man of learning, and it is likely that after Ignatius XI the revival was largely due to him. After his death (probably in 1517) the energies of the convent, if the library list is a sound criterion, began to wane; doubtless to this monastery, as apparently to the Monastery of Saint Macarius, the Turkish conquest had brought grave misfortune. In 1518 a ms. was written for the new abbot, John the Cyprian,¹ and a copy of the Gospels was bequeathed to the monastery in the same year²; but from then onwards notices of books written in the monastery or received grow few indeed. In 1539 part of a volume was written at the monastery³; and a copy of Sem'an ibn Kalil’s Garden of the Solitary was written there in 1580.⁴ Before the end of the century the impetus of the revival was probably spent, and the Syrian and other monasteries alike settled down to a period of almost featureless existence.⁵

Two small pieces of evidence, however, go to show that in the sixteenth century the patriarchs still took some interest in the desert monasteries and apparently visited them. First, a note is extant in a Coptic ms. of the Gospels once belonging to the Monastery of Bishôi, “known as the White Monastery in Wady al Iṭrûn,” which was written in 1514 by John XIII of Alexandria⁶; and second, Gabriel VIII (1585–?) “died in the desert of Shihêt and was buried there.”⁷

¹ Wright, Cat. Syr. MSS. in B.M., No. cccxcvii, p. 314.
² Id., No. lxxxiii, pp. 58 f.
³ Zotenberg, Cat. MSS. syr. B.N., No. 170, pp. 120 f. The scribe was (another) Moses. De Slane (Cat. MSS. arabes B.N.) is wrong in stating that No. 297 in the Paris collection belonged in 1561 to the “Syrian Convent of Mar Moses in Scetis.” The note from which this statement is derived does indeed record the purchase of the Syrian Monastery by Marutha, but the original record is stated to have been found in the Monastery of Moses in Syria.
⁵ It was, however, probably enlivened for a while by the contention between Copts and Syrians as to the ownership of the Syrian Monastery.
SECTION V

THE MODERN PERIOD

(FROM THE SEVENTEENTH TO THE NINETEENTH CENTURY)
CHAPTER I

GENERAL CHARACTER OF THE PERIOD

THE materials for our final period are historical only in a limited sense. Save for the first few decades, no information derived from Egyptian sources is known to exist. We are therefore dependent upon the narratives of European travellers who visited the Wâdi 'n Natrûn in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries.

Such travellers naturally learned little of the current history of the monasteries, and less of their internal affairs. Nearly all journeyed to the desert either out of general curiosity, or as missionaries, or with the object of securing ancient manuscripts. Not one seems to have been genuinely interested in the history and archaeology of the monasteries themselves. We can do no more, therefore, than present a series of pictures illustrating the merely outward condition of the monasteries at longer or shorter intervals.

So far as we can judge, the state of the monasteries during these centuries remained practically unchanged. It is only at the very end of the period, about 1840, that signs of a revival begin to show themselves. Incidents of greater or less moment, such as the pillage of Baramûs in the eighteenth century, might and did occur; but there were no organic changes or developments—unless the reversion of the Syrian Monastery to the Copts can be so called. The monasteries remain poverty-stricken, impotent, and almost empty; there is no suggestion of any vigorous spiritual life or even of ambition to play any part in ecclesiastical affairs. It is as though the monasteries, exhausted by their changing activities through so many centuries, had fallen into a state of coma and could do no more than continue to exist.

1 But such material may lie hid—in the form of official and semi-official documents—in the monasteries themselves or in the Patriarchal Library.
CHAPTER II

THE END OF THE SYRIAN COMMUNITY

We have seen that early in the sixteenth century an intrusive element had appeared in the Syrian Monastery and that out of a total of forty-three monks only eighteen were Syrian, while twenty-five were Egyptian.¹ The scanty information available suggests that the first of these immigrants came principally from the ruined Monastery of John Kamé somewhere between 1413 and 1430.² We have now to trace the gradual disappearance of the Syrian element.

So far back as the thirteenth century there are distinct signs of an encroaching tendency on the part of the Copts and of a corresponding feeling of resentment on the part of the Syrians. The writer of the long historical note quoted in a previous chapter³ complains that the Egyptians, profiting by the weakness of the Syrians, had occupied the Monastery of Paul the Hermit, and that there was "none to examine them and release it from their hands"; and between the lines of Makrizi's notice on the Syrian Monastery it is possible to read traces of the same mutual ill will.⁴ When Syrians and Egyptians found themselves living side by side in the same monastery⁵ the friction would naturally become greater. Thévenot, Wansleben, and Sonnini inform us that the Egyptian monks had built for themselves a separate church in the Syrian Monastery⁶; and there were doubtless other ways in which the difference between the two races was emphasized.

In course of time, as it appears, the Egyptians, cuckoo-like, challenged the Syrians' right to the possession of the monastery, but were met with references to the transaction between Marutha and the Patriarch of Alexandria. Thus in 1562 a Syrian monk wrote in a manuscript a copy of the recorded finding of an inscription in Syriac and Coptic attesting the

¹ See p. 408.
² A.A.C.M., iv, v, § 4.
³ See p. 390.
⁴ See p. 406.
⁵ We might conjecture that when the Coptic monasteries became impoverished, the Syrian endowments for some reason had maintained their value, and that the Syrians were consequently called upon to maintain a certain number of Egyptian monks. But there is no shred of evidence to prove this.
⁶ See pp. 419, 420, 429.
THE END OF THE SYRIAN COMMUNITY

purchase; and in 1607 Gregory Behnam, Bishop of Jerusalem, after naming “the holy Convent of the Theotokos Mary that is called or named by all nations the Convent of the Syrians,” adds in an evidently combative tone: “and it is truly theirs inasmuch as we have found in the Hypomnemata of the Convent that Tagritan merchants bought it....”

Just as the Syrian title undoubtedly was, time cancelled it in the end. In 1624 a Syrian monk records that he dusted, counted, and arranged the Syriac books in the library, and three years later the Syrian, George, records his pathetic failure as a calligraphist. In this second note one Moses of Damascus is mentioned, apparently as abbot of the monastery—an allusion which shows that the institution was still under Syrian control. But in 1634 the last known addition to the collection of Syriac books was made; the ruling abbot was then ‘Abd el Meshih, whose name affords no definite clue to his nationality. Two years later, in 1352 a.m. (1636 A.D.), a new abbot, Abûl Farag, was installed who was certainly an Egyptian, since he is described as El Barmawi, that is, as a native of Barma, or Berma, a town in the Delta. Moreover, the document from which we learn the foregoing—the instrument appointing Abûl Farag superior of the monastery—was issued by the Patriarchal Synod of Egypt. Now that the abbot was Egyptian and appointed by Egyptian authority, it is surely almost certain that Syrian control had ended.

It is uncertain whether or not there were Syrian monks in the monastery after this date. Two notes, one in Syriac and the other in Arabic, dated 1664 and 1666, respectively, show that ‘Abd el Galîl of Mûsul, Metropolitan of Jerusalem, visited the monastery at these dates, possibly but not definitely in his official capacity. Thévenot’s observation that in 1657 there was a church for the Syrians and another for the Copts in the monastery may or may not imply that both nationalities were still represented at that date. But the Syrians had probably disappeared before the last quarter of the century, for, though Huntington describes the monastery as “dedicated to the Most Holy Virgin for the use of Syrian monks,” he subsequently observes that the Tree of Saint Ephraem clearly proves that it “once (olum) belonged to the Syrians”—implying that Syrian ownership had come to an end.

Almost certainly there were no Syrians left in the eighteenth century. J. S. Assemani, himself a Syrian, does not mention Syrians as inmates of the place at the time of his cousin’s visit (1707), or of his own (1715); nay, rather, he attributes the success achieved by Elias Assemani to the tact and fluent Arabic which ingratiated him with the Egyptian (Ægyptiacci) monks of the convent. Sicard also in 1712 remarks that the meal in the refectory was concluded with the recitation of the paternoster in Coptic (not in Syriac). But it is only

---

1 See p. 313.
2 See Excursus, § 9.
3 Ibid.
4 Wright, Cat. Syr. MSS. in B.M., No. dw.
5 De Slane, Cat. MSS. Arabes B.N., No. 320.
6 Assurance is lacking, because we do not know how the early Syriac abbots were appointed, and whether the Egyptian patriarch had any say in the matter.
7 See Assemani, B.A.V.C., No. cxvii.
8 See p. 419.
9 See p. 421.
10 B.O., i, Preface, § vii.
11 See p. 425.
with Sonnini (1778) that we are definitely assured of the eclipse of the Syrians: “From its name,” he writes, “it appears to have been formerly the residence of Syrian monks who have relinquished it to the Copts.”\footnote{See p. 429.} Whether Sonnini’s word “relinquished” means that the Syrians had definitely renounced their rights is extremely doubtful; it is far more likely that they had suffered them to lapse.

In such obscurity ended the Syrian community.
CHAPTER III

THE MONASTERIES IN THE SEVENTEEN CENTURY

1. El Baramûs

We have seen that of the original "Four Monasteries" one—the Monastery of John the Little—was abandoned probably in the fifteenth century, while the once proud Monastery of Saint Macarius had fallen very low. To the hegemony of the latter succeeded the Monastery of Baramûs, which seems to have escaped comparatively lightly from the general depression. From the meager appendix to the History of the Patriarchs\(^1\) we learn the bare facts that the Patriarchs Matthew III (1629\(^?\)–1646\(^?\)) and Matthew IV (1656–1675\(^\circ\)) were both monks of this monastery. Thévenot describes the establishment as enjoying larger revenues than any other monastery and containing more monks\(^3\); and the latter part at least of this statement is borne out by other writers.

2. Earlier Seventeenth-Century Visitors

We have now exhausted all that can be learned from Oriental sources\(^4\) concerning the monasteries. Henceforward we depend entirely upon the records of their impressions left by European visitors to the monasteries.

It is definitely known that European travellers reached the Wâdi 'n Natrûn in the first half of the seventeenth century; but for the most part all record (if they left any) of their experiences is either lost, or unpublished, or has so far eluded search. Possibly the Syriac codices at Milan, brought from the Syrian Monastery to Italy before 1634,\(^5\) were acquired by such nameless pioneers. The first who can be identified with tolerable certainty as having

---

\(^1\) Cod. Vat. Arab., No. 686, fol. 222\(^b\). Here, as hitherto, I am dependent on the ms. translation so generously lent to me by E Yetts.

\(^2\) Wansleben (Hist. de l'église d'Alexandrie, p. 330) calls Matthew IV Superior of Baramûs, but dates his accession 1661.

\(^3\) See p. 419.

\(^4\) Again it is necessary to say much unpublished material may exist in Egypt, but for the European it is probably almost inaccessible.

\(^5\) See Excursus, § 10.
visited the desert monasteries is the Capuchin, Gilles de Loches. On his return from Egypt to Europe about 1633 this father informed Peiresc that rare books existed in the monasteries of Egypt, and specially mentioned a library containing eight thousand (sic) volumes, which he had seen.1 There is every reason to accept the current view2 that this missionary had seen (but exaggerated) the literary treasures of the Syrian Monastery. It is only to be regretted that no particulars of his visit appear to be extant.

Peiresc promptly acted on this information. In 1634 he was in correspondence with Agathange de Vendôme who negotiated for him the purchase of the polyglot (Barberini) Psalter from the abbot of Saint Macarius.3 De Vendôme does not appear to have visited the monasteries, but the fact that Europeans were in touch with the monks makes it probable that visits of the former to the latter were now not extraordinary. Indeed, graffiti4 in the Chapel of Saint Michael at the Monastery of Saint Macarius prove that a French traveller, Claud Durand, was there in 1640 and was followed by two others in 1644.

In 1649 the Sieur de la Boullaye le Gouz visited Egypt and devotes some space in his memoirs5 to the natron as an article of commerce, which was then exported in “vessels of Havre and Sables d’Olonnes” to Rouen where it was used by Norman linen manufacturers for bleaching. He gives a bare mention to the Monastery of Saint Macarius alone; but there is no indication that he ever went there or even entered the Wâdi ’n Natrûn.

3. Thévenot and Wansleben

Though Thévenot, who was in Egypt in 1657, never visited the monasteries, he gives a fairly adequate notice of them which had been given him by an unnamed traveller.6 Travellers then journeyed to the valley by way of Bûlât and Terrâneh, where the local kasbeh and the desert Arabs provided an escort, or (with the monks) from Cairo to “Dris” (Et Tris), where there was a hospice. The Monastery of Saint Macarius, the first to be visited, is described as the largest but the most dilapidated of all; the church particularly was ruinous, though it appeared “to have been formerly very fine.” Besides several bodies of saints, “five or six fine altar-slabs of marble” are singled out for mention. The keep to which the monks used to flee when attacked by the Arabs contained all that they held most precious, including their books which they dared not sell. There was no garden and the water was slightly brackish.

On the way to the Monastery of Bishói the “Path of the Angels”7 was to be seen stretching out into the western desert. Along the route were also the ruins of numerous cells, among them the remains of the Monastery of Saint John (the Little), whereof only

---

2 See Assemari, B.O., 1, Preface, § vii.  
3 See my New Texts, loc. cit.  
4 See A.A.C.M., 11, iii, § 2, on the chapel of S. Michael.  
5 Voyages et observations, pp. 383 f.  
6 Voyages, 11, ch. lxxi. The list of monasteries given by Thévenot gives the Syrian Monastery twice (once as “Balsarion”) and omits the Monastery of Bishói, which however, is named in the text.  
7 See p. 395, and Wansleben’s narrative, p. 420, below.
THE MONASTERIES IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

a single dome remained standing. There, too, was to be seen the famous “Tree of Obedience.”¹

The Monastery of Bishôî boasted a fine church with a good garden and good water. On Palm Sunday, 1656, the bodies of many saints preserved there were accidentally burned. The monks at first declared that the relics had been stolen by a French merchant, but, finding this story unprofitable, they drew upon the monastic cemetery for fresh bodies, declaring that the stolen saints “had come out of the French ships and returned to their church.”²

The Monastery of the Syrians is described as small but agreeable, with good water, and the best cared for of all the monasteries. It possessed two fine churches, one for the Copts and one for the Syrians. There, too, was to be seen the Tree of Saint Ephraem,³ which is now for the first time mentioned.

Journeying westwards, the traveller reached the dried sea, or river, called “Bahr el malame” (sic),⁴ once haunted by pirate vessels but dried up at the prayer of Saint Macarius; the petrified wood fragments here abounding were believed to be remains of the fleet. On the west side of this was the Hill of the Eaglestones,⁵ called “Djebel el Masqué,” where are found the stones which eagles carry off to their nests to keep off serpents.

The fourth monastery, “Dér El Syâdet” (i.e., Our Lady, Baramûs), lying not far distant, was large but a little ruined; it possessed a garden, and a fine church. The water was brackish, but the number of monks here was larger than in the other monasteries owing to the larger revenues.⁶

In 1672 the Dominican, Johann Michael Wansleben (alias Vansleb), planned a journey to the monasteries.⁷ Sailing up the western branch of the Nile from Rosetta, he landed at Terrâneh. Here a trivial incident inspired the local Arabs with a fantastic idea of his wealth; and a plot being laid to waylay and murder him, Wansleben was forced to abandon his project. During his stay at Terrâneh, however, he gathered some valuable information concerning the Wâdi ’n Natrûn.

From a Copt, the secretary of the local kasbef, he learned that the average yearly yield of natron brought in from the wâdi was thirty-six thousand quintals; it was carried by camel to Terrâneh and thence forwarded to Cairo or Alexandria where it realized twenty-five meidins per quintal. The total revenue derived from this substance was thirty-six purses or eighteen thousand French crowns. The subordinate kasbef stationed at Terrâneh to guard the natron was at this time “lord of the monasteries.”⁸

¹ See p. 108.
² As did the bodies of certain of the Forty-nine Martyrs when stolen by men of the Fâyyûm: see p. 270.
³ See p. 114.
⁴ Thévenot renders it mare convicci, “sea of rebuke”; but the ordinary name is Bahr bila Ma’, “waterless river”: see p. 420.
⁵ Probably the modern Kâret el Mulûk (see Pl. II), where selenite (if that be the eaglestone) abounds.
⁶ See p. 417.
⁷ See Nouvelle Relation en forme d’un journal d’un voyage fait en Égypte en 1672 et 1673. Wansleben had previously been in Egypt in 1661. He had difficulty in escaping even from Terrâneh, and speaks bitterly of the treachery of a certain Nasr Allah, abbot of one of the monasteries.
⁸ Id., pp. 225 f. Presumably the monks paid a consideration and in return enjoyed the protection of the kasbef.
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

Another Copt, who had been abbot in one of the monasteries, informed Wansleben of various points of interest to be seen in the desert. The first of these was the "Path of the Angels." Between the Monasteries of Saint Macarius and Bishōi "and from there a little further into the desert" stretched "a long line of little mounds of earth, one pace distant from each other and forming a kind of road." According to the monks this track had been formed by angels to guide the hermits to church on Sundays; it was therefore called "Tārīk el Malā’ikeh" ( طريق البلاك)، or the Path of the Angels.¹

Wansleben had learned from "an old Arabic ms." that the desert valley once boasted seven great monasteries named after Macarius, John the Little (or the Hegumen), Bishōi, Maximus and Domitius ("Massime et Timothée"), Moses the Black, Kamē ("Kéma"), and the Holy Virgin of the Syrians—besides "three hundred dwellings of hermits and solitaries." But of all these (he was told) only the Monasteries of the Syrians and Bishōi were of consequence²; both enjoyed good water, and the former contained two churches, "one for the Syrians and the other for the Copts." In the same monastery was to be seen the tree miraculously sprung from the staff of Saint Ephraem: "this saint having left it (his staff) at the door when he went to visit one³ in the monastery, it straightway struck roots and put forth leaves and flowers. They say that in all Egypt there is no such tree besides."⁴

In the Monastery of Saint John (described merely as being "in a very bad state") was to be seen another marvelous tree, sprung "from the staff of this Saint (John), when at his superior's command he planted it in the ground and watered it. It is because of this act of obedience that the monks still call it Scieiğiaret itlāa (شجرة الطاعة) or the Tree of Obedience" (Pl. V, A).

On the way leading from the Monastery of the Syrians to the Hill of the Eaglestones, the bed of the Bahr bila Ma’, or Waterless River, was to be seen and the legend (as given above) is repeated.

4. Robert Huntington’s Visit

The next traveller who has left any account of the monasteries is Robert Huntington, Chaplain to the Levant Company and afterwards Bishop of Raphoe in Ireland.⁵ He went to Egypt in search of mss. in 1678 or 1679 (the probable date of his visit to the Wādi ‘n

¹ Nouvelle Relation en forme d’un journal d’un voyage fait en Égypte en 1672 et 1673, pp. 226 f. The Path of the Angels was venerated in the XIV century (see p. 395) and is doubtless identical with the "Road of the Cherubim" mentioned in the history of the IX century.
² But not, as is sometimes stated, that they alone existed.
³ Sc. Abba Bishōi: see p. 114.
⁴ See A.A.C.M., Pl. LXXIV, 8. The tree is a tamarind, a species which, though uncommon, is found elsewhere in Egypt. The legend is related for the first time by Thévenot and Wansleben and was almost certainly unknown in the XIV century when Benjamin II visited the sacred sites in the convent: see p. 395. We may suspect that it was fabricated by the Syrians in their controversy with the Copts concerning the ownership of the monastery, to prove that the Syrian connection went back to the earliest days. It is really an adaptation of the legend concerning the Tree of Obedience, but the budding of a staff is, of course, a very common feature in hagiography: cf. Liber Elienis, i, 13, concerning the staff of S. Etheldreda.
⁵ See the memoir on Huntington in Huntingtoni epistolae, ed. Smith, pp. xvi f., xx.
THE MONASTERY IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

Natrûn), but was again in the country towards the end of 1681. The letter containing the account of his visit was written (presumably from notes) some fifteen years later.\footnote{Huntingtoni epistolae, ed. Smith, xxxix.}

Huntington first notices the natron lake and the natron, observing that it was generally called “latron” by the Arabs.\footnote{This is confirmed by XVI–XVIII century inscriptions in MSS. from the desert monasteries where the name is written الأطروون.}

Barely three miles from the lake he reached a monastery dedicated to the Virgin (\textit{sc.} Baramûs) in which were to be seen many ruined cells and a church (not described). In spite of its forlorn condition the monastery housed a superior with twenty-five monks. From these he heard the customary story of the Waterless River and the pirate ships.

Two leagues E.S.E. of Baramûs, Huntington visited the Syrian Monastery, “dedicated to the Most Holy Virgin for the use of the Syrians,” but remarks on nothing there save a Syrian Old Testament in the library,\footnote{Presumably the Syriac library was already thrust away out of sight.} and the Tree of Saint Ephraem, which, he remarks, is “a clear proof that the monastery once belonged to the Syrians.”

The Monastery of Anba Bishôi was found to be less ruinous than the rest. In the church on the north side (wall) paintings of saints, labelled \textit{mosekbeba},\footnote{Not S. Saba, but an imperfect inscription, “The Holy Abba...”} Saint Theodore, etc., were to be seen. The refectory was furnished with stone seats and table to accommodate from fifty to sixty persons.

The only other surviving monastery of the three hundred and sixty-six\footnote{The number is of course fanciful.} (of which the monks told Huntington) was that of Saint Macarius. It is described as being the most ruinous of them all, and Huntington found nothing worthy of mention except the “many manuscript codices... in the Library,” some of which he enumerates.\footnote{For these see my \textit{New Texts}, introduction, § 6. It may be worth while to add that Huntington maintained a correspondence in Arabic with the abbot of the “Monastery of S. Mary Barsema” (Baramûs) in the desert of S. Macarius: see \textit{Huntingtoni epistolae}, ed. Smith, p. xx. Note further that Benoît de Maillot, consul-general in Egypt, 1692–1707, visited the Wâdi ‘n Natrûn. He contributes nothing to our knowledge, however, barely mentioning the “Monastery of St Zacharias (sic) and two or three others,” and the Waterless River: see \textit{Description de l’Égypte}, p. 296.}

In conclusion Huntington comments on the spare and frugal life of the monks: “In these monasteries the monks live even as they did at first, hardly and strictly enough; being satisfied with lentils, beans, and bread begged from outside.”
CHAPTER IV
THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

1. Gabriel Eva and Elias Assemani

The earliest visitors to the monasteries in the eighteenth century add very little of general interest. Gabriel Eva, Abbot of the Monastery of Saint Maura on Mount Lebanon, being in Rome as the envoy of his own patriarch, was sent by Pope Clement XI to ascertain the real intentions of the Coptic patriarch, then negotiating with the Vatican. After accomplishing the object of his mission, Gabriel made a pilgrimage to the chief Egyptian monasteries, including those in the Wâdi 'n Natrûn. On his return to Rome in 1706 he reported that he had seen there important and ancient libraries—news which aroused considerable interest.

At this time the pope was anxious to increase the Vatican Library and particularly its collection of Oriental mss. Elias Assemani, the librarian, was therefore dispatched to Egypt, where partly by his own tact and easy address, partly by the complaisance of the patriarch, he succeeded in carrying off forty choice volumes from the Syrian Monastery. Except for a remark on the danger from Arab robbers on the desert journey (iter periculosum et Hagarenis latronibus summopere infestum) and a rhetorical description of the gloomy vault where the mss. were discovered, the notice of his visit is of little general value.

2. Father Claude Sicard

The most satisfactory account of the monasteries at this period is furnished by Père Claude Sicard. As a Jesuit missionary whose aim was to effect the conversion of the Copts, he considered that the monasteries were the strategic point, for if they could be won over to Rome, the Coptic laity would soon follow their lead. He determined, therefore, to visit the Wâdi 'n Natrûn.

Starting on December fifth, 1712, from Bûlûk in company with the superior of Saint

1 See Assemani, B.O., 1, Preface, § vii.
2 Lettres édifiantes et curieuses, t. v (Levant), pp. 17 f.
THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Macarius, he sailed down the Rosetta branch of the Nile to Wardân and thence to Et Tris, where the monks had a hospice. On December seventh he set out to cross the desert accompanied by the Superior of Saint Macarius and by another monk who was taking out supplies for the monasteries. These amounted to ten ass loads of grain, rice, lentils, beans, salt fish (?), wax, and incense. The Monastery of Saint Macarius was reached a little before sunset.

After naming the surviving monasteries, Sicard describes their general features. Each is a great four-sided inclosure, about one hundred paces long and slightly less in width, bounded by high and thick walls with a parapet and possessing a tower half as high again as the inclosure walls. This tower contains a chapel dedicated to Saint Michael, store-chambers for provisions, a library containing three or four chests of old mss. in Arabic and Coptic, a well, mill, oven, and a drawbridge. The remark that “the tower serves as a keep and a refuge for the poor monks in the attacks by the Arabs who cannot so easily make their way into this tower as they can by force or fraud into the lower inclosure” — suggests that the monks had lately undergone some such experience. Within the inclosure were to be seen the ruins of two or three churches, of several dormitories (dortoirs), of a large number of cells, and of various offices.

In the Monastery of Saint Macarius there were only four monks—a priest (the superior), a porter, and two secular deacons; in that of Bishôi four monks; in the other two (Baramûs and the Syrian Monastery) twelve or fifteen. Thus the monasteries were tenanted by less than forty persons at this time, and of these some were laymen who had been admitted by order of the patriarch.

The food and clothing of the monks were the same as those of the peasantry. They said Mass every Sunday and on every Wednesday and Friday during the four fasts of the year. For the rest, “they pass several hours in the choir by day and night,” working with their hands during the remaining hours. All obey one superior, submission to whom is their chief rule. “I was greatly edified,” writes Sicard, “to see these solitaries after their office every evening and before retiring to their cells prostrate themselves at the feet of their superior, confess their faults to him, while seeking his pardon, and receive his blessing.”

The Monastery of Saint Macarius contained two churches: the first, small and complete, was dedicated to Saint Macarius; the second, larger and half ruined, to Saint John (sic). Of this latter “there still remain five domes (vaults) supported by twenty marble columns of the Gothic (sic) order with five altars.” Behind their sacristies these, like all Coptic churches, have a special oven for baking the eucharistic bread, which is made in small

---

1 In the XIV century the hospice was at Abû Nishâbeh near Khatâbâh: see p. 398.
2 There were no “dormitories” in these monasteries.
3 Sicard has certainly fallen into error over these dedications: see A.A.C.M., 11, i, § 6.
4 This passage is of great importance for the architectural history of the (original) Church of S. Macarius.
5 Tischendorf makes the same assertion which is combated by Butler (Ancient Coptic Churches, 1, p. 397).
round cakes. The unconsecrated cakes are distributed after the ceremony among the monks and the more eminent members of the congregation.

In both churches Sicard saw the square tanks intended for the ceremony "which they call Gothas"; and in that of Saint John the Baptist (sic) he was shown a chapel dedicated to Saint Apollinaris (sic) whom the Copts mistakenly regarded as the daughter of Zeno. In the choir of the Church of Saint Macarius were four small coffins containing the bodies of the three Macarii and of John the Little.

Sicard left the monastery on December ninth. "Hardly had we proceeded two hundred paces beyond the gate, when I found myself amid the ruins of several buildings whose foundations and some complete expanses of wall show their size and form." In reply to Sicard's inquiry as to the nature of these remains, his guide assured him that in the desert of Scetis and on the Mount of Nitria "which you see bounding the horizon on the north," there were formerly as many monasteries as days in the year, and that these ruins were the remains of some of them. One such ruin was specially indicated as the "Castle of the Maidens" (Kasr el Banât). Three or four hours' journey farther on, there were the remains of more than fifty monasteries quite distinct from one another, but ruined and almost levelled with the ground. Here the Tree of Obedience was pointed out as once the staff of Abba Poemen (sic) watered by John the Little with such surprising results.

On the same morning Sicard saw the Path of the Angels which he describes as "a long line of little heaps of stones one pace distant from one another and stretching away from south to north for the distance of several days' journey." In the same region his guide pointed out an eminence, or hillock, called the Pillar of the Devils, because the demons used to lie in wait there to mock the monks and to try to lead them astray.

The Syrian Monastery was reached a little after noon. It was the best of the four, provided with a good garden, a well, and many trees (including that of Saint Ephraem), and contained three churches dedicated to the Virgin, to Saint Antony, and to Saint Victor.

After prayers in the first of these churches, Sicard was brought into the refectory—it being the custom of the monks to fast until after midday before Christmas, during the Fasts of the Apostles and of the Holy Virgin, and before Easter. Here he shared in the common meal consisting of lentil soup and bread. During the repast a code of monastic

---

1 Rather for the Maundy foot washing, on which see p. 376.
2 On Apollinaris Syncletica see p. 117. But probably this chapel was really dedicated to Hilaria, "the daughter of Zeno."
3 Presumably his remains were removed to this place from the larger and ruinous church when the Monastery of John fell into ruin.
4 These were the remains of the "dependent cells" mentioned above: see p. 361.
5 A common Arabic name for ruined buildings. There was of course no nunnery in Scetis at any time.
6 These were the ruins of the Monastery of John and others in the vicinity. Many of Sicard's fifty were either dependent cells or mere outbuildings.
7 Unless Sicard is mistaken (cf. Thévenot's and Wansleben's notice), this may have marked the way from Scetis to the "Mount" of Pernoudj or Barnûg.
8 On the dedications of the churches in the Syrian Monastery, see A.A.C.M., iv, v, § 1.
rules, believed to have been given by the Virgin to Saint Macarius the Less, was read, and at the end the paternoster was said in Coptic by way of grace. In the kitchen three great cooking pots, of the stone called in Upper Egypt baram, were the only utensils; these, however, last for centuries.

Since it was a time of festival the monks had as a collation or evening meal “a little dish of powdered oatmeal and another of sugar-cane”; sometimes dry onions steeped in salted water were also served. They drank no wine and little coffee; they slept, fully dressed, on mats spread upon the floor, and their mode of life was extremely frugal and austere. Contrary to the report of later travellers, Sicard found them strong and sturdy, well-nourished, and full of health. They spent their days partly in psalmody, partly in manual labor, for they rarely went out of the monasteries, and then only with the greatest precautions for fear of wandering Arabs. These latter, when passing the monasteries, called out at the gate, and received a dole of bread, onions, soup, and water which was lowered to them.

Wishing to gain an adequate knowledge of Coptic beliefs, Sicard studied in the library “their books written in Arabic and the legends of their saints.” He makes no mention of Syriac texts, and what books he saw there and elsewhere he does not say. Nor indeed does he notice any object of archaeological interest in this monastery except a bell about two feet high and the same in diameter which hung in the tower and was used to summon the monks to church.

On December tenth Sicard paid a visit to the neighboring Monastery of Bishôi, but noted nothing relating to it save that it was tenanted only by three or four monks without a priest. He then returned to the Syrian Monastery.

After the night office and Mass which lasted from 2 A.M. until sunrise, Sicard left on December eleventh for Baramûs where he was well received by the superior, a young man. The monastery, as he was informed, had been founded by one of the Macarii; Arsenius, who was held in special honor there, chose it for his retreat; Moses the Ethiopian was one of the abbots, and Maximus and Domitius had passed their monastic life there and given their national name to the convent.

He records an interesting piece of demonology. Having suggested to the superior that it was time for vespers, he was gravely informed that on the contrary it was “exactly the hour when the demons make their prayers”; in half an hour hell would be closed and heaven open to the prayers of mankind.

1 But Sicard has previously said that it was a fast.
2 Probably Bessus the XI century Hegumen of the Monastery of Kamé fed the starving Arabs in much the same way: see p. 355. Wandering Arabs are still supplied with food in the same way.
3 But the Hegumen of Baramûs converted by J. S. Assemani in 1715 must have been elderly.
4 I.e., Macarius the Great.
5 Cf. the Apocalypse of Adam, ed. Renan in Journal asiatique, Ve Série, t. ii (1853), p. 452: “First Hour of the Night: it is the hour of the adoration of the demons. During all the time that their adorations last, they cease to do ill and to harm men.” It is evident that the superior had read this Apocalypse in the monastery or elsewhere.
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

In conclusion, Sicard notices the remains of other buildings in the neighborhood of Baramûs: “at three or four musket-shots from this place are to be found the melancholy remains of ten or twelve sacred edifices, amongst which the Monastery of Moses and the Church of Saints Maximus and Timothy (Domitius)\(^1\) are still named.”

3. J. S. Assemani: Le Sieur Granger

J. S. Assemani, like his cousin Elias, visited Egypt as agent for the Vatican Library. At his own request he was accompanied by Sicard\(^2\) in his journey to the Wâdi ’n Natrûn in 1715, where he stayed some eight days.

At the Monastery of Saint Macarius he acquired the priceless collection of Coptic mss. now in the Vatican Library, but achieved only partial success at the Monastery of the Syrians. Beyond the facts that at the latter monastery he saw a very narrow cell, alleged to be that of Anba Bishõi himself and called the “Oratory” or “Place of the Cross,”\(^3\) and that the body of Marutha, Bishop of Tekrit, preserved in the Syrian Monastery had been transported thither when Mesopotamia was overrun by Persians and Arabs,\(^4\) no details of his visit have come down to us. From another source,\(^5\) however, we learn that Assemani converted Macarius, the Superior of Baramûs, who subsequently went to Rome and became Hegumen of the Monastery of Saint Stephen for Coptic and Abyssinian monks, where he died in 1740 at the age of one hundred and seven years.

The next visitor, le Sieur Granger, was more interested in the natural history than the antiquities of the valley. Consequently there is much in his account\(^6\) concerning the natron and the petrified wood, but little or nothing relating to the monasteries. The Monastery of Bishõi (called Deîr Labiat, that is, Dé el Abiad, or the White Monastery) is dismissed as possessing no feature of merit; on the Monasteries of Saint Macarius and of the Syrians he has nothing to say except that the monks refused to admit him to their libraries or to part with their books at any price.

A variant on the legend of the Waterless River, which ascribes its drying up to prayers of Saint Ephraem, may be worth mention.\(^7\) But the only new fact contributed by this traveller is that “three abandoned glassworks” were to be seen to the southeast of the Natrûn Lake on the route to the Monastery of Saint Macarius.\(^8\)

---

1. If Sicard is right this should be the original Monastery of Baramûs and the existing monastery the Theotokos of Baramûs.
2. See *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses*, t. v, p. 188; Rabbath, *Documents inédits pour servir à l’histoire du christianisme en Orient*, p. 131, where the visit is dated (? by a slip) in 1714.
4. Id., i, p. 179.
5. Mai, *S.V.N.C.*, v, ii, pp. 160 f. Yet the Superior of Baramûs at the time of Sicard’s first visit was a young man.
8. Id., p. 179.
THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

4. C. S. Sonnini’s Narrative

A very disparaging account of the monasteries in general and of the monks in particular is given by Sonnini, who crossed the desert from a village which he calls Honèze to the Wâdi ’n Natrûn in 1778. Sonnini was robbed by Arabs of the desert while on his journey and seems to have stood in considerable personal danger during his visit. These facts may account for the intolerant irritability which he showed towards the monks, and this again for their incivility to him.

The first object of interest noticed by this traveller is otherwise unrecorded: “Before you reach the lakes (he writes) there is a small house on the declivity of the hill, in which the Copts say a saint was born to whom they pay particular honor. They call him Maximus (sic).” The real nature of this structure is unknown.

From the so-called “house of Maximus” Sonnini went to the Monastery of Baramûs. This, he alleges, was formerly inhabited by Greek monks who had subsequently given way to the Copts—a statement based upon the name of the convent, but for which there is no historical warrant. Excepting for a little gate, opened only two or three times a year, there was no opening in the inclosure walls; and those who went in or out were hoisted or lowered by means of a pulley.

Within the walls was “a kind of small fortress (the kasr), surrounded with ditches, over which is a draw-bridge.” To this shelter the monks would retire if the Arabs forced the outer walls; indeed, they had done so ten years previously (1768), when Sonnini’s Arab guide Hussein had breached the inclosure wall, and pillaged and laid waste the monastery. In this kasr was a reservoir for rain water, provisions to enable the monks to stand a siege, a chapel, and the library “where they keep their books written in the Coptic language.” With these manuscripts, though utterly neglected, the monks would by no means part.

The cells of the monks, vaulted and very low, were ranged round the court on ground level. The church was destitute of ornament “except ostriches’ eggs and a few bad pictures of saints.”

Sonnini asserts that the greatest disorder prevailed in the services:

“Frequently they do not know what they ought to sing; one would have this anthem or psalm, another would have that, on which a dispute arises that comes to blows, while a third chants a prayer, is followed by the choir, and thus terminates the contest. During the time of service the congregation neither sit, kneel, nor stand upright. They are on their feet...with their loins resting against the wall and their bodies inclining forward, supporting themselves by a sort of crutch or staff which has the figure of the letter lnu or T.”

1 Travels, trans. Hunter, ii, pp. 142 f.
2 How Maximus (“son of Valentinian”) can have been thought to have been born in the Wâdi ’n Natrûn is not clear.
3 See pp. 103 f.

4 Travels, trans. Hunter, p. 161. But Baramûs was already ruinous in Huntington’s time.
5 This is the “Staff of Macarius,” on which see p. 197 and Tischendorf’s account of his visit, p. 434.
Their sacred vessels are nothing but a sort of glass plates. They consecrate common bread. This the priest cuts into little bits and mixes with water likewise consecrated. Having eaten a few spoonfuls of it, he administers the Communion in the same way with the spoon. During the Mass the priest blesses likewise some little round loaves, very slightly baked. These are distributed when the Mass is finished, but the distribution never takes place without quarrels. In celebrating Mass, the priest is clothed in a sort of white shirt which has a cowl and is spotted with little crosses. During the other prayers the officiating priest is distinguished only by a large band of white linen spotted with crosses which he wears half wrapped round his head like a turban, and the ends hanging down, one before, the other behind. After all the service is gone through, they kiss... the shrine of the saints, on which they rub and roll their heads.” The shrine last mentioned was alleged to contain the relics of seven saints, including those of Maximus and Domitius; the Arabs, however, asserted that the bones were merely those of camels and donkeys gathered by the monks in the desert.

Sonnini found three priests “and a few friars” in the monastery; but some Coptic peasants, came to do penance, brought the total up to twenty-three. All ate together in the refectory, while one of the monks read aloud. Their food was of the poorest: “bread or rather biscuit made with the flour of lentils, lentils, rice... vile cheese, and sometimes a little honey.” For this fare they were dependent upon collections and especially the charity of wealthy Copts at Cairo. Their dress was equally simple and coarse, consisting of nothing more than “a sort of robe, a long, black shirt.”

Some ruins on one side of the monastery were alleged to be “the remains of the ancient edifice,” and amongst them was a very deep well with steps to descend into it.

From Baramús Sonnini took bearing to the other buildings within sight. The little “house of Maximus” lay to the E.S.E., the Syrian Monastery to the S.S.E., while very near the latter was another monastery (Bishői) lying S. by E.; a small deserted building erected by a former kasbef stood on the further side of the lakes, lying N.E. by E.

1 Tischendorf (see below) also comments on the use of glass vessels. According to Butler (Ancient Coptic Churches, 11, p. 38) glass chalices only came into use in the Arab period. But if we may believe the Coptic Martyrdom of S. Epime (Acta martyrum, ed. Hyvernat and Balestri, p. 82) the use dated back at least to the days of Diocletian. For S. Epime, when ordered to produce the church vessels, declared that they were of glass. Again, in the Coptic Life of Macarius of Alexandria (A.M.G., xxv, pp. 255 f.) the story is told that Macarius miraculously restored a glass chalice which had fallen and been broken to atoms. This vessel was still preserved in the writer’s own day in the Monastery of Tashentos at Tanis.

2 In this Sonnini was mistaken: see Tischendorf’s report (below) and Butler, Ancient Coptic Churches, 11, pp. 281 f. For the eucharistic spoon, see id., p. 40, and fig. 6.

3 Again see Tischendorf below. For the distribution of these eulogiae see Butler, op. cit., 11, p. 392.

4 The chasuble: see Butler, op. cit., 11, pp. 173 f.

5 The shamleh, or amice: see id., 11, p. 118.

6 Probably Moses the Robber, Isidorus the Priest, and Arsenius (if his remains had been translated from Tura) were amongst the five unnamed.

7 When Benjamin II visited the desert in 1330 mention is made of Anba Yûntab, Bishop of Abt Felli, who “was living in the Monastery of Baramús for a penance”: see B.N., Fonds arabe, No. 100, fol. 52a-b. Was Baramús a definite place of penance, and was this due to its association with Moses the Robber, the most famous penitent?

8 Again the suggestion is that the existing monastery is the Theotokos of Baramús, not Baramús proper.

9 It must have been situated near the present Salt and Soda Company’s factory.
THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

After a stormy parting with Mikhaîl, the Superior of Baramûs, Sonnini went on to the Syrian Monastery which he pronounces to be in every respect better than Baramûs. “From its name,” he observes, “it appears to have been formerly the residence of Syrian monks, who have relinquished it to the Copts. The ancient Syrian chapel still remains. It is tolerably handsome and adorned with sculptures and paintings in fresco... The Copts do not make use of this chapel, but have built another, after their own fashion, that is, in the form of a cross. In it is a shrine filled with saints, among whom Saint Marmarotous (sic. for Mar Marutha) is the most revered.” Here, too, Sonnini saw the tamarind tree of Saint Ephraem, and heard the usual legend concerning it.

Owing to the danger to which he was exposed from Arab robbers, Sonnini would not prolong his stay in the desert by visiting the remaining monasteries. Accordingly, he resisted the blandishments of the monks of Dûr Anba Bishôi, who told him of the body of a saint (Bishôi) “as fresh and rosy as if alive.” As he did not visit the Monastery of Saint Macarius, all he can say concerning it is that there were adjacent ruins alleged by the Copts to be the remains of the ancient monastery, but known to the Arabs by the name of “Women’s Castle” (Kasr el Banât).

5. Other Eighteenth-Century Visitors

The remaining travellers of the eighteenth century do not add much to our information. Browne, who visited the Syrian Monastery and another, which he calls that of Saint George (presumably Bishôi), again dwells on the sparse and frugal life of the monks. He saw some part of the library of the Syrian Monastery, but mentions no further particulars of interest.

General Andrêossy has a note on the ruined fort which still exists on the northeastern side of the lakes (doubtless the building mentioned by Sonnini as built by a former kashêl to repel the Bedawîn). It was square, with round bastions at two of its angles, and was constructed with fragments of natron. From this building the Syrian Monastery was seven thousand four hundred thirty and two-thirds meters, while Baramûs was nine thousand two hundred and fifty-eight and one-fourth meters distant from the Syrian Monastery.

In the general description of the monasteries which follows, only two points call for notice. First, the measurements of the tree of Saint Ephraem are given as follows: height, six and one-half meters; girth of trunk, three meters. These dates show that the tree must be of a considerable age, but are not sufficient to make an approximation possible. Second,
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

he states that the water in the Monastery of Saint Macarius was brackish, but that a well of sweet water existed four hundred meters distant from the monastery.

More important is the number of the monks at this date. At Baramûs there were nine; at the Syrian Monastery, eighteen; at the Monasteries of Bishôi and Macarius, twelve and twenty respectively; in all, fifty-nine. Comparison of these figures with Sicard’s estimate made early in the century indicate a slight but distinct improvement in the condition of the monasteries.

Besides a general reference to the mss. to be seen in the monasteries, Andréossy has recorded a peculiar superstition current in the neighborhood. When a Muslim in the Delta builds a pigeon house, he sends a letter, together with a present, to the desert monasteries. In return, the monks supply a written charm which, placed in the pigeon house, insures its prosperity.¹

¹ Père Sicard found what was evidently a collection of these charms (not, as is sometimes really stated, ancient mss.) in a pigeon house at Wardân, and burned them: see *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses*, t. v, p. 53.
CHAPTER V

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

1. Von Minutoli and Lord Prudhoe

The first two visitors to the valley in the nineteenth century are hardly helpful. The Prussian, von Minutoli,\(^1\) gives the Arabic names of the monasteries as follows: Said el Magarín (? Baramûs), Labiat\(^2\) (Bishôî), Ou Serian\(^3\) (sic, the Syrian Monastery), and Aboumakar (Abû Makûr). Minutoli declares that he entered none of them, finding the monks “sehr roh und ohne alle Geistscultur.”

Lord Prudhoe, who reached the valley eight years after Minutoli, has left no record of his experiences except a memorandum addressed to Cureton, dealing almost exclusively with the remains of the libraries seen by him.\(^4\) The only fact of general interest noticed by him is that there were then “about twelve” monks at Baramûs.

2. Robert Curzon’s Visit

Robert Curzon, the best known of modern visitors to the monasteries, journeyed to the Wâdi ’n Natrûn from Cairo by way of Terrâneh in 1837.\(^5\)

The first monastery inspected—Baramûs—was in a miserable condition: “two or three poor-looking monks” were the sole human (Curzon notices other species) inhabitants. The walls contained only “a good-sized church in tolerable preservation, standing nearly in the center (sic) of the enclosure,” and some ruined buildings whose character is not stated. In the former the most noticeable feature was “several curious lamps... formed of ancient glass, like those in the Mosque of Sultan Hassan at Cairo”: they were “in the form of large, open vases... ornamented with pious sentences in Arabic characters, in blue on a

---

\(^1\) *Reise zum Tempel des Jupiter Ammon*, p. 195, and note.
\(^2\) I.e., El Abiad. A copy of the Gospels (Lindsay Library of the Earl of Crawford, No. 13) has a note dated 1514 in which the monastery is described as “Known as Dêr el Abiad in the Wâdi el Latrûn.”

\(^3\) Note the vocalization and cf. p. 315 and note 4 there.

\(^4\) *Quarterly Review*, vol. LXXVII, pp. 51 f. For Prudhoe’s information on the libraries see my *New Texts*, Appendix II, § 3.

\(^5\) *Visits to Monasteries in the Levant*, pp. 74 f.
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

white ground.” The library situated in the *kasr* was “a large vaulted room with open, unglazed windows.”

From Baramūs Curzon went on to the Syrian Monastery and thence to the Monasteries of Bishōi and Macarius. Both were in a very poor condition, being “apparently” inhabited only by three or four monks. Nothing in them (in his opinion) was noteworthy. Like previous travellers he saw “many ruins and heaps of stones nearly level with the ground, the remains of some of the fifty² monasteries which once flourished in the wilderness of Scete.”

Curzon returned, therefore, to the Syrian Monastery, where his successes in discovering first a valuable series of Coptic mss. and then the Syriac collection³ rendered him blind to all other objects of interest. “In the morning I went to see the church and all the wonders of the place” is all the notice he could devote to the building adorned by Moses of Nisibis. Perhaps the same preoccupation caused him to omit the number of monks then inhabiting the monastery.

One fact of very real importance emerges from the stream of Curzon’s lively narrative. In the southeastern corner of the monastery and close to the inclosure wall he found a flat-roofed building wherein dwelt a colony of Abyssinian monks. He was informed by a Coptic monk that “the monastery which they frequented in this desert has fallen into decay; and they now live here, their numbers being recruited occasionally by pilgrims on their way from Abyssinia to Jerusalem.” That the Abyssinians had once possessed a monastery of their own which had fallen into decay is an established fact⁴; and we may accept the implication that the brotherhood had dwelt in the Syrian Monastery since that date.

3. Miss Platt

In Miss Platt’s *Journal⁵* which records her visit to the Wâdi ’n Natrûn in company with her stepfather, Henry Tattam, ancient mss. again take precedence of other considerations; and, as a woman, Miss Platt had slight opportunity allowed her for general observation. Nevertheless, she notices that in the Monastery of Saint Macarius there was, besides the church, keep, and conventual buildings, a small chapel which the monks believed to “date its origin as far back as the fifth century.”⁶ Moreover, she makes the important observation that “at the back of the garden-wall” were “remains of buildings still connected with the present monastery,” which suggested that the place had once been much more extensive.⁷

In crossing “the ridge of hills separating the two valleys” the travellers saw “the remains

---

1 They had disappeared before the time of Butler’s visit (1884): see *Ancient Coptic Churches*, i, p. 331.
2 I.e., the fifty “tabernacles” mentioned in the *Hist. Mon.* which were, however, at the Mount of Nitria and not in Scetes.
3 For Curzon’s discoveries of mss. see *Excursus*, § 10.
4 See pp. 368, 405.
5 As quoted in *Quarterly Review*, vol. lxxvii, pp. 56 f.
6 Possibly the Church of the Forty-nine (Esh Sheyûkh) is meant. But the existing building is comparatively late.
7 Cf. *A.A.C.M.*, xi, iii, § 1.
of many convents,” and were regaled with the customary legend of the three hundred and sixty monasteries which once adorned “the mountain and... the valley of Nitria”: of these the ruins of fifty were—it is said—still to be seen.

Concerning the other monasteries Miss Platt has nothing of general interest to record, save that the monks at the Syrian Monastery numbered fifteen or sixteen. Tattam’s second expedition to Egypt and his purchase of the Syriac Library is dealt with elsewhere.¹

4. Sir Gardner Wilkinson

It was in 1843 that Wilkinson travelled to the Wâdi ‘n Natrûn. The account of the valley which he has left, though far from ample, contains some interesting particulars which are not to be found elsewhere.²

To the southeast³ of Baramûs was a village named Zakeek, which had been founded twelve years before his own visit in connection with the natron works. This settlement occupied the site of “Colonel Leake’s glass house”⁴—a building of stone regarded as probably of Roman date. Refuse and slag showed its original purpose.

The number of the monks was seventy-seven in all; thirty to forty being in the Syrian Monastery, twenty-two in the Monastery of Saint Macarius, thirteen in the Monastery of Bishôî, and seven only at Baramûs.

As we have seen,⁵ Wilkinson erroneously attributes the founding of the Syrian Monastery to “one Honnes.” He tells us, too, that the monastery was supposed by the monks to resemble Noah’s Ark.⁶

Ruined monasteries (of Saint John and others) were to be seen about two miles south of the Syrian Monastery, and vestiges of yet more could be found here and there in the valley. About two and two-thirds miles southwest of the Syrian Monastery Wilkinson noted a small stone building of the Christian period.⁷

Near by the Monastery of Saint Macarius the ruins of three “convents” still remained, and about half a mile to the east of the same point were mounds of pottery, doubtless refuse cast out during the prosperous days of the monastery.

In the Monastery of Saint Macarius itself Wilkinson notes only that there were many mss., bound, and in good condition, though the ground was strewn with leaves and fragments of others which had been abandoned.

If Wilkinson has little or nothing to say about the monastic buildings actually standing, his references to ruined structures are valuable. To these he adds some remarks on the vegetable products of the valley, such as rushes (“soomâr”) and bulrushes (“beerde”),

¹ Excursus, § 10.
² Modern Egypt and Thebes, 1, pp. 382 ff.
³ Surely an error; the modern Survey Dept. Map, 1:100,000, shows “Za‘agig (ancient glassworks)” about 4 miles very slightly E. of due N. from Baramûs.
⁴ I have been unable to learn the date of Colonel Leake’s visit to the Wâdi ‘n Natrûn. Nothing is said of glassworks in the wâdi in early or mediaeval times.
⁵ See p. 316.
⁶ The same assertion is still made by the monks.
⁷ This has not yet been rediscovered.
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

both used for mat making. Doubtless these, as well as palm leaves, played a large part in the old monastic industries; and we may recall that one of the crying offenses of the ninth-century finance minister Ahmed ibn el Mudebbir was that he “demanded... the tax upon the rushes that grow in the marshes.”

5. Constantine Tischendorf

The last of our witnesses as to the state of the monasteries at this period is the biblical scholar, Constantine Tischendorf, who reached the desert valley by way of Terrânehe in 1844.

Like other travellers he prefaces his narrative\(^1\) with a description of the general type and appearance of the monasteries, and fails not to observe that besides the four still existing, he saw “ruins and [of] monasteries and heaps of rubbish scattered in great numbers throughout the district.” Tischendorf deserves credit as the first to recognize, or at least to point out, that the existing buildings had replaced earlier structures. “Here and there,” he writes, “in the mural structure of the entrances to the cells and chapelries, we obtain a glimpse of the fragment of a marble pillar, or of a frieze (?) or some similar decoration.” It is only regrettable that he has left no detailed notes on such earlier remains as were visible.

At the Monastery of Saint Macarius Tischendorf found fifteen monks, “all sallow and several of them of a sickly yellow; they almost all suffered in their eyes and the superior was totally blind.” This general ill health was ascribed to the conditions of their life in windowless cells, “dark chambers upon the ground-floor,” and to their diet, “bread steeped in a concoction... of lentils, onions and linseed oil.” Coffee and tobacco also were in use.

Before sunrise on the morning following his arrival, Tischendorf attended Mass, which lasted for more than three hours. His account of the confusion prevailing at the celebration partly agrees with Sonnini’s contemptuous report. The reception of the Eucharist is noted as peculiar: “instead of wine they used a thick juice of the grape,\(^2\) which I at first mistook for oil.\(^3\) The officiating priest took it out of a glass vessel with a spoon and shared it between himself and the deacon standing opposite him; he then scraped up the remainder with his bare finger, and licked it, and poured into the vessel and its glass plate some water which he and the deacon also drank. And lastly, with his hands still wet... he touched all the other brethren upon the forehead and cheek.”\(^4\)

During the rite, Tischendorf stood with the monks outside the haikal “at the lattice of the main aisle (whatever that may mean) supported like all beside me upon a wooden

---

\(^1\) Travels in the East, trans. W. E. Shuckard, pp. 45 f.
\(^2\) See Butler, Ancient Coptic Churches, II, pp. 281 f.
\(^3\) Sonnini made a similar mistake; see p. 428.
\(^4\) With this description cf. Butler’s (op. cit., II, pp. 291 f.).

For the concluding details compare the passage from Cyril of Jerusalem (IV century) quoted by Butler (ib.), who aptly asks: “What other Church preserves in so startling a manner the minutiae of primitive tradition?”

434
THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

staff with a straight handle.¹ This is called the staff of Macarius, and is an attribute which always accompanies his representation.”

On the church or churches in the Monastery of Saint Macarius Tischendorf offers no remarks, save that there was a four-sided stone basin (Epiphany tank) “in front” of the building and a special oven for baking the sacramental bread behind the sacristy.² This bread is made in round loaves “like a small cake of the size of the palm of the hand... and stamped at the top (on the upper surface) with many crosses. One is eaten at the altar and the remainder are distributed amongst the community after mass.”

The mss. fragments found by Tischendorf in this monastery are noticed elsewhere.³

From the Monastery of Saint Macarius, Tischendorf went on to the monasteries in the northwestern part of the valley. At Anba Bishoi the only objects of interest seem to have been four monks and a blind abbot aged one hundred and twenty years.⁴

The Syrian Monastery is pronounced to be the “handsomest and richest of all”; yet the only feature selected for notice is the debated “grotto chapel” containing a picture of the Virgin reputed to have been painted by Saint Luke.⁵

Of the Monastery of Baramus we are told only that it housed twenty monks, and could show the blackest and narrowest cells to be found in the desert.

---

¹ Again compare Sonnini’s description. On the staff of S. Macarius see p. 197. Despite Tischendorf’s remark, the staff does not appear in the ancient (VII-century) painting of Macarius from the Monastery of Apa Jeremias, now in the Cairo Museum (Pl. IV, 4).

² Sicard makes the same assertion which is challenged by Butler, Ancient Coptic Churches, 1, p. 297, note 1.


⁴ Yet Wilkinson found here thirteen monks, and seven at Baramus (against Tischendorf’s twenty). Either there has been some confusion, or monks had been transferred from one monastery to the other.

⁵ This is the Church of Sitt Miriam which is distinguished in the official church list (Somers Clarke, Christian Antiquities, p. 202) as “(the Church) with the Cave in the name of the Lady the Virgin.” Butler’s severe remarks (Ancient Coptic Churches, 1, p. 297, note 1) on Tischendorf’s reference are therefore unjustified. The alleged picture by S. Luke is now removed to the abbot’s house in Cairo.
EPILOGUE

We have now traced the history of the monasteries in Scetis or the Wâdi 'n Natrûn (and, so far as possible, of the twin settlement in the desert of Nitria or Pernoudj) from its beginning in the early fourth century, down to the middle of the nineteenth, when some signs of a reviving prosperity begin to appear. In the course of the narrative we have seen how rapid was the rise of the monasteries under the impulse of a glowing faith and enthusiasm; we have seen how first barbarian ravages and then sectarian bitterness dimmed their splendor; how the benefaction of Zeno the Emperor and the intolerance of Justinian's nominee, Apollinarius, laid the foundations of a new epoch in their history—an epoch of material prosperity and pomp; how in the Middle Ages this tendency exercised its natural corrupting influence beneath a surface outwardly brilliant; and lastly we have seen the monasteries in their fall.

That history is not ended yet. But the task of carrying on the record through the second half of the nineteenth century to the present day and of tracing the partial revival of the monasteries in modern times is one which cannot be attempted here. Much documentary material must be extant which can be studied only by an Arabic scholar and which is, perhaps, too confidential to be laid before strangers. Moreover, matters of ecclesiastical politics, controversies, even personalities are involved; and on these it would be impertinent for the Western student to pass judgment.

Everything, therefore, marks out the latest period in the history of the monasteries as a subject which must wait for some Egyptian scholar, who with the intimate knowledge necessary can combine impartiality, and who can exercise unbiased historical judgment without losing sympathy.
EXCURSUS

THE LIBRARY OF THE SYRIAN MONASTERY
EXCURSUS

THE LIBRARY OF THE SYRIAN MONASTERY

1. Introductory

We have seen that in the sixth century there was in Scetis a cell of Syrian monks possessing a library.\(^1\) This collection was destroyed almost entirely in the fourth sack of Scetis, and no new community was formed until Marutha of Tekrit (in the eighth century?) purchased the Theotokos of Abba Bishðôi from the Copts and thus founded the Syrian Monastery. Marutha and his fellows must have taken steps to form a library; but whatever books they may have collected perished (it is believed entirely) in the fifth sack of Scetis.\(^2\) It is therefore impossible to recover anything of the history of the library before the period of restoration in the third and following decades of the ninth century.

From this epoch onwards the fortunes of the library can be traced almost continuously. Fluctuating apparently with the fortunes of the monastery itself, these may be divided into nine periods: from the ninth century to 1007; from 1007 to 1081; from 1081 to 1102; from 1102 to 1199; from 1199 to 1292; from 1292 to 1480; from 1480 to 1518; from 1518 to 1634; and from 1634 to the nineteenth century.

2. The First Period: Foundation and Consolidation of the Library

The first of the nine periods is by far the most brilliant. Its outstanding features are the foundation of the library and its consolidation in the ninth century, and its enrichment in the tenth.

The foundations of the new library were laid by the Tekritan monks, Matthew (Mattai) and Abraham, who also rebuilt the devastated buildings of the monastery.\(^3\) The surviving books presented to the monastery or procured for it by members of this family rarely show the dates at which they were added to the library, but their chronological sequence can

\(^1\) See p. 319.
\(^2\) For the one MS. known to have escaped see p. 319.
\(^3\) See p. 311.
be roughly fixed from the following facts. In some mss. Matthew and Abraham alone are named; in others, Matthew, Abraham, and Jacob (at a date, apparently, previous to the restoration of the Syrian Monastery); in others, Matthew and Abraham alone (after the rebuilding of the monastery); in others again, Matthew, Abraham, and Theodore; in yet others, Matthew, Abraham, Theodore, and Joseph. Then we have the combination Abraham, Joseph, and Theodore alone, and lastly Joseph alone. From this we infer that Matthew and Abraham, the two eldest brothers, first became monks; that they were joined by a third of the family, Jacob, who died early; that after the death of Jacob and the restoration of the Syrian Monastery Matthew and Abraham lived for a while alone, but were subsequently joined first by Theodore and then by Joseph, two younger brothers. And again, of these four brothers Matthew died first, then Abraham and Theodore, while Joseph was living as abbot in A.G.R. 11*9 (8*8 A.D., probably 868 or 878). The benefactions of these brothers were therefore spread over a number of years.

There remain thirteen volumes presented by or through the members of this family; a summary account of their contents is here given.

1. *Excerpts from the Pauline Epistles* and various ascetic writings, such as the *Paradise of the Fathers*, the *Testament of Ephraem Syrus*, the works of Macarius, Isaia of Scetis, Evagrius, etc.\(^1\) A note states that “Mattai and Abraham, brothers uterine and spiritual... of the city of Tekrīt, gladly gave this spiritual treasure for the profit of their lives... (It was) completed A.G.R. 11*2 (816 A.D.)... in the desert of Maris (Southern Egypt) in the holy Monastery of Mar Michael....” In 816, therefore, Matthew and Abraham were monks in the Monastery of Saint Michael\(^2\); presumably they brought the book away with them when they migrated to Wādī Habīb.

2. *Excerpts from Scripture*, chiefly from the New Testament. The usual note\(^3\) states that “Mar Mattai, Abraham, and Jacob, spiritual brethren of Tekrīt... put this treasure in the desert of Scetis...,” and after generally indicating the period of writing (between 819 and 830) by reference to three prelates then living, adds a prayer that “God might send His peace and quiet into all the world, that is, His holy churches and monasteries.” This suggests that the date of writing was earlier than 827 when the Andalusians were driven out of Alexandria and peace in Egypt was restored.\(^4\) Since no monastery is named, it is probable that the Monastery of the Syrians still lay in ruins and that its restoration was not yet contemplated.

3. The *Book of Joshua*,\(^5\) presented, as a note informs us, “to the Monastery of the House of the Mother of God of the Syrians of Abba Bishōi.” The donor was Papa bar Duma of Tekrīt, who was influenced by “the great zeal of Mattai and Abraham, monks, brethren,
of Tekrīt." The Syrian Monastery, be it noted, was now definitely restored; but unfortunately no date is indicated.

4. *First and Second Books of Samuel,* given by Yakira bar Abbas of Tekrīt through Matthew and Abraham.

5. A Jacobite *Lectionary* presented by George, son of Barni, of Tekrīt, through Matthew and Abraham.

6. A Jacobite *Lectionary* (Part I) similarly presented. The general date of this gift may be gathered from the fact that Part II of the same lectionary was presented by Bar ‘Idai of Tekrīt, who states in a note that he has appointed Matthew and Abraham as his "brothers" (or colleagues), and who is otherwise known to have been abbot about 851–859.


8. The *First Book of Samuel,* once the property of Matthew, Abraham, and Theodore.

9. *Jeremiah* and *Baruch,* Ep. 1 and 11, also the property of the same three monks.

10. "Jerome," *Histories of the Egyptian Solitaries and Life of Gregory Thaumaturgus.* This book belonged to the four brothers, Matthew, Abraham, Theodore, and Joseph, "they who built and ordered this holy place"—and who gave it to the monastery.

11. *Lives and Anecdotes of the Ascetics* from Palladius and Jerome presented by the same four brothers.

12. *Selected works* of John the Monk and thirteen *Discourses* of Philoxenus; once the property of Abraham, Theodore, and Joseph. (The omission of Matthew implies his death.)

13. *A Book of Hymns for the Round of the Year,* written by order of "Abba Mar Joseph, Abbot of the Monastery of the Syrians" in A.D. 398 (858 A.D., possibly 868 or 878). Presumably the rest of the family were now all dead.

Matthew and Abraham with their brothers were not the only benefactors of the library. Three monks, Isaac, Daniel, and Shalmun, from the Monastery of Mar Jonah in Maris (Southern Egypt) entered the Monastery of the Syrians (apparently very soon after its restoration) at a date between 851 and 859 when Bar ‘Idai was abbot. They brought with them a parcel of ten volumes, of which two are extant: the *Letters and Discourses* of Jacob of Batnae, and a collection of *Excerpts* from the works of John the Monk, Jacob of Batnae, Ephraem, Basil, Nilus, Evagrius, and Cyril, and from the Apostolic *Epistles.*

1 Wright, *Cat. Syr. MSS. in B.M.,* No. xxii.
2 *Id.,* No. cxix.
3 *Id.,* No. cxxi.
4 *Id.,* No. cxxii.
5 See p. 311.
6 *Id.,* No. dxxi.
7 *Id.,* No. xxiii.
8 *Id.,* No. xxxvi. N.B. *Fol. 130* does not belong to this book but to some other presented by Ephraem of Marak through Moses of Nisibis.
9 *Id.,* No. dccccliii.
10 *Id.,* No. dcccxlvi.
11 *Id.,* No. dclxxiv.
12 *Id.,* No. ccclxix, p. 247.
13 For these facts see the library note in *Id.,* No. dclxxxii, quoted p. 310.
14 *Id.,* No. mxiv is a flyleaf only from a third volume in the series.
15 *Id.,* No. dclxxii.
16 *Id.,* No. dclxxxi.
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

Though the age of Matthew and Abraham cannot be defined precisely, it seems to have been followed by a short period of depression, due, no doubt, to the troubles which beset the monasteries in the patriarchate of Shenûdeh I.¹ For the only further accessions prior to 875 are two, and those doubtful. One² is a volume of excerpts from Evagrius, John the Monk, Philoxenus, and the *Metrical Discourses* of Jacob of Batnae, presented by a certain Abraham bar John at a date later than 866; the second³ is Part III of a *Commentary on I Corinthians* by John Chrysostom, written in 870 for Marcus, Marutha, and Athanasius of Ras‘ain,⁴ living in Scetis.

From 876 (by which date, probably, the monastery was fortified) onwards the accessions become continuous again. Five books were presented about 876 by a monk named John, two of which are still preserved: (1) a collection of *Exhortations of the Holy Fathers and Monks*,⁵ excerpts from the works of Macarius, Evagrius, Philoxenus of Mabug, John the Monk, and Isaias of Scetis; and (2) the *Acts and Catholic Epistles*.⁶ In 877 a collection of *Funeral Services and Funeral Sermons*⁷ was written for the monastery at the expense of a Tekritan, Simeon of the Monastery of Mar Solomon of Doluk, who also presented a *Commentary*, compiled from various authors, on the entire Old and New Testaments.⁸ A flyleaf⁹ records a donation received in 879 through Andrew, Metropolitan of Cilicia, from his cousin, Aaron, a deacon. A copy of the works of Isaias of Scetis¹⁰ was given about 886–887 by John, son of Abi of Tekrit; in 888 a work (title unknown) was written in the monastery itself for Joseph of Harran.¹¹

A noteworthy addition was made towards the close of the century,¹² when eighteen books were received from a certain Jacob and his “son” John who had inherited them from Simeon of the Monastery of Mar Solomon at Doluk; but only one¹³ of these—an anthology containing the *Lausiac History*, the *Lives of the Egyptian Solitaries* by Jerome, Evagrius, extracts from Eusebius’ *Ecclesiastical History*, and the *Plerophoriae* of John Rufus—is known to have come down to us. In 893 a collection of *Choral Services and Homilies*¹⁴ was written in the monastery for John of Circesium; and two years later the monks of a monastery whose name is lost presented the *Homiliae Cathedrales* of Severus of Antioch.¹⁵

Three more volumes acquired during this century are: the *Metrical Homilies* of Jacob of Batnae¹⁶ presented anonymously in the ninth century, the *Works of Evagrius* (frag-

---

¹ See p. 323.
² Wright, *Cat. Syr. MSS. in B.M.*, No. DCCCLXXIII.
³ Id., No. DCCCLXXV.
⁴ These three persons reappear in the early X century: see below.
⁵ Id., No. DCCCLXXV.
⁶ Id., No. CXXVII.
⁷ Id., No. DXXIII.
⁹ Wright, *op. cit.*, No. mxv.
¹⁰ Id., No. DLXXVII.
¹¹ Id., No. mxvi (a flyleaf).
¹² This may be presumed since Simeon was alive in 877: see above.
¹³ Id., No. DCCCLXX. Possibly two others are Nos. DCCCL (lives of saints, martyrdoms, etc.) written by Simeon the Priest of Tekrit and left at his death to the monastery, and DCCXL (Jacob of Batnae, *Metrical Discourses*) presented by Simeon bar Cyriac of Tekrit to the Church of the Tekritans at Fustât.
¹⁴ Id., No. CCCVI.
¹⁵ Id., No. DCLXXV.
¹⁶ Id., No. DCCCLXIX.
mentary), and a volume of Lections from the Pauline Epistles. The last two were bound (or rebound) by the Abbot John, son of Macarius, in 894.

From 895–932 the accesses were very few; and once again the phenomenon is probably due to political conditions and the unsettlement accompanying the downfall of the Tûlûnide Dynasty and the subsequent invasion of Egypt by the Fatimides. So far as we know, the only accesses were: (1) the Book of Ecclesiasticus presented by Emmanuel, Abbass, John, and Saliba, sons of Abû'l Bashar of Tekrit, in 906–907, when Moses of Nisibis was already abbot; (2) a Psalter written in the monastery in 927.

3. The Additions by Moses of Nisibis

In 927 Moses of Nisibis went to Bagdad in the circumstances already narrated. He turned the opportunity to advantage, securing as many books as possible, either by purchase or as gifts. With this object he seems to have visited not only Bagdad, but the other chief centers of learning in northern Syria and Mesopotamia—such as Ras'tain, Tekrit, and Edessa. Consequently, on his return in 932 he enriched his own monastery with a collection.

LIST OF BOOKS STILL EXTANT BROUGHT TO THE SYRIAN MONASTERY BY MOSES OF NISIBIS IN 932 A.D.

   
   Exodus (Wright, Cat. Syr. MSS. in B.M., No. ix).
   Daniel (Wright, No. xli).
   Gospels, Part of (Wright, p. xvi; now at Berlin = Sachau, Verzeichniss der syrischen Hss., No. 63).
   Pauline Epistles (Wright, No. cxxxiv).
   Pauline Epistles (Wright, No. cxxi).

2. Patristic and Theological.

   Aphraates, Works (Wright, No. dxxix).
   Athanasius, Commentary on the Psalms (Wright, No. dxxxi).
   Festal Letters (Wright, No. dxxxi).
   Oration on the Incarnation, with a Homily by Timothy of Alexandria (Assemani, B.A.V.C., No. cxi; B.O., i, p. 612; Cod. Syr., viii).
   Basil, On the Holy Spirit (Wright, No. dxxxvii).
   Hymns (Wright, No. dxxxvii).
   Homilies (Wright, No. dxxxiv).
   Discourses (Wright, No. dxxxviii).
   Metrical Discourses (Wright, No. dxxi).

   Gregory Nazianzen, Carmina Iambica (Assemani, B.A.V.C., No. cv; B.O., i, p. 612, Cod. Syr., ix).

1 Wright, op. cit., No. dlxviii.
2 Now at Leningrad: see Dorn in the S. Petersburg Mélanges asiatiques, 11, p. 199.
3 In this sketch only those books are taken into account which can be exactly or approximately dated.
4 Wright, op. cit., No. criv.
5 Wright, however, represents Moses as having entered the monastery at this date: on this matter see p. 337 where the text of the note is quoted.
6 Id., No. clxxvi.
7 See pp. 337 f.
8 According to Cureton, Festal Letters of Athanasius, pp. xxiv f.
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

Isaias of Scetis, Works (Wright, No. DLXXXV).
John the Monk, Works (Wright, No. DLXXXIII).
John Chrysostom, Commentary on Saint Matthew (Wright, No. DLXXXV).
   Commentary on Saint John, Part III (Wright, No. DLXXXVII).
   Commentary on Saint John, Homilies 60–88 (Wright, No. DLXXXVIII).
   Commentary on I Corinthians (Wright, No. DXC).
   Commentary on II Corinthians (Wright, No. DXCI).
   Commentary on II Corinthians (Wright, No. DXCII).
   Commentary on Ephesians (Zotenberg, Cat. MSS. syr. B.N., No. 69).
   Commentary on Thessalonians (Wright, No. DCCVI).
   Discourse on the Second Coming (Wright, No. DC).
   Homilies, with Ascetic Epistle of Isaias of Scetis and Homilies of Jacob of Batnae (Assemani, B.A.V.C., No. CIX; B.O., 1, p. 612, Cod. Syr., x).
   Letters, etc., controversial (Wright, No. DCCLVIII).
Jacob of Batnae or Sarug, Metrical Discourses (Wright, No. DCCXXVI).
   Metrical Discourses (Wright, No. DCCXL).
   On the Incarnation and Passion (Wright, No. DCLXXVI).
Severus of Antioch, Against John Grammaticus (Wright, No. DCLXXXVII).
   Correspondence of Severus and Julian, Against Julian, and Letter to the Monks of the East (Assemani, B.A.V.C., CXL; B.O., 1, pp. 569 f., Cod. Nitr., XXIX).
Nonnus of Nisibis, Works (Wright, No. DCCXIX).
   Catena Patrum, illustrating the Old and New Testaments (Wright, No. DCCCCLII).
   Selections from the works of various Fathers and Doctors (Wright, No. DCCCLXXXIX).
   Selections and Extracts (Wright, No. DCCCLXIII).
   Patristica, miscellaneous (Wright, No. DCCCLXIX).
   Collection of Letters, theological and controversial (Wright, No. DCCLIV).
   Collection of Canons and Creeds (Wright, No. DCCCVII).

3. Historical, etc.
   Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, i–v (Wright, No. DCCCCXI).
   Ecclesiastical History, i–ix (Wright, p. xvi: at Leningrad2).
   Dionysius of Tel Mahar, Chronicle (Assemani, B.A.V.C., No. CLXII; B.O., 1, p. 613, Cod. Syr., XIII).

4. Liturgical.
   Tropologion (Wright, No. CCCXXXVIII).

5. Hagiographical.
   The Doctrine of Thaddaeus, of the Apostles, of Simon Peter; the Invention of the Holy Cross, the Martyrdom of Judas-Cyrilus, the Life of Abraham Kidunaya, etc. (Wright, No. DCCCCXXXVI).
   Lives, etc., of Saints (Wright, No. DCCCCXXXI).
   Lives of Saints and Martyrs (Wright, No. DCCCCXLVIII).

1 Patriarch, 578–591.
THE LIBRARY OF THE SYRIAN MONASTERY

6. Unidentified.
   a. Flyleaf recording a gift from the monk Ephraem of Marak, presented through Moses of Nisibis (misplaced in Wright, No. xxxvi).
   b. Flyleaf (Wright, No. mxxix).

Among those who presented books to the monastery through Moses the following call for special mention.

1. The brothers Marcus, Marutha, and Athanasius of Ras‘ain, who gave Wright’s No. dccccvii. In the ninth century they were living in Scetis, and then made some addition to the library, but at the time of Moses’ journey they seem to have been settled in Syria.

2. Yakîra bar Sahlûn was an involuntary benefactor. He entrusted Moses with Wright’s No. cccxxixviii and two other books for the Syrian Church at Fustât, but the gift seems to have been diverted to the Syrian Monastery in Scetis.

3. Cyriac, Paul, and Thomas, sons of Yahye, who gave Zotenberg’s No. 69, Assemani’s No. cviii, and Wright’s No. dxci. Wright’s No. dxci was written for Marcus, Marutha, and Athanasius, named above, in 870 and by them given to the library. It was subsequently alienated, but was now restored by Paul, son of Yahye.¹

4. Isaac bar Abraham bar Dinara of Tekrit is the most considerable single benefactor known, since he presented Wright’s No. dxxxi, No. dlxxvii, and No. dcx.

During the next twelve years there was only one considerable addition, a collection of fourteen books belonging to the deacon Haurân bar Dinara of Tekrit.² The only one remaining of these, a collection of Lives of Saints and Martyrs,³ was written at the Syrian Monastery itself in 936, when Moses was abbot, purchased by Haurân and subsequently presented to the monastery. It is a noteworthy fact that the Life of John the Little in this series was translated into Syriac from an Arabic version—a clear proof that Coptic was already losing ground. Only two other mss. belong to this period: a copy of the Gospels written in the desert in 936, and a collection of Funeral Services,⁴ given by Shabur bar lDurak in 943-944. The latter is remarkable as containing the latest known reference to Moses of Nisibis.⁵

4. Close of the First Period

The thirty years or more which follow are blank so far as the library is concerned, but a renewal of activity set in under Abbot Saliba in the last quarter of the tenth century. We still possess three books, gifts of the Patriarch Abraham (or Ephraem), and therefore acquired between 977-981: two collections of Canons⁶ and a Commentary on the Pauline Epistles by Lazarus of Beth Kandasa.⁷ In these years also a copy of the Metrical

¹ See Wright, Cat. Syr. MSS. in B.M., No. dx ci.
² Possibly an uncle of Isaac b. Abraham b. Dinara, mentioned above.
³ Id., No. dccccliv.
⁴ See Nau, Hist. de Jean le Petit, p. iv.
⁵ Wright, op. cit., No. cxx.
⁶ Id., No. dxiv.
⁷ See p. 338.
⁸ Wright, op. cit., No. cccxlvi, ccclii.
⁹ Id., No. dccxiv.
Discourses of Ephraem Syrus was received. And other accessions in the days of Abbot Saliba were: a New Testament, a Psalter, the Works of Gregory Nazianzen (Part I), of Evagrius and others, of Dionysius the Areopagite, and a Sugerita on Simeon the Aged by Jacob of Batnæ.

Reference must also be made to another group of benefactors belonging to an unknown date in the tenth century—the sons of Duma Shatir of Tekrit. To these the library owed a copy of Ezra and Nehemiah, another of I Kings, the well-known Hexaplar ms. of IV Kings and Daniel, and a fourth book of which only the flyleaf remains. A copy of the Discourse of Philoxenus of Mabug, written, according to Wright, in Scetis, also belongs to the tenth century.

This brilliant period closes with a well-marked group of gifts presented by Abū 'Ali Zakariya, Sheikh of the Tekritans in Egypt. These comprise: (1) a copy of the Old Testament with Apocrypha, purchased by Abū 'Ali for the monastery at a date unspecified; (2) a Choral Service Book (Part II) specially written in 1006 for the monastery by the scribe Yeshua of Hisn Zaid at the expense of Abū 'Ali; (3, 4) a Choral Service Book (Parts I and II) written in 1006 by the same scribe at the charge of the same Abū 'Ali.

5. The Second Period: 1007–1081

No book is known to have been written in the Syrian Monastery or presented between 1007 and 1081. The political events of the time once more provide an adequate explanation. The year 1007 probably marks the zenith of El Hâkem's persecution, which may well have brought wealthy Christians like Abū 'Ali to ruin. And after the mysterious end of the "mad caliph" commerce and intercourse between Egypt and Syria (the main source whence Syriac books were derived) must have been seriously interrupted by the insurrections which vexed the latter country. Later on came the Seljûk invasion of Syria; while in Egypt the Christians were persecuted by the Vizier El Yazûri (1050–1058). Famine and anarchy also ravaged the country between 1067 and 1074 and did not spare the monasteries of Wâdi Habîb. It is not surprising, then, that the library, if not neglected, was not increased during this period.

1 Wright, Cat. Syr. MSS. in B.M., No. DXXI.
2 Id., No. LXIII.
3 Id., No. CLXVIII.
4 Id., No. DLVII.
5 Id., No. DCXXVII.
6 Id., No. DCXXV.
7 Id., No. DCLXIV. This was presented in the time of the Patriarch Philotheos, i.e., between 981 and 1005.
8 Curzon Syriac: see id. p. x.
9 Id., No. LIII.
10 B.N., Fonds syr., No. 27.
11 Wright, op. cit., No. M.IX.
12 Id., No. DCLXXXI, p. 532.
14 Wright, op. cit., No. CCCXXII.
15 Id., Nos. CCCXIX and CCCXX.
16 See Lane-Poole, History of Egypt in the Middle Ages, pp. 159 f.
17 See p. 354.
6. The Third Period: 1081–1102

The restoration of stable conditions by Bedr el Gemâlî, and the prosperity enjoyed by Christians during the Armenian domination of Egypt were, no doubt, the causes which led to a short period of renewed activity in the library.

A certain Denha, disciple of Lazarus of Arzan who dwelt in Scetis, presented or bequeathed at least two books¹ to the monastery, and a third² is known to have been acquired at about the same time (when Gabriel was abbot). In 1085 a copy of the *History of Bar Sauma*³ was written in the monastery at the cost of Theodore, a priest, and in 1100 the *Works* of Jacob of Batnaë were copied there,⁴ at a time when John was abbot, Basil steward, and fifteen clerical monks were on the establishment.

But the chief benefactor was a certain Samuel bar Cyriac. Five works from the hand of this scribe are still extant: (1) A *Catena Patrum*⁶ written by him in 1081 when a "monk or styliste" in the Monastery of the Theotokos "in Gazarta, in the region of Alexandria the Great." (2) A *Commentary on Revelations*,⁷ written and bound in 1088. (3) A Jacobite *Lectionary*⁸ written and bound in 1089 (when the scribe was still dwelling near Alexandria). (4) David of Salach’s *Commentary on the Psalms* (Part II) transcribed in 1102, when Samuel is described as a priest and styliste at Nikiu, "not far from the desert of Scete and from Cairo and Alexandria." (5) A Nestorian *Lectionary*⁹ repaired and bound at an unknown date. This scribe is the more interesting since he is probably to be identified with the Syrian "Samuel the Hermit in the cell at Adari" who would have been elected patriarch in 1093 but for his heterodoxy.¹⁰

This period must not be dismissed without reference to a general repair of the library which took place in 1084.¹¹ This was effected by a refugee at the Syrian Monastery, Bar Sauma of Tela Mar‘ash, who employed himself in putting the collection in order. Most of the books (we learn) were in a deplorable state, their bindings being broken, their leaves detached and quires scattered all over the monastery. If Denha’s copy of *Genesis*, etc.,¹² above mentioned, is a sample of Bar Sauma’s work, his methods were not above criticism, for portions of three different mss. are there lumped together.

---

¹ Wright, op. cit., No. vii, containing *Genesis*, a frag. of *Maccabees* and *I Baruch*; Assemani, *B.O.*, i, p. 561, Cod. Nitr., 1; B.A.V.C., No. xii, the *Four Gospels* (the latter was bound in the monastery when Gabriel was abbot).
² Wright, op. cit., No. mxxiii, a flyleaf.
³ Id., No. dcccclxvii.
⁵ Wright, op. cit., No. dccccxii.
⁶ Id., No. dccclxxv.
⁷ Id., No. ccxxv.
⁸ Id., No. dccc.
⁹ Id., No. ccxliv.
¹⁰ See p. 371.
¹¹ See Zotenberg, *Cat. MSS. syr. B.N.*, No. 27, p. 12—the date might be read 1089, but the earlier date is the more probable.
¹² Wright, op. cit., No. vii.
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

7. The Fourth and Fifth Periods: 1102–1292

The revival just described was short-lived, and once more intervenes a period of stagnation—in this case lasting for nearly a century. Again the cause appears to have been the depression of the monastery resulting from external events. The Seljûk invasion had presumably cut off the supply of books from northern Syria and Mesopotamia, and this was followed by the Crusades, which barred the road between Egypt and north Syria, and by Saladin’s Syrian wars. In Egypt itself there was the anti-Christian reaction which set in when Bahram was overthrown in 1037, and later the struggle between Shâwar and Shirkûh complicated by the invasion of Egypt by the Crusaders under Amalric.

The rise to power of El ‘Adil in the closing years of the twelfth century brought about more stable political conditions which speedily reacted upon the library. From a note in a ms. from the Syrian Monastery we learn that a considerable restoration of the monastic books took place in 1194. “In the year (of the Greeks) 1505, there came to this Monastery ... a monk with many companions who was praiseworthy (?) in his chaste behavior. He deserves a good memorial, for he undertook much work in renewing and ordering these many books which were torn and cut by reason of age and use by the brethren. This brother whom we have mentioned repaired this book and about a hundred books that were torn and scattered: he made a multitude of their leaves into an ordered assembly and collection. And this great work that he did, none of those who came hither was able to do it....”

Possibly this unknown restorer was the monk Zakhe, described as the “oriental” who came from the Monastery of Mar Matthew and copied a collection of Histories of Saints and Martyrs at the Monastery in 1199. The same monk with a recluse named John (also from the Monastery of Mar Matthew) presented several volumes to the library in 1209.

In 1211 Lazarus, monk and priest of Tûr ‘Abdîn, presented a copy of the Gospels which he had “restored and bound and also overlaid and adorned with gold and silver, and for which he made a case wherein it should be placed.” To insure the retention of this treasure by the monastery, Lazarus induced John, Bishop of Damascus (with whom he had come to Egypt on a mission from John of Antioch to the Patriarch of Alexandria), to write in it a special anathema against anyone who should dare to remove it.

Eleven years later at least three books were written by scribes in the monastery, and in the same year a further restoration of damaged volumes took place. Our authority for

1 For the effect of invasion upon the ancient book world see de Slane, Cat. MSS. arabes B.N., No. 181, pp. 45 f., where the author of a compendium of theology states that seeing the Turks invade the country in the reign of Constantine Ducas, and feeling that Christians would find it difficult to procure books, he determined to compress into a single volume all the doctrines of religion.
2 Wright, Cat. Syr. MSS. in B.M., No. dcxxv. I assume that the dates given by Wright and by Zotenberg, Cat. MSS. syr. B.N., No. 27, are correct and that the restorations of 1084 and 1194 are really distinct.
3 Wright, op. cit., No. dccclxix.
4 Id., No. mmxxvii, flyleaf only.
5 Assemani, B.A.V.C., No. xiii; B.O., i, p. 561, Cod. Nitr., ii.
6 Wright, op. cit., Nos. ccclxxxvii, cccxxviii.
the latter fact is a note in the famous "Cureton Syriac," stating that "in the year 1533 of the Greeks the books of the Monastery of the House of the Mother of God of the Syrians were repaired in the days of the Presidency of the Count, our Lord John, and of Basil, the head of the Monastery, and of our Lord Joseph the steward." The process of restoration was more simple than scientific: the lacunae in one ms. were filled up with pages taken from other copies of the same text, the remnant presumably being discarded. Thus the original text of the Curetonian Syriac is eked out with portions of three distinct mss. while stray portions of the original have found their way into other volumes.

Record is also preserved of books written in the Syrian Monastery in 1237 and 1239; and a thirteenth-century copy of the Works of Isaac of Nineveh, made by Rabban Matthew when Joseph was abbot, possibly belongs to this same period.

For the most part the scribes and donors who figure in the annals of the library are mere names to us; but now, about the middle of the thirteenth century, we find a diligent and persevering scribe, Bacchus, whose personality is at least once somewhat pathetically revealed. This monk makes his first appearance as a copyist in 1248, when he is spoken of as "a feeble old man" who was aided in the preparation of a psalter by Rabban Habib. Codices written by him in 1251 and 1255 are also extant; and one of the latter contains the following solemn address by the aged monk to his brethren: "And you, my fathers and brethren, mighty host and assembly of chaste monks and priests and chosen solitaries and faithful strangers together with the honored Abbot—I, who humble myself, beseech you not to blame me for the weakness of my writing. For—God is my witness—I have not come short of my power; for I am very weak through age, my hands shake and my eyes are dim: long sicknesses have come upon me, and every day I ask for death. I beseech your goodness, be mediators between God and my weakness, that by your prayers he may be merciful to me and spare me... And pray for my spiritual brother Rabban Habib who serves me in the faith; and pray for my brother in blood, Rabban Sergius; and pray for my uncle Rabban Isaiah who is dead; for he educated me and taught me. Praise be to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit for ever! And pray for Rabban Yeshua, the Abbot, by whose care this was written."

In spite of his age and infirmities the old man was able to complete in 1257 a book of Supplicatory Hymns. But after this date he is heard of no more.

Two more mss. belonging to this same period are: the Histories of Holy Men and Women, Part vi, No. 32; Wright, op. cit., No. ccxxix, a psalter.

1 Wright, op. cit., No. ccxix.
2 See Cureton, Remains of a very antient recension of the Four Gospels in Syriac, p. ii.
3 Wright, op. cit., Nos. clxxix, a psalter, and cccxxx, a series of commemorations.
4 Id., No. dccxcv.
5 Id., No. ccclvii.
6 A slightly earlier reference to him, dated 1245, is found in a Syriac ms. written by Habib at the Monastery of S. John: see Payne Smith, Cat. Cod. MSS. Bibl. Bodl., Part i.
7 Wright, op. cit., No. cxxviii, a Jacobite Lectionary, Part l.
8 Possibly Rabban Isaiah or Bar Othman of Salach, the scribe or donor of Wright's No. dxxv, a (?late) XII century ms.
9 The version is by Dr A. S. Tritton.
10 Wright, op. cit., No. cccclxxxvii.
11 Id., No. dcccclxviii.
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

written in 1254 in the Syrian Monastery by John of Sigistan for Rabban ‘Aziz, when Yeshua was abbot; and a copy of the Pauline Epistles,¹ written by Behnam of Sigistan in the Monastery of Abba Yuhannan Ze’ura (John the Little). This ms. also was completed in 1254 and presented to the Syrian Monastery. In 1264 the first two quires in a copy of the Four Gospels,² prepared for Rabban Joseph, were written in the Monastery of the Syrians by ‘Aziz of the Monastery of Mar Matthew.³

At this point the impulse which had animated the revival seems to have spent itself; for during the remainder of the thirteenth century only two accessions are known to us—a service book⁴ bequeathed in 1277, and a second (choral),⁵ which was written in 1292 for use in the monastery. It is probable that a general decay in learning and letters had now set in; and if so, we may possibly assign to this period the following lament⁶ penned by some solitary scholar: "We books are many, but there is no one who reads us. O what a great pity that we remain unused!" It is a significant fact that in the years with which we are now dealing very little attention seems to be paid to theological or patristic writings; scribes are indeed busy, but in almost every case⁷ it is in the production of liturgical books, or copies of the Gospels, psalters, or lectionaries. Moreover, excepting the Gospels, presented by Lazarus, no books from northern Mesopotamia seem to have reached the Wâdi Habîb during this period. Doubtless this was due to the devastation of that region. In any case the Syrian Monastery is henceforward dependent on its own scribes for literary supplies.

8. Sixth and Seventh Periods: 1292–1480, 1480–c. 1518

The next two centuries (1292–1480) must have been well-nigh the darkest in the annals of the library. While we cannot definitely account for this, it is highly probable that it was the result of a series of adverse circumstances which brought the monastery very near to ruin. In 1301 and 1321 there were fierce anti-Christian outbreaks in Egypt; in 1348–1349 (as we have seen reason to believe⁸) the Black Death seriously affected the monasteries, and at the close of the fourteenth century the conquests of Timûr (Tamerlane) effectually severed Syria and Egypt.

That the library was still used to some extent is shown by a note written in one of the books,⁹ stating that in 1319 a Bishop Abraham with certain monks from the monastery

---

¹ Wright, Cat. Syr. MSS. in B.M., No. cxxvii.
² Zonitenberg, Cat. MSS. syr. B.N., No. 56, pp. 20 f.
³ No doubt identical with the ‘Aziz for whom John of Sigistan wrote in 1254; see above. Monks of the Monastery of Mar Matthew are frequently mentioned at this period; probably it was the famous monastery on Gebel Maklib, near Nisibis, and the monks named were refugees.
⁴ Wright, op. cit., No. cccxxix.
⁵ Id., No. cccxxxiv.
⁶ In Wright’s No. dxxv: cf. id., pp. iv f. Wright also calls attention to the despairing note of a monk who read the Introduction to the Festal Letters of Athanasius but failed to understand a single word.
⁷ The only exception seems to be the Works of Isaac of Nineveh noted above. For the Arabic version of the Homilies of Jacob of Sarug, presented to the “Monastery of the Virgin of Abba Bis hô of the Syrians” by Cyriac the Metropolitan (Cod. Vat. Arab., No. lxviii), though stated to be a XIII century ms. (Mai, S.F.N.C., iv, ii, pp. 147 f.), certainly was presented in the XV or XVI century; see p. 452.
⁸ See p. 401.
⁹ Wright, op. cit., No. dcccxxix.
of Natpha came to Wādi Habib. But the only book known\(^1\) to have been written in the Syrian Monastery in the fourteenth century was the *Ethics* of Gregory bar Hebraeus.\(^2\) In 1404 part of a work entitled the *Lamp of the Sanctuary* by the same author was copied, but apparently never completed there.\(^3\) This ceases to be surprising when we find that immediately before 1413 only one monk was left in the monastery.\(^4\) Yet in 1416 two mss.\(^5\) were rebound by a monk named Jacob—a proof that some improvement in the condition of the monastery took place.

Shortly before 1480 a marked improvement in the affairs of the monastery, due apparently to the initiative of John bar Sila (Ignatius XI of Antioch), took place\(^6\); and under the rule of Abbot Severus, or Cyriac, the library received fresh additions. In 1481 a copy of the *Gospel of Saint John*\(^7\) was made for Cyriac the abbot; other mss. were written there in 1482, 1483, and 1484.\(^8\)

One of the two volumes written in 1484 was copied in part by a priest, Moses, who was apparently the leading scribe at this period. Other works from his hand are dated 1489, 1490, 1493, and 1499\(^9\); and in them he is described as the priest Moses of Mount Lebanon. His latest known work is dated 1501, when he wrote the last six quires of the *Works* of Isaac of Nineveh, a monk John being responsible for the remainder in 1516.\(^10\) A note, dated 1496, in a volume of *Discourses for the whole Year* records that Moses of Mount Lebanon read the book and translated some of the sermons contained in it into Arabic\(^11\); whence we infer that Moses was more than a mere mechanical copyist.

The monk Abraham who in 1484 collaborated with Moses,\(^12\) was also not idle. In 1492 he copied a book of which a fragment only is preserved\(^13\); in 1493 he “repaired and bound the damaged part of these books” assisted by a monk named Gabriel.\(^14\) Presumably, then, he carried out a fresh restoration of which the library must have been greatly in need.

After an apparent pause of some ten years, a new effort was made by a scribe named John, who copied certain *Homilies* attributed to Saint John Chrysostom in 1512\(^15\); in the

---

1. Once more it is necessary to remark that we are dealing only with dated books; doubtless many volumes (mostly liturgies) can be assigned to this period on paleographical grounds.
4. See p. 403.
6. See p. 408.
8. Assemani, op. cit., No. xxv; Wright, op. cit., No. cccc; id., No. cccclxiv, and Assemani, op. cit., No. xxvi. The last was written by Moses, a priest, and Abraham, a monk, for John, son of Ezekiel, “a man skilled in Coptic, Syriac, Arabic, and Egyptian (*sic*? Ethiopian) tongues.” Such a linguist may have executed some of the polyglot mss. peculiar to Wādi Habīb; see pp. 366 and 369.
10. Assemani, B.O., 1, p. 568, Cod. Nitr., xx. Possibly Moses died in 1501 leaving the ms. unfinished. The “last” six quires are presumably so called from the Western point of view: to the Oriental, writing and reading from right to left, they were the first since they contained the beginning of the work.
12. See note 8 above.
13. Id., No. cccxcix.
14. Note in id., No. mxxxiii.
15. Zotenberg, op. cit., No. 192, p. 134. He is there called Jonas of the Monastery of Bishbî (doubtless “of the Syrians” should be added).
same year he left a note in a volume of the *Homilies* of Cyril, and finished two other works in 1516 and a third in 1518.

It was in 1516 that the Abbot Severus, or Cyriac, then probably at point of death, made over his private collection of books to the monastery. This is recorded in the latter part of a long note, written at the request of Severus by Gregory, Metropolitan of Jerusalem, who states that he wrote inscriptions in “this New Testament and also in many other books which he (Severus) arranged that I should inscribe for this Monastery. He made them a sure and inalienable gift for the good memory of his soul. . . .”

The comprehensive anathema which precedes is worth quotation. After ordaining that no one may remove the book out of the monastery, Gregory continues: “Whosoever dares to transgress these (commandments), whoever he may be, archpriest, priest, or other cleric, or layman, let his lot be with the despised Cain, let the leprosy of Gehazi cleave to him, let the halter of Judas be upon his neck, and let him be anathema, accursed, cast out, from the Holy Trinity. . . . May he have neither pardon nor release until he return it to its place aforesaid. . . . Whoso destroys (?) this memorial in any way, let him receive double the curses and anathemas which we have written above. Amen.”

Abbot Severus was clearly the moving spirit in this revival; and as it begins with him, so it ended at his death (probably in 1517). But active as this brief period was, its products were again almost entirely liturgical; works of learning (by which we understand early Christian and Oriental theology) are scanty in the extreme. We conclude that for most of the monks in this age the only important part of the library was that which contained the service books in current use.

9. *Eighth Period: 1518–1666*

Besides the book written, as already mentioned, for John the Cyprian, a single ms. was bequeathed to the monastery in 1518, and no further item was added to the library until 1539, when a *Collection of Hymns* partly written by a monk named Moses, was acquired. Doubtless the decrease in the number of Syrian monks consequent upon the intrusion of Copts into the monastery, now seriously discouraged the production of further Syriac books.

In 1580 a copy of Sem‘an ibn Kalil’s *Garden of the Solitary* was written in the monastery, and in 1607 Gregory Behnam of Jerusalem completed there his transcript of an exegetical
commentary on the *Acts of the Apostles* and the *Pauline Epistles*. The last known Syriac accession was received in 1634 when Abd el Masih was abbot.

Notes written in certain volumes show that even in these late years the library was used to a certain extent. Matthew, a monk from near Môsul, seems to have used some of the books: at least he has left a note dated 1585 in one of them; another mutilated note bears the date 1618. But the most important of such records is a Karshûni inscription in which a monk, apparently one Thomas of Maridin, makes the following statement: “I, the servant, entered the Monastery of the Virgin in the desert of Scetis, and I saw therein writings without number arranged without order (i.e., lying in confusion); and I began in love and dusted them and counted them. They came to 403 books. Also I arranged them in the tower of the fortress; and the date was 1935 of the Greeks (1624 A.D.).” Near as we are to the end of the lengthy history of this library such a statement is peculiarly valuable. Three years later another Syrian, named George, records that he bound a book, and incidentally shows how low was the standard of learning among the monks at this period. His confession reads as follows: “I, the sinner, was a member of this Monastery of the Mother of God in the year 1938 of the Greeks (1627 A.D.) and I bound this holy book. And I did not know writing, because I was not a scribe, and I desired that I might write for myself the Gospel of Saint John, and I was not able, and I was very sorry. The Lord who said: ‘I do not desire the death of a sinner, but that he should turn and live,’ gave understanding; and I learned by heart all the Gospel of John... and three chapters of Matthew and two chapters of Mark, and two chapters of Luke. And I was comforted: and do not blame me.” Surely no one will.

The latest date at which the books are known to have been accessible was 1664–1666, when ‘Abd el Galîl of Môsul, Metropolitan of Jerusalem, visited the monastery and wrote two notes in one of the volumes—the earlier in Arabic, the later in Syriac. Huntington, who followed ‘Abd el Galîl some sixteen years later, saw nothing except “an Old Testament in two large volumes written in Estrangele characters” in the library. In the meantime, therefore, the books had been committed to the vault, where they were subsequently found, either for safe-keeping or as mere lumber.

10. Ninth Period: c. 1620–1850

In the final period, which extends from the early seventeenth to the nineteenth century and therefore overlaps the preceding division, we have to record the dispersal of the library.

---

1 Cambridge University Library Add. 3280. This note is quoted above, p. 314, in connection with the purchase of the Syrian Monastery.
2 Wright, op. cit., No. dx, p. 390.
3 Id., No. CCCCLXIII.
4 Id., No. CCCXCIX.
5 Id., No. CCLXXIV.
6 Id., No. LXXXIII.
7 Assemani, op. cit., No. cxvii.
8 Huntingoni epistolae, Epist. XXXIX (ed. Smith, p. 68).
9 Perhaps the books were hidden by the monks lest they should be forced to part with them (despite the anathemas) to European agents backed by the local kasbef or some similarly irresistible official.
The process was begun indirectly at a date earlier than c. 1630. For the Ambrosian Library at Milan contains two mss.\textsuperscript{1} purchased from the Syrian Monastery before 1634. At this period Gilles de Loches appears to have seen the library,\textsuperscript{2} and it is possible that he may even have secured one or two volumes—perhaps the Milan mss. Another ms. had passed into the possession of an Armenian (?), Mirigian, about 1646 and had found its way to Aleppo, where it was acquired by J. S. Assemani in 1716.\textsuperscript{3} Yet another, the Works of John, Bishop of Dara, was once the property of Abraham Ecchellensis, who died in 1664.\textsuperscript{4} Moreover, the Bibliothèque Nationale at Paris contains four mss.\textsuperscript{5} once belonging to the monastery which passed through the collection of Colbert, the minister of Louis XIV, and must have been acquired before his death in 1683.

Possibly it was owing to the demands of Colbert’s agents or others that the monks determined to hide their books. At any rate, Huntington certainly failed to see them.\textsuperscript{6} It was Gabriel Eva who first made the existence of the library generally known in Europe. This monk, the abbot of Saint Maura on Mount Lebanon, had been sent by Stephen, Maronite Patriarch of Antioch, on a mission to Rome, and from there was dispatched to Egypt by Clement XI to ascertain the bona fides of John of Alexandria, who was then negotiating for the reconciliation of the Coptic Church with that of Rome.\textsuperscript{7} After completing his inquiries, Eva travelled in Egypt, visiting various monasteries, and on his return to Rome in 1706 reported that excellent libraries remained in the monasteries of Wâdi ’n Natrûn wherein he had seen “Syriac, Arabic, and Coptic codices” nine hundred years and more in age.

At this time Clement XI was endeavoring to enrich the Vatican Library and especially the Oriental section. Elias Assemani was therefore sent to Egypt and arrived in 1707 at the Syrian Monastery, where he was well received. The books were found apparently in the same small chamber in which Curzon and Tattam saw them more than a century later. “You would call it a cave, filled with manuscripts heaped and piled together haphazard,” writes J. S. Assemani recalling, no doubt, his own experience. Of this literary treasure Assemani secured forty volumes\textsuperscript{8}; but on his return voyage down the Nile, his boat was upset and the mss., though ultimately recovered, suffered considerable injury.

In 1715 the Vatican made an effort to secure yet more of the spoils of the monastery and dispatched J. S. Assemani to the East.\textsuperscript{9} At the Syrian Monastery Assemani found some two hundred books, of which he selected one hundred for removal, but the monks would

\textsuperscript{1} Milan, Ambros., ms. B 21; C 313. See Wright, Cat. Syr. MSS. in B.M., p. v, and Ceriani, Trans. Syra Pescitto vet. test., p. 8.
\textsuperscript{3} Assemani, B.A.V.C., No. c111. This ms. was given to the monastery by Simeon of Tekrit: see p. 442.
\textsuperscript{4} Id., No. c (= B.O., i, p. 576, Cod. Ecch., xvi).
\textsuperscript{5} Zotenberg, Cat. MSS. syr. B.N., Nos. 27, 56, 74, 170.
\textsuperscript{6} See p. 453.
\textsuperscript{7} On Gabriel Eva and Elias Assemani, see Assemani, B.O., i, Preface, § viii.
\textsuperscript{8} For a summary list of these see id., i, pp. 561 ff. “Codices Nitiensienses.”
\textsuperscript{9} Id., Preface, § xi.
permit him to carry off only "a few." Assemani's real success was achieved at the Monastery of Saint Macarius where he acquired a priceless collection of Coptic mss.\(^2\)

The next traveller who mentions the library is W. G. Browne. "I inquired," he writes, "for mss. and saw in one of the convents (evidently the Syrian) several books in the Coptic, Syriac and Arabic languages. Among these were an Arabo-Coptic lexicon. The works of Saint Gregory, and the Old and New Testament in Arabic. The superior told me they had near eight hundred (sic) volumes; but positively refused to part with any of them, nor could I see any more."

General Andréossy refers in general terms\(^4\) to books on parchment and cotton paper at the monasteries, and actually removed some of them. But as he appears to have seen only Copto-Arabic mss., he evidently failed to see the Syriac library.

The visit of Lord Prudhoe\(^6\) was more important for its consequences than for its direct results. While in search of "Coptic works having Arabic translations" in order to further Tattam's Coptic studies, he learned that a lexicon of the two languages was at the Monastery of Baramûs; he also learned of libraries there and at the Syrian Monastery. On journeying to the Wâdi 'n Natrûn, he was shown the library at Baramûs, where he selected "a certain number of manuscripts"; at the Syrian Monastery he purchased "a few manuscripts (presumably Coptic) with Arabic translations."

Ten years after Prudhoe's visit Robert Curzon made his famous journey to the Wâdi 'n Natrûn.\(^6\) So far as the library of the Syrian Monastery is concerned, the results of this visit have been wildly exaggerated. Curzon is popularly regarded as the chief despoiler of the monastery;\(^7\) but as a matter of fact his acquisitions amounted to some eight volumes only, which were carried away in a pair of saddlebags. In the library proper he found "some Coptic mss.," and was permitted to take away "three or four" of those which were on vellum,\(^8\) with two imperfect Copto-Arabic lexicons of paper.\(^9\) Profiting by information previously received, Curzon penetrated into the vaulted room where the Assemanis had seen the Syriac books. This room he describes as "a small, close chamber vaulted with stone, which was filled to the depth of two feet or more with the loose leaves of the Syriac manuscripts...." Out of this mass Curzon chose four volumes\(^10\) only which were more

---

1. These are comprised in Assemani's list of Syr. mss. brought by himself from the East: see id., 1, pp. 606 f.
3. Travels in Africa, Egypt, and Syria, p. 43.
4. See p. 429, and reference there given.
5. Quarterly Review, lxxvii, pp. 51 f.
6. Visits to Monasteries in the Levant, chs. vii and viii.
7. E.g., Falls (Drei Jahre in der libyschen Wüste, p. 89) makes the absurd statement: "Lord Curzon (sic) erwarb hier nämlic 1842 (sic) ungefärb. Toaneid (sic) Hand- schriften für das Britische Museum."
8. Curzon, Visits to Monasteries in the Levant, p. 85. For these mss. see Curzon, Cat. of Materials for Writing, p. 26, Coptic, Nos. 1-6; the "Nitrian" examples are not distinguished except No. 1. This is the Catena on the Four Gospels written in 889 by Theodorus of Busra, a monk of the holy Laura of the great Abba Makari": see p. 438, and P. de Lagarde, Catena in evang. Aegypt., pp. iii f. for a correct description.
10. Curzon, Visits to Monasteries in the Levant, p. 88; cf. Cat. of Materials for Writing, Syria, No. 1 (Ezra, Nehemiah, etc.), Nos. 2-3 (Homilies of Gregory Nazianzen): on these see Wright, Cat. Syr. MSS. in B.M., p. x, note. Curzon's No. 4 (Lessions for the whole year) is stated to have been written in 1230 at Beth Xenaya near Edessa by "Bacus," son of Matthew, i.e. (possibly) by the scribe Bacchus noticed above, before he came to Sceis. But Curzon's statement doubtless needs revision.
perfect than the remainder. A fifth volume, so large that the monks hailed it as a box of treasure, had ultimately to be left behind.

Early in 1838 Henry Tattam visited the Wâdi ‘n Natrûn in search of further material for his own Coptic studies. On January fourteenth he explored the Syrian Monastery and found in a “dark vault”—evidently that in which the Assemanis and Curzon had seen the manuscripts—“a quantity of very old and valuable Syriac manuscripts.” On this occasion Tattam purchased two Syriac volumes, but obtained four more before he returned to Cairo on the next day.

On February ninth he revisited the monastery and secured “a large sack-full of splendid Syriac manuscripts on vellum”; to these four more were added on the next day. These mss., forty-nine in all, were transferred to the British Museum on Tattam’s return to England.

Four years later the British Museum, having secured a special grant from the Treasury, sent Tattam to Egypt to secure the remainder of the collection. Tattam not unreasonably left the negotiations for the purchase to “the sheikh of a village on the borders of the desert” and to his own dragoman, but with unspeakable foolishness left the delivery and removal of the books to the pair. The natural result followed: Tattam secured a large part (but only a part) of the whole collection for which he paid, the monks held back the remainder, and the “sheikh” and dragoman, we may be sure, took their share of the purchase money.

The monks were evidently now alive to the market value of their books, and this may be the reason for the limited success achieved by Tischendorf, who speaks bitterly of the effect of British gold. The famous scholar mentions that he saw “in the third monastery (the Syrian) . . . some Syriac, together with a couple of leaves of Ethiopic,” but was unable to acquire anything of real importance.

The British Museum, though it had received excellent value for its money, regretfully realized how it had been defrauded in the person of its agent, Tattam. For in 1845 Auguste Pacho, a Levantine, approached Cureton with the news that a large part of the Syriac library purchased, or paid for, in 1842 still remained in the hands of the monks. With touching confidence the authorities intrusted the task of securing the remaining volumes to Pacho who “cleared” the monastery of every scrap of Syriac to be found there in 1847. Consequently the Museum obtained more than one hundred and seventy additional items.

But there were already indications that Pacho was inclined to play false. These suspicions were confirmed when in 1851 Pacho offered for sale to the Museum ten more mss. which
he had withheld,\(^1\) and disposed of four more\(^2\) in the following year to the Imperial Library at Saint Petersburg.

Whether Pacho had defrauded the Museum to a greater extent than was at first supposed, or whether the monks had outwitted Pacho is uncertain, but in 1872 some thirty or forty more Syriac mss. were for sale in Egypt.\(^3\) That these also came from the Syrian Monastery is practically established by the fact that one of them, purchased for the Royal Library at Berlin by Brugsch, belongs to the series acquired by Moses of Nisibis\(^4\); the present whereabouts of these mss. is apparently unknown.\(^5\) But in 1906 a single volume,\(^6\) one of a group of four containing, it is said, a Greek codex of the Bible and Greek commentaries on the Old Testament, was purchased by Budge for the British Museum.\(^7\) In 1921 fragments of Syriac mss. were still to be found in the Syrian Monastery,\(^8\) and other indications suggest that the last chapter in the history of the library has yet to be written.

11. *Coptic Manuscripts at the Syrian Monastery*

Until the fifteenth century, when an Egyptian element first appeared, there can have been very few Coptic mss. in the monastery, and books acquired at and after that date are not likely to have been of great interest. The few exceptions, perhaps accidentally acquired, may be noted.

In the existing monastic library (a small vaulted cell on the third floor of the *kasr*) there is a fine cotton paper copy of the *Gospels*\(^9\) written, as the Coptic colophon states, in A.M. 936 (1220 A.D.) by Simon, “son” of the deacon Petros, “son” of John νικελαφρον,\(^10\) at the charge of the Archon Bartholomew, son of the deacon Abû’l Fatih (?) (Ἀπὸλλαθρος) Mansûr, the man of the cell (μονή) of Abba Besa.\(^11\) At the end of Saint Mark’s *Gospel* there are good circular miniatures of the Four Evangelists occupying a full page. In the fourth *Gospel* the passage\(^12\) relating to the stirring of the waters at Bethesda is (as usual) omitted. It is supplied in the margin in extremely bad Greek by a later hand, and the Coptic was finally inscribed below by a third and illiterate hand.

Two other copies of the *Gospels* from this monastery are respectively in the British Museum\(^13\) and in the Patriarchal Library at Cairo.\(^14\)

---

\(^1\) B.M. Add. 18812-18821.
\(^2\) For these see Wright, loc. cit., and Dorn, *Mélanges asiatiques tirés du bull. de l’Acad. de St. Pétersbourg*, 11, pp. 195 f.
\(^3\) See Wright, op. cit., p. xvi.
\(^4\) See Sachau, *Verzeichnis der syrischen Hss.*, No. 63, and Wright, loc. cit., note.
\(^5\) The British Museum authorities could or would give me no information.
\(^6\) Now B.M. Or. 6714.
\(^7\) See Budge, *By Nile and Tigris*, 11, pp. 370 f.
\(^8\) E.g., a complete quire (8 leaves) belonging to B.M. Add. 14586 (= Wright, op. cit., No. ccxxxiii) where it should fill the gap after fol. 73 b. This is now in the Coptic Museum at Cairo.

\(^9\) This copy is apparently unknown to Horner. There is of course no library mark or number. I was allowed to see the book only for a few minutes. About a hundred other volumes are piled on the shelves in a modern wooden press and I was not permitted to do more than glance at a few volumes, all of which were late.

\(^10\) “The son of Stephri (Stauro-phori)”?  
\(^11\) “The “Red Monastery” at Sohag.”

\(^12\) *S. John* v. 4.

\(^13\) B.M. Or. 3381. Its date is unknown, but it was restored in 1794. Cf. [Horner], *Coptic Version of the New Testament*, 1, p. lxix.

\(^14\) Id., 1, p. lxxxvii. It was restored in 1878.
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

The most ancient ms. known to have been found here is Catena on the Four Gospels written at the Monastery of Saint Macarius in 889 A.D. and acquired with two or three other vellum mss. by Curzon. The first of these did not properly belong to this monastery and was perhaps brought thither by J. S. Assemani.¹ One of the others belonged to the Monastery of the Abyssinians.²

On the other hand, the polyglot Epistles at Milan,³ dating partly from the twelfth and partly from the fourteenth century, was the genuine property of the monastery, being "provided" by the steward, Salib (see Plate VIII), and written (in part) by a Syrian monk, Yuhanna of Amid.⁴

From the fifteenth century onwards the ordinary Coptic liturgical books must have grown common. Copies or parts of ancient copies doubtless exist in the monastery and in European collections; but only one can be mentioned—the Anaphoras of Saints Basil, Gregory, and Cyril now in the British Museum.⁵

Lastly, the library contained several Copto-Arabic vocabularies. Curzon purchased two imperfect copies, but was unable to secure a third, which he left "in one of the niches in the wall" (of the library); at a later date it was bought for him by a friend (? Tattam) and sent to England.⁶

12. Arabic Manuscripts

Very little is known of the Arabic mss. here, though these, with the Arabic mss. and fragments in the other monasteries, would doubtless repay the attention of an Arabic scholar versed in Christian literature. We know, however, that there is or was here a copy of the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles, discovered and published by Mrs Lewis and Mrs Gibson.⁷

² Id., Appendix II, § 7.
⁴ Can he be John, son of Ezekiel, the man "skilled in Coptic, Syriac, Arabic, and Egyptian" (Æthiopic), for whom Assemani's B.A.V.C., No. xxvi, was written?
APPENDICES
APPENDIX I

Abbots of the Monastery of Saint Macarius

390 Macarius the Great.
    John (disciple of Macarius: see Palladius, Hist. Laus., ch. xvii).

444 *John (slain by the barbarians).

C. 482 John (afterwards patriarch).

C. 530 *Macarius (contemporary with Severus: see p. 230).

VI century Daniel the Hegumen.

VI century *John (afterwards Bishop of El Borlos: see p. 249).

C. 641–c. 675 John the Hegumen.

C. 675–c. 680 *Zacharias.


C. 767 Menas (Hist. Patr., pp. 475, 495).

IX century Paul the Hegumen (Hist. Patr., p. 598).

IX–X century Victor (Zoëga, Cat., No. x, colophon).

925 Abraham of Coltha (Zoëga, Cat., No. xix, colophon).


1340, 1346 Anba George alias Daniel (B.N., Fonds arabe, No. 100, fols. 74a, 75b, 93a).

1626 Jonas “Metran and Reis” (note in Barberini Psalter: see P.O., x, p. 217).

* Presumably superior of the monastery.
APPENDIX II

Abbots of the Syrian Monastery

c. 851–c. 859 Bar 'Idai of Tekrit.


c. 860 Matthew and Abraham of Tekrit.

“He (Bar 'Idai) appointed the monks Mattai and Abraham his brothers. Each one who cries at them and lies in wait for them may know that he has transgressed God's word and every commandment” (Wright, No. ccxxii, p. 153, second note. See also p. 311).

868 or 878 Joseph I (of Tekrit?).

Wright, No. ccxxix, p. 247 (note dated a.g.r. 11*9 = 88*9 a.d.). In all probability Joseph was one of the four Tekritan brothers Matthew, Abraham, Theodore, and Joseph (for whom see Wright, Nos. dcccxlxi, dccclxvi—where they are described as having “built and ordered this holy place”; cf. also pp. 310f. above, and Excursus, pp. 439 f.).

894 John I, son of Macarius.

Wright, No. dlviii, p. 450.

906 or 907–943 Moses of Nisibis.

(1) Apparently abbot in 906 or 907 (Wright, No. clxiv, p. 97; cf. p. 337, above).

(2) Erects baikal screen 913 or 914 (see p. 337).

(3) Erects choir screen 926 or 927 (see ib.).

(4) Mission to Bagdad, after 927 (Wright, No. dclxix; cf. p. 337, above).

(5) Returns from Bagdad, bringing 250 books for the monastic library (Assemani, B.O., ii, pp. 118 f.).

(6) Last mentioned in Wright, No. dxiv, p. 394: “Mar Moses, our glory and the ornament of the whole Church, the head of this Convent.”

981 Saliba of Arzian.

Abbot under the Patriarchs Abraham (977–981) and Philotheos (981–1005): see Wright, Nos. cccxlvii, p. 292, and dclxiv, p. 516.

1 For Theodore, superior of the Syrian community (not monastery) in Scetis, 576 A.D., see Assemani, B.A.V.C., iii, No. cxxii, and p. 320 above.

2 Apparently successors: cf. Wright, No. ccxix, quoted below under David.

3 A note in Wright, No. dccxxviii, p. 668, states that “Ephraem the Stranger bound and repaired this book by the care of Moses and Aaron, priests and directors of the Convent of the House of the Mother of God, of the Syrians.” No date is given, but Moses may be Moses of Nisibis, and Aaron the donor of Wright, No. mxv, p. 1196, who presented the volume in 879. If so, Moses must have come to the monastery some time before the close of the IX century.
1006, 1007 David.

"Mar David the Abbot of the Convent, brother of Mar John (may the Lord exalt his memory!), who was likewise Abbot of the Convent" (Wright, No. cccxxii, p. 268, scribal note dated 1006; id., No. cccxxi, note dated 1007).

1081 Gabriel.

See Assemani, B.O., i, p. 561 (dated 1081); and cf. Wright, No. mxxiii, p. 1197 (dated 10—).

1100 John III.

See Assemani, B.O., i, p. 565, dated c. 1100.

1131 ? Joseph II.

See Hist. Patr., quoted above, p. 373. But it is not certain that "Abba Joseph the Syrian saint in the Monastery of the Syrians" there named was abbot, though this is probable.

— 1222 John IV.

Apparently died in 1222: see following notice.

1222— Basil.

Wright, No. cxix, p. 74. Note dated 1222 "in the days of the abbacy of Rabban John and Basil the Abbot and Rabban Joseph the Steward."

Joseph III. 2

Wright, No. dcxvii, p. 580. The note is undated but in a XIII century hand.

Constantine I.

Wright, No. dcxvii, p. 580: "he wrote them...in the time of Constantine the Abbot (the former, not the latter, for there were two abbots named Constantine)." This abbot fled from the Syrian Monastery to that of Saint Anthony and died there: see p. 389, above.

Constantine II.

See preceding notice.

? XIV century John V of Beth Severina.

Wright, No. ix, pp. 38 f. Cf. id., p. 1533.

1254–1257 Yeshua (Joshua) of Zargel Castra.

Wright, Nos. cxxix, p. 94, dated 1254; ccxxviii, p. 171, dated 1255; and cccclxxvii, p. 380, dated 1257.

1492–1516 Severus alias Cyriac of Mount Lebanon.

Wright, Nos. ccxxix, p. 315, dated 1492; mxxiii, p. 1200, dated 1493: "Mar Severus of Mount Lebanon"; Assemani, B.O., i, p. 568, written 1501 and given to "Cyriac, Priest and Abbot"; Wright, No. lxv, p. 44, dated 1516: "Severus the Abbot"; Zotenberg, Cat. MSS. 37r. B.N., No. 74, p. 45, dated 1516: "Cyriac of Mount Lebanon, the Abbot."

1518 John V of Cyprus.

Wright, No. ccxxvii, p. 314.

1561 ? Moses II.

De Slane, Cat. MSS. arabes B.N., No. 297, where a Syrian note states that the ms. belonged in 1561 to the Syrian Convent of Saint Moses in Scetis (presumably the Syrian Monastery over which a certain Moses presided: but see above, p. 409, note 3).

1 I.e., successor: cf. Matthew and Abraham above.

2 The order and position of this and the two following abbots is uncertain, but Joseph III may well be identical with Joseph who was steward under Basil.
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES


Wright, No. LXXXIII, p. 59: "the noble priest and chaste monk, the head of the house of God, Moses of Damascus, the son of Salama."

