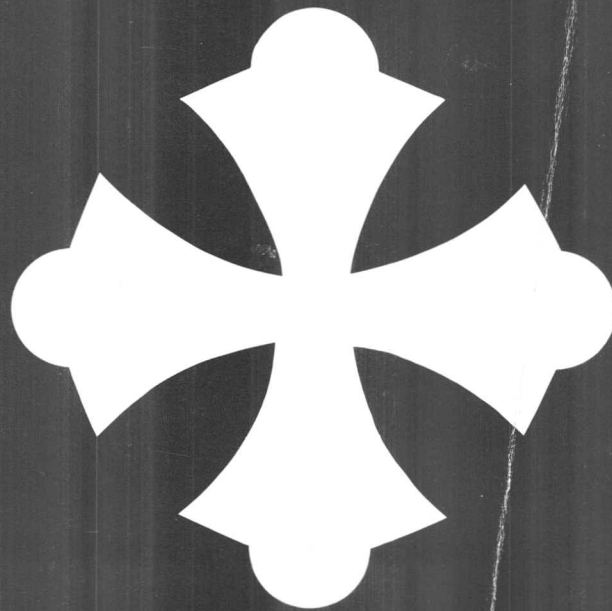


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COPTIC CHURCH REVIEW

Volume 9, Number 1 Spring 1988

- *WOUNDS OF THE RISEN CHRIST*
- *A SERMON ON PENITENCE*
- *COPTIC PROTEST UNDER
ISLAMIC RULE*



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ABOUT THIS ISSUE

In the early Church, Easter was called *Pascha* because, having its type in the Jewish Passover, it is the feast of “Jesus who was crucified”. The joy of the Resurrection does not erase the sacrifice of the Cross. On the contrary it shows its efficacy and its acceptance. In the Orthodox theology both Crucifixion and Resurrection have their roles in God’s plan for salvation. This is why the Coptic Church does not reflect on either event, while excluding the other, in any day in its liturgy of the Holy Week. The powerful resurrected Christ is worshipped on Good Friday and the Eucharist on Easter night is the *anamnesis* of Christ’s Sacrifice. The same is seen in Scripture, which does not separate the Cross from the Resurrection. *Blessed Father Bishoi Kamel* elaborates on this fact in his meditation on two of the appearances of Christ on Easter Sunday in the article, ***Wounds of the Risen Christ***. The two Marys took hold of His wounded feet, while the disciples saw the wounds of His hands and His side. Father Bishoi Kamel (1931-1979) is well known to our readers through his highly spiritual articles previously translated in the *Journal*. His biography appeared in the issue of Spring 1981. The present article was published in Arabic in *St. Mark’s Review* in April 1972.

We thank *Mr. John S. Jorgensen* for his translation from Coptic of ***A Sermon on Penitence Attributed to St. Cyril of Alexandria***. The part of the sermon published in this issue gives the story of a miracle that illustrates clearly the traditional teaching of the Coptic Orthodox Church concerning the change of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist. John Jorgensen is a Ph.D. candidate in the Northwest Semitic program of the Department of Near Eastern Studies at John Hopkins University and holds an A.B. degree in Classical Studies from Duke University. Currently he is studying ancient Semitic languages, Hebrew Bible, and archaeology. Among his other interests are history and literature of the Orthodox Churches.

In ***A Quality of Spirit***, *Mr. Jack Phillips* narrates how a visit to Egypt, during Holy Week and Easter of 1981, has changed his life and left him with a lasting impression of the spiritual dimension in Christianity. Jack Phillips received his Master of Pastoral Ministry degree from Creighton University and serves as Director of Adult Education at St. Leo Catholic Church in Omaha, Nebraska. He is of Syrian heritage, and has traveled widely in the Middle East for academic and archeological research.

Islam and the Coptic Church

There are three articles in this issue about Islam. The Moslem Arabs captured Egypt from the Romans in AD 641. At first the Egyptians thought that the Arab invasion was one of similar invasions they got accustomed to since 525 B.C. Persians delivered the country to the Greek, who were later conquered by the Romans, who in their turn left it to the Arabs. However, after a century of the occupation and the failure of several organized Egyptian revolts against the invaders, the Egyptians began to live with the fact that the Moslem Arabs were there to stay. In *The Apocalypse of Pseudo-Pesyntheus: Coptic Protest Under Islamic Rule*, Dr. L. S. B. MacCoull discusses how the Egyptians in the eighth century looked at the teachings of Islam, the social evils that came with it, and their sufferings under its rule. Their hope in a delivery from its yoke was kept alive in Coptic apocalyptic literature, an example of which is reviewed in this article. Dr. MacCoull is a known Coptic Scholar and a Senior Research Scholar of the Society for Coptic Archaeology, Washington, D.C. She is a frequent contributor to this *Journal*.

The Messenger of God in the So-called Gospel of Barnabas, by Dr. Boulos A. Ayad, is the last article in a series on that false gospel which was forged by a Moslem in the sixteenth century. The article gives examples in which this gospel tries to prove the heavenly message of Islam by putting words in the mouth of Christ where He is supposed to have prophesied the coming of the Prophet of Islam.

In *Currents in Coptic Church Studies*, Dr. Ayad reviews the Arabic book, *Christianity in Islam*, which stated the positive views of the Koran regarding Christianity. However, the reader is advised that the book, which was originally written and published in Egypt, did not illustrate frankly how the Koran contradicts itself with teachings in which it refused the main Christian doctrines of Christology and redemption.

Editor

Acknowledgement

Scripture quotations in this volume, unless otherwise noted, are from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible copyrighted 1946, 1952, © 1971, 1973 and used by permission of the division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches.

The picture of St. Pesyntheus Bishop of Qift on the backcover is taken from an icon in the Church of St. Mary, Haret Zuwaila, Cairo. It is reprinted from *Coptic Egypt*. Cairo, Egypt: Art Publishers, 1986.

WOUNDS OF THE RISEN CHRIST

Blessed Father Bishoi Kamel

“See my hands and my feet . . . ; handle me.”

(Luke 24:39)

What is required of us today is not to stand at the foot of the Cross and meditate, but rather to feel the wounds of Jesus of Nazareth Who was crucified and Who rose from the dead.

The Cross and the Resurrection are two inseparable incidents. Death (the Cross) is a must before the Resurrection. Since the Resurrection was present in Christ as he hung on the Cross, death could not hold Him (Acts 2:24) in spite of the fact that He experienced it, and this is because He is “the resurrection and the life” (John 11:25).

It is difficult for people to comprehend the power of the Resurrection without sharing in the sufferings of the Cross (Phil. 3:10), that is by feeling the wounds of the Lord. It is as though the Lord wished to assure His disciples that the Resurrection is in seeing and touching the wounds of Christ (Luke 24:39; John 20:20, 27). He who shares in the sufferings of the Lord, and carries His Cross and follows Him, qualifies to experience the power and splendor of the Resