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• *About Pope Shenouda's Catalogue of Heresies*

• *Saint Augin*

• *The Importance of the Coptic Language
and Literature*

• *In Memoriam: Ragheb Moftah*



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ABOUT HERESIES AND THE SYLLABUS ERRORUM OF POPE SHENUDA III

*Otto F. A. Meinardus**

The repeated endeavours of the Assyrian Patriarch-Catholicos Mar Dinkha IV to integrate the Apostolic Church of the East in the ecumenical organisations of the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC) have led to a conference of the three hierarchs of the Oriental-Orthodox churches on March 10th and 11th 1998 in the Coptic Monastery of St. Bishoi, Wadi 'n-Natrun. Under the chairmanship of Pope Shenuda III, Patriarch Mar Ignatius Zakka I Ivas of the Syrian Orthodox Church and the Catholicos-Patriarch Aram I of Cilicia of the Armenian Apostolic Church joined in a common theological declaration to express the miaphysitic christology of the three Oriental Orthodox Churches. It is in the frame of this declaration that the three patriarchs issued solemn condemnations of nine heretical movements of the 4th and 5th century (Keraza 13, 14, April 10, 1998).

To write about heresies in our post-Christian age might seem to be a rather risky undertaking. In these days, Thomas H. Huxley's aphorism (1825–1895) has gained much support, that "it is the customary fate of new truths to begin as heresies and to end in superstitions". It is widely forgotten that the Early Church used to be described as a most sacred heresy and that St. Luke used to refer to the disciples of Jesus Christ as the "sect (*hereseos*) of the Nazarenes" (Acts 24:5.14; 28, 22). Whereas in the Hellenistic world the term "heresy" merely stood for a special opinion, a certain teaching, for the Jews it meant a religious party like the Pharisees (Acts 15:5) or the Sadducees (Acts 5:17). The biblical admonition to maintain Christian unity suggests threats of disunity and schisms due to divergent religious opinions. From the very beginnings of the church heresies appeared which means that these movements were not mere accidental phenomena but rather part of the historic nature and reality of the Fellowship of Believers. "For there must be factions (*heresais*) among you in order that those who are genuine among you may be recognized" (1 Cor 11:19). Later, we read "that a man who is factious, after admonishing him once or twice, have nothing more to do with him" (Tit 3:10).

Towards the end of the New Testament period we read about a warning about

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Left to right: H.H. Catholicos Aram I, H.H. Pope Shenuda III, H.H. Patriarch Zakka I at the papal residence, Monastery of St. Bishoi, Wadi 'n-Natruw

“false prophets who arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies even denying the Master who bought them...(2 Pet 2:1). To the Apostle Paul it was plain. Heresy occurs “if some one comes and preaches another Jesus than the one we preached” (2 Cor 11:4). “The false prophets come to you in sheep’s clothing, but are inwardly ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits” (Mt 7:15). In the Pauline literature, heresy clearly stood for another gospel and meant more than a mere schism. “I am astonished that you are quickly deserting him, who called you in the grace of Christ and turning to a different gospel...if any one is preaching to you a gospel contrary to that which you received, let him be accursed” (Gal 1:6-9).

Throughout the centuries the orthodox or right believers have excommunicated, anathematized, banished, tortured or even murdered those who used to differ from their teachings. They were known as the *alieni, profani, haeretici, schismatici, adversarii, blasphemantes, inimici, rebelles, hostes*, in short they were *anti-christi*. To be in their presence caused spiritual discomfort as described in the well known episode related by St. Polycarp. “John the apostle once entered a bath to wash; but ascertaining Cerinthus the heresiarch was within, he leaped out of the place, and fled from the door, not enduring to enter under the same roof with him, and exhorted those with him to do the same, saying, ‘Let us flee, lest the bath fall in, as long as Cerinthus, that enemy of the truth, is within’.” (Eusebius, HE III, 28).

For the orthodox church-fathers the roots of most heresies were either the legalism of the Tora or the Hellenistic philosophy. In addition, there existed a variety of spiritual enthusiasts. The first heretic of the young church was the Samaritan

magician Simon, who wanted to acquire the grace of the Holy Spirit by purchasing the blessings of God (Acts 8:9-25). In Rome he used to perform many magic rites and was honored with a statue having the inscription “*Simoni Deo Sancto*” (to Simon the Holy God) (HE II, 13). Because of his desire to obtain the grace of God with money, this ill-practice became known as “simony”. Apart from the heretical teachings of the Simonians, the use of simony played a rather important part in the medieval history of the Coptic Church. In the biographies of 28 patriarchs from the 9th – 14th century, there are the reports of seven patriarchs or 25% who openly and indiscriminately engaged in the practice of simony or cheirotonia.¹ During those centuries only four patriarchs, Shenuda I (859-80), Abraham (975-78), Cyril II (1078-92) and Gabriel II (1131-45) had openly condemned this immoral custom.

Within this context it is possible to mention only few of the better known catalogues of heresies. Some of them may well have served as a kind of model for the 20th century *Syllabus errorum* of Pope Shenuda III. Most of the lists include the trinitarian and christological heresies of the 4th and 5th centuries. About 180, Bishop Irenaeus of Lyons, being the “first doctor of the anti-Nicene church” published his “*Against the Heresies*” in which he condemned the various Gnostic sects, the Valentinians, Carpocratians, Ebionites, Nicolaitans, etc. About the same time, Hippolytus (+235), the first anti-Bishop of Rome, wrote his *Refutatio omnium haeresium* in which he listed altogether 32 heresies, twenty of which belonged to Gnostic sects which he abused with rather nasty insults and affronts. St. Epiphanius of Constantia (Salamis, Cyprus) was the first theologian of the Constantinian era to fight against the heresies of his days. Centuries later, St. Epiphanius was honoured as being the “Patriarch of Orthodoxy”.² He denounced the teachings of Origen (185-253), the most ingenious and highly gifted theologian of the Alexandrian catechetical school, whom he even accused of being an originator of the godless heresy of Arius. In his *Panarion omnium haeresium* he warned against 60 heresies – by referring to the *Song of Solomon* 6:8 – which he listed in a chronological sequence. With this encyclopaedia of heresies Epiphanius (315-412) became the most important heresiologist of the early church.

The principal purpose of the ecumenical councils, convened by the Roman emperors, served to draw up and formulate the statements of faith and to condemn those who had deviated from the established theological norm. In Nicea 325, 318 hierarchs under the emperor Constantine excommunicated and banished to Illyricum the Alexandrian presbyter Arius (250-336) for his subordinationalist christology. The second ecumenical council at Constantinople in 381 under Theodosius I pronounced the teachings of Bishop Macedonius I of Constantinople as being heretical since they had denied the divinity of the Holy Spirit. Bishop Apollinaris of Laodicea (310-390) was condemned because he seemed to deny the presence of a human soul in Christ! The 200 church-fathers at the council of

1 Meinardus, O., “*The Cheirotonia among the Copts, a necessary Evil?*” *Ekklesiastikos Pharos* LIX, 1977, 437-449.

2 St. Epiphanius received this title at the Second Council of Nicea in 787.

Ephesus in 431 under Theodosius II excommunicated and later exiled the Patriarch Nestorius of Constantinople (428-431) to Upper Egypt where he died in 451. He had maintained the so-called doctrine of the "two natures" of Christ and used to call the Virgin Mary the 'Mother of Christ', thereby refusing the cyrillian title of "Theotokos" or Godbearer.

Also Bishop Eusebius of Caesarea (260-340), the father of church-history, joined the early heresiologists by listing the most abominable and detestable impieties of his days. There were the Cathari of Novatus, the Cleobians, the Dositheans, the Gorthoeonians, the Masbothoenans, the Basilidians, the Saturnalians and Carpocratians, etc. His *History of the Christian Church* completed in late 324 is the most important ecclesiastical history in ancient times, written in the conviction that the old order was passing away.

The church-fathers of the second ecumenical council of Constantinople used to differentiate between those heretics who were to be anathematized and those who could not be even be considered Christians. For example, the Arians, Macedonians, Sabbatians, Novatians and even the Apollinarians-upon written rejection of their heresies-could be received into the fellowship by being anointed on the forehead, mouth, eyes and ears. On the other hand, the baptism of the Eunomians, Montanists and Sabellians were declared invalid. If they were to join the church, they had to be baptized.

One of the most zealous pursuers of heretics towards the end of the 4th century was Bishop Philastrius of Brescia (+397). In his *liber diversarum hereseon* he had numbered altogether 128 Christian and 28 Jewish sects. In 575, Patriarch Paul of Antioch had consecrated Theodore, abbot of the Coptic monastery of Rhamnis as Anti-Pope to Peter IV of Alexandria. In his informative catalogue of 22 heretics, Theodore accused eleven theologians of the false doctrines of Nestorius, namely Paul of Samosata, Diodorus of Tarsus, Theodore of Mopsuestia, Nestorius of Constantinople, Theodoret of Cyrrhus, Andreas of Samosata, Ibas of Edessa, Eutherius of Tyanal, Alexander of Hierapolis, Irenaeus Bigamus of Tyrus and Barsauma of Nisibis. The other heretics were those "classical monophysites" as Eutyches, Julian of Halicarnassos and John Aegeatis.³ In his homily about the wedding of Cana Pope Benjamin I (623-662) included in his list of heretics the Arians, Nestorians, Meletians, the Chalcedonians as being those who denied the divinity of the redeemer, namely the Roman Pope Leo I (440-461) and his Melkite adversary Cyrus of Alexandria (631-643), the Muqauqas.⁴ Even throughout the 9th century, the Coptic Church suffered from various heretical movements. There were the Phthartolatrians, the Aphthartodocetists who considered the body of Christ prior to the resurrection as being incorruptible. On the occasion of his enthronement Pope

3 Grillmeier, Alois, *Jesus der Christus im Glauben der Kirche*. Freiburg 1990, II, 4, 75.

4 Müller, C.D.G., *Die Homilie über die Hochzeit zu Kana und weitere Schriften des Patriarchen Benjamin I. von Alexandrien*. Heidelberg 1968.

James of Alexandria (819-830) condemned the Nestorians, Eutychians, Phantasiasts and Gaiianites who denied the suffering of the divine-logos (HPCC, PO V, 445). An unusual number of strange doctrines reflecting the whole spectrum of christological subtleties and sophistries appears in the monumental theological encyclopaedia *The Lamp of Darkness* (1307) by Abu'l-Barakat ibn Kabar, the priest of the Church of the Holy Virgin al-Mu'allaqah in Old Cairo. There were the Audians who took offence at the secularized clergy. The Paulicians were the successors of the Antiochene Patriarch Paul of Samosata and forerunners of the Bulgarian Bogomiles. The Sabbatians believed that the Jews were the true Christians and the Borborines practiced their magic with the blood of children while the Quqanians denied the resurrection and the Last Judgements.⁵

Major and minor heresies have left their marks on the history of the Coptic Church. Yet, so intimate was the connection of the Holy Scriptures with the teachings of the fathers that in one sentence the Apostle Paul and some of the fathers could be invoked together. The difference between the holy apostles and fathers seems to have been one more of degree than of kind. Therefore, the attribute "inspired by God" *theopneustos* which the New Testament used only once and applied to the Old Testament (2 Tim 3:16) could be applied also to the fathers. Athanasius was known as the "God-bearing teacher" and Clement of Alexandria as "the philosopher of philosophers". While all that was ancient was neither apostolic nor orthodox, all that was orthodox was both apostolic and ancient!

The Syllabus errorum of Pope Shenuda III

There is no doubt that the "Common Declaration" of the three Oriental-Orthodox Patriarchs on March 11th 1998 meeting at the Coptic Monastery of St. Bishoi should be seen as a reply to the ecclesiastical endeavours of the Assyrian Catholic-Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV Khnanaya to be accepted by the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC). Ever since the first World Council of Churches conference in Amsterdam 1948 the Apostolic Church of the East (Assyrian) was engaged in the ecumenical movement, at that time represented by Mar Eshai Shimun (1920-1975). On October 17, 1976 Mar Dinkha IV was elected as 120th successor to the see of Seleucia-Ctesiphon. Since 1984 Mar Dinkha IV has repeatedly applied for membership in the regional ecumenical organization. However, the historic anti-cyrrillian christology of the Apostolic Church of the East has so far prevented the Assyrians from joining the ecclesiastical families of the Middle East.⁶ On the other hand, the theological dialogues with the Roman Catholic Church have led to the famous christological declaration between Mar Dinkha IV and John Paul II on November 11, 1994.⁷

5 Dom Louis Villecourt, "Abu'l-Barakat d'Ibn Kabar, Livre de la lampe des ténèbres", *Patrologia Oriental*. XX, 4.

6 The Middle East Council of Churches is composed of four ecclesiastical families: The Orthodox (Chalcedonians), the Oriental-Orthodox (Non-Chalcedonians), the Catholics and the Protestants (without Pentecostals and Adventists).

7 Keraza 11/12 of March 27th, 1998.

The first four paragraphs of the "Common Declaration" of the three hierarchs state the christological positions of the Coptic, the Syrian and the Armenian churches.

#1. In our common witnessing to our one faith in the One Son and Incarnate Word (Logos) Jesus Christ our Saviour, we maintain the apostolic faith that we received from the apostles in the Old and New Testaments and the first three ecumenical councils of Nicea (325), Constantinople (381) and Ephesus (431) as well as the teachings of the holy fathers of our three churches who struggled for maintaining the faith of our churches and the teachings of those councils. Our churches struggled with the blood of the martyrs to preserve the teachings and decisions of the Council of Ephesus concerning the incarnation of the Logos, based on the teachings of St. Cyril the Great.

#2. The teachings of St. Cyril the Great are the base of the christological education of our churches. Upon those teachings, the "Common Official Theological Dialogue Committee" between Oriental-Orthodox and Byzantines was able to formulate a common agreement which was proposed and which is in the process of being studied by the Holy Synods of the two families.

#3 Maintaining and honestly obeying the faith and dogmas of our holy fathers, we firmly assure our rejection of all heretical teachings taught by: Arius, Sabellius, Apollinaris, Macedonius, Paul of Samosata, Diodorus of Tarsus, Theodore of Mopsuestia, Nestorius, Eutyches and all who follow their heresies or teach their false heretical teachings and all other heresies.

#4 We believe that our Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, the Word (Logos), came in his own Person, not taking one of the people but He Himself (sic), in a Personal Union took a full human nature: rational soul and flesh but sinless from the holy Virgin Mary by the Holy Spirit, making His own humanity and divinity One Nature and One Person to incarnate naturally and personally in the moment of incarnation. His divinity did not separate from His humanity for one moment. This union is above description and realisation.⁸

The composition of the *Syllabus errorum* betrays clearly the theological intentions and purposes. The first four condemnations do not touch the issues pertaining to the cyrillian christology. These are the teachings of the archheretic Arius (250-336) which are rejected because of the subordinationalism of Christ to the Father. The Roman modalist Sabellius (3rd cent.) intended to safeguard the "monarchy of the Godhead" and taught a kind of patripassianism. Bishop Apollinaris of Laodicea (31/390), once a friend of Athanasius, was condemned for his denial of the full divinity of Christ in Alexandria 362 and in Constantinople 381. The teachings of Macedonius of Constantinople (+364) were a denial of the divinity of the Holy Spirit and were condemned in Constantinople 381.

8 The English translation was supplied by Shenuda Mamduh.

The following four theologians were undisputed adversaries of the Cyrillian “*mia physis*” Christology.⁹ Bishop Paul of Samosata was excommunicated by the synod of Antioch in 269 because of his anti-trinitarian theology, later he was considered a forerunner of the Nestorian heresy. Bishop Diodorus of Tarsus (+394) used to be the teacher of John Chrysostomus and Theodore of Mopsuestia and represented the Antiochene School of Theology. The second council of Constantinople in 553 condemned his theology as being ‘nestorian’. Bishop Theodore of Mopsuestia (392-428) was the most important and ingenious theologian of the Antiochene School. As a representative of a dyophysitic christology he fought against the Arians and the Apollinarians of his day. His teachings were anathematized in Ephesus 431 and in Constantinople 553. The patriarch Nestorius of Constantinople (428-431) was deposed and excommunicated in Ephesus 431 for his dyophysitic christology and for his opposition to the title *Theotokos* for the Virgin Mary: “Let no one call Mary the mother of God, for Mary was a human being; and that God should be born of a human being is impossible”. In his *Bazaar of Heraclides* Nestorius offered an *Apologia* of his theology and the events of the Latrocinium of 449.¹⁰ The classical monophysitism of the archimandrite Eutyches had stated that the humanity of Christ was absorbed into the Godhead. An endemic synod in Constantinople in 448 had condemned the teachings of Eutyches.

For the vast majority of Oriental-Orthodox Christians in the Middle East the theological and christological issues of the 4th and 5th century appear insignificant and unimportant, while others consider them even trivial and petty. Their real questions about “the God in the form or shape of a person” or their query about “the dying deity on the cross” can hardly be answered by the traditional miaphysitic theologies of the fathers or the councils.

For most Christians of the 21st century the names of theologians, heretics and councils of the 4th or 5th centuries belong to an utterly strange world. For the three Oriental-Orthodox patriarchs, however, the *syllabus errorum* served a very useful purpose. It provided for them the kind of legal verdict to keep “at a certain distance” from the ecumenical families the Assyrian heretics, the smallest of the oriental churches with about 385,000 members, a group that had suffered severely during the past centuries.

Ever since the middle of the nineties of last century Pope Shenuda III has warned with much vigour his believers in Egypt and in the emigration about the anti-Christian teachings of two chiliastic movements, the Jehovah’s Witnesses and the Seventh-Day Adventists.¹¹ Although they differ in their organisation and religious structures, yet both movements maintain that the present era corresponds to

9 *Mia physis tou logou sesarkomene*, the one nature of the divine Word incarnate.

10 Recent Nestorius-studies have acquitted the Patriarch of Constantinople of the charges of heresy. Winkler, D.W. *Koptische Kirche und Reichskirche*. Altes Schisma und neuer Dialog. Innsbruck, 1997, 44-50.

11 Mr. George Quay of the Seventh-Day Adventists arrived in Egypt in 1910. They have churches in Cairo, Alexandria, Sohag and East Zuq.

the biblical pre-millennial period which sooner or later will eventually find its fulfillment in the universal sovereign domain governed by the risen Christ or Jehova (Apc 20:1-10). Both movements originated in the 19th century in the United States of America, being products of the puritan-chiliastic revival. Their religious ancestors were the Montanists with their spiritual goal to establish a "heavenly Jerusalem" in Pepuza (Phrygia) and the legalistic Ebionites of the 2nd and 3rd centuries. The spiritual exclusiveness of these groups based upon the 144,000 redeemed who have not defiled themselves, etc. (Apc 14:3.4) has motivated and coerced them in their intensive missionary activities. Repeatedly, the Jehovah's Witnesses had proclaimed the *parousia*, yet each time the messianic age had to be postponed.

In June 1985, the Holy Synod of the Coptic Church declared both religious movements, the Jehovah's Witnesses and the Seventh-Day Adventists as being "non-Christian". Because of their zealous missionary activities they apparently pose a threat to Orthodox Copts in Egypt and in the emigration. On several occasions of his pastoral visits to Europe and the United States of America, Pope Shenuda III has lectured to his clergy and theological students about the heresies of these two movements.¹²

Each and every generation and region has had its heresies. This means that heresies are not mere accidental phenomena. On the contrary, whenever orthodoxy and orthopraxy are upheld, there also exist the "works of the flesh" which are among other things "selfishness, dissension, party spirit, envy and the like" (Gal 5:20).

At the same time, heresies are also a challenge, "lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified" (1 Cor 9:27).

12 Keraza 5/6, January 30, 1998; 23/24, June 12, 1998; 5/6, February 12, 1999; 31/32, September 15, 2000; 37/38, October 10, 2000.

ST. AUGIN (EUGENE)

Leader of the 4th Century Egyptian Monastic Influence in Mesopotamia

*Dale A. Johnson (Bar Yohanon)**

We have two primary sources for the life of St. Augin (Eugene) that lie outside the domain of either liturgical sources or expanded hagiographical texts. These are *the Book of Sobriety* by Isho'dnah, a 9th century history, and a recently discovered mention of St. Augin in a 7th century text from the Chronicle of Seert.

The first source gave rise to speculation by such eminent Syriac scholars such as Sebastian Brock that St. Augin was a pious invention of the 9th century by those enamoured of the contributions of Egyptian cenobitic monasticism. This opinion given in 1973 has been modified due to the intellectual honesty of Brock and others because of the recent discovery and publication of the *Chronicle of Seert*. This 7th century document gives credible evidence for the existence of St. Augin. Perhaps more discoveries are yet to come closer to the time of the late 3rd or early 4th centuries. We are always humbled by such finds which undoubtedly lie in the treasure houses of the Mesopotamian world.¹

In the province of literature outside these primary sources is the publication of Paul Bedjan's collection of the *Lives of the Martyrs and Saints* published in 1892. Over a hundred pages are dedicated to the life of St. Augin. It draws upon the scant information of Isho'dnah and probably the Chronicle of Seert and glori-

* Fr. Dale A. Johnson is a Syrian Orthodox priest presently in the Westen Diocese of the United States. He is one of only two priests who are not of ethnic origin in the Syrian Orthodox Church. He has spent several years at Mor Gabriel Monastery in Tur Abdin in southeast Turkey, specializing in Syriac/Aramaic texts. He studied at the University of Chicago under the great Syriac specialist, Arthur Voobus, and followed in his footsteps by helping to make available to the world manuscripts of the language of Jesus.

1 S. Brock noted the pushing back of the date of the first mention of St. Augin in an article published in India in Malyalam. He was kind enough to recently provide me with an unpublished English version of the article. He points out in the sources that there is an English summary of the Life of St. Augin (ed. Bedjan, *Acta Martyrum et Sanctorum II*, pp.376-480) by E.A. W. Budge in *The Book of Governors* by Thomas bishop of Marga (London 1893), vol. I, pp. cxxx-cxxxi. Also there is a well known history by J-M Fiey in his 'Nisibe: *metropole syriaque orientale et ses suffragantis des origines a nos jour's* (Leuven, 1977), pp.134-41.

fies the saint with numerous miracles of which we have no sources to verify these stories.

Also, there are other sources which have yet to be analysed such as a Trichur edition of the Hudra of the 9th or 10th century which delightfully tells the story of St. Augin in poetic form. In similar parsed verse we find information about St. Augin in a 13th century Gospel lectionary at Mor Gabriel monastery on the high limestone plateau a few miles north of Mt. Izla. Added to these texts are three *fenquithos* of 18th and 19th century dating but copies of far more ancient sources which this writer has surveyed at the very same monastery and also the nearby monastery of Mor Malke. These *fenquithos* also make references to aspects of the life of St. Augin. In particular they refer to the disciple of Augin named Lazarus.

Although the life of St. Augin is revered by the Syriac communities of Turabdin, unfortunately legendary ideas about the saint lack justification for belief even from the evidence of the liturgical texts. St. Augin was Egyptian and not of Syrian parents who were ex-patriots living in Egypt as believed by some of the Syriac faithful today.

The Pearl Diver – clue to when St. Augin became a monk

St. Augin was a pearl diver for 25 years. He was born on an island of Clyisma near the town of modern day Suez. This estuary was famous for oysters bearing pearls of great value. The island is in the gulf of Suez, an arm of the red sea. An oyster produces a pearl when foreign material becomes trapped inside the shell. The oyster responds to the irritation by producing nacre, a combination of calcium and protein. The nacre coats the foreign material and over time produces a pearl.

At the height of the Roman Empire, when pearl fever reached its peak, the historian Suetonius wrote that the Roman General, Vitellius, financed an entire military campaign by selling just one of his mother's pearl earrings.

The best natural pearls occur in the species *Meleagrina vulgaris*, native to the Persian Gulf. This species is found at the depths of 48 to 120 feet. St. Augin would have been highly athletic to participate in such an occupation. It is also likely that he probably did not start diving for pearls until he was at least 10 years old in order to have the lung capacity for such work. This would mean that he would have been about 35-40 years old before he became a monk under Pachomius, assuming that he was a diver for 25 years. Thus, St. Augin was probably a middle aged man when he arrived on the slopes of Mt. Izla. This analysis hints at a possible solution to the problem of which century in which St. Augin lived.

The Problem of Dating St. Augin's Life

The account of Isho'dnah says he was a contemporary of Jacob of Nisibis (d. 338) which would have placed him in the 4th century. The Chronicle of Seert, makes no mention of Jacob but links him to Gregory the Wonderworker from Pontus in north-central Turkey who died about 270 AD. Also he is associated with Mani in Isho'dhan's Life of St. Augin. Again this would place him in the 3rd cen-

tury as Mani is known to have died in 276 AD.

But it is possible for St. Augin's life to have spanned over both the 3rd and 4th centuries. If he was about 50 years old when he got to Mt. Izla where he first met St. Jacob of Nisibis around the year 320 AD, St. Augin would have been born around 270 AD or slightly before. Therefore, St. Augin would have been alive at the end of the life of Gregory the Wonderworker and also been active during the final years of the rule of St. Jacob in Nisibis.

As far as which king Shabur he was linked to in the *Chronicle of Seert*, that appears ambiguous, it seems he was alive during both their reigns. King Shabur I died in 272 AD and Shabut II, his son, began his reign in 309 AD. The linkage is to this royal Persian family and not to a particular family member, although Shabur II was the adult contemporary of St. Augin.

Who were the original disciples?

In an article published in *Malyalam* by professor Brock a few years ago he identified 14 disciples of St Augin in the text of Isho'dnah. These are likely to be the most historical and also members of the original group that came from Egypt. They are as follows:

- *John*, who lived near Castra (Roman military settlement) of Beth Zabdai, and was buried in the monastery of Castra known as Hlahah.
- *Sheri*, who came to Nisibis and became one of the original 18 brothers, Later he went to Dara, a few miles west of St. Augin's monastery and on the Izla range, and founded a monastery there. Dara was also a Roman fortification.
- *Yonan the hermit* whose father was a senator and relative of Emperor Constantine. He later returned to Egypt after a brief sojourn in Jerusalem.
- *Shallita*, founded a monastery in Qardu and Zabdai. He was from an Egyptian family and was trained in the monastery of St. Pachomius. He spent his last days in the town of Fenek on the Tigris river.
- *Aho*, who founded the monastery of the bucket not far from Fenek.
- *John* who founded the monastery of Kamul. He was from a Zoroastrian family from Beth Garmai. He was converted by St. Augin at Nisibis.
- *Ezekiel*, shared a birthday with Emperor Constantine. He was a Jewish convert from the tribe of Manassah. After becoming a monk under St. Augin he founded a monastery in Beth Garmai. He died on December 6th.
- *Toma*
- *Gurya*
- *Gregorios*
- *Serapion*
- *Michael* – may have been the companion of St. Aho who served in the military with Aho before they became monks.
- *Thekla* – sister of St. Augin
- *Elisha*
- *Stratonike*, another sister of St. Augin

Tradition built up the number of disciples to 72. These disciples who were added were memorable abbots and disciples who followed in the cenobitic tradition attributed to St. Augin and thus were added to his list quite correctly. It would be no different than people who are added to schools of thought in various fields from generation to generation. Followers of Thomas Aquinas who lived centuries after Aquinas would still be called Thomists even though they only knew him through books and tradition.

From the Syriac Sources

First, concerning the Holy St. Augin who established the monastery on the mountain of Izla near Nisibis. His family was from Egypt, from the Island of Clysma (according to Brock near modern Suez). His occupation was to place a mask over his face and dive down into the sea to bring up pearls, which he would then give to the poor. This was his work for 25 years.

He received the monastic habit in the monastery of Abba Pachomius. He and his companions went to the mountain of Izla where he built the beautiful monastery. Large groups of monks gathered around him. In those days St. Jacob was appointed Bishop of Nisibis. He built the church at Nisibis. St. Augin made many miracles before King Shabur.

The following were among his many disciples who built monasteries and convents: St. Thomas, St. Taba, Gurya, Gregorios, Yoannes, John, Shallita, Elisha, Serapion, Thekla the sister of St. Augin, Strtatonike another sister of his, John, St. Sheri, St. Michael. He died and was buried in the shrine of the martyrs next to the church he built.²

Also, "Augin was a contemporary of Anthony in the time of Constantine. He came to Persia with 10 brethren, settled near Nisibis at the time of Shabur in caves on a mountain called Marde, that is the monastery of Izla. He performed many miracles and even raised a youth killed by a lion who became a monk named Lazarus."³

2 From Isho'dnah Book of Sobriety, published in a French translation, *Livre de la Chastete' Compose' par Jesusdehah*, Paris 1891, Syriac text reprinted by P. Bedjan, *Liber Superiorum, seu Historica Monastica auctore Thoma, episcopo Margensi*, Paris 1901, pp. 437-517. (9th century Syriac document)

3 Dadisho of Qatar (E. Syr, late 7th century) excerpt edited by N. Sims-Williams in *Analecta Bollardiana*

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE COPTIC LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

*Dr. Boulos Ayad Ayad**

The History of the Coptic Language

The ancient Egyptian language had been abandoned totally between the fourth and fifth centuries A.D. The Coptic language was used side by side with this language up to the fifth century A.D. However, Coptic continued in use until the Arab invasion in the seventh century, after which its usage dwindled because of the spread of Arabic. "In 705/706 A.D. the Umayyad Viceroy 'Abd-Allah ibn Abd-al-Malik issued the hazardous and untimely decree substituting Arabic for Coptic in all state affairs."¹ By the seventeenth century A.D., Coptic had become a "dead" language although it is still used as the language of the Coptic Orthodox Church of Egypt and, along with Arabic, is employed in some Coptic communities scattered in Upper Egypt. Through usage by Egyptian Christians and in the writing of the fathers of the church, the Coptic language was refined to its final form.

We do not know exactly when the Egyptian started to use the Greek alphabet plus the seven letters borrowed from Demotic to write spoken Coptic. "The reason for using this alphabet would have been to give the correct pronunciation of sacred pagan formulae of which the Egyptian script only gave consonants."² This language, which we call Coptic, is the same ancient Egyptian language, but what is certain is that "in the 2nd century B.C. the Nubian kinglest, Urganophor, visiting Abydos, wrote there a graffito in the Egyptian language but in Greek characters. He obviously knew very little of either language! Later, some Egyptian rituals were written out in Greek."³

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1 Aziz S. Atiya, *A History of Eastern Christianity* (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1968), p. 18. For a discussion of the Coptic Church and culture, see Boulos Ayad Ayad, "The Coptic Orthodox Church," *Coptic Church Review*, winter 2000 (vol. 21, no. 4), pp. 115-16

2 George Posener, 1 (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1959), p. 52.

3 Ibid.

“It is interesting to note that the Coptic language reflected the old Egyptian local dialects.”⁴ Thus, philologists divided in the Coptic dialects into the following groups, according to the differences in pronunciation: Bohairic, Saidic, Fiomitic, Akhmimic, Memphitic, Bashmoric, and Oasis.

In the third century A.D. the Coptic language took final shape and the Christian School of Alexandria translated the books of the Old Testament; this was the first writing that appeared in Coptic.⁵ The Copts used their language with its dialects in their religious texts, in the translation of the Bible, for letters, stories, legal documents, and the history of the Coptic church.

The Importance of the Coptic Language

The importance of Coptic became apparent as Champollion attempted to decipher the Rosetta Stone. In preparation, he had studied the Coptic language as a tool. In 1822 Champollion had seen copies of texts from Egyptian temples in Nubia that contained the cartouches of Thutmose III and Ramses II. Knowing of the possible meaning of the royal names from Coptic as well as the knowledge of Thutmose and Ramses from ancient Greek authors, he realized the dual principle within the Egyptian hieroglyphics script via the specific writing of these two names. “Ramses” clearly illustrates the dual principle: “Ra” means “sun” in Coptic, and in the cartouche the sun disk represented the idea or concept of the sun, with the sound value “ra” in Egyptian. On the Rosetta Stone, the sign at the end of the cartouche was used to write the letter “s” in the name Ptolemy (Ptolemaios in Greek), enabling Champollion to read ra?_s_s. With a guess that the middle sign should read “m,” he had the name Ramses, which he could explain further from his knowledge of Coptic as “ra-mise” or “Ra is the one who give birth to him.”

In the case of Thutmose he was able to read similarly the ibis at the start of the cartouche as the god Thoth and the ending –mes in the same way as for Ramses. In other words some signs represented ideas (ibis or the ibis-god Thoth, sun for the sun-god Ra) while others within the same name represented sounds (the values discovered by Young for individual signs in the writing for foreign names, notably p, n, s).⁶

Champollion went on to delineate the importance of Coptic grammar when he published *Précis du système hieroglyphique* in 1824, “in which he laid out not only the script but also, using Coptic, the grammar of ancient Egyptian.”⁷ Clearly, a knowledge of Coptic grammar proved valuable to the early Egyptologists in their

4 Murad Kamil, *Coptic Egypt* (Cairo: Scribe Egyptian, 1968), p. 24. See also Stephen Quirke and Jeffrey Spencer, editors, *The British Museum Book of Ancient Egypt* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1992), p. 129.

5 Cf. George Posener, op. cit., p. 52, who believed that such translation was accomplished by the Jewish communities living in Upper Egypt.

6 Stephen Quirke and Jeffrey Spencer, op. cit., p. 129.

7 Ibid.

study of the ancient Egyptian language. Moreover, scholars turned as well to the Coptic vocabulary to recognize the vocabulary of ancient Egyptian and in its transliteration.

In addition, because Coptic was written in the Greek and Demotic alphabets, it supported scholars' research into the Nubian Christian language. "The Old Nubian alphabet is essentially the Coptic, reinforced by a few extra letters (for the peculiar sounds of the language) which may be derived from the earlier pagan writing of Nubia, the so-called Meroitic."⁷

Coptic served as one of the languages that assisted researchers in discovering the correct pronunciation of certain ancient Egyptian words. Several examples will be useful. The word P3wns⁸ in hieroglyphics means "the wolf," in the Aramaic of Elephantine it is Pwns⁹, in Coptic **ΠΟΥΩΝΥ, ΦΟΥΩΝΥ**, and in Greek **ΦΟΥΩΝΙΣ**. One can say that the pronunciation of this word between the fifth century B.C. and its writing in the third century A.D. was **ΠΟΥΩΝΥ** or **ΦΟΥΩΝΥ**.

Another example is the Egyptian name that was written **P3-dj-ωsjr** in hieroglyphics, in the Aramaic of Elephantine as **Ptwsyr̄y** or **Ptwsry** **Ptswry**, and Ptsry, in Demotic as **P-a.te-ωsr**, in Coptic as **ΠΑΤΟΥΣΙΡΕ**, and in Greek as **ΠΕΤΟΥΣΙΡΙΣ, ΠΑΤΟΥΣΙΡΙΣ**, and **ΠΕΤΩΣΙΡΙΣ**, meaning "whom Osiris has given." From the above, we can say that the pronunciation of this name would be **Ptwsyr̄y** as in Aramaic, or as **ΠΑΤΟΥΣΙΡΕ** in Coptic, or as **ΠΕΤΩΣΙΡΙ** in Greek.

Further, the ancient Egyptian name, meaning "the (man) of (the god) Amun", written in hieroglyphics as **P3-n-īm̄n** would be **Pa-īm̄n** in Demotic, **ΠΑΜΩΝ, ΠΑΜΑΝ, ΠΑΜΟΥΝ** in Coptic, and **ΠΑΜΟΥΝΙΣ** **ΠΑΜ(Μ)ΩΝ**, and **ΠΑΜΟΥΝΙΟΣ** in Greek. Using the Coptic, the pronunciation of this name could be **ΠΑΜΩΝ** or **ΠΑΜΟΥΝ** for it is the closest to the Aramaic **Paṃwn** and the Greek.

A fourth example is the hieroglyphic word htm (khtm), meaning "seal." The Aramaic of Elephantine in the fifth century B.C. would be hwtm or htm and in Coptic **ΨΩΤΕΜ**. The pronunciation of the word before the writing of the Coptic language in the third century A.D. was **ΨΩΤΕΜ** or **ΚΗΩΤΕΜ**.⁹

For those researching the spoken Arabic of Egypt, it is valuable to study many of the Coptic loan words, such as those that follow.¹⁰

8 F. Ll. Griffith, *The Nubian Texts of the Christian Period* (Berlin: Abhanal. Der Berl. Akad., 1913), p. 71.

9 Boulos Ayad Ayad, "The Jewish-Aramaean Civilization and Its Relationship to the Ancient Egyptian Civilization," *Occasional Publications in Classical Studies (OPCS)* (Greeley, Colorado: University of Northern Colorado, Museum of Anthropology, 1983), pp. 88-89, 90, and 102.

10 Murad Kamil, "Coptic Loan Words in the Spoken Arabic of Egypt," Cairo, self-published, 1967, p. 4, and George Sabhy, *Common Words in the Spoken Arabic of Egypt, of Greek or Coptic Origin* (Cairo, La Société d'Archeologie Copte, 1950), pp. 4-18.

bersim	= clover
ghos	= small donkey; Arabic: gahsh
halak	= earring
halom	= cheese
herman	= pomegranate; Arabic: roman
kaake	= cake
kash	= straw
kot (+ article pi = pikot)	= straw basket; Arabic: beqoti
koh	= cough
koyke	= owl; Arabic: qowayq
lebsh	= bundle; in Arabic, usually of sugar canes

“The Coptic calendar is still used in Egyptian, especially by the Fellahs: the names of Coptic months have thus been introduced into the Arabic Language.”¹¹

Murad Kamil has pointed out that many Coptic verbs have been adopted by Arabic, such as

beshbosh	= to wet through
fot	= to jump up
fotfet	= to break into small pieces
kelka	= to clot; Arabic kalka’
loklek	= to mix
sha	= to rise (sun), shine; Arabic: sha sha
tota	= to step (when said to children); Arabic: tata. ¹²

He asserts that “The use of the interrogation instrument (adverb or suffix) at the end of a sentence or of a work in spoken Arabic is also the result of Coptic influence.”¹³

After the Arab conquest, the original Coptic names of Egyptian cities appeared again after “nine centuries of prevalence of the Greek Language in Egypt . . . , a fact proving that the common folk had preserved these names in their daily use.”¹⁴

<u>Coptic</u>	<u>Arabic</u>
Koos	Qos
Shmunein	El-Ashmunein
Hnis	Ahnâs
Ushim	Usim
Siout	Assiout
Pemshe	Bahnassa
Khmim	Akhmim

11 Murad Kamil, “Coptic Loan Words in the Spoken Arabic of Egypt,” pp. 4-5.

12 Ibid., p. 5.

13 Ibid.

14 Ibid.

The Influence of Coptic Outside Egypt:

While the Coptic language was used by all Egyptians at one time, it also has had an influence on some European languages during the classical period and Middle Ages. For example, the English word “oasis” originate from the Coptic word “owahe” and “gum” is derived from the Coptic “komi” or “komme.” To the Coptic word “tobe,” (“brick”), the definite article al was added later in Arabic and became “at-tobe.” The Arabs carried the word with them to Andalusia, where it became the Spanish “el-adobe.” Later the word moved with the Spanish to the America, “and thus the English vocabulary contains now the Adobe.”¹⁵

Murad Kamil offered yet another example of the influence of Coptic with the two brothers, Saints Cyril and Methodius of the Russian (Eastern) Orthodox faith, “who established the Cyrillic alphabet in the 9th century A.D., adopted therein two Coptic letters borrowed from Demotic: tshai and fai.”¹⁶

The Importance of Coptic Literature

Coptic literature is varied: the sayings of the Church Fathers, theological writings, monastic rules, biographies of the saints and martyrs that have been included in the Coptic *Synaxarium* and other books, stories, contracts, letters, funeral and religious texts borrowed from the Old and New Testaments, grammatical studies, Gnostic writings, and even magical and medical texts. Coptic literature has close links to both ancient Egyptian and Greek literature and is used by scholars in comparative linguistic studies.

The impact of the Coptic language and literature expanded with the spread of Christianity throughout the classical world in the first five centuries A.D. During that period, there was an “international” aspect to Christian literature because it was shared among the Coptic and Syriac churches and those in Armenia, Ethiopia, Greece, Russia, and even to the Western Roman Empire and Roman Catholicism.

Monasticism arose in Egypt. Among the monks and hermits living in communities or solitude in the Egyptian deserts, time was spent in copying the sayings of the Church Fathers and their sermons against paganism, along with magical writings and other forms of literature. Because the monks in Egypt at that time were not always originally Egyptian, the copying could be done in a variety of languages—Greek, Latin, and Syriac—depending on the copyist’s primary tongue and anticipated audience and usage. This movement of the literature aided in the spread of monasticism both to the East and the West.

After the Arab conquest of much of the Middle East in the seventh century, the Egyptian Copts and other Christian Arabs began to translate texts from their original languages into Arabic as well as using Arabic for their contemporary writing. This is the reason George Graf believes another Arabic dialect (aside from the

15 Ibid., p. 3.

16 Ibid.

well-known classical, spoken, and modern forms) exists based on such writings and translation: *Arabic Christian literature*.¹⁷

The Copts left thousands of manuscripts, papyri, ostraca, and stelae. These manuscript and papyri, which were originally written in or translated into Coptic, were very important from the political, social, religious, and cultural facets revealing the situation in Egypt during the Greco-Roman and Byzantine ages. For these reasons, a number of amateurs, tourists, and scholars began collecting Coptic manuscripts and papyri from the monasteries; most such manuscripts and papyri now reside in different museums, universities, and private collections in Europe and the United States. However, a substantial number remain in the Coptic Patriarchic Library of Egypt, the Coptic Museum in Cairo, and libraries of monasteries and churches in Egypt.

Societies and scholars have published indexes for these Coptic manuscripts, while others have published the manuscripts themselves along with interpretation and commentary in a variety of languages: English, French, German, Italian, Russian, and Arabic.¹⁸

The Relationship between the Ethiopic and Coptic Literature:

The Ethiopian Church has strong connections with the Coptic Church since the last part of the fourth century A.D. Thus, "The Ethiopic literature is a religious literature [that] depended totally on the Coptic literature in all its different periods, and most of the Ethiopic literature has been borrowed from the Coptic literature."¹⁹

The Ethiopians became believers in Christianity from the time of Frumntios in the fourth century. In the fifth century, nine Egyptian monks arrived in Ethiopia for the purpose of spreading Christianity among the Ethiopians. This led to the translation into Ethiopian of books of the Bible as well as other volumes used in the Coptic Church or related to the Coptic creed. Coptic literature flourished in Ethiopia during the fifth century. Ethiopic literature was religious and heavily depended on Coptic literature throughout all periods.

Scholars divided the phases of these translations into two periods. The first began from the introduction of Christianity in Ethiopia (fourth century A.D.) until the thirteenth century. Throughout this span, Ethiopic literature was dependent on the Coptic literature through translation. Many parts of the Coptic literature itself had been borrowed from the Greek or Syriac Christian writings. The second period started from the mid-thirteenth century to the present and depended on Coptic literature that was written in Arabic.

17 See Boulos Ayad Ayad, "Dr. Murad Kamil and the Coptic Biographies," *Occasional Publications in Classical Studies* (OPCS) (Greeley, Colorado: University of Northern Colorado, Museum of Anthropology, 1979), pp. 9-20.

18 Labib Habashi, "The Coptic Manuscripts," *Resalet Mar Mina fi 'Aid al-Nirwz, Twt 1664* (September 1947), Alexandria, Egypt, Society of St. Mina the Wonder-Worker.

19 Murad Kamil, "The Relationship between the Ethiopic Literature and the Coptic Literature," *Resalet Mar Min fi 'Aid al-Nirwz, Twt 1664* (September 1947), Alexandria, Egypt, Society of St. Mina the Wonder-Worker, p. 8.

Murad Kamil wrote in great detail about the periods of weakness and strength in Ethiopic literature and linked that literature to the political situations of Ethiopia and Egypt. He pointed to another important aspect of the dependence of Ethiopic literature on the Coptic literature: the Ethiopians did not have a written independent literature even though they did have an oral literature in poems and stories. This was due, he asserted, to the fact that the Ethiopians considered it undignified to write down popular literature. The lack of written literature also could be traced possibly to the high cost of parchment and the wages of scribes, who usually were priests. As priests, they concentrated their writings on religious, not secular matters. The priests were the only people who specialized in writing. As a result, little is recorded of Ethiopian history except that which has been written in the religious literature.²⁰

The Ethiopic literature did preserve some Coptic books that disappeared from the Coptic and Christian body of literature. The Ethiopian Church still uses fourteen liturgies, while the Coptic Church uses only three of the fourteen.

The influence of Ethiopic on Coptic literature was very limited. Yet, the Copts borrowed the biography of Saint Takla Himanut, which was translated from Ethiopian into Arabic by the Ethiopian monks who lived in the Egyptian monasteries and knew both Coptic and Arabic.

²⁰ Ibid., pp. 7-8.

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IN MEMORIAM: RAGHEB MOFTAH

Revd. Dr. John H. Watson

A wide range of amateurs and professionals in a definite social and cultural setting practises music, but all great music becomes accessible to peoples outside the cultural or ethnic circle. The present writer was educated in Western Classical music traditions from childhood and was a professional musician before becoming a theologian and priest. It is a personal conviction that it is in playing Coptic Orthodox music that we come close to the inner reality of Coptic liturgical life. It is essential to be aware of the public setting of Coptic Music whilst affirming the value of individual experience. All religious music, and especially Coptic music in this context, can be experienced at once as inward and intimate, communal and educational. There is nothing so evocative of the Coptic experience as the enigmatic *malisma* (a melodic extension of a vowel); the long unison phrases (the music is monophonic); and the measured metrical scanning of the verses of Coptic liturgical music, pointed by the metallic ring of the lonely *naqus* (a pair of small hand cymbals) or the *trianto* (triangle).

Speech, the unique sound of each distinct tongue, is intimately related to musical notation. Coptic Music, like Spanish Catholic, Armenian, Slavonic and traditional Anglican cathedral music is absolutely *sui generis*. It is impossible to ignore ethnic issues in the production and interpretation of Music. Each of the world's musical voices needs its own standard, the ability to distinguish the authentic and the counterfeit.

Just as there is a measure by which all Coptic Iconography may be evaluated, thanks to the tremendous accomplishment of Isaac Fanous, so there is a standard by which all Coptic music may be judged and it is that sanctioned by Ragheb Mofteh, a musicologist and scholar of eminence who devoted his life and personal fortune to the modern notation and definition of Coptic music. It is a phenomenal achievement. Dr. Mofteh lived in the nineteenth, twentieth and twenty-first centuries, dying at the age of 102 only the other day.

Ragheb Mofteh was born on 21 December 1898 at al-Faggala in Cairo. Fluent in English, French and German, he was sent to Germany to study at the Faculty of Agriculture in the University of Bonn in the Rhineland. It was a rather obvious field of study for a wealthy Copt living in the Nile Delta. But Ragheb's great passion was music, European classical music and the traditional music of Egypt, and he eventually obtained degrees in Music at Bonn and in Catholic Southern Germany at the University of Munich. At home in Egypt, both before his departure to Germany and on his return to Egypt, Ragheb found inspiration and collaboration with the traditionalist Coptic musician Mikhail Girgis al-Batanouny. The rest of the twentieth century was devoted to the recording and notation of Coptic liturgical texts. It was a turbulent century for Egypt, even when compared with the long centuries of turmoil in the Nile Valley. While Egypt struggled with experiments in con-

stitutional government, the failure of liberalism, war and occupation, revolution and republic and the growing Coptic revival, this remarkable man stuck to his task of cultural conservation. He disliked anything that interfered with his researches and was not an enthusiast for the 1950s Revolution. In popular English parlance, he kept his nose to the grindstone. It was a firm, indispensable dedication. In the later years of the century Moftah found valued collaborators in the cantors Sadek Attallah and Farag Abdel Messih.

UNESCO championed his work and Moftah was conscious of the international context of his project. He knew the British scholar Cecil Sharp (1859-1924) who travelled the United Kingdom for half a century, with basic recording equipment, collecting folk songs that would otherwise be lost. Moftah also understood that it was essential to be hard-hearted in pursuit of his ideal. He knew that the Hungarians Zoltan Kodaly and Bela Bartok had started their recordings and transcriptions of folk music in 1913 and that the results were only finally published in 1951. Much later in 1998 the Bela Bartok system of notation was used in Moftah's published transcriptions. Ragheb Moftah worked with the authoritative singers of the time, and produced an enormous number of recordings for critical analysis. The process was slow and careful, involving travels from the furthest reaches of Upper Egypt to the Mediterranean coastline. Coptic singers were everywhere in Egypt. In 1927, Moftah employed an Oxford trained musicologist called Ernest Newland Smith to work in a Nile houseboat investigating the structure and notation of Coptic music. Together, they produced sixteen volumes of musical notation, which could be read by trained musicians anywhere. It was a defining moment in the Coptic cultural and ethnic renaissance. Moftah and Newland Smith believed that the origins of European Music lay in the music of Egypt.

The *magnum opus* of Dr. Ragheb Moftah is *The Coptic Orthodox Liturgy of St. Basil* with Complete Musical Transcription, an indispensable tool for Coptic Studies. (American University in Cairo Press 1998). The Hungarian ethnomusicologist Dr. Margit Toth undertook the exquisite musical transcriptions, under Moftah's direction. This project alone took thirty years. Moftah has devoted most of his long life to the preservation of the significant Coptic musical heritage. Without this authentic sound of the Christian Nile there is no Coptic worship. The Western Coptologist or the Copt of the lands of emigration who does not understand Coptic Music mediated by Moftah does not understand the Copts at all. The Music is related solely to Coptic and Arabic. It cannot be successfully sung in English or any European language and the attempt ought not to be made. It is an act of cultural barbarism.

Dr. Moftah's death after so long a life left all those concerned with Coptic language and culture bereft, though it was clear that even those who live longest will be called home. To give thanksgiving for Ragheb Moftah's ascendancy in the field of cultural and theological studies, the writer has been spending time with the musical text of the Liturgy, in Arabic, Coptic and English. It is an indispensable work of gift and disclosure. The gift is that of the beauty of holiness in music, and

the disclosure is of a trustworthy and genuine expression of history, culture and spirituality among the Copts.

SPECIAL ISSUE OF COPTIC CHURCH REVIEW
Father (Abouna) Bishoi Kamel
by John Watson

The Coptic Orthodox Christian might ask the question, why has a Western priest and theologian expressed such an enthusiastic interest in a Coptic priest who spent most of this relatively short life of 47 years working in a parish church in Alexandria?

Readers of the *Coptic Church Review* in the last two decades will have seen and understood many varied contributions from the Revd. Dr. John Watson and will be aware of his other supplements of Coptic Studies. But he has said that his study of Abouna Bishoi Kamel was written to provide a comprehensive appreciation of what he sees as the most significant gift of modern Coptic thought and life to universal Christian spirituality. Fr. Watson has made three visits to the church of Mar Girgis in Sporting, in December 1989, April 1992 and May 2001, exclusively to study the life of Fr. Bishoi on the ground. In preparation for the CCR text he has described these meetings as “moments of great Christian joy and spiritual disclosure”; numerous direct quotations from these recordings are an essential part of the published text.

In seven chapters with an Introduction and Epilogue, the author has explored the significance of Abouna Bishoi Kamel’s continuing presence in Coptic Egypt. The two longest chapters explore the Alexandrine priest’s authentic *theologia crucis* or Theology of the Cross, which the author sees as the key to Fr. Bishoi’s life. These chapters also discuss Fr. Bishoi’s confrontation with cancer and record his piercing historical analysis of barren ecclesiasticism with theological truth. Some Western Theology has focused upon an interpretation in which our knowledge of the Being of God is derived from the study of Christ in his humiliation and suffering. Fr. Watson finds an Orthodox resonance in the teaching of Father Bishoi. Five chapters offer shorter but careful surveys of the Coptic Orthodox priest’s biography, parochial ministry, marriage, publications and relations with Islam and Muslims.