1634–1636. 'Abd el Masih.

Wright, No. dx, p. 390, reference dated 1634.

1636–. Abu'l Farag el Barmawi.


1830–. El Kommos 'Abd el Kaddûs.¹

— —— El Kommos Hanna Bishâra.

Subsequently consecrated Bishop of Abûðig with the name of Matteos.

— —— El Kommos Tadaros.

— —1897 El Kommos Hanna el Isnâwi.

Now Bishop of Khartûm.

1897–. El Kommos Maximus.

The present abbot.

¹ For the last five names in this list I am indebted to S. E. Marcos Pasha Simaika.
APPENDIX III

On the Coptic Life of Macarius

The most ambitious account of the life of Macarius the Great is a Coptic Life, or encomium, intended for liturgical use. Sarapion, the fourth-century Bishop of Thmuis, is directly claimed as the author (or source) of this work in the title, "The Life of the great luminary... Abba Makari...", which was related by Abba Sarapion the most holy bishop of the Christ-loving town of Thmuis, the disciple of Abba Antoni the Inspired; and though this lemma may well have been added by a later hand, the same claim seems to be made in the body of the work when (in the account of Macarius' first visit to Antony) the author calls himself "the unworthy Sarapamon," and declares that "we (sc. Sarapamon and Macarius) told the story of our lives one to the other." Similarly in his notice of Macarius' second visit, at the end of which Antony died, the author alleges that "we (Sarapamon and Macarius) took care of his holy body."

The document therefore claims to be the work of a disciple of Antony who was acquainted with Macarius; and the title identifies this Sarapion, or Sarapamon, with Sarapion the well-known Bishop of Thmuis. If this can be accepted as substantially true, then the Life has all the importance of a contemporary biography, and as such Amélineau acclaims it. Butler, however, points out that Sarapion of Thmuis having died before 370 cannot well have recorded even the death of Macarius, who lived until 390, much less the subsequent removal of his body from Sceitis to Jibber. He therefore regards the identification in the title of the author with the Bishop of Thmuis as a gloss, but, while allowing for some additions in the extant version, accepts the Life as the work of a monk Sarapion, or Sarapamon, who was contemporary with Macarius and a disciple of Antony.

There is, however, the gravest reason to suspect the authenticity of the Life as a contemporary document. For, first, it is highly probable that by Sarapamon, or Sarapion, the disciple of Antony mentioned in the text, we are intended to understand Sarapion of Thmuis, the one well-known person of that name connected with Antony; and second, the use of the first person singular on which Amélineau lays such stress is in itself no guarantee of genuineness, or we should be forced to admit the authenticity of the Life of Maximus and Domitius by Pshoi, or of that of Bishôi by John the Little. But it is internal evidence which makes the authenticity of the Life impossible to maintain. There are to be found in it (1) mistakes as to facts, (2) glaring omissions of which no contemporary would have been guilty, (3) anachronisms and evidences of comparatively late date, and (4) no indications that, apart from some element of local tradition relating to minor points, the Life contains anything substantial which cannot be traced to sources still available, such as the Apophthegmata.

1 Edited by Amélineau in A.M.G., xxv, pp. 46 f. from Cod. Vat. Capt., Nos. LIX, LXII, LXIV.
2 At the head of the Life is the rubric: "(To be read on) the fourteenth day of Epêp in the Sanctuary of Abba Makari to the south."
3 A.M.G., xxv, p. 46.
4 Id., p. 79. N.B. The Vatican Ms. LXIX here uses the 3rd person, and uses the form Sarapion in place of Sarapa-
mon. The two names seem interchangeable, for a famous recluse of Scetis, the undated Hegumen of the Monastery of John the Little, is variously called Sarapamon and Sarapion: see Synax., ed. Basset, Baremât 5, p. 840.
5 A.M.G., xxv, p. 86. 6 Id., p. xxviii. 7 L.H., i, p. 220.
8 The identification is not found in the Syriac version: Bedjan, Acta SS. et mart., t. v, 205.
9 A.M.G., xxv, p. xxviii. 10 See p. 98. 11 See p. 111.

465
(1) According to the *Life* it was only after the second visit to Antony and the death of that saint (i.e., after 356) that Macarius began to gather disciples round him in Scetis; but the combined evidence of the *Apophthegmata* and of Palladius shows that a group of followers had gathered round the saint before he was ordained priest (i.e., before 340). Moreover, when “Sarapion” asserts that he and Macarius ”took care” of Antony’s body, he falls into the blunder of identifying Macarius of Scetis with Macarius of Pispir who with Amatas actually buried Antony. Again, the *Life* represents Macarius as having been ordained priest before he retired to Scetis; Palladius, indirectly supported by the *Apophthegmata*, states positively that he was ordained at the age of forty, ten years after his retirement. And whereas Palladius most distinctly says that Macarius died at the age of ninety, and other sources indicate that he retained his activity to the last, “Sarapion” gives his age as ninety-seven and pictures him as having fallen into a state of great bodily weakness, though he was still able to rout the “demons” who attacked him. The author of the Coptic *Life* has therefore conflated Macarius the Great with Macarius of Alexandria whom Palladius describes as having reached “extreme old age,” as “getting on for one hundred years old and having lost his teeth,” and as striving with the devil to the last.

(2) The omissions are no less remarkable. No reference is made to the important relations which Macarius maintained with the monastic colony of the Mount of Nitria; Macarius of Alexandria is never mentioned, though his life was closely connected with that of his namesake; and above all the most striking event in the career of Macarius the Great—his exile in the Arian Persecution of Lucius—is totally ignored.

(3) At least one serious anachronism occurs. We are informed that when Macarius visited the Wādī ‘n Nātrūn in his youth, a heavenly being promised that he should beget spiritual sons who should be placed as leaders over the people. Now since Macarius is elsewhere entitled “Father of Patriarchs,” the reference is clearly to the series of primates who were chosen from among the monks of Saint Macarius. This series begins with Isaac (late seventh century) and Cosmas I (early eighth century) and only becomes continuous with Michael I (744 A.D. onwards). Again, events subsequent to the death of Macarius are alluded to in a way which shows they belong to a past at least comparatively remote. Such are the references to “the place where the Barbarians killed the soldiers” (i.e., where Moses the Robber and his companions were slain in 408), and to the removal of Macarius’ body from Scetis to Jībēr. Incidental expressions also point the same way. When the author writes, “They call this place ‘Abba Makari’ because he finished his life there,” or states that a certain well is called “the Well of Makari unto this day,” or that the place where the “Little Strangers” died “is called the cell of the Romans (i.e., Baramús) unto this day,” or relates the parentage of the saints, “as we have heard from our fathers who were before us”—it is clear that he is looking back to events which occurred long before his own time.

(4) The foregoing considerations should be sufficient to show that the *Life* was not only not by a contemporary, but was a comparatively late work. The same conclusion emerges when we examine the subject matter of the *Life*. Of the salient facts there recorded, there are few which are not to be found in the *Apophthegmata patrum*; and the inference is that “Sarapion” compiled a large part of his work by writing up anecdotes from a recension of this collection—possibly from the *Paradise of Scetis*. The obvious rejoinder, that the *Apophthegmata* relating to Macarius may have been culled from the *Life* itself or from some earlier (Greek) version of it, overthrows itself, for the sayings embedded in the *Life* are demonstrably secondary, adapted and modified by “Sarapion” from the sayings in the *Apophthegmata patrum* to suit the context in which he is pleased to set them. Two examples may serve to establish this. The obvious implication of Apophthegm xxxi

---

1 Page 86.
2 See p. 66.
3 Page 86.
5 “Sarapion” apparently equates himself with Amatas.
6 Page 65.
7 See p. 65.
8 Pages 105 f.
10 See p. 66.
11 See p. 90.
12 See p. 79.
13 *A.M.G.*, xxv, p. 57.
14 See Malan, *Calendar of the Coptic Church*, p. 25:

---

Barenhätt 27—“Rest in the Lord of our devoted father Abu Macarius, Father of Patriarchs.”
15 John I (V century) and Damian (VI century) are isolated examples. The former was a monk in the “askt” of S. Macarius (see the *Synax.*, ed. Basset for Bashans 4), the latter a monk of the Monastery of S. John.
16 *A.M.G.*, xxv, p. 76. For *Matōr* (soldiers) in the sense of monks, cf. id., p. 65.
17 Id., p. 112.
18 Id., p. 89.
19 Id., p. 90.
20 Id., p. 87.
21 Id., p. 48.
22 On this work see my *New Texts*, p. xxiii, note 2.
23 Migne, op. cit., lxxv, col. 273; see p. 64 above.
APPENDIX III

is that Macarius was an ordinary camel driver before he became a monk, and as such used to journey to the Wādi 'n Natrūn (the sly insinuation that he used to steal the natron and was thrashed by the guards need not be taken seriously). "Sarapion" knew this anecdote, but gave it a new turn: Macarius was no common camel driver, but because he went with his father's camels to the Wādi 'n Natrūn in order to avoid the society of his wife, the name "camel driver" was bestowed upon him.\(^1\) This is ingenious but quite unconvincing, for in Egypt people are not and were not named after occupations which they do not ordinarily follow but take up merely for the moment. There can be no doubt that our author felt the anecdote in its original form to be derogatory to the dignity of the saint and ingeniously twisted it so as to serve his purpose by bringing Macarius to the Wādi 'n Natrūn in his youth, while glazing over that element in it which offended his sense of fitness. Again, in Apophthegm 1, Macarius himself relates that he fled to Scetis to avoid the demonstrations of the villagers when they had become convinced of his innocence: "This," he concludes, "is the beginning of the cause why I came here."\(^2\) But nothing so simple will content "Sarapion." Scetis must have been founded in fulfilment of a divine behest, and therefore Macarius did not flee thither on his own initiative, but had to be led to the appointed place by a "Cherubim" who appeared to remind him of the vision revealed to him in boyhood.\(^3\)

To point out and compare all the matter which is common to the Coptic Life and to the Apophthegmata or other documents would require much space; but the instances just quoted are probably sufficient to establish that, so far from dispensing the exclusive information of a contemporary, "Sarapion" compiled his narrative from much the same documentary sources as we ourselves have to use.

There remain, however, certain elements which are not derived from these sources, and prominent among them is the account of Macarius' parentage and early life. Can this be regarded as resting upon real tradition surviving at Jijibēr, the saint's native village? The expression "as we have heard from our fathers who were before us,"\(^4\) fatal as it is to the view that the Life is a contemporary work, favors such a suggestion; and the statement that the parents of Macarius were ruined and migrated to Jijibēr at a time when "there was no government in their country"\(^5\) looks like a genuine reminiscence of the conditions which must have accompanied the revolt of Achillesus in 295, and its suppression by Diocletian. But if some genuine tradition concerning the family of Macarius was current, the account of the saint's early life is almost certainly artificial and made to match his subsequent career. The exemplary boyhood of Macarius, as of other great personages, is too good to be true. His enforced marriage and the asceticism he showed too closely recall the more authentic history of Amoun\(^6\) to be probable, and are indeed stock motives in Coptic hagiography;\(^6\) the admiration provoked by his precocious wisdom and knowledge\(^7\) suggests that the author is merely enlarging upon the epithet παιδαριογέρων, which, however (as Palladius clearly implies\(^8\)), was bestowed upon him by the fathers of the desert; and the dispersal of his property before he adopted the solitary life\(^9\) is suspiciously like an echo from the life of Antony.

Another element in the Life independent of documentary sources relates to the various habitation of Macarius in the Wādi 'n Natrūn and to the origin of the Four Monasteries there. As we have seen elsewhere\(^9\) there is good reason to accept the essential features of this account as representing the actual facts. Yet this admission by no means implies that here at last is something contemporary; the places where Macarius had dwelt and the origins of the earliest settlements would naturally be handed down in continuous tradition in Scetis, and that the author is merely recording such tradition (sound as it is) is made clear by his use of the formula "unto this day" in this part of the narrative.

To sum up: The Life of Macarius is not by Sarapion of Thmuis and if the author was really named Sarapion, or Sarapamon, his mistakes, omissions, and anachronisms show that he was not only not a contemporary of Macarius but lived at some period far removed from the lifetime of the saint. The contents of the work lead to the same conclusion. Nowhere are there signs of contemporary authorship. On the contrary, the principal

---

1 A.M.G., xxv, p. 56.
2 Migne, op. cit., lxxv, cols. 257, 260.
3 A.M.G., xxv, pp. 72 f.
4 Id., p. 50.
5 See p. 46.
6 It recurs, for example, in the story of John Kamé: see p. 306.
7 A.M.G., xxv, p. 59.
8 Hist. Laus., ed. Butler, ch. xviii. Sozomen (H.E., iii, 14) directly asserts that Macarius was called so by the monks.
9 See pp. 13, 62.
incidents are derived from pre-existing documents; and for the remainder of the narrative we have some fragments of surviving tradition floating in a sea of pious imagination. As for the period to which the work really belongs, our only solid clue is the implied assurance that the remains of Macarius were at Jijbër\(^1\) when the \textit{Life} was written. This enables us to state that the date of production was earlier than 784 when the relics were removed to Elmi.\(^2\) There is no evidence to help us to fix a more definite date.

1 \textit{A.M.G.}, xxv, p. 113.  
APPENDIX IV

The Nitrian Rule

Two early codes of monastic rules are extant which claim to be intimately associated with the Mount of Nitria and with Scetis. The first, attributed to Macarius of Alexandria, enjoins the characteristic monastic virtues—charity, humility, submission, labor, observance of silence, and so forth. The second was drawn up by the Macarii, Sarapion, and Paphnutius in conclave. First Sarapion deals with the cenobitic life—brotherly union, the authority of the superior, and obedience; Macarius then enlarges on the duties of the superior in relation to the monks, the office, the novices, and the entertainment of guests; Paphnutius follows with precepts on fasts, labor, and other such matters; and lastly the other Macarius treats of relations between one monastery and another, of reception of the clergy, and of discipline.

Since both of these codes were used by Saint Benedict they are clearly earlier than the close of the fifth century. But do they go back to the fourth century, and were they originated by the great fathers of Nitria and of Scetis? It is quite certain that they cannot have been formulated in the northwestern desert of Egypt at so early a date. For (1) Palladius explicitly states that the monks of the Mount of Nitria were guided solely by their own discretion and their own physical ability to lead an ascetic life; and (2) the rules are definitely designed for cenobitic life within the walls of a monastery (in the modern and popular sense), whereas at the Mount of Nitria cenobitic life, so far as it existed, was certainly far less formal, and in Scetis it was a later development. Moreover, no early authorities mention or even imply the existence of any set code hereabouts.

Now there appears to be no ancient version of these codes in any Oriental language—surely a remarkable fact if the rules themselves are of Eastern origin. Pending a thorough and systematic discussion of the origin of the codes, we may perhaps regard them as having been drawn up in the West (possibly in southern Gaul) by men who, like Cassian, were under the influence of “Nitrian” monasticism and, when formulating definite rules, sought the sanction of these great names. Possibly the rules really enshrine something of the general teaching of the Fathers to whom they are attributed, crystallized into direct and particular precepts.

It is therefore only remotely that the two codes have any bearing upon the history of “Nitrian” monasticism. Yet if they are of Gallic origin, how eloquently do they testify to the influence of that type of monasticism.

1 Migne, P.G., xxxiv, cols. 967 f. Cf. Besse, Les Moines d’Orient, pp. 80 f. (whom I have closely followed here).
2 Presumably Sarapion was he of the Mount of Nitria (Palladius, Hist. Laus., ch. vii), and Paphnutius was the successor of Isidorus in Scetis.
3 Besse, loc. cit.
4 Hist. Laus., ch. vii.
5 A code of ascetic rules, alleged to have been given by the Virgin to Macarius in Shi‘et, is extant in two Arabic mss. at Rome (Cod. Vat. Arab., No. 112, seq.): see Mai, S. V. N. C., iv, ii, pp. 384 f.
APPENDIX V

Acclamations to the Great Saints of Scetis

(From the Theotokia, Curzon mss., No. 131)

MACARIUS THE GREAT

Hail, great Abba Macarius, lamp of monkhood, that wast a golden candlestick, brilliant beyond the sun. For thy soul shone in the heavenly Jerusalem, and thy body glittered in thine own church. Yea, we believe that thou art with us in spirit, soul, and body, and art become for us a comfort and a solace for our souls. So that we entreat thee as children of thy prayers; entreat the Lord for us that he may have pity upon our souls. Pray (God for us), my righteous lord father, our father the great Abba Macarius that He may (forgive our sins).

MACARIUS THE PRIEST

The dark caves wherein thou didst dwell, do testify of thee, Abba Macarius the Priest. How that thou wast worthy to stand before the Lord five days and five nights, whilst thy mind was in heaven, Singing praises with the angels and the heavenly hosts and the choirs of the saints, glorifying the Trinity. Pray (God), etc.

MACARIUS THE BISHOP

What shall thy people call thee, whom thou didst shepherd in purity and truth, Abba Macarius the Bishop? Shall I call thee angel, or shepherd, or martyr? These (parts) all thou didst well fill, in deed, and word of truth. If I call thee martyr, thou gavest thy head for Christ, Who was martyr’d for us before Pontius Pilate. The priestly-office thou didst accomplish and didst keep the faith, and wearest (now) the unfading crown of martyrdom. Pray, etc., Abba Macarius the Bishop.

ABBA MACARIUS AND ALL THE SAINTS

See, Moses the Black also is come into these deserts, wearing the unfading crown of martyrdom. The Forty-nine Martyrs, the Elders of the desert (also): them the Barbarians did slay upon the Rock of Piamoun. The holy Hilaria, the saintly Anastasia, the holy Aripsima, the brides of Christ.

1 Translated by W. E. Crum.

470
All the sanctuaries which thou didst found, my lord father Abba Macarius, they shall not cease to bear fruit until the end of the age.
Pray, etc., Abba Macarius and their (sic) cross-bearing children.

ABBA JOHN THE LITTLE

For thou wast a shining luminary upon earth, O our blessed father, my holy lord, Abba John.
When by thy humility and thy angelic life thou didst hang all Shihêt on thy finger, as it were a drop of water.
And thou didst subdue thy body by severe exercises till thou didst become immune in the Day of Judgment.
And moreover thou wast made worthy, my lord father, Abba John, to sit with the Apostles to judge thy generation.
Pray, etc., Abba John, the revered Hegumen.

ANBA BISHOI AND ANBA PAUL

Joseph the high priest of the great city Rakoti, the pure virgin, clothed with true humility,
In the day of thy high priesthood did this great grace befall us—us the unworthy—namely, the coming to us of our cross-bearing fathers Abba Pishoi and Abba Paulê, the shining luminaries, the two that became for us a harbor of salvation. They illumined our souls with their holy relics.
Pray, etc. . . . , my lords, fathers, loving their children, Abba Pishoi and Abba Paulê.

MAXIMUS AND DOMITIUS

Luminaries of the truth and great beginners of our holy Congregation, Maximus and Domitius;
They in whose name the life-giving Trinity hath assembled us that we might walk in their footsteps and wear their holy habit;
They gave unto us the promises written in the Gospel—even brotherly love, the perfection of all virtues.
We hold festival in their memorial, we give glory to the Trinity by day and night.
Hail to you, O righteous ones! Hail, ye inspired! Hail, our holy Roman Fathers, Maximus and Domitius.
Pray (to God), our holy Roman Fathers, Maximus and Domitius, that He may forgive (us our sins).

MOSES THE BLACK

The first of the holy martyrs who fulfilled (their course) in the mount of Shihêt was our holy father Abba Moses.
For he was a fighter, terrible against the demons. He stood upon the Rock in the attitude of the cross.
By his great endurance and the pain of the torments he was endued with the unfading crown of martyrdom.
He went up to the heights of the Spirit in the resting places which the Lord had prepared for such as love His holy name.
He bequeathed us his body and his holy cave, that therein we might fulfil his revered commemoration,
Whilst we cry out saying: “God of Abba Moses and those that met their end with him, have mercy on our souls,”
And let us obtain the promises which He prepared for the saints that pleased Him from time everlasting,
because of their love toward Him,
Pray, etc.

ABBA JOHN KAME

The perfume of thy purity hath spread abroad and of thy perseverance unto the end, O our holy father, Abba John Kamê. The sages smelt it and were jealous of thy choice life. For through thy purity and thy

1 Psalmodia, Cairo, 1908, p. 354: “Abba Macarius” (sic) (Curzon ms.).
2 “O our father Macarius, my holy lord” (sic) (Curzon ms.).
4 Supplied from the Psalmodia, Cairo, 1908, pp. 357 f.
THE HISTORY OF THE MONASTERIES

stainless virginity the Lord caused to blossom a vine shading thy bridal chamber, a sign visible and testifying to thy angelic purity.

Thy revered memory and (that of) thy virgin wife, the bride of Christ, is spread abroad throughout all the world.

Therefore came those to thee that seek the Lord, O priest, O shepherd of Christ's flock.

Thou didst teach them monkhood according to the order of the angels, thou didst offer them up, an acceptable sacrifice unto God the Father.

Gifts of honor and crown didst thou receive from Christ the king. There didst thou rejoice with the saints in His kingdom.

Pray, etc.

THE FORTY-NINE MARTYRS, THE ELDERS OF THE DESERT

The holy cross-bearers, athletes of Christ that were slain in our (sic) ? Silnêt by the Barbarians.

They passed their whole life in desert places, girt with Christ's strength against evil spirits.

They cleansed their infirmities both of soul and body by rigorous asceticism and by tears.

They clothed them with the orthodox faith by meditation on the dogmas of the Church's chosen teachers.

Meanwhile (?) they were decked with the unfading crown of martyrdom by their true Ordainer of Conflict, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Pray, etc.
INDEXES
## I. INDEX OF PERSONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'Abbās, son of 'Abdullah Abū'l Bash-shar</td>
<td>337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Abd el 'Aziz</td>
<td>288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Abd el 'Azīz el Jawāri</td>
<td>296 300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Abd el Gallil</td>
<td>415 453</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Abd el Masih, abbot</td>
<td>415 453</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>——, monk</td>
<td>383</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ablatos, v. Ptolemy, disciple of John</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the Hegumen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abraham bar John</td>
<td>442</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abraham, bishop</td>
<td>403</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abraham or Ephraem</td>
<td>340 375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abraham of Kashkar</td>
<td>319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abraham, Metropolitan of Emesa</td>
<td>321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>——, monk</td>
<td>451</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abraham of Phelbes</td>
<td>39 n 232 n 270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>280 280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abraham, prophet</td>
<td>61 64 311 318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abraham, senior</td>
<td>313</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abraham, Tekfrtan monk</td>
<td>310 311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>318 439 440 441 442 462</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abraham and George, disciples of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John the Hegumen</td>
<td>278 281 282 282 284 285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>——, cell of 280</td>
<td>V. also Biebelj,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index II</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abisit, relics of 364</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abū 'Ali Katfāt</td>
<td>366 446</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abū 'Ali Zakariyya</td>
<td>312 ib. n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abū'l Barakāt</td>
<td>27 348 378 394</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abū'l Bedr</td>
<td>353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abū'l Farag el Barmawi, abbot</td>
<td>29 n 415 464</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abū Habib Michael</td>
<td>352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abū Harūdeh, church of, v. Index II</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abū Kama, v. John Kamē</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abūl Khair, prophecy of 380</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abū Makār</td>
<td>80 117 n V. also Macarius the Great</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abū Rufār</td>
<td>344 n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abū Sālih</td>
<td>367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abū Shākir</td>
<td>382</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abū Shenūdeh, v. Shenūdeh the Great</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abū'l Tidur Peter</td>
<td>354</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abū'l Yemen Kuzmān</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acacius of Beroea</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acacius, patriarch of Constantinople</td>
<td>224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achillas, Abba</td>
<td>25 200 202 205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achilleus, revolts of 61 n 467</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adamantius, v. Origen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adelphius 79</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El 'Adīl 381 448</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ado 44</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aelius Gallus</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aelurus, Timothy, patriarch</td>
<td>222 223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Afdal 366 371</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agabus, Palestinian ascetic 98 100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agatho 50 53 n 174 201 212</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agatho, master of Samuel of Kalamūn</td>
<td>252 253 259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agatho the Stylite</td>
<td>278 278 282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agathon 269 ib. n 276 n</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>——, his account of visit of Benjamin I</td>
<td>271 f.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahmed Mohammed ibn el Mudebbir</td>
<td>324 ib. n 404 n 434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahmed ibn Tūlūn</td>
<td>274 n 335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akh-en-Aten</td>
<td>343 n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albanius 31 84 n 88 190</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexander, disciple of Arsenius 163</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexander II, patriarch</td>
<td>258 275 279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>284 288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'All ibn 'Isā ibn el Jarrah</td>
<td>337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'All ibn Suleimān</td>
<td>349 n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amalric 448</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amatas, Amathias</td>
<td>12 15 466</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amélineau, E. 30 32 39</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amen-hotpe IV, v. Akh-en-Aten</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ammōës, v. Amoi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ammonias 181</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ammonathas 82 n</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ammonius, bishop</td>
<td>50 58 74 75 170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>178 181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ammonius, companion of Amoun</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ammonius, disciple of Pambo</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ammonius, hermit</td>
<td>303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ammonius, monk</td>
<td>261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ammonius, riotous monk</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ammonius, scholar</td>
<td>89 n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ammonius the Solitary</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ammonius the Tall or One-eared</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>——, his cell 93 214</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>——, his death 143</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>——, his life 130 f.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>—— and Theophilus 136 f.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>—— mentioned 73 74 75 78 84 n 86 88 91</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>128 134 178 200</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amoi 25 66 n 107 109 158 183 193</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>—— called a &quot;Theban&quot; 189 n</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>—— and his disciple 182 191</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amoun and Antony</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>—— and Cellia 49 f. 94 169 170</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>——, his cell 214</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>——, his character 47</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>——, his death 46</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>—— and his disciple Theodore 47 50 73 130</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>—— founds monastery at Nitria 45</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>—— and the hydrophobic 47</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>——, his marriage and separation 46</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>——, married and ascetic life combined by 48</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>—— mentioned 4 11 19 45 49 n 62 66 73 74 88 94 106 169 189 467</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amoun or Fiamoun</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Amr ibn el 'Asi</td>
<td>268 f. 358 401 405</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anan Ienso</td>
<td>274 321 ib. n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ananias, v. &quot;Three Children&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ananias, Armenian patriarch</td>
<td>365 n 367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anastasias 30 117 n 165 244 245 246</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>247 ib. n 259 262 270 470</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anastasius, patriarch</td>
<td>238</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Anatolius 30
Andréosy, Gen., v. European visitors
Andronicus, silversmith 245 f. 259
262 292 319
Anthemius, emperor 118
Antoninus Pius 44
Antonius, Abba 66 V. also Antony
Antony, his boyhood 13
———, churches dedicated to 407
424
———, community surrounds 14
——— and his disciples 15 52
——— as a hermit 14
——— and Macarius the Great
67 f.
——— and Mount of Nitria 55
———, painting of 195 n 272 n
———, precepts of 16
——— his sister 13
——— mentioned 34 5 9 11 12
13 14 15 16 45 46 47 48 51
69 73 74 88 106 113 119 121
138 169 189 194 202 204
307 405 465 466 467
Anub 151 157 161 192
Anub, S. 406 ib. n
———, monastery of, v. Index II
D'Anville 23 37
Apater 352
Apollinaria, female monk 117 226
——— calls herself Dorotheus 118
Apollinaris, S., chapel dedicated to
444
Apollinarius, prefect and Melkite
patriarch 229 n 237 238 240 ib. n
247 436
Apollo the Herdsman 64 n 82 n 189
Apollonius, monk 173 189
Apollonius of Tyana 6
Arcadius 89 98 n 101 123 140 155
162 163
Ares, monk 201
Arispima, female saint 117 n 470
Aristomachus, governor of Egypt,
231
———, church of, v. Index II
Armenius, monk 159
Arsenius, anchorite 124
——— appointed tutor to two
princes 123
———, his birth 122
———, where buried 163
——— at Canopus 161 163
———, his cell 124 n
———, his chronology 162
———, his clothing 164
——— and his disciples 160 163
164
———, his flight to Scetis 123
———, his initiation 123
———, his penances 124
———, his personal appearance
164
——— retires to Troë 162 f.
——— and story of Maximus and
Dominitius 101 103 406
——— mentioned 32 101 103 110
127 146 n 160 163 180 181
187 190 195 198 203 204 406
425
Arsilius 54 75 88 169 171
Artemius, the magnificus 165 166
Asad ed Din 381, v. also Shirkoh
Elscheisch 288
Asion 55 88 171
Assemani, E. and J. S., v. European
visitors
Asterius, patriarch 236 n
Aterbius, Egyptian monk 126
Attil, bishop of 366
Athanasia, v. Andronicus
Athanasius and asceticism 11
———, book of 215
———, death of 77
———, his exile 73
——— and the Homoeusian
party 73
——— mentioned 13 16 47 49
95 128 130 191 221 272 n
307
Athanasius of Antinoë 159
Athanasius, archpriest 290
Athanasius VI, patriarch 341
Athre 99 102
Augustine, S., on barbarian raids
153
Aurelius 143
Ausonius 122 123
Azarias, n. “Three Children”
El ‘Aziz 340 n 345
Bacchus, monk 391 449
Bahram 317 365 n 366 367 ib. n 448
Bamfu, Abba 143 225 ib. n
Bar Duma, Papa 440
Bar-Hebraeus 346
Bar ‘Idai, abbot 310 311 316 441 462
Bar Sauma 358 447
El Barmawi, v. Abödî Farag
Barni of Tekrit 312 441
Basil the Great 81 n 85
Basilius 223
Basilius, Metropolitan of Tekrit
310
Bates, Oric 153
Bedr el Gemäl 312 356 365 366 447
Bennam, monk 390 450
Benedict, S. 469
Benjamin, Melkite deacon 288
Benjamin I, patriarch, canons of 274
——— consecrates church 271 f.
———, flight of 253 255
———, returns to See 269
——— mentioned 25 96 103 105
229 n 232 240 258 316 362
388
Benjamin II, patriarch, visits monas-
teries 394 f.
——— mentioned 113 n 316 363
369 420 n
Benjamin, priest 244
Benjamin, sanctuary of, v. Index II
Benjamin, solitary 172 203
Benoper, Abba 344 n
Bent-Resh, story of 225
Bessus, monk 333 n 352 353 354 355
365 366 425
Betines, v. Piijmi
Beysbar el Bundukďatî, sultan 25 n
391
Beyoka, priest 244
Bisarion 90 117 n 180 201
Bishō, Abba or Anba, his chronology
160
———, his death 159
———, disciple of Amoi 112
———, etymology of his name 112
———, flight of 157 158
——— founds monastery 113
———, monastery of, v. Index II
———, monastery of Virgin of, v.
Index II
——— and Paul of Tamweh 159
——— = Prósôs 114
———, relics of 364
———, his translation 25 302
——— visited by Ephraem Syrus
114
——— mentioned 66 n 106 111 180
182 n 306 396 471
“Black Dowager” 355
El Bohaireh 358
De la Boullaye le Goux, v. European
visitors
Browne, W. G., v. European visitors
Budge, Sir E. A. W. 310 320
Bûla, S., v. Paul of Tamweh
Butler, Abbot 29 30 35 39 56
Butler, A. J. 317 320
Caïus, patriarch, v. Gaianus
Caligula, v. Gaius
Cassian 11 14 15 150 154 169 180
190 198 208 209 210 213 and
passim
Cephalas, v. Paphnutius
Chael, monk 378 n
Chaeremon 31 34 182
Chaeremon, philosopher 5 6
Champollion 39
Christodulius, patriarch 346 351
——— translation of 357
——— visits Wâdi Habîb 352
Chronius 55 V. also Cronius
Chrysaphius 219
Cleddian 151
INDEX OF PERSONS

Clement of Alexandria 10
Clement XI, pope 422
Clugnet, L. 964 241 247
Colluthus 307
Colobos, v. John the Little
Commodus, emperor 44
Constantine I, abbot 389
Constantine, emperor 10 n 405
Constantius, emperor 45 191
Copres, monk 116 181
Cornelius 300
Cosmas I, patriarch 284 286 n 466
Cosmas II, patriarch 310 323
Cosmas III, patriarch 337
Cronius 15 55 84 n 88 93 141 141 n
157 n 171
Curzon, R., v. European visitors
Cyprian of Beth Magusha 10 319
ib. n
Cyriac or Cyriacus, abbot 316 364 n
408 409 451 452 463
Cyril I, patriarch 146 221 378
Cyril II, patriarch 347 349 350 357
365 370
Cyril III, patriarch 348 387 f. 393
Cyril, S., painting of 272 n
Cyril of Scythopolis 169 213 222
Cyril the Wise 161
Cyrus the Colchian 253 254 255
— consecrated Melkite patriarch
253
— usurps See of Alexandria 255

Dalmius, v. Zollus, patriarch
Damasus, pope 129
Damian, patriarch 96 232 248 253
259 319
— mentioned 238 260 n 320 n
Daniel, archpriest called George 308
Daniel, disciple of Arsenius 122 127
160 162 163 164 195
Daniel, disciple of Paphnutius 122
181
Daniel, Hegumen of Scestis, his birth
241
—, his death 250
—, his fondness for travel 244
—, homicide committed by 242
—, his miraculous powers 243
—, as a monk 242
—, tortured 246
—, mentioned 96 152 179 n 181
227 239 259 261 262 270 275
319
Daniel, Metropolitan of Abyssinia
342
Daniel, monk of Mar Jonah 441
Daniel, the Prophet 9
David ibn Lakkak, v. Cyril III
David, priest 347 349
David the Prophet 80

Demetrius, banishment of 151
Demophilus the Arian 99 n
Didymus of Alexandria 86
Didymus, monk of Cellia 93
Dioneliton, emperor 208 467
Dionysius of Alexandria 11
Dionysius of Antioch 301 310 311
Dios, martyr 165 269 270
—, his body stolen 231
Dioscorus, bishop 75 84 n 89 92 ib. n
93 130 131 134 137 148
—, death of 143
—, excommunicated 142 V.
also Tall Brothers
Dioscorus I, patriarch of Alexandria
219 220 237
Dioscorus II, patriarch 228 n
Dioscorus, S., painting of 272 n
—, relics of 364 n
Dominus, v. Maximus and Domitian
Dorotheus, man of Sakhâ 230 231
Dorotheus the Theban or Hermit
87 129 169 n 190
Dracantius 75 n
Dulas, Abba 90 117 n
Duma Shatir 312 313 446
Dunna, prince of the Homeritae
236
Durand, C., v. European visitors
Eladius 148
Elisée, king of Ethiopia 230 257
Elias 222
Elijah 12
Eluron 74 130 178
Ephraim or Abraham, v. Abraham
Ephraem Syrus, his staff takes root
114 316 420
Epimachus 212
Epimachus of Arwat 277 284
Epime, martyr 208
Epiphanius, bishop of Constantia, v.
of Cyprus
Epiphanius of Cyprus 86 126 127
129 142
Epiphanius Hagiopolites 296
Epiphanius of Salamis, v. of Cyprus
Etheldreda, S., staff of 108 n
Eudaemon 179 191
Eudokia, empress 166
Eudoxia, empress 142
Eugenius, emperor 92 ib. n
Eulogius the Quarryman 242 ib. n
244
Eunapius 319
European visitors to the monasteries:
Androsyos, Gen. 429 455
Assemani, E. 415 422 454 ib. n
—, J. S. 415 426 454 458
De la Boullaye le Gouz 418
Browne, W. G. 429 455
Curzon, R. 454 455 458

Durand, C. 418
Eva, Gabriel 422 454 ib. n
Frescobaldi, Niccolo 402
Granger, Le Sieur 426
Huntington, R. 29 n 415 420 453
454
De Loches, Gilles 418 454
De Maizilet, Benoît 421 n
Von Minutoili 431
Pacho, A. 456
Platt, Miss 432
Prudhoe, Lord 431 455
Sanuto, Marino 390
Sicard, C. 23 363 415 422 f.
Sonnini, C. S. 21 416 426
Von Suchem, Ludolf 400
Tattam, H. 432 454 456 458
Tischendorf, C. 434 456
Wansleben, J. M. 407 419 420
Wilkinson, Sir Gardiner 433
Eusebius the Tall 8 9 84 n 93 130
131 134 137 142 145 V. also Tall
Brothers
Eustathius, deacon 298
Eustochium 54 87
Euthymius 84 n 93 130 131 135
137 142 145 179 n V. also Tall
Brothers
Eutropius 78 129
Eutyches and his heresy 219 220
Eutychius, Melkite historian 123
223 236 ib. n
Euzouls 77 80
Eva, Gabriel, v. European visitors
Evagrius the augustalis 89
Evagrius, Ponticus 85
— and bishopric 86
—, his cell 258
—, date of his death 85
— and Melania 85
— and Origenist party 86
— and Palladius 88
— mentioned 18 30 40 84 ib. n
87 91 92 93 105 131 134
157 n 169 176 189 190 202
203 258
Evagrius Scholasticus 223
Ezekiel, disciple of Paul of Tamweh
159

Faramâ, bishop of 277
Firmus, revolt of 151
Flavian of Antioch 129
Flavian of Constantinople 219
Forty Martyrs of Basta 364 n
Forty-nine Martyrs, martyrdom of
164 f.
—, relics of 231 364
—, translation of 206 f. 292
— mentioned 32 38 187
223 225 229 270 361
362 470 472

477
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Page Numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frescobaldi, Niccolo, v. European visitors</td>
<td>478</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fronto, v. Frontionius</td>
<td>43 f.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frontionius</td>
<td>45 f.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>——— existing of doubtful 45</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>——— Nitria 44</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gabriel, bishop of Ahnassie</td>
<td>394 n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gabriel ibn Tarik, v. Gabriel II</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gabriel, monk 45</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gabriel I, patriarch 42</td>
<td>336 337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gabriel II, patriarch</td>
<td>339 368 373</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>——— 374 378</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gabriel III, patriarch 391 393</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gabriel VII, patriarch 409</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaianus, patriarch 231 n 237</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaius, emperor 9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George, archbishop 89 n</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George, two disciples of Keménamed</td>
<td>307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George, hegumen 307 398</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George, martyr 345</td>
<td>357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George, Metropolitan of Abyssinia 371</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George, monk, becomes Cyril II 357</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George, Nubian king 368 n</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George, son of Barni 312 441</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George, Syrian priest 415 453</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George, v. Abraham and George</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garasimus, laura of, v. Index II</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Granger, Le Sieur, v. European visitors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gratian, emperor 123</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gregory III Bahlavouni 365 n</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gregory Behnam, bishop 314 317 n</td>
<td>415</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gregory of Nazianzen 85 99 n</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gregory, nephew of Gregory II Vahram 365 n</td>
<td>367 n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gregory II Vahram, patriarch 356</td>
<td>357 365 367 n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guest, A. R. 29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guis, M. 23</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Von Gutschmid, A.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Habbib 313 315 317</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Habbib ibn Mohammed 29 274 404</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Habbib ibn Mu'kil es Suy-uri el Mughfıl 274 ib. n</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Háfiz, caliph 366 367 377</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hafs ibn el Walid, governor 290 n</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hagius 75</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Hákem 42 312 341 343 344 345 356</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halus, monk 377 387</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harmais 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harmanus, Abba, monastery of, v. Index II</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helladius 89 n</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hephæstion 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heraclides 67 75</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heraclius, emperor 254</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hero of Alexandria and Cellia 31 86</td>
<td>188 179 192 200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hieracas, v. Hierax</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hierax 10 84 n 141</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>——— heresy of 115 f.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hierax, schoolmaster 146</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hierax the younger 84 n 141 145</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hilaria, daughter of Zenod 224 f. 227</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>——— church dedicated to? 424 n</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>——— known as Hilarion the Eunuch 225</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>——— tomb of 364</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>——— mentioned 117 n 165 241 259 270</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hilarion, v. Hilaria</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hippolytus 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hones 316</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honorius, pope 254</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honorius, prince 89 98 n 101 123 140 162</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hornizid, Rabban 320 ib. n</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horneman 36 n</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hulagu 493 n</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huntington, R., v. European visitors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypatia, murder of 147</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibn Assal 348</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibn el Muddebin, v. Ahmed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibn Sirawin 385 386</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibn Tahir 310</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibn et Tawil 312</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ignatius XI, patriarch of Antioch 408 451</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immanuel, son of Abdullad 337</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irenaeus, Abba 250</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isaac, Abba, v. Isaac of Cellia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isaac, called Chrysogonus 75</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isaac of Cellia, disciple of Cronius 25 26 27 55 134 141 141 ib. n 144 145 146 148 171 175 ib. n 178 191 197 272</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>——— also a disciple of Theodore of Pherman 171</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isaac, disciple of Macarius 93 134</td>
<td>141 172 182 n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isaac of Mar Jonah 441</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isaac of Nineveh 451</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isaac, patriarch 283 284 466</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isaac the Priest, v. Isaac of Cellia 95 112 172 n 183 184 185 198 200 202 203</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isaac, son of Abraham 64</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isaac the Theban 212</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isaas, v. El ’Aziz</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isaias of Scetis, v. Isaias of Scetis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isaias of Scetis 95 112 157 n 183 184 185 198 200 202 203 Isaias and Paæsius 189 211</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ischyron 39</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isidorus the Confessor 75 87</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isidorus the Hospitaller 58 73 87</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isidorus the Hospitaller 158 159 160 161</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isidorus the Hospitaller quilars with Theophilus 125 f. Isidorus of Pelusium 146</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isidorus the Priest 34 37 54 58 n 76 98 101 102 106 121 129 154 n 155 180</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>——— called priest of the anchorets 58 178</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>——— mentioned 67 77 79</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jablonski 165</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacob, senior 313</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacob, Tekritan monk 310 440</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jambres, wizard 57</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James, Abba 194 222</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James, bishop of Misr 339</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James, hegumen of Baramus 351 353</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James, monk 312</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James, patriarch 239 297 298 299 300 310</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James the Persian, relic of 364 ib. n</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jannes, wizard 57</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeremiah, Prophet 113</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeremia, monastery of, v. Index II</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerome, S., and Oriegenist controversy 126 129</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>——— visits Mount of Nitria 86</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>——— mentioned 12 40 78 82 172 321 n and pasmin</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John XII of Antioch 358 n</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John of Antioch, IX century 310</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John of Antioch, XI century, bishop of Jerusalem 358</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John of Antioch, XI century 448</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John the Baptist 12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John bar Sila, v. Ignatius XI</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John the basket-maker, leader of the Forty-nine 165 231 261 270</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John of Beth Tatiana 148</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John, bishop of Borlos 249 275</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John, bishop of Damascus 448</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John, bishop of Jerusalem 126 129</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John, bishop of Sâ 258 289 318</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Cassian, v. Cassian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John the Cenobite 191 205 213</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Chrysostom, S. 88 129 142 220</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John of Cilicia 258</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John of Cricarium 442</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Climacus, writer 258 260 n</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Colobos, v. John the Little</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John the Cyprian, abbot 409</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John of Damascus 234</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John, deacon 355</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John, disciple of Macarius 120 ib. n</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John of Ephesus 320 n</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John George of Saxony 317</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John the Hegumen, his captivity 255 275 276</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>——— his death 276</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>——— his disciples 275–286</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INDEX OF PERSONS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John the Hegumen, made hegumen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>276</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— mentioned 30 n 99 n 106 n 232</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>255 256 n 259 271 287 302</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John the Hermit 313</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Kamé, called the Black 301</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— his death 308</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— his disciples 307</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— his marriage 306</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— his monastery 306 308</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— priesthood of 307</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— as a reclus 306</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— relics of 364 ib. n</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— his rule 307</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— his youth 305 f.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— mentioned 317 n 471</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John of Kashkar 319</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John ibn Kidrān, cell of 380</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John the Little, anchoret 109 110</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— and Arsenius 123</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— authorities for life of 107</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— body of 424</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— his boyish ideal 107</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— his chronology 110 158</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— church of Holy Abba, v. Index II</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— his death 158</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— disciple of Amoi 107 110 182</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— his flight 157 f.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— as Hegumen of Scetis 150 179</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— known as John Colobos 106</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— monastery of, v. Index II</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— relic of 364 ib. n</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— from the Thebaid 109 183 n</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— translation of 294–296</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— and “Tree of Obedience” 408</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— mentioned 27 31 33 61 66 n 96</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>112 122 161 184 192 193 195</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>199 202 211 213 306 316 471</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John of Lycopolis 86 88 90 92 108</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ib. n 176 191</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John, Metropolitan of Abyssinia 303</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John, monk of Daker Kufra 340</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John, monk of Mar Simeon 403 407</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Moschus visits Egypt 249</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— mentioned 89 n 96 97 152</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>242 258 319 and passim</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John of Nikiu, deceased 288</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— visitor 287</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— mentioned 146 166 237 285</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and passim</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John I, patriarch 226</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John II, patriarch 283 286 n</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John IV, patriarch 291 294 295</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John V, patriarch 378 380 381</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John VI, patriarch 347 362 381</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— burial instructions of 384 389</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John VIII, patriarch 394</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John XIII, patriarch 407 409</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John of Petra 258 ib. n 261</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John, renegade monk 381 382</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Rufus of Maıuma 148</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John of Samannūd 292</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John, son of Abdullāh 337</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John, son of Abī 442</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John, son of Sanhaṭ 372</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John, steward 185</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Talaiā 224</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John of the Thebaid, v. John the Little</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnādah, son of Rechaḥ 9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnah or Junan, monastery of, v.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index II</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jonas the Gardener 196</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jonas, priest 344</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph, Abba 373</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph, Archon of Elmi 202</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph the Deacon on the persecution of El Hākem 345</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph of Hārran 442</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph, patriarch 239 300</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph of Pelusium 196</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph Rabban 389</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph, S., church of, v. Index II</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph, senior 313</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph, Syrian saint 368 373</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph, Tekfrān monk 311 440 441</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julian, author of a Tomarion 229</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ib. n</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julian, bishop of Halicarnassus 228</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julian, emperor 82 n</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julietta, relic of 364 n</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julius of Aফṣās (Afṣās) 80 n</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justin I, emperor 236 242 242 247</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>250 n 287</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kamē, S., v. John Kamē</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Kāmil 382 383 384 n 385 386</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karo, Abba 33 34 192</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Kāsim 277 290</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khel, v. Michael II</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khumaraweih 335 336</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kurreh, emir 289</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leo, emperor 222</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leo, monk 152</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leo, Tome of, v. Index III</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leontius of Byzantium 234</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberius 272 n</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Little Strangers,” the 100 102 106</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>179 184 186 190 191 195 199 201 n</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>203 205 206 209 n 210 n 214</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. also Maximus and Domitius</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De Loches, Gilles, v. European</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>visitors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longinus, bishop 320 n</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longinus, superior of monastery of El Zajār 221</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lot, Abba 127</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucius, Arian archbishop 40 77</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— exiles monks 79 131</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— persecution of 61 77 f. 95</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— recalls the Macarī from exile 80</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucius, Dr. 8 9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macarī, the 77 78 79 80 85 87 90 91</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>182 n 268 n 409</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— relics of 364 395 397 424</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macarius of Alexandria, also named</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politicus 55 61 68</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— cells of 57 90 214</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— character of 58</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— death of 91</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— and his disciple Evagrius 85</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— and his disciple Paphnutius 56 58</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— excommunicated by Macarius the Great 90 179</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— excommunicates two brethren 90</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— exiled 79</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— miracles of 58 91</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>—, part author of monastic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rules 91 469</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>—, personal appearance 91</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>—, superior of Celacia 91</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>—, a tradesman 56 189</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>—, various dates of death 91</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— mentioned 18 n 32 33 55</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61 ib. n 65 66 n 67 n 70 n</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76 92 93 94 148 170 175 n</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>176 205 343 n 364 405 466</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macarius, bishop of Samannūd 380</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macarius, bishop of Tŏdō 343 n 364</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>470</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macarius, bishop of Upper Menēf 343</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macarius, disciple of Bessus 354</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macarius the Great, also named the</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egyptian 68</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>—, his birth 62</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>—, a camel driver 64 189</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>—, his cell 105</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>—, his character 70</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>—, church of, v. Index II</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>—, his death 118 f.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>—, disciple of Antony 67</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— and his disciple John 120</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— excommunicates Macarius</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of Alexandria 90 179</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— falsely accused 63</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>—, his father 61</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>—, his first community 65</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— founds monastery 104 f.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— and heresy of Hierax 115</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>116 117</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>—, Life of 465–468</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>—, his literary works 72 185</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— and “Little Strangers” 102 203 204 205</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>—, his marriage 62</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— on marriage 71</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— and Maximus and Domi-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tius 99</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INDEX OF PERSONS

Nebuchadnezzar and the "Three Children" 111
Nectarius, bishop of Constantinople 85 99 n 129
Nestorius 152 153 n 161 164 n
Nicephorus 123
Notker 44

Olympius, philosopher 89
'Omar ibn 'Abd el 'Aziz, caliph 290
Onesimus 319
Onuphrius, church of, v. Index II
Or, Abba 50 52 54 76 84
Orestes, prefect of Alexandria 146
147 221
Origen, opponent of Anthropomorphism 125
—, his unorthodox tenets 126
—, his works 126 127 137 143
—, mentioned 10
Origenes 75 76 88 93 173 177
Orosius 78 82
Othman, caliph 274 404
Oxyrhynchus, bishop of 151

Pacho, A., v. European visitors
Pachomius 3 4 45 56 119 127 172
272 n
—, monastery of, v. Index II
Paësia 187
Paësius, anchoret 95 112
Paësius, brother of Isaias 189 211
Paësius, various persons named 112
ib. n
Paphnutius, v. Paphnutius
Palestine, bishop of 126 142
Palhâm, v. El Hákem
Palladius, bishop of Heliopolis 88
—, and monasteries of Mount of Nitria 87 f.
—, as a monk 87
—, retires to desert 88
—, retires to Palestine 88
—, translated to See of Asmina 88
—, mentioned 15 18 19 20 23
24 25 30 31 34 40 46 51
52 58 61 65 n 73 75 84 n
86 91 128 151 154 160 172
176 189 190 201 211 321 n
and passim

Pambo, Abba 53
—, death of 76
—, on monastic clothes 54 197
—, ordained priest 53
—, and his steward Origenes 76
173 177
—, mentioned 18 47 52 66 ib. n
67 73 74 77 79 ib. n 84 99
102 105 129 130 145 148
157 n 170 190

Pammo 259 V. also Bamu
Pammy of Antinoë 47
Pamo, v. Pambo
Paphnutius, also named Cephalas
121
—, his attitude to wine 203
—, and his disciple Daniel 122
—, falsely accused of theft
126 208 n 215
—, his nickname 121
and paschal letter 133
—, succeeds Macarius 179
—, mentioned 34 75 91
100 101 150 ib. n 182
199 469
Paphnutius, disciple of Macarius of Alexandria 19
56 68 ib. n 176
Paphnutius the Exile 79 95 n
Paphnutius the Scitoiete 95 ib. n
Paternuctius 194
Paul, anchoret of Scetis 95 112
Paul, bishop of Hamat 408
Paul, disciple of Or 52
Paul, first anchoret 11
12 45
Paul, Melkite patriarch 237 240 n
Paul of Pherece 36
Paul, S. 80 126 272 n
—, basilica of 130
Paul the Simple 15
189 199 n 204
209 n
Paul of Tamweh 159 302 364 471
Paul the Theban 12
Paul of Tinnis 238
Paula, Roman lady 40 86 126
—, her husband Toxotius 86
Paulus 78
Peirec 418
Pelusium, priest of 213
Peretele 123
Pesoës, v. Bishoi
Peyrus 112
Peter, archbishop of Alexandria
135
Peter, bishop of Behnesa 378 n
Peter, bishop of Tarnut 286 n
Peter the Iberian 157 ib. n 167
Peter Moungus 223 224 226 227
Peter II, patriarch 77
Peter IV, patriarch 238 247 320 n
Peter V, patriarch 394 n 397
Peter the Piontie 212
Peter, reader 147
Peter, S. 272 126 n
—, basilica of 130
Petrie, Sir Flinders 22 36 n
Petubastes 55 88 171
Philip the Evangelist 10
Philo 7 8
Philostorgius 151
Philostatus 6

Philoteos, patriarch 340 f. 362
—, cell of, v. Dependent cells, Index II
Phoas, monk 221 n 222
Photinus 133
Piamoun, cave of 231 232
—, place of 39
—, rock of 470
—, tower of 270
Phior, v. Pior
Pijjini, ascetic 25 100 n 161 n 205
Pior 51 f. 54 66 n 74 84 99 102
130 141 n 148 170 171 177 n 178
192
Pisiiimus 79
Pithou, Abba 66 n 107
Platt, Miss, v. European visitors
Pliny 22
Poemen 54 157 161 192 198 200 203
210 261
Poemen, archdeacon 359
Politicus, v. Macarius of Alexandria
Polyarpex quoted 234
Porphyry 5
Porphyry of Gaza 95 ib. n 190 191
193
Posidonius 88
Postumian 108
Potamon 167 220 221 n
Proterius 148 167 222
—, murder of 220 237
Prudhoe, Lord, v. European visitors
"Pschoi" 28 65 n 98 ib. n 101 112 n
Psalos, anchoret 95 112
Ptolemy, disciple of John the Hegumen 285
Ptolemy, geographer 35 60
Ptolemy, hermit 38 182
Ptolemy the károcos 5
Ptolemy of Scetis, abandons monastic life 192
Pulcheria, sister of Theodosius II
165 220

Quatremère, E. 27 28 37 38 39

Rabanus 44
Renaudot, E. 348
Rijs 341
Romanus, Abba 101 124
"Roman Fathers," v. Maximus and Domitian
Romanus, Count of Egypt 89
Rudvwän 366 367
Rufinus and Arian persecution 77 f.
—, census of monks by 84
—, and Mount of Nitria 76 f.
—, and Origenist controversy 126
—, mentioned 18 20 40 75 126
and passim
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDEX OF PERSONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Saba</strong> 313</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Saladin</strong> 382 448</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Saliba, abbot</strong> 313 445 462</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Saliba, son of Abdullah</strong> 337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Salmán 380</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Samuel, the Hermit</strong> 363 371</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Samuel of Kalamün</strong> 152 194 227 241 247 252 253 255 275 276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Samuel the Prophet</strong> 119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sanhúhit, bishop of Missir</strong> 359 ib. n 365 n 372</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sanuto, Marino, v. European visitors</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sarapion, bishop of Thmuis</strong> 61 119 146 n 465 466 467 469</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sarapion the Great</strong> 55 75 88 91 171 182 n 469</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sarapion the Wise</strong> 146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sarapion, various persons named</strong> 146 n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Sarapion&quot; 14 61 64 67 98 118 119 310 465 f.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Es Sarf 295</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Selim, sultan 407</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sem'an ibn Kallal, monk</strong> 333 n 386 ib. n 387</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Senouphi 191</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Serapis 89 90 n</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Serenus 202</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sergius of Constantinople</strong> 254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Severus, abbot, v. Cyriac</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Severus of Ashmunén</strong> 237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Severus, patriarch 228 230 231</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Severus, S., relics of</strong> 364 ib. n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sha'bán 401</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shahid, martyr 341 n</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shalman, monk 310 441</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sharut, archdeacon 357</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sháwar 381 448</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shenúdeh, disciple of John Kamé 307</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shenúdeh the Great 161 ib. n 188</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>——, church or sanctuary of, v. Index II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shenúdeh, ecumenus 301 333</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shenúdeh I, patriarch 152 239 303 309 323 325 f. 329 331</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>——, fortifies monastery of S. Macarius 327 f.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shenúdeh II, patriarch 345 347 349 351 360 362</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shénófa, martyr 381 ib. n</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shirkhâb 381 448</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sicard, C., v. European visitors</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Silvanus 181 182 183</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Simeon bar Cyriacus 312</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Simeon the Stylite 281</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Simon, monk 313</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Simon I, patriarch 284 285 288 320 n</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Simon II, patriarch 300</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sinuthius, S., v. Shenúdeh</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sircius of Rome 127</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sisinnius 143</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sisoes, Abba 21 n 52 66 72 74 95 184 203 212 215</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>——, Laura of, v. Index II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Socrates 46 48 89 134 and passim</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Solomon, monk 380</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sonnini, C. S., v. European visitors</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sopater 127</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sophronius 254</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sozomen 25 77 136 and passim</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stauros, Apa, monk 368</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stephanos, Papa 307</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strabo 6 19 22</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Von Suchem, Ludolf, v. European visitors</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sulpicius Severus 108 137 142</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Surus, perhaps the same as Pesurys 112 ib. n</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tall Brothers, the 79 86 130 133 136 137 138 142 150 214 215 V. also Ammonius</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tamerlane 450</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tatian, prefect of Egypt 81</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tattam, H., v. European visitors</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teroti, Abba 282 306</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>——, cell of 362</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theodora, empress 244 245 250</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theodore, abbot 310 320 ib. n</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theodore of Alexandria 250 261</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theodore, disciple of Amoun 47 48 50 52 73 130</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theodore, miscreant monk 329</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theodore, patriarch 284</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theodore, patriarch of Antiocch 321</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theodore of Pherme 37 157 171 184 192 195 205 266 215</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theodore, S. 336</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theodore of Studium 122 n</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theodore of Tabennesi 47 50 74</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theodore, Tekritan monk 311 440 441</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theodosius, Abba 271</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theodosius I, emperor 89 92 99 101 123 129 151 191 231 238</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theodosius II, emperor 164 n 165 166</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theodosius the Great King 245 n</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theodosius I, patriarch 231 ib. n 237 270 n</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theodosius II, patriarch 394</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theodosius, Priest of the Great Cell 362</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theognis, Abba 223</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theon the Mathematician 147</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theonas 196</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theopemptus, monk 70 105 200 201</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theophanius, patriarch 339</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theophilus, archbishop of Alexandria, his attitude to Origienism 126 127 129</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>——, calls a synod 139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theophilus, death of 146</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>——, denounces Anthropomorphism 132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>——, destroys Sarapeum 89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>——, excommunicates the Tall Brothers 139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>——, hostile to John Chrysostom 129 142 220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>——, invades Mount of Nitria 140 f.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>——, maltreats Ammonius 137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>——, his paschal letter 132 f.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>——, his passion for building 135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>——, quarrels with Isidorus 135 f.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>——, reconciled to monks 143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>——, succeeded by his nephew Cyril 146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>——, mentioned 40 53 86 90 n 93 106 111 116 126 128 130 131 134 180 191 375 378**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theoktos 299 306</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Thévenot 415 417 418 f.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Thomas 244 262 ib. n 364 n</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Thomas of Damascus, priest 408</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Thomas of Mârga 116 319 ib. n 321 n</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Thomas, S., body of 364</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Thomas of Shenata 384 n</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Three Children,” the 111 157 307 n 378 398**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tib, merchant 312 386 n</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tichô, deacon 282</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tillmont 51 52 123 127</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Timothy Aelurus 148 222 223 322 ib. n</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Timothy, archdeacon of Alexandria 92</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Timothy III, patriarch 228 236 242 247 257</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Timothy the Poor, archbishop of Alexandria 131 132 163</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Timûr, v. Tamerlane</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tischendorf, C., v. European visitors</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Toxotius 86</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Uenofer, Abba, church of, v. Index II</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Usameh 289</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Usardus 44</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Valens, emperor 77 79 80 81 82 384</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Valens, a monk 59 176</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Valentinian I, emperor 99 101 103</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Valentinian, father of Maximus and Domitian 81 82 98</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>De Vendome, Agathange 418</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Victor Tununensis 240</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Virgin Mary 60 339</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INDEX OF PERSONS

Virgin Mary, monasteries dedicated to, v. Theotokos monasteries, Index III, and Monasteries, Index II
———, picture of 435 ib. n

El Wâdih 341
El Waitd 289
Wansleben, J. M., v. European visitors
Weingarten, H. 4
Wilkinson, Sir Gardiner, v. European visitors

Yahye 445
Yahye, son of Zachariah 346

Yakdra bar Abbas 441
Yakdra bar Sahlun 445
Yâ’kûb, v. James, patriarch
Yâ’kûbî 26 n
Yanis 366
El Yazûri 446
Yeshua, abbot 389 n 449 463
Yeshua of Hisn Zaid 446
Yezld II, caliph 290
Yezld, friend of El Asbagh 288
Yuhanna, scribe 394 n
Yûntab, bishop of Fellis 428 n
Yûsâb, v. Joseph, patriarch