The conclusion of Fr. John Watson’s investigation and writing is that the perfect reciprocity between confession of faith and life, which he finds in Abouna Bishoi Kamel, is evidence of such holiness as to define a saint.

The book is scheduled to be mailed to subscribers of CCR next March. Price \$5.00 copy. For orders of more than 20 copies there is a 40% deduction (price \$3 per copy) if prepaid and received before the end of January 2002. Send orders to:

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BOOK REVIEWS

The Purple Mantle

By Alikı Kafetzopoulou. Translated from the Greek by Efrosyni Zisimou Robinson. Edited by Lawrence Damian Robinson. St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 2001. Pp.188 \$12.00 U.S. ISBN 1-887904-05-0

This historical novel is set in the Roman Empire during the reign of the Roman Emperor Diocletian and is consequently of special interest to all Copts and Coptologists. AD 284 was the year of the accession of Diocletian and Coptic time is reckoned from this Era of the Martyrs. One chapter of this book is devoted to the martyrdom of the Copts in Egypt.

The author has given an adequate picture of the period with a convincing presentation of the hero, Helianos, and his journey to Christian faith, inspired by the life of his mother and of many of his friends who were ready to die for Christ. This is a worthwhile and easy read in American-English, with a few phrases and words which fall discordantly on English ears but will probably sound natural to most readers.

There is a rather gruesome presentation of Ursus, an apostate who betrays his friends. Although at times psychologically convincing this portrait is merciless and the narrator appears to know in advance the judgement of a merciful God. There is an ugly sense of religious fundamentalism.

The narrative ought to have been allowed to speak for itself. The Translator's Introduction and the footnotes are heavily didactic and unnecessarily dogmatic. There is no advantage in turning a solid piece of narrative into religious propaganda. The text can easily stand-alone and deserves to be read by anyone interested in the period or in the concept of martyrdom. The great hero Mar Guirgius has a significant role in the novel, which fact alone commends the novel to all readers of the CCR.

John Watson

*The Anglican Parish of St. Mark
Highcliffe, Dorset, UK*

Be Thou There: The Holy Family's Journey in Egypt.

Edited with an introduction by Gawdat Gabra, Text by William Lyster, and Cornelis Hulsmann, and Stephen Davis. Photographs by Norbet Schiller. 2001. 24x32cm. 100 colour illus. 160 pp. Hardbound. ISBN 977 424 606 3 LE 125 US\$ 49.50. £41.50.

This beautifully illustrated and elegantly bound volume is a joy to hold, to leaf through for the illustrations and, of course, to read. This is a significant contribution to Coptic studies focusing upon the traditions associated with the Holy Family in Egypt. William Lyster's scholarly examination of the tradition, Corneils Hulsmann's detailed tracing of the sacred route and the close reading of the written sources by Stephen Davis all add up to a profitable work which can be warmly commended to everyone working in this field.

John Watson

The Coptic Orthodox Liturgy of St. Basil with Complete Musical Transcription

Compiled by Ragheb Mofteh. Music transcriptions by Margit Toth. Text edited by Martha Roy. 1998. 21.6x28cm. 748 pp. Hardbound. ISBN 977 424 437 0. LE150 US\$49.50 £41.50

This volume will be a lasting memorial to Ragheb Mofteh, the Coptic musicologist who devoted his life and personal fortune to the modern notation and definition of Coptic music. It is the extraordinary achievement of a scholar who died recently at the age of 102. Mofteh was born on 21 December 1898 at al-Faggala in Cairo. Although sent to Germany to study at the Faculty of Agriculture in the University of Bonn, he eventually obtained degrees in Music at Bonn and at the University of Munich. At home in Egypt, both before his departure to Germany and on his return to Egypt, Ragheb found inspiration and collaboration with the traditionalist Coptic musician Mikhail Girgis al-Batanouny and later found valued collaborators in the cantors Sadek Attallah and Farag Abdel Messih.

The notation system of the Hungarian composer Bela Bartok was used in Mofteh's published transcriptions and the volume under review in an essential tool for all Coptologists. The Hungarian ethnomusicologist Dr. Margit Toth undertook the exquisite musical transcriptions, under Mofteh's direction. This project alone took thirty years and the result is a superb gift: that of the beauty of holiness in music, and the disclosure of a trustworthy and genuine expression of history, culture and spirituality among the Copts.

John Watson

(Please see the article in this issue of CCR on Ragheb Mofteh for more information on the author and his work, editor)

Monasticism in Egypt: Images and Words of the Desert Fathers.

By Michael McClellan. 1998. 25x24cm. 41 b/w illus. 112 pp. Hardbound. ISBN 977 424 188 6. LE40. US £27.50 £22.95.

This is an ecumenical volume devoted to the presentation of the life of Greek Orthodox monks at Sinai and Coptic monks in Upper Egypt and the Wadi Natroun. There are interesting images of Catholic monks visiting the Copts at the Red Sea monasteries. With its useful introductory essay and numerous quotations from the desert fathers the book provides the reader with a useful introduction to Egyptian monasticism.

John H Watson

Gone But Not Forgotten: Church Leaving and Returning in the Twenty-first Century

By Philip Richter and Leslie J Francis ISBN 0-232-52236-7, Darton, Longman and Todd, February 1998. Sterling £10.95 pp. xvi x 192.

The Coptic Orthodox Christian may be forgiven for believing that he has little use for a survey, which examines the drift away from church attendance in the United Kingdom, carried out by The Church Leaving Research Project and conducted by the University of Surrey's Roe Hampton Institute. This would perhaps be a mistake. The Church within Egypt itself may have little to learn here, but the present writer has often argued that the Church in the Diaspora has much to learn from Western mistakes. (One may read 'Migration' for Diaspora though the usage is clearly disingenuous). Future generations in the Coptic Diaspora will reflect the situation in Western churches, indeed, they may already do so.

Reasons for leaving the church include a perceived gap between personal values and those of the church establishment, a failure of the church to accompany people into an adult, questioning faith, and a lack of pastoral care when someone undergoes a major life change, such as leaving home or getting divorced. The experience of leaving is liberating for many. Young Copts have expressed themselves in terms not far from those in this volume: "The pressure is off, the pressure of belonging, doing the right thing, having the right experience has gone, and it is absolutely liberating". Other factors include excessive pressure from parents, too many demands on time or money from the church, and a perception that church leaders do not put Christian values into action through their lifestyle and perception of their roles.

The contrast between the world of Faith and the petty despotism in so many church communities is nowhere more sharply portrayed than in this volume of religious sociology.

John H Watson

Dorset, United Kingdom

Coptic Egypt: The Christians of the Nile

By Christian Cannuyer 122 colour, 25 b/w illustrations. 7x5 inches (18x12.5cm.) 160 pp. Paperback original ISBN 0 500 301042 3. £6.95. New Horizons series: Thames & Hudson, London 2001.

L'Art Copte En Egypte: 2000 ans de christianisme

Institute Du Monde Arabe, Paris. Publishers: Gallimard, Paris 2000.255 pp. 287 colour illustrations. 200 French Francs.

Coptic Art in Egypt, the catalogue for the superb exhibition in Paris and Cap D'Agde 15 May 2000 to 7 January 2001, is edited by a team from the great Parisian Institute of the Arab World. Contributors include Isaac Fanous, Edward Al-Kharrat, Nasser El-Ansary and Christian Cannuyer, with many other eminent scholars. The text and illustrations are of a uniform standard which is quite superior. The accompanying volume *Coptic Egypt: The Christians of the Nile* is beautiful and inexpensive. It began life as a supporting text for the same exhibition. The popular New Horizons format is the first popular illustrated history of Coptic Egypt in English. The text is clear. Novices and specialists will learn from Professor Cannuyer of the Catholic University of Lille.

In five chapters almost all of the important questions in Coptology are covered. "The first church of Alexandria" deals cautiously with early Coptic history. On the period "when Egypt was Christian", broadly from the fourth to the early seventh centuries, Cannuyer offers a careful commentary. The exposition of Coptic Art is rare, in pages illustrating Coptic textiles, which have a unique place in art history, and in presentations of icons from the sixth century to the present. The primary images of the Copts throughout the ages are all here in radiant colour reproductions. In the survey "under the Sign of the Crescent", we are offered an accurate treatment of conversions to Islam, an examination of the Coptic ambivalence towards Islamic rule and a summary of the frustration of the Copts with their co-religionists, the Christian Crusaders. The centuries of decline are impartially presented. The concluding chapter, on the Copts in the Modern Era, contains significant acknowledgement of Isaac Fanous and contemporary iconography. Cannuyer's handling of the tension between Coptic Catholics and Orthodox is discerning.