Zaccheus, Mar 313
Zachariah 346

Zacharias, Abba 192
Zacharias, bishop of Sais 277 282
283 362
Zacharias, bishop of Sakhâ 60 n 61
107 285
Zacharias, patriarch 42 343 344
Zacharias, son of Kario 33 192
Zakhe 448
Zeno, emperor, endows Scetis 225
226 227
———, his Henoticon 224
——— mentioned 223 236 269 358
401 407 n 436
Zeno the Prince, relic of 364
Zoilus, disciple of Arsenius 163
Zoilus, patriarch 237 240 ib. n
II. INDEX OF PLACES

Abbā Mēnā 26 n
Abū Mina, v. Abbā Mēnā
Abū Nishābeh 397 398 423 n
Abusir Bana 358
Adarī, cell at 363 371
Aelia = Jerusalem 140
El Ahnāsiyeh 358
Akbahah 391
Akfahs (Aklās) monastery at 359 n
Alexandria 18 20 23 24 25 n 40 f.
86 92 123 129 243 254
296 300 329 339 350 353
356 405
———, Church of 77 79
———, Church of, and election
of patriarchs 347 f. 371
373
———, disturbances in 137 147
———, Jews driven from 147
———, patriarchal seat
removed from 238
———, patriarchal seat
returned to 287 350
———, See of, subordinated to
Constantinople 220
———, vacancy of See of 384
385
Anaballous or Anabīlūs 34 ib. n 65
Ansinā, v. Antinoē
Antinoē 88 114 ib. n 158 159 160 302
Antinus 114
Antioch 80 86
Apamea 250
Apelites 39
Arbat, diocese of 99 n
Ascalon 100
El Ashmunēn 60
El Askt = Scetis 27 32 164 n 387
404
Aspuna, See of 88
Assiūt 159 V. also Lycopolis
Aswān 88 296
‘Auzīl, v. Dependent cells
El Azhar 363
Babylon 92
Bacchis 35
Bagdad 325 337 338 340 403 n
443
Bahr bila Ma, v. Waterless River
Bahr el malame, v. Waterless River
Bahrlyeh, oasis of 35 n 153 n
Balance of the Hearts 28 60 404
Bamhā 283 n
El Baramūs, v. Monasteries
Barhīnī, v. Barṣīnī
Barma 415
Barīng, v. El Barnūgī
———, mountain of, v. Gebel Bar-
nūg
El Barnūgī 22 23 24
Barṣīnī, cell of, v. Dependent cells
El Batānūn 270 n
Bault 113 n 241
Behesē, v. Oxyrhynchus
Behūt, v. Pehōut
Beni Suēf 315 n
Berlin, ms. at 319 457
Berma, v. Barma
Beth Aḥbe 274 n
Bethlehem 86
Bigēl 279 n 280 V. also Bījebīl
Bīhima-absit, cell, v. Dependent cells
Bījebīl, cell, v. Dependent cells
Bījīl, v. Bījebīl
Bikha Iyēsūs 60
El Bikhārūbim 398
Bilbaṣ 290
Bīltaus, cell, v. Dependent cells
El Bībirhos, cell, v. Dependent cells
Birket el Adīreh or Lake of the
Monasteries 269 406
Bishṭīsh, cell, v. Bījebīl
Bīshē, v. under Monasteries
El Bīyādes 397 398
El Bohaireh 296 405
British Museum, ms. at 316 456
457 458
El Buhira, v. El Bohaireh
Būlāk 418 422
Buliyanā 323 347
Cairo 158 312 418 V. also Misr
———, capital transferred to 41
———, effect of Black Death on 401
———, ms. at 362 457
Calamus, desert 135 n
Callinice 312
Cambridge, Syrian ms. at 408 ib. n
Canopus of Alexandria 122 161 162
163 223
Cappadocia 44 190
Castle of the Maidens, v. Kasr el
Banāt
———, Women's, v. Kasr el Banāt
Cell at Adarī 363 371
—— of the Council 395
——, Great 292 V. also Dinshthīr
under Dependent cells
—— of John ibn Kidrān 380
—— of the Patriarchs 350
—— of Philotheos, v. Biltaus under
Dependent cells
—— of Sanjar 371 ib. n
Cellia, anchoritic character of 169
——, Anthropomorphic strife at
125
—— in Byzantine period 257 f.
—— condensed into a laura 222
——, description of 93
——, foreign monks and Hellenic
culture 84 128 190
——, foundation of 50
—— identified with El Muna 25 f.
——, last mention of 258
——, Monophysite schism at 222 f.
——, nomenclature of 24
——, organization of 175–178
——, position of 24
——, relation to Mount Nitria
37 169 175
——, single church at 177
——, two churches at 222 223
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place Name</th>
<th>Page Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cellia mentioned</td>
<td>49, 57, 76, 84, 85, 86, 191, 194, 197, 198, 221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chalcedon, Council of</td>
<td>219, 220, 221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chios</td>
<td>364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Churches:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexandria</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. Anthony</td>
<td>424</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aristomachus</td>
<td>231, 232, 233, 235, 270, 271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baramūs</td>
<td>99, 101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caesarium</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elias</td>
<td>363</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father-Disciples</td>
<td>301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isidorus</td>
<td>103, 272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. John the Little</td>
<td>359</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. John in Monastery of S. Macarius</td>
<td>423</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. Joseph</td>
<td>238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. Macarius built</td>
<td>269, 271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. Macarius, a second</td>
<td>343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. Mark, Alexandria</td>
<td>375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. Marmarotous</td>
<td>429</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maruta</td>
<td>315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. Menas</td>
<td>291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. Menas of Maryūt</td>
<td>327</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. Mercurius</td>
<td>341, 394, 402</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misr</td>
<td>348, 349, 388, 389, 394</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Mo'allakeh</td>
<td>394, 396</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onuphrius, v. Uenofer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. Onuphrius in Monastery of S. Macarius</td>
<td>344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pure Lady Mary</td>
<td>272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in Scissis</td>
<td>34, 61, 229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. Sergius</td>
<td>284, 381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. Severus</td>
<td>323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abū Shenudeh in Misr</td>
<td>395</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. Shenudeh in Monastery of S. Macarius</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abba Uenofer, in Pathanon</td>
<td>270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. Victor</td>
<td>424</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Virgin</td>
<td>424</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ez Zuhri</td>
<td>381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cinarond</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climax</td>
<td>34, 38, 182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clysmia</td>
<td>158, 294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coenobium of Abba Theognius</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comas</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constantinople, Council of</td>
<td>220, 240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>————, Sec of 220</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>————, Synod of 85, 92</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>————, mentioned 142f. 225</td>
<td>242, 244, 356</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cronos, temple of 89</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyprus</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dakter Kufra, v. Dependent cells</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dakhleh, oasis</td>
<td>15, 152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dakhnūneh, cell, v. Dependent cells</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Damanūr</td>
<td>18, 21, 22, 23, 25 n 140, 352, 358, 363</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>————, cell, v. Dependent cells</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Damascus</td>
<td>345, 381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>————, sack of 403 n</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Damirēn</td>
<td>358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danabeh, cell, v. Dependent cells</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dastagerd</td>
<td>278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dayr Surūnī</td>
<td>316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. also Syrian Monastery</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delta</td>
<td>19, 21, 22, 24, 34, 36, 37, 40, 41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependent cells:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Auzāl</td>
<td>363, 396</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barshīl</td>
<td>363, 395</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bihim-abyit</td>
<td>361</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bījebl</td>
<td>277, 280, 281, 362, 395</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biltaus</td>
<td>363, 397, 398</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Birbirhou</td>
<td>362, 381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daker Kufra</td>
<td>340, 362</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dakhnūneh</td>
<td>363, 397, 398</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Damanūr</td>
<td>362</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danabeh</td>
<td>347, 362</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Damanūbāb</td>
<td>339, 362, 395, 396</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dinīshṭīrī</td>
<td>282, 362, 380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pehdūr</td>
<td>363, 368, 396, 399</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sakīk</td>
<td>362, 383</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Sēḍīr</td>
<td>363, 395, 396</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terōtī</td>
<td>362</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dēr el Abiād (Monastery of Bishōp)</td>
<td>426</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— Anba Būla, v. Monastery of Paul the Hermit</td>
<td>12 n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— el Bahri</td>
<td>57 n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— el Baramūs, v. Monastery of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— Abū Hennys, v. Monastery of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— S. John</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— Abū Makār, v. Monastery of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— S. Macarius</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— el Memmūn, v. Pispir</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— Bū Mīna</td>
<td>26 n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— Abba Mūsa, v. Monastery of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— Moses</td>
<td>304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— Mūt, v. Monastery of Abba</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— Harmanus 98 n</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— er Rūm, v. Monastery of Baramūs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— es Sūrānī, v. Syrian Monastery</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— el Syādet, v. Monastery of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— Virgin of Baramūs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— V. also Monasteries</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deranba, cell, v. Deranabābā</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deranabābā, v. Dependent cells</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desert of Abū Makār or Saint</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macarius 340, 394</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. also Eastern Desert and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libyan Desert</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimru</td>
<td>352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dinīshṭīrī, cell, v. Dependent cells</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dioecesarea, district 79, 95, 131</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Djebel el Masquē</td>
<td>419</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dris, v. Et Tris</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Desert</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edessa</td>
<td>114, 364, 443</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt = Delta, q.v.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elmi</td>
<td>120, 468</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enaton</td>
<td>149, 221, 225, 228, 238, 239 n 247, 248, 249 n 257, 288, 298, 320 n 351</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ephesus</td>
<td>161, 219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Éskēte</td>
<td>27, V. also Scotis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farafra, oasis of</td>
<td>35 n 153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faramā</td>
<td>296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fayyūm, the</td>
<td>152, 270, 276, 345, 404, 405</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four Laurae</td>
<td>96, 97, 259, 261, 303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Four Monasteries,&quot; the</td>
<td>96, 97, 115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— 232, 233, 249, 299, 303, 318, 320, 394, 417</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fustat</td>
<td>25 n 296 n 312, 313</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gabala</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Gaiif</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Galatia</td>
<td>88, 190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gangra</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gara</td>
<td>36 n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaza</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gazarta</td>
<td>371 n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gebel Barnūg</td>
<td>22, 25, 29, 258, 272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. also Nitria</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gebrāwī</td>
<td>113 n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>en Natrun</td>
<td>32, 60, 114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Gezrēf</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garbhīye</td>
<td>366, 386</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghūrāl, cell, v. 'Auzāl under Dependent cells</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gīzeh</td>
<td>21 n 25 n 255, 283 n 290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Granaries of Joseph</td>
<td>296, 399</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gynaecopolis</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamāmāt</td>
<td>391</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helenopolis</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heliopolis</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hermopolis, Magna</td>
<td>244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— Parva, v. Damanūr</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hībis, oasis of</td>
<td>152, 164 n, V. also Khārgeh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hill of the Eaglestones</td>
<td>37, 419</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— of the Princes</td>
<td>34, 38, 386</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hills, Mokattam</td>
<td>346</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INDEX OF PLACES

Mesopotamia 338
Metras, monastery of, v. Monasteries
Milan, Syriac codices at 417
Misr, Church of 29 296 347 353 396
401
—, Church of, its elevation 388
389
— and patriarchal elections 347
—, See of 158 355 357 358 359
—, Synod at 340
—, V. also Cairo
Mitzán el Kuliub, v. Wádi Habib
Moeses, lake 33
Mokattam Hills 346
Momemphis 22
Monasteries:
Abyssinian 363 365 368f. 396 399
400 403 f.
Akfahs (Akfas) 359 n
S. Antony 284 285 313 n 389 390
S. Anub 369 398 400 406 407
El ‘Arabeh 67 399 405
Armenian 366 f. 398 399 400 406
407
Athanasius 159 n
Baramús (Maximus and Dominus), church built 99
——, foundation of 98 f.
——, the name 97 98 101
103 f. n
——, restored 303 304 391
—, succeeds the headship 417
—, mentioned 23 25 30 32
34 35 38 96 231 n 232
272 279 n 300 n 333 339
351 360 361 364 379 380
395 406 417 419 420 421
425 427 431 435
Bishóü, called the White 409 426
——, founded 113 f.
——, rebuilt 269
——, restored 302 396
——, mentioned 29 n 96 97 233
300 n 316 320 333 339
360 361 363 364 367 n
379 395 396 400 406 418
419 420 421 425 426 432
435
El Bústan 367
Cave or Caves of Abba Moses
303 333 398
Cosmas 294
Dahshúr 99 n
Elias 404 f. n 405 407 V. also
Abyssinian
Epiphanius 259
of the Fathers, or Mount Tabor 248
Frontonis 43
Harmanus, Abba 98 n
Jeremias 3 n 112
John the Black, v. Kamé

Monasteries:
John the Little, dependent cells
361
——, end of 408
——, founded 109
——, ordination at 397
——, restored 302 f.
——, still a laura 333
——, mentioned 96
97 106 110 113
ib. n 248 285
300 n 319 329
333 339 360 363
369 379 380 387
395 399 400 405
417 418 420
S. John at Antinóë 316 n
Mar Jonah or Junau 441
Justinian 327 328 329
Abû Kama, v. Kamé
Kámé, attack on 339
——, built fortified 328
——, end of 407
——, founded 306
——, mentioned 303 308 328
329 333 340 n 352 353 345
357 360 361 366 379 396
400 405 414 420
El Kuseir 163 164 n
Lebanon, Mount 408 422
S. Macarius, census of 296 360
——, chrism consecrated at, v. Chrm, Index
111
——, churches at, built and dedicated 231
271–274 300 343
——, clerical element at, depleted 385
——, decline of 407
——, dependent cells of 361 f. V. also Dependent cells
——, Easter in 299 300
322 326 350 357 f.
——, elections 347 f.
——, fortification of 327 f.
——, foundation of 104 f.
——, laura 233
——, patriarchal seat at 238 248
—— and patriarchate 350
——, patriarchs buried at 322 357 381 384
——, primitive arrangement of 105
——, privileges of 238 f.
322 347 f. 350
——, privileges of lost
394 407
### INDEX OF PLACES

#### Monasteries:

- S. Macarius, revenues of 358
- Site of 104
- Subordinated to Müsir 388
- Mentioned 18 n. 32
  - 383, 941, 896 972 226
  - 229, 232 236
  - 247, 252 259 266
  - 269, 279 281 284
  - 287, 290 291 295
  - 306, 323 333 339
  - 340, 351 352 353
  - 370, 371 372 377
  - 380, 382 393 395
  - 396, 400 402 405
  - 417, 418 420 421
  - 423, 426 432 461

- Abû Makâr, v. Macarius
- Mary the Theotokos the Syrian 361
- V. also Syrian

- Maura, S. 422
- Maximus and Domitian, v. Bara-mús
- Metras 221 n. 254
- Mar Michael 310 440
- Abba Moses 303 304 361 406 420
- Moses in Syria 409 n.
- El Muna (q.v.) 269
- Nahýà 21 n. 255 256 396
- Olives, Mount of 87 92
- Our Lady 277
- Pachomius 196
- “Patrician Lady” 244
- Paul the Hermit 12 n. 317 n. 390 414
- Qennesre 321 n. ib. n.
- Raithu 212
- Severus 351
- Shenúdah 367 n.
- Mar Solomon at Dolûk 442
- S. Stephen 426

#### Syrian, Abyssinians in
- Churches in 355 394 415
- 419 420 424 429 432
- Connection with Tekrit 311
- Copts claim 414
- Its date of purchase 317 f.
- Decline of 402 f.
- Earliest reference to 309 f.
- Egyptian abbot installed in 415
- Egyptians in 408
- Library of 439-458
- List of abbeys of 462-464
- Nomenclature of 315
- Purchase of 312 f.
- Restoration of 311

#### Nitria, invasion of 77 82 140
- Monasteries 4 15 16 21 41 92
- The name 17 f.
- Relation of to Cellia 169
- Semi-coenobitic character of 169
- Simple buildings at 174
- Topography of 17-24

- No, city 87
- Nome, Arsinoite 117 127
- Heracleote 13
- Mareotic 35
- Nitriote 22
- Of Pernj = Oxyrhynchus 107

#### Oak, suburb of Chalcedon 143
- Oasis 151
- Greater 35
- Lesser 35
- V. also Bahryyl, Dåkhle, Farâfî, Hibîs, Khârgeh, and Siweh
- Oktokaidakaton 149 245 ib. n. 257 262
- Olives, Mount of 87 92
- Oxyrhynchus 82 n. 364
- Bishop of 151

- Palestine, 100 190 222
- Pamah, mountain of 283
- Paris, mss. at 338 454
- Path of the Angels 395 ib. n. 418 420 424
- Pathanon 270
- Peamu 39
- Pehóout, cell, v. Dependent cells
- Penptom 149 243 244 257
- Pentapolis 152 250
- Pernoudj, mount of 66 76 99 149
- Petra 37 124 156 304 V. also Kâret el Mullûk
- Pharne 36 157
- Phœnicé 55
- Piamoun, Forty-nine Martyrs buried at 38
- Cave of 231 232
- Place of 39
- Rock of 470
- Tower of 165 270
- Phenaton, v. Enaton
- Pillar of the Devils 424
- Pisgah, Mount 157
- Pisidia 302 n.
- Pispir 313 n. 16 55 74 212
- Porphyrites, desert of 141
- Pshati, v. Nikiu
- Puelzems, v. Clyisma

- Rakoti 18 302
- Ras’ain (Râ’s el ‘Ain) 443 445
- Raven’s Spring 404
INDEX OF PLACES

Rhamnis 320 n
Er Riyashât canal, v. Lycus
Romania 106 n 190
Rome 128 130 356
—, sack of 162
Rosetta 419

Sâ, v. Sais
Sa‘id 230
S. Petersburg, mss. at 457
Sais 277 282 283 289
Sakhd 230 281 285
Sakkârêh 3 n 21 n 112
Saksik, cell, v. Dependent cells
Salamis, bishop of 142
Salt Lake, Little, v. Anaballous
Samannûd 60 284 380 406
Sanjar, cell of 371 ib. n
Scetis 4 14 23 25 27 60 76 80 122
152 n 160 161 249 302 351
375 404 and passim
—, acclamations of saints of
470–472
—, advantages of situation of 41
—, in Arian period 73–83
—, charter granted to monks of
268
—, control of 287
—, devastation of, foretold 153
—, distance of, from Nitria and
Cellia 30
—, early history of 60
—, endowed by Zenô 225 226
—, in fifth century 150 f.
—, foundation of 65–66
—, Four Laureae of 259
—, "Four Monasteries" of 96 f.
—, heresy in 228
—, immune from persecution 41
—, Macarius settles in 63
—, monks self-supporting at
184
—, new monasteries at 303 f.
—, nomenclature of 27 28
—, organization at 178
—, and Origenist crisis 150
—, orthodoxy of 74 75
—, relations of, with Mount of
Nitria 66
—, religious observances at 185
—, restored 161 164

Scetis sacked 42 97 146 153 154
160 162 164 249 297 f. 439
—, a shrine for saints 292
—, Syrian community at 319–320
—, topography of 27 f.
—, = Wādî ‘n Natrûn 17 18 n 32
Scitium or Scithium, v. Scetis
Scythopolis 142
El Sedrî, cell, v. Dependent cells
Seleucia 100
Serapeum at Alexandria 89
—, at Memphis 5
"Seven Monasteries," the 303 324
361
Shansa 112
Shatnûf 296
Shi‘êt, v. Scetis
—, Rock of, v. Petra
Shihût, v. Scetis
Shumustâ 315 ib. n
Sigistan 390
Sinai, Mount 327
—, anchorites of 208 n
Siweh, or Siwh, oasis of 36 152
Soah 367 n
Suez 158 n
Sumustâ, v. Shumustâ
Syene = Aswân 88
Syria 190
Syrian Monastery, v. Monasteries
Tabennesi 3 n 56 74 75
Tabor, Mount 116
Taeniat 35
Tambok 246 249 250 ib. n
Tanis 281
"Târîk el Medâ‘îkeh," v. Path of the
Angels
Tarnût, v. Terenuthis
Tarûgeh 25 27 272 ib. n 391
Teb el Barût 21 22 n
Tekrit 310 311 312 443
Tel Trûgâïn, v. Tarûgeh
Tela Mar‘ash 358
Terenuthis 25 n 41 72 n 153 n 157
184 187 243 249 250 261 262 268
283 293 345 391 395 405 418 419
Teroudjeh, v. Tarûgeh
Terraheh, v. Terenuthis
Terrânet Harâreh 23
Tesê 107
"Thebaid," the 15 244 399
Thebes 259 399
Thessalonica 95 190
Thmuis 86 134 284
Tinnis 277 343 n 360 364
Tmai, v. Thmuis
Tomb of Abraham and George 280
281 396 397 398 V. also Bigeih

Tomb of Forty-nine Martyrs 244
—, of Hillaria 364
—, of the Patriarchs 397
—, of Thomas 262 ib. n
Et Tris 418 423
Trov 122 162 163 166
Tûkh en Nasara 270 n
Tuna 244
Tûr Abdîn 389
Tura 164 n

Upper Egypt 310 n

Valley of the Kings 404
—, of the Natrûn 404
Vatican Library, mss. at 316 319
345 355 n 362 373 n 374 375 n
394 n 422 426 454

Wâdî Abû Makâr 38
Wâdî Habîb 32 60 253 375 and passim
—, Makrizî’s account
of 404
—, monasteries of 269
272 298 303 377
400
—, monks of, appeal
against taxation
290
—, monks of, and patriarcal elections
347
—, origin of name of
274 404
—, patriarchal seat
237
—, relics at 363–364
V. also Scetis

Wâdî ‘n Natrûn 24 32 and passim
—, confused with Nitria 17 22
—, deplorable condition of 320
—, monasteries of 208
—, monasteries of, de-
stroyed 297 298
—, polyglot mss. from
366 ib. n
V. also Scetis and
Wâdî Habîb

Wardân 423
Wasin 117 n 119
Waterless River 419 ib. n 420 421
426
Well of Abba Makari 104

Za‘agîg 404 n
El Zâjâjì, v. Enaton
III. INDEX OF SUBJECTS

Abbâsíde forces 337
Abbots, lists of 461–464
Absolution, the 395 397
Abstinence 110 261
Abyssinian monks 399 400 406 432
Abyssinians, monastery of, v. Index II
Acclamations to saints of Scetis 295 470–472
Agape 163 ib. n 187 ib. n 210–213
Agriculture 262 V. also Gardening
Aldo uprising 327
Aloes 375 n
Alphabet, Armenian 369 n
Altar for consecration of Chrsim 375
——, service of 378
——, slabs, marble 418
——, tray, inscription on 368 n
Anabasus 196 ib. n 204 206
Anarchy 337 446
Anathemas written in books 448 452
Anchoretic life, demands of 169
Anchorets 11 12 15 ib. n 24 168
169 181 194 n 197 204 207 f.
Andalusians 296 310 440
Angels 37 43 61 62 80 99 107 112
113 126 159 165 193 230
251 270 276 280 281 306
307 375
——, Path of the, v. Index II
Anthropomorphism 40 92 110 125–144 150 ib. n 187
Antonian system, v. Monasticism
Ants, white 395 406
Aphthartodocetae, sect of 228 240 n
Apostolic succession 191
Apples 203 205
Arab Conquest 240 265 268 287 321
350 358
Arabic, church use of 378
Arabs 297 325 f. 345
——, early attitude of, to monasteries 265
Arian controversy 40
——, Persecution, v. Persecution
Arianism 73 83
Arians 73 ib. n
Armenian Church 355
Armenians, monastery of, v. Index II
——, specially favored 317 357
Arrows 194
Art, works of 321
Ascesis and ascetics, Christian 9
10 11 13 41 48
Asiam 405 V. also Girdle
Asps 57 n 93
Augustalius, the, of Alexandria 79
Austerities 85 201 425
Auxoriani, the 151 155
Avarice 276 287
Axes 215
Bacillus prodigiosus 323 n
Backsliding monks 192 377
Bakeries 173 174 188 202
Bakshish 341 349
Baldr 216
Baptism 80
Barbarians 65 78 151 ib. n 152 154
155 157 158 162 163 164 165 187
223 242 249 250 252 270 275 f.
300 325 401 436
Barley 385
Barsanuphian heretics 258 289
Baskets and basket-making, process of 198 199
——, mentioned 33 63 65 72 76
99 110 124 157 n 177 184
188 198 205 213 214 215 243
261 262 324 n 329 n
Bathing 85
——, Feast of the 99 n 372
Beans 266 385 421 423
Bedding 204 ib. n
Beds 215
Bell 423
Bible, reading of 378
Bigotry 70 247
Bishop and bishops 60 n 61 79 86
88 92 ib. n 107 136 n 137 139 229
238 240 284 320 n 323 324 326 336
338 344 345 347 ib. n 348 349 357
371 374 376 377 383 396 397
Bishoprics, sale of 344
Bit in priest’s mouth 276
Black Death 401 450
Blemmyes, the 152 164 n
Blindness 434 435
Body robe 195
Bohairic name for Nitria 18
Bolsters 204 215
Books 174 193 195 272 337 338 340
352 355 358 389 390 392
401 403 422 425 426 427
——, anathemas in 448 452
——, destruction of 140 ib. n 321
——, as evidence for history of
Syrian Monastery 310 311
312 ib. n 313 316 318 ib. n
320 337 338 ib. n 389 390
403 407 408 409 415
——, parchment 215
——, rare 418
——, repair of 358
——, from Syrian Monastery 439 f.
——, V. also Libraries
Bookcases 215
Boys 154 193
Branding of monks 288 289
Bread 67 13 ib. n 46 51 57 76 85
93 94 130 173 177 184 202
207 211 261 421 425 428 434
——, abstention from 203 253
——, eucharistic 352 405 423 428
435
——, and salt 13 94 202 207
Bribery 136 140
Bricks 93 214
Brother, term used by kárhoi 5
Building stone 328
INDEX OF SUBJECTS

Buildings, communal 174 177 186
Burial office 397

Cabbage 56
Cakes 173
Calendar of Abūl Barakāt 322 n
——, Coptic 322 n
——, Jacobite 163
——, of monastery of S. Macarius 379 n
Calf, wild 33 n
Camels 31 43 44 152 153 184 325 335
Canal 19 20 92
Cancer 58
Candles 243 376
Cannibals 152 n
Canons, apostolic 378
—— of Benjamin 273 274 388
Canopy 376 396
Cap, monkish 405 V. also Cowl
Cariophyllon 375 n
Cassia 375 n
Cattle 56 301
Caves 12 22 n 31 34 38 39 65 299
340 359
Cells 5 15 ib. n 19 22 n 24 26 30 46
49 57 93 105 120 n 169 178
181 186 197 232 n 259 267 269
270 280 282 296 297 300 316
320 321 328 333 339 n 361 362
363 397 423 V. also Index II
——, furniture of 214
——, restoration of 288
——, two domed 214
Cemetery, monastic 396
Cenobites 11 15 169 207
Cenobitic life, demands of 169
Censers 272 376 398
“Chalcedonians” 221 222 236 266
294
Chalices 230 248 382
——, glass 428 n
Chapter, monastic 116 171 V. also
Council of fathers
Charity 173 174
Charms 430 ib. n
Charters, monastic 268 385 405
Chasuble 376 378
Cheese 428
Cherubim, guide of Macarius 28 63
64 104 119 293 398
497
——, ritualistic 376 396 398
ib. n
——, road of the 38
Chests containing MSS. 423
Chick-peas 203
Children at monasteries 193
Chirim, consecration of 238 239 339
350 358 381 387 389 394
396 397 407
Chirim, the ceremony 374-377
——, ingredients of 375 n
——, last recorded 401
——, use of 273
Christianity, decline of 402
Christians massacred by Jews 147
Church, The 10 11 40
——, of Alexandria, v. Alexandria, Index II
——, corruption of 343
——, of Misr, v. Misr, Index II
Churches, building of 99 177 180
223 231 266 300 301 397
——, burnt 297 298
——, closed 304
——, dedication of 424 n
——, destruction of 97 157 297
345 381
——, rebuilt 300
——, repaired 300 397
——, ruined 300 423
——, sale of 314 335
——, separate 257
——, sick taken into 61 n 155
180
——, stormed 229
——, and towers 232 234
——, various uses of 187
Cinnamon 375 n
Cistern as hiding place 140
Clay 50
Clergy 77 81 176 181 347 348 349
Clothing 12 135 173 n
Codices 181 199 358 421
——, Syriac 310 316 317 n 319
390
Coenobiarchs 171
Coenobium 11 15 45 69 121 169 173
183 186 201 207 213
Coffee 425 434
Coffins 405 424
Cohort of Chamavi 38
Coins 306
Collar, wooden 79 131
College, priestly 170
Colobium 195 196 336
Colossus of Serapis destroyed 89
Comets 354
Communion, v. Holy Communion
Concordat of Churches 365 367 368
Confession 374
——, eucharistic 378 380
Confessor, title 79
“Congregations” 150 180 185 187
Consecration of a church, rite of 272
273
——, of patriarch, secondary
391 393
Convent 109
Converts 8 289
Cooking pots 216 425

Coptic Church comes into being 219
——, Church mentioned 41 42 48
265
——, church use of 378 379
Copists 354 365 368
Copying 184 f. 352 406 409
Corn 184 203
Cortical punishment 288 289
Cotton-paper, books of 453 457
Council of fathers 171 176 181
Cowardice 11 14
Cowl 195 ib. n 222 252
Creed of Nicaea 219
Cross, chapel in the form of 429
——, Feast of the 99 n 372
——, sign of the 107 306
Crossettes 49 99 295 376 382 396 398
Crusades 448
Culture, Hellenic 84
Cupboards 214 215
Cures, miraculous 58 273 292 354

Daily meal of monks 200
Dancing, ritual 7
Dates 207
Deacons 170 300 423
Dead, raising from the 72 ib. n
Death, magical formula for 390
——, penalty 381
Declan persecution, v. Persecution
Demons 13 14 ib. n 15 57 67 69
71 n 79 86 104 194 209 210 222
280 424 425 ib. n 466
Departed, the, epithet 50 52
Dependent cells 361 f. 395 398 399
424 ib. n V. also Index II
Desecration of sanctuary 377
Desert 11 12 1 15 18 20 23 28 44 57
——, Eastern, v. Index II
——, inner 18 24 62 67 93 137 169
——, Libyan, v. Index II
——, life, hardships of 190
——, population of 296
——, “upper” and “lower” 67 n
——, utter 36 105 141 145 175
177 ib. n 178 257
Destruction of churches, v. Churches
——, of monasteries, v. Monasteries
Devil, the 51 118 126 128 n 176 184
211
Dew 38
Diplomatic mission 337 338 340
Disciples, the 80
——, of monks 182 183 260
Discipline, monastic 172
Divan 285 344 347 n 386
Dog, mad 47
Domestic utensils 215
Donors of books 440 f.
Dormitories 423
Doxology, office of 378
Dream 85
Dress, monastic 194 f.
Drunkenness, feigned 244
Dummy dressed as monk 194
Duplicate monasteries, v. Theotokos monasteries
Duties, civil 80
Dwelling-houses 267 V. also Manšābēhs

Eagles 419
Eaglestone 404 419 ib. n
Easter 99 n 180 211 238 230 259
299 300 322 325 326 345 350 357
396 397
Eating in church 211 212
Ecclesiasticism prevails 266 333
Ecumenical council 219
Edict, imperial 81 82 89 140 225
237
Egyptian Church 219 220
Elders 80 181
Embrima 204 206 215
Encratites 11
Endowment of monasteries 225 226
227 268 358 401 ib. n 407 n
Epiphany 345
Excommunication 83 90 136 170
179 180 219 249
Execution of monks 289
Exiles 79 80 82 84 141
Eye trouble, monastic 434

False accusation 136 329
— witnesses 140
Famine 339 354 401 446
Fast, Great 375 V. also Easter
Fasting 14 179 201 202 222 336 424
Father, title 5 16 48 n. 49 50 66 n 92
108 110 158 170 176 179 191
259 260 282 307 326 345 353
369
— Disciples, church of, v. Index II
—, office of 170 180
— of Scetis 16 170 178 f.
Fathers 90 171 200 202 213 469
Fatimide forces 337
Feast of the Bathing 99 n 372
— of the Cross 99 n 372
— of Epiphany 345
— of the Immersion 353
— of the Resurrection 345
Feasts, funerary 211
Feet, ceremonial washing of 376 396
397 424 n
Festal letter 323
Fetters, punishment 176
Fever 85 119 307
Figs 56 185 203
Fire, invocation of 249
—, metaphor 153 n
Fish, salt 423
Flask of oil 203
Flax weaving 171 173 177
Flesh 13
Flogging 170 172
Food 5 7 12 188
——, cooked 203 206 210 f.
——, ration of 202
——, shortage of 43
——, weekly supply of 213
Foreign monasteries, uses in 379
"Foreigners" 221
Forgery 8
Fornication 37
Fortification of monasteries 39 322
325 327 328 329 ib. n
Fortress 361 396 427 V. also Kas-
štālēb
Forty-nine martyrs, the, v. Index I
Fruit 85 203
——, dried 6
—— trees taxed 324
Funeral garments 262
Furniture, church 324 325
—— of cells 214 f.
Gaianite Heresy, v. Heresy
Gaianites 229 f. 258 270 289 318 362
Galilean 376 377
Galabēyb 195
Garden of Eden 297
Gardening 185 262
Gardens 7 154 n 173 174 177 301
Garments worn at funerals 262
Gebel 19 20 60
—— mountain 21 23 158
Ghuzz, tribe 367 381
Gift to monasteries 340
Girdle 195 204 206 252
Glass-furnace, ancient 404 ib. n 426
433 ib. n
Gluttony 201 202
Gonitae 35 36
Good Friday 359 375
Gospels 29 n 295 396
——, Coptic 370
Goths, ceremony of 424
Goths 80
Gourds used as water vessels 38
Gout 329
Graft 368 n 418
Grain 423
Grapes 57 85 203
——, juice of, instead of wine at
eucharist 434
Grass 152 n
Grave clothes 76 194 195 222
Greater Church 350
Greek Church 48 91 118
——, loan words from 26
Greek taught 300
Guest house 173 174 177 n 178 187
Gymnosophists, community of 6

Habit, monastic 67 106 191 193
194 f. 222 245 252 260 281 306
378 405
Hair shirt 164 195
—— tunic 225
Harvesting, monks employed at 72
173 177 184
Healing, power of 24 47 54 58
Heavenly bodies 30 126
Hebraism 10
Hegumen, duties of 287
—— of Scetis 259 348 351 V. also
Father
Hellenes = pagans 19 71
Henotic 224 226 227
Heraclian persecution, v. Persecution
Heresy 115 126
——, Arian 54
——, Encratite 10
—— of Eutyches 219
——, Gaianite 96 228 f. 258 259
—— of Hierax 115 f.
——, Nestorian 233
Heretics 7 10 72 86 165 301 318
——, Barsanuphan 258 259
——, Miletan 248 249
——, Nestorian 222
—— taxed double 289
Hermit 12 14 92 114 V. also An-
chores
Herts 253 261
Hidden treasure 275 343 382
Hiding of candidates for bishopric
359
Hills, various, v. Index II
Hoes 185 n 215
Holy Communion 66 ib. n 86 135
186 194 195 197 207 208
209 210 212 213 222 273 345
428
——, Cross, Feast of 99 n 372
—— Family 60
—— Mysteries 276 326
——, Place 7
——, Places = Jerusalem 87 245
——, Sacrifice 295
——, table 7
——, Thursday 350, 388 V. also
Maundy Thursday
—— water 72
—— Week 239 326 396
Homounians, the 73 77
Honey 423
Horses 152 325
Hospitality 206 261
Hospitals, churches used as 187
Host, the 230
——, reservation of 352
INDEX OF SUBJECTS

| Land-tax | 290 325 |
| Latrine | 337 |
| Lactrocinium | 219 |
| Laura, laurae | 15 97 100 167 179 n |
| 182 186 222 223 245 257 259 260 |
| 267 282 320 333 V. also Index II |
| Laymen share in elections | 347 |
| Lead | 402 |
| Learning by heart | 130 198 200 336 |
| 453 |
| Lebeto | 195 196 |
| Legends: |
| John and the Three Children | 111 |
| “Little Strangers” | 102 |
| Maximus and Domitius | 98 |
| Tree of Obedience | 108 109 317 |
| 419 420 ib. n 424 |
| Tree of S. Ephraem | 114 420 |
| Lemma | 154 n |
| Lent | 55 57 239 299 350 V. also Great Fast |
| Lentils | 203 206 421 423 428 434 |
| Lessons from the Scripture | 209 |
| Letter of Ammonius | 47 52 67 74 95 |
| 129 170 |
| Letters, encyclical | 77 |
| ——, festal | 323 |
| ——, paschal | 132 |
| ——, stolen | 129 |
| ——, synodical | 126 341 |
| Lewatch Berbers, v. Lewatis |
| Lewatis ravage the monasteries | 153 |
| 355 356 |
| Libraries, monastic | 338 ib. n 340 |
| 352 355 358 369 n 391 493 407 |
| 415 418 422 423 425 426 427 432 |
| Library of Syrian Monastery | 439-458 |
| Linen | 76 93 |
| ——, tunic of | 195 |
| Linseed oil | 434 |
| Lions | 12 344 |
| Liturgy | 80 300 372 373 f. |
| Loan words from Greek | 26 |
| Looms for flax weaving | 215 |
| Lord’s Day | 197 |
| Love feast | 213 |
| Madlajahites | 296 |
| Madlajah tribe | 327 |
| Mafor | 196 |
| Maghribis, tribe | 339 |
| Magic | 377 |
| ——, formula to bring about death | 390 |
| Magistrosinos | 255 269 |
| Malakia = small baskets | 200 ib. n |
| Malkan, v. Malakia |
| Manichaean woman | 135 |
| Manners, table | 206 |
| Manshabebs | 184 259 333 n 361 ib. n |
| 362 |
| Manual labor | 198 ib. n |
| manufactures, monastic, disposal of | 173 ib. n 184 185 188 262 |
| Maps | 399 400 ib. n |
| Marble columns, “Gothic” | 423 |
| Marikos, the | 152 |
| Marriage | 10 11 46 62 115 192 284 |
| 324 339 |
| Marsh | 31 32 33 34 38 57 65 199 293 |
| Martyr | 381 382 |
| Martyrium | 271 |
| Martyrologies | 44 |
| Maskeb | 404 |
| Mass, the | 71 170 208 213 377 397 |
| 423 425 427 f. 434 V. also Offering |
| Massacre in a church | 237 |
| Mastikos, the | 152 |
| Masiitai, the | 35 152 |
| Mats and mat-making | 119 184 199 |
| 206 215 243 324 n 329 n 404 425 |
| 434 |
| Maundy Thursday | 374 375 396 397 |
| Mazices, the | 36 n 151 152 153 155 |
| 157 164 n |
| Medicines | 173 |
| Meditation | 198 ib. n 200 |
| Meletians, v. Heretics |
| Melkites | 104 223 224 |
| Melotes | 196 197 204 205 |
| Memory, feats of | 200 |
| Metempsychosis | 126 |
| Metropolitan of Abyssinia | 80 n |
| Miles, Roman | 15 20 23 24 25 31 |
| 32 |
| Mills | 301 355 n 423 |
| Miracles | 14 43 f. 58 59 72 99 111 |
| 204 295 336 354 |
| ——, wrought by relics | 302 |
| Miraculous journey | 111 161 279 341 |
| 353-354 |
| Missionaries | 413 418 422 |
| Mitraeum, a. 89 |
| Monachism | 108 |
| ——, Antonian | 180 |
| Monasteries, abandoned | 393 |
| ——, census of | 84 324 360 |
| 386 |
| ——, decay of | 401 |
| ——, decline of | 385 386 |
| ——, dedication of | 32 |
| ——, destruction of | 249 ib. n |
| 297 |
| ——, foreign | 366 367 368 |
| 369 379 |
| ——, fortified | 42 306 n |
| ——, plundered | 325 326 327 |
| 355 |
| ——, rebuilding of | 269 |
| ——, restoration of | 299-304 |
| ——, ruined | 3 400 405 407 |
| 424 432 433 434 |
| ——, wealth of | 398 |
INDEX OF SUBJECTS

Monastery = church and tower 232 n
—, sale of 235 248 n 313 f. 315
—, term 92 n 93 n
—, with two churches 419 420
—, walled 45 267 306 327 328 329 333

Monasticism, Antonian 14 f. 168 180
—, Buddhist 4
—, change in character of 285
—, and country villages 4 n
—, decline of 361 402
—, father of 49
—, Nitrian 469
—, origin of 3 f.
—, spirit of, violated 383
—, systems of 3 ib. n 4 15 16 168

Money 75 171 173 192 215

Monks 45 49 81 92 292
—, backsliding 192
—, daily life of 190 ff.
—, degeneracy of 301
—, and disciples 260
—, disguised as Arabs 294
—, dispersed 297
—, eat one meal a day 200
—, and election of patriarch 348 349
—, enslaved 250
—, foreign 190 369 ib. n
—, garments worn by 195
—, Government action against 82
—, illiterate 53 189
—, influence of, on See of Alexandria 90
—, and inheritance of property 192 385 ib. n
—, initiation of 191 193 194
—, investiture of 193 194 260 278
—, lay 171 176
—, maltreated 289 385
—, marriage of 324
—, martyred 381 382
—, from middle classes 189
—, and military service 82 ib. n
—, naked 192
—, from peasant class 189
—, religious observances of 177
—, renegade 333 377 381 382 384
—, slain 78 165 327 355
—, spurious 191 n 384 386
—, and taxation 266 289 324 384 386
—, unenviable reputation of 148

Monks, unruly 58
—, from upper classes 190
—, and women 192 ib. n
Monophysite Church 236 V. also Coptic Church
—, schism 40 219 f.
Monophysites 104 221 228 233 236 f.
Monothelitism 253
Mosquitoes 33 57 90 118
Mount, meaning of 21
“Mountain” = desert 18 ib. n 27 32 62 151 272
Muslims 289 366
Mutilation of monks 289
Myśliwosie 376 377
Mysteries, Divine 182 196 V. also Holy Communion

Nágás 353 n
Narón 18 n 19 22 ib. n 23 33 35 n
39 62 64 65 92 107 324 n 404 ib. n 418 419 421 426
Nestorianism and Nestorians 149 ib. n 222 233
Night, how spent by monks 198
Night office 174 198 204 206 208
 Ninth hour, observance of 44 174
Nitre 87
Nitrariam 33
Nutrum 17 n
Noah’s ark 433
Nomads 42 V. also Arabs, Lewatis, Mazica
Nones 45 V. also Ninth hour
Novices 85 n 169 171 182 183 194 n
Nubians 365 400 ib. n
Nuns 71 77 82 n 244
Oases 36 n 152 153
Oasites 35
Oatmeal 425
Obedience, excessive 307
—, Tree of, v. Legends
Offering, 53 n 66 68 69 80 100
— = Mass 53 n V. also Mass
Oil 5 46 85 203 226 352
—, of balsam 375 n 377 388
—, of catechuemum 375
—, of gladness 375 376
—, linseed 434
—, olive 375 ib. n
—, presses 301
Olive oil 375 ib. n
Olives 51 261
Omens of disaster 354
Onions 203 425 434
Oratory 46 66 78
Orchards 154 n
Originists 40 91 126
Orthodox, orthodoxy 73 74 75 77 80 82 84 95 115 126 128 220 221

ib. n 222 223 224 229 236 254 289 301 365 367
Ostrica 245
Ostriches’ eggs 427
Oven 423 435
Oxen 152 n

Pagan temples, destruction of 89 90
Paganism 10
Pagans 19 89 138 147
Paintings 435 n
—, wall 272 n 397 421 429

Pallium 350
Palm branches 105 153 202 215 272
—, fibre, garments of 109 145 195 197 295
—, leaves 72 124 157 ib. n 184 186 202 215
—, stick 107 117 ib. n
—, Sunday 396 397 398
—, trees 12 15 32 33 142 172 174 177 184 199 324
Papyrus 5 205 215 329 n 404
Paradise 11 174 299
Paradise of the Fathers 61
—, of Shitt 61
Parchment 215
—, books on 455 456
Passion, Book of the 378
Patchew�n 225
Paten 382
Patriarch 80 n
—, burial of 322 357 381 384
—, of Constantinople 247
—, election of 347–351 371 373 381
—, enthronement of 238 239 322 405 407
—, seat of, transferred 41 237 287 350
Patron saints 97 233 235
Paxamata, v. Bread
Pearl barley 203
Pears, flat 385
Penance 32 33 37 ib. n 91 179 186 336 428 ib. n
Perfumes 295
Persecution 75 77 79 343 344 ib. n 394 402
—, Arian 58 61 74 75 77 84 89 129
—, Decian 12
—, of Diocletian 60 208
—, of El Hâkem 42 252 f.
—, Heraclean 40 221 252 ff. 320
—, Justinian 231
—, Lucian, v. Arian
—, of Vaïens, v. Arian
Persian Invasion, v. Invasion
—, Wars 317

493
INDEX OF SUBJECTS

Persians 278
— destroy monasteries 249 n
— withdraw from Egypt 253
pestilence 401
Petrina Papyrus 248 n
Phantasists 229 234 V. also Gaianites
Phthartolatrae, sect of 228 231 n
Physicians 173
pictures 336 427 435
— bleeding 323 354 369
pig, wild 183
Pigeon house 430 n
Pilgrims 19 266 292 326 363
Pillows 204 215 V. also Embrimia
Pirates 419 421
place-names, dual 18
plague 401
plates 216
plerophoria 254
poison 380
poll tax 289 290 324 325 338 385 386
polyglot mss. from Wādī n Natrun 366 n 368 369
pope, the 123 247
poverty 54 193
praetor urbanus 75
prayer 36 186 198 n 205 209
Prayers, recitation of 198 209
priest, sensual 276
Priest, superior 150 175 180
Priests 79 170 180 181
princes, Roman 101 103 V. also Maximus and Domitius, Index I
probation 15
processions 376 396 397 398 399 n
procrisium 213
proclamation of patriarch, ceremony of 350
Professor of rhetoric 123
property 5 7 13 81 192
prophecy 69
prosodita 35 36
prostitution 108 n 324 330 395 423
psalms, recitation and singing of 186 198 204 207 209 210 273 295 301 307
psalter 336 418
psephisma 348 351
pulley, entrance to a monastery by 427
pulse 203
pythagoreanism 4
quarrels at Mass 428
Ravens as demons 57
real presence 209
rebrecciatoria 196
recantation, public 323
reclus 5 176
refugees in monasteries 358 390
relatives 7 192
Relics of saints 39 n 111 231 n 262
96 270 292 302 n 315 n
345 346 350 363 364 395 397
418 419 n 424 428 429
— accidentally burned 419
— Mathew's list 363 f.
— spurious 419
— theft of 370
renegade monks, V. under Monks
renunciation, monastic 69 192
resurrection 352
reservoir for rain water 427
restoration of books and libraries 447 448 449
resurrection 72 115 116 126
revelation, divine 49
revenues given monasteries 358
— shrink 401
rice 423 428
riots in Alexandria 137 147
ritual peculiarities 378
road of the Cherubim 420 n
rock 37 38 65 ib. n 105
Roman Church 91
— Saints, V. maximus and Domitius, Index I
‘Royal road’ 200
rule, monastic 16 67 91 168 469
rushes 199
— taxed 324 434
sabbath 74 122 162 n 174 ib. n 175
177 185 197 258
— celebration of 34
— public worship on 207 208
ib. n 210 213
sacrament 80
saffron 375 n
sahidic dialect 18
sale of bishoprics 344
— of churches 314 335
— of monasteries, V. Monasteries
salt 7 19 94 202 207 212
— box 216
sandals, palm-leaf 197
sarabaitae 11 15 n
saracens 15
satan 70 105 203
schema 191 194 195
schism 289 359 n
— Monophysite 219 f.
schismatics 231
scorpions 93
screens, church 317 377
scribes, monastic 352
scriptures, the 7 10 13 80 113 125
318 n
sculptures 428
sea, dried 419 V. also Waterless
river, Index II
seclusion, monastic 198
secondary enthronement of patriarch 238 239 372 407
see of Alexandria, V. Alexandria, Index I
— of Aspuna 88
— of Constantinople, V. Constantinople, Index I
— episcopal 48 n
— of S. Mark 80 n 239 n V. also
Alexandria, Index II
— of Misr, V. Misr, Index II
selenite 419 n
self-consciousness 47
seljuk invasion, V. invasion
Senussi 153
seraph 273
serpents 339
sheep 152 n
sheepskin 76
sheitans, stoning of 71 n
shirt 428
— hair 164 195
show-bread 9
shrouds 194 270 271 276 336
sick, food of 203
— visitation of 198
sickles 215
signs and wonders 323
silence, monastic 53
simony 344
singers 376
sira 199 200
sites, fictitious 32
slander 53
slaves 139 140 152
sleep 57 204
— renunciation of 113 201
sleeping mats 206 215 425
sleeplessness 14 201
sodom 136
soldiers 14 77 78 82 220 237 246
355 377
monks 65 n
solitaries 11 48 176 V. also Anchorets
solitary life, dangers of 115
solute 12 14 15 168 176 183
son 307 ib. n
spies 135 146
spirits, unclean 276
spoons 382 428 n
springs 15 34 230 ib. n 404
spyrades = large baskets 199
stades 20 25
staff, monastic 197 326
— takes root 114
stars 30
stela of John Kama 308
steward 173 185 ib. n 188 212
stone columns 402 423
— in mouth 201
— seats 421
— table 421
INDEX OF SUBJECTS

Stone throwing 237
Stones, building 135 328
Storax 375 n
Storehouses 187 188 327
Sudanese troops 355
Sugar-cane 425
Suicide 15 n 325 302
Sunday 34 74 122 162 n 175 177 185
258
———, public worship on 207 208
ib. n 210 213
Superior 191 V. also Father
Synod of Constantinople 85 92 n
131
———, Patriarchal 415
Syriac, Curetonian 449
———, literature 321
Syrian monks 319 354 383 400 415
Syrians 317 365 368
Tabennesiote Order 245
Tabernacles 92 170 172 174
Tables 215
Tamarind tree, miraculous growth of, v. Tree of S. Ephraem
Taxation, effect on the monasteries 324
———, evasion of 384 386
———, monks and 288 f. 324 338
Taxes on church buildings 323
——— on palm trees 324
———, petition for reduction 290
——— on rushes 324 434
Tekfritans 311 312 313 314 315 408
Teqhib 348 349
Theft of corpses 231
Theodosians 318 V. also Gaianites
Theopaschite doctrine 323
Thetookia, medieval copy of 18 n
Theotokos monasteries 232 233 234
235 239 269 299 303 304 306 315
318 ib. n 361 371 395 399 406 407
415 421 439 V. also Monasteries, Index II
Therapeutae, community of 7 f. 11
Thieves 196
Thirst 7 31
Thorns 201
Thunder 295
Tobacco 434
Tomarion 229
Tomb 13 398 V. also Index II
Tome of Leo 220 246 247 254 255
Tonsure 107 193

Topos 97 99 121 161 179
Torture 77 146 147 289 381 382
Towers of Refuge 39 166 187 188
232 n 259 269 272 272 423 V. also
Keeps
Translation of patriarchs 322 351
370 374 381
——— of saints 269 f. 292
293 294 302
Transportation, miraculous 279 341
Travelling by night 396 n
——— by water 397 398
Tray, altar, inscription on 368 n
Treasure hidden 255 275 343 382
Tree of Obedience 108 109 317 419
420 ib. n 424
—— of S. Ephraem 114 316 419 429
Trees 108 109 154
——, marvelous 108 114 420
—— V. also Fruit and Palm
Trinity, the 273
Tunic 195 222
——, hair 225
Tunnel 105
Turkish troops 355
Ulcer 377
Vegetables 6 85 185 203 261
Veil, silk sanctuary 382
Veneration of the dead 292
Vespers 186 204 206 208 209
Vessels, church 324
Vestments worn at Mass 428
Vigils 210
Vinegar 207 261
Vineyards 301
Vipers 93 141
"Virgin" monasteries, v. Theotokos
monasteries
Virgins 10
Virtues, monastic 189 260
Visions 46 116 n 270 278 279 306
Visitor of monasteries, office of 287
288
Visitors to the monasteries, v. European visitors, Index I
———, reception of, at monasteries
205
Visits, monastic 205
Voice from heaven 249
Vows 191 192
Wadi 28 n 29 ib. n 32

Wall, boundary 93 361 397
—— tomb 398
Walled monasteries 45 267 327 328
329 333 307 n 398
Walls, collapse of 395
Water 65 109 113 166 430
—— abstained from, after drinking wine 203
——, bitter 51 230
—— bottles 216
—— carrying 34 38
——, death from lack of 30
——, drinking of 93
—— jars 109 122 155 204 206
213 ib. n
—— pitchers 93
—— skins 327
—— supply 327
——, travelling by 19 397 398
—— wheel, crystal 377 382
—— when drunk 204
Wax 423
Weaving 206
"Week days," how spent by monks 198
Weekly assembly 207 f.
Wells 34 51 52 55 93 104 109 382 423
430
Wheat 54 173 226 385
Windows of cells 214
Wine 5 13 46 70 173 203 207 211 212
213 n 226 248 353
——, eucharistic, grape juice instead of 434
—— jar 353
Women 7 14 54 71 87 116 135 307
324
—— and monks 192 ib. n
—— as monks 117 225 244 245
Wood, petrified 436
Woodwork 355 405
——, ancient 401
——, destroyed by white ants 395 406
Worship, public 174 185 207
Writing materials 215
——, monastic occupation 177
184 185 352
Yoke, wooden collar 79 131

Zinc 404
Ztr 216
PLATES
Metropolitan Museum of Art
Publications in Reprint

Egyptological Titles

Davies, Norman de Garis
The Tomb of Ken-Amun at Thebes (2 vols. in 1)

Davies, Norman de Garis
The Tomb of Nefer-Hotep at Thebes (2 vols. in 1)
(Metropolitan Museum of Art Egyptian Expedition Publications, Vol. IX: 1933)

Davies, Norman de Garis
The Tomb of Rekh-Mi-Re at Thebes (2 vols. in 1)
(Metropolitan Museum of Art Egyptian Expedition Publications, Vol. XI: 1943)

Hayes, William C.
The Burial Chamber of the Treasurer Sobk-Mose from Er-Rizeikat
(Metropolitan Museum of Art Papers, No. 9: 1939)

Hayes, William C.
Glazed Tiles from a Palace of Ramesses II at Kantir
(Metropolitan Museum of Art Papers, No. 3: 1937)

Hayes, William C.
Ostraka and Name Stones from the Tomb of Sen-Mut (No. 71) at Thebes
(Metropolitan Museum of Art Egyptian Expedition Publications, Vol. XV: 1942)

Hayes, William C.
The Texts in the Mastabeh of Se'n-Wosret-Ankh at Lisht
(Metropolitan Museum of Art Egyptian Expedition Publications, Vol. XII: 1937)

Mace, Arthur C. and Winlock, Herbert E.
The Tomb of Senebtisi at Lisht

White, Hugh G. Evelyn
The Monasteries of the Wadi 'N Natrun (3 vols.)
(Metropolitan Museum of Art Egyptian Expedition Publications, Vols. II, VII and VIII: 1926-1933)

  New Coptic Texts from the Monastery of Saint Macarius (1926)
The History of the Monasteries of Nitria and of Scetis, ed. by Walter Hauser (1932)
The Architecture and Archaeology, ed. by Walter Hauser (1933)
Map of the Wâdi 'n Natrûn.
Marino Sanuto's Map of the Delta showing the Monasteries and Lakes of the Wâdi 'n Natrûn (from B. M. Add. 27376, fol. 183a).
A. Saint Macarius (from a wall painting in the Monastery of Apa Jeremias at Sakkâreh).
B. Anba Bishôi (B. M. Add. 14594, fol. 1a).
A. The Tree of Obedience.
B. Dér es Suriân (left) and Dér Anba Bishōi (right).
Syriac Note recording the purchase of the Syrian Monastery (Paris, B. N., Fonds syr., No. 27).
Syriac Note concerning Moses of Nisibis and the poll tax (B. M. Add. 14531, fol. 157b).
Page from the polyglot *Epistles* at Milan.
Schiller, A. Arthur  
Ten Coptic Legal Texts  
(Metropolitan Museum of Art, Dept. of Egyptian Art Publications,  
Vol. II: 1932)

Winlock, Herbert E.  
The Temple of Rameses I at Abydos (2 vols. in 1)  
(Metropolitan Museum of Art Papers, No. 1, Pt. 1 and No. 5, 1921-1937)  
Bas-Reliefs from the Temple of Rameses I at Abydos (1921)  
The Temple of Ramessas I at Abydos (1937)

Winlock, Herbert E.  
Materials Used at the Embalming of King Tut-Ankh-Amun  
(Metropolitan Museum of Art Papers, No. 10: 1941)

Winlock, H. E.; Crum, W. E.; and White, Hugh G. Evelyn  
The Monastery of Epiphanius at Thebes (2 vols.)  
(Metropolitan Museum of Art Egyptian Expedition Publications, Vols.  
III and IV: 1926)  
The Archaeological Material, by H. E. Winlock;  
The Literary Material, by W. E. Crum  
Coptic Ostraca and Papyri, by W. E. Crum;  
Greek Ostraca and Papyri, by H. G. E. White

Winlock, Herbert E.; White, Hugh G. Evelyn; and Oliver, James H.  
The Temple of Hibis in El Khargeh Oasis (2 vols. in 1)  
(Metropolitan Museum of Art Egyptian Expedition Publications, Vols. XIII  
and XIV: 1938-1941)  
The Excavations, by H. E. Winlock (1941)  
Greek Inscriptions, by H. G. E. White and James H. Oliver (1938)

Winlock, Herbert E.  
The Tomb of Queen Meryet-Amun at Thebes  
(Metropolitan Museum of Art Egyptian Expedition Publications, Vol. VI:  
1932)

Winlock, Herbert E.  
The Treasure of El Lahun  
(Metropolitan Museum of Art, Dept. of Egyptian Art Publications,  
Vol. IV: 1934)

Miscellaneous Titles
Schiller, A. Arthur
Ten Coptic Legal Texts
   (Metropolitan Museum of Art, Dept. of Egyptian Art Publications,
   Vol. II: 1932)

Winlock, Herbert E.
The Temple of Rameses I at Abydos (2 vols. in 1)
   (Metropolitan Museum of Art Papers, No. 1, Pt. 1 and No. 5, 1921-1937)
   Bas-Reliefs from the Temple of Rameses I at Abydos (1921)
   The Temple of Ramesses I at Abydos (1937)

Winlock, Herbert E.
Materials Used at the Embalming of King Tut-Ankh-Amun
   (Metropolitan Museum of Art Papers, No. 10: 1941)

Winlock, H. E.; Crum, W. E.; and White, Hugh G. Evelyn
The Monastery of Epiphanius at Thebes (2 vols.)
   (Metropolitan Museum of Art Egyptian Expedition Publications, Vols.
   III and IV: 1926)
   The Archaeological Material, by H. E. Winlock;
   The Literary Material, by W. E. Crum
   Coptic Ostraca and Papyri, by W. E. Crum;
   Greek Ostraca and Papyri, by H. G. E. White

Winlock, Herbert E.; White, Hugh G. Evelyn; and Oliver, James H.
The Temple of Hibis in El Khargeh Oasis (2 vols. in 1)
   (Metropolitan Museum of Art Egyptian Expedition Publications, Vols. XIII
   and XIV: 1938-1941)
   The Excavations, by H. E. Winlock (1941)
   Greek Inscriptions, by H. G. E. White and James H. Oliver (1938)

Winlock, Herbert E.
The Tomb of Queen Meryet-Amun at Thebes
   (Metropolitan Museum of Art Egyptian Expedition Publications, Vol. VI:
   1932)

Winlock, Herbert E.
The Treasure of El Lahun
   (Metropolitan Museum of Art, Dept. of Egyptian Art Publications,
   Vol. IV: 1934)

Miscellaneous Titles