It is a pity that the otherwise excellent translation by Sophie Hawkes tells us that the relics of St. Mark are 'worshipped' at Abassiya, when Cannuyer's French original uses 'venerated': as in the case of icons, the distinction is important for Orthodox Christians.

In the enlarging Western library of Coptic Studies this volume deserves a place.

John H Watson

The Inner Kingdom

Vol. 1 of the collected works of Bishop Kallistos Ware of Diokleia. Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2000. 230 pp. Paper: ISBN 0-881-41-209-0. U.S. \$14.95 U.K. £11.99. Hardcover: ISBN 0-88141-198- 17. U.S. \$22.95 U.K. £17.99

This book is a very good introduction to the Orthodox theology and spirituality. It is the first of the Collected Works of Bishop Kallistos of Diokleia, one of the leading contemporary Orthodox theologians, who teaches at the Oxford University, and who lectures around the world, speaking equally to lay people and specialists. The book deals with essential themes in Orthodox theology, spirituality and worship. In the first chapter, that is a perfect introduction to the whole book, the author describes his 'Journey to the Orthodox Church'. There are separate chapters on 'Repentance' (Chapter 3), 'Orthodox Public Worship' (4&5), Chapters 6 and 7 ('Pray without Ceasing' " and 'Silence in Prayer') invite us into the world of the desert ascetics and hesychast monks.

There are three chapters on personal vocation, 'martyrdom' (8), 'spiritual guide' (9) and the strange path of the fool for Christ's sake (10). Three chapters discuss Time and Eternity, 'Death and Resurrection' (2), and 'Time' (11). Chapter 12 is a challenging discussion of Origen, St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. Isaac the Syrian and St. Silouan the Athonite, in an attempt to find an answer to a challenging question, "Dare We Hope for the Salvation of All?"

Throughout the whole book, Bishop Kallistos includes many quotations from the early Church Fathers as well as from contemporary theologians, and famous writers and monastic leaders (including one from Fr. Matta El-Meskeen, Abbot of St. Macarius' Monastery, Wadi-Natrun, Egypt). This book is an essential reading for Orthodox Christians who seek to increase their knowledge of the Church Tradition as well as any Christian who wants to enrich his spiritual life.

Your Sins are Forgiven You: Rediscovering the Sacrament of Reconciliation

By George A. Maloney, SJ. Staten Island, New York: Alba House. 2000; pp. 127. Paper, \$7.95.: ISBN 0-8189-0691-x

The author of this book is a Jesuit priest who has written extensively and has led many retreats on various aspects of the spiritual life. He addresses himself here to a problem that is common not only among Catholics but also other Christians as well, which is the lack of interest in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, People are going less often to confession nowadays. To find a solution for this problem, Father

Maloney goes to the sources, the Bible and the Tradition in the early Church. He gives examples from the life and teaching of our Lord: the loving Father in the parable of the prodigal son, the sinful woman who anointed the feet of our Lord, and his prayer on the cross to forgive those who were responsible for his crucifixion. Evolution and change in the practice of the Sacrament throughout Church history is shown by reference to the Shepherd of Hermas (second century), Tertullian (third century), and other Fathers in later centuries when public confession was the common practice. Private confession, usually to the monastic elders, started among the Egyptian monks in the fourth century. In the fifth century the Celtic monks of Britain started to replace the public confession by the private confession to a priest, and through their missionary activity, this became the practice in many churches, east and west. The final chapters of the book describe the present practice of the Sacrament of Confession in the Catholic and Orthodox churches.

The Journals of Father Alexander Schmemmann 1973-1983

Translated and Edited by Juliana Schmemmann. Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2000, pp. 353. Paper, \$19.95: ISBN 0-88141-200-7.

Born in a Russian family that migrated in his early childhood to France, Father Schmemmann loved the Orthodox liturgy since his teens. He actively participated in St. Sergius Orthodox Theological Institute in Paris where such famous Russian theologians as Sergius Bulgakov, Archimandrite Cyprian and Nicholas Afanassieff influenced him. The latter had a great impact on Schmemmann by his 'Eucharistic ecclesiology' He also learned from the Roman Catholic theologians who lead the 'liturgical revival' in the Catholic Church and called for the return to the Fathers. In 1951 he left Paris to New York to follow Father George Fluorovsky in his newly opened St. Valdimir's Seminary. Father Schmemmann became its dean and professor of liturgy, positions which he kept till his untimely death in 1983. Under him the school became a center of liturgical and Eucharistic revivals. Father Schmemmann became busy with writing and lecturing all over the US. In addition he addressed a weekly sermon in Russian on *Radio Liberty*.

The Journals offer an insight into the intimate life of Fr. Schmemmann. Although written during the last ten years of his life, yet they cover events of his earlier years. As one of the pioneering Orthodox theologians in the west, his journals, as well as his other writings, will be a guide to all new Orthodox churches in the Diaspora.

Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, New Testament Vol. II: Mark

Edited by Thomas Oden and Christopher A. Hall. Downers Grove: Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1998. Pp. 316. \$39.99 (hardcover). ISBN: 0-8308-1471-X.

Church Fathers very rarely produced sustained commentary on Mark. The larger Gospels of Matthew and John overshadowed this Gospel in the minds of the Fathers. With the assistance of computer searches, an abundance of comment has been discovered to be embedded amidst patristic homilies, apologies, letters, commentaries, and theological treatises. In this Ancient Christian Commentary on Mark, the insights of many Fathers from the second to the seventh centuries are included. There are frequent quotations from the Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Athanasius, Ephrem the Syrian, Gregory Nazianzen, Cyril of Jerusalem, Jerome and Augustine. The book is concluded with a chronological list of the Fathers and their writings, an author's / writing index, a subject index and a Scripture index.

Preachers, teachers and Bible students of every sort will want to drink deeply from the Ancient Christian commentary on Scripture that integrates spirituality and erudition, liturgy and dogma.

Coptologia: International Journal of Coptic Thought and Orthodox Spirituality, Volume XVII

Edited by F.M. Ishak, Ph.D. (P.O. Box 235, Don Mills Postal Station, Don Mills, Ontario, Canada M3C 2S2) 2001. Pp. 173. \$8.50 (US), \$10 (Canada), \$12 (Other Countries), \$15 (Libraries and Institutions), \$5.00 (for full-time students); plus postage.

The 2001 volume of Coptologia contains a variety of articles that reflect the different aspects of Coptic life. They include *Discipleship* by His Holiness Pope Shenouda III, *Coptic Patrology* and *Coptic Mimarology* by the editor, *Chronology and Iconography of St. Joseph* by Dr. Otto Meinardus, *Mystery of the Eucharist* by Father Matta El-Meskeen, and *Coptic Language and Literature* by Professor Boulos Ayad.

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2002 CALENDAR OF FASTS AND FEASTS

- * *THE SEVEN MAJOR FEASTS OF OUR LORD*
- ** *The Seven Minor Feasts of Our Lord*
- *** *Feasts of Virgin Mary*
- **** *Fasts*

- * **January 7 - CHRISTMAS**
- ** **January 14 - Circumcision of Our Lord**
- *** **January 18 - Paramoni (1)**
- * **January 19 - EPIPHANY**
- ** **January 21 - First Miracle of Our Lord at Cana**
- *** **January 29 - Dormition of Virgin Mary**
- ** **February 15 - Entrance of Our Lord into the Temple**
- **** **February 25 - Fast of Nineveh (3)**
- **** **March 11 - Great Lent (55)**
- March 19 - Feast of the Cross**
- *** **April 2 - Apparition of the Virgin at Zeitoun in 1968**

- * **April 7 - ANNUNCIATION**
- * **April 28 - ENTRANCE OF OUR LORD INTO JERUSALEM (PALM SUNDAY)**

- ** **May 2 - Holy Thursday**
- * **May 5 - EASTER**
- *** **May 9 - Birth of Virgin Mary**
- * **May 12 - St. Thomas' Sunday**
- ** **June 1 - Entrance of Our Lord into Egypt**
- * **June 13 - ASCENSION**
- * **June 23 - PENTECOST**
- **** **June 24 - Apostles' Fast (18)**
- July 12 - Martyrdom of St. Peter and St. Paul**
- **** **August 7 - Fast of the Virgin (15)**
- ** **August 19 - Transfiguration of Our Lord**
- *** **August 22 - Assumption of the Body of Virgin Mary**
- September 11 - **Nayruz: Coptic New Year's Day (Feast of the Martyrs)**
- September 27 - **Feast of the Cross**
- **** **November 25 - Christmas Fast (43)**
- ** **December 12 - Presentation of Virgin Mary into the Temple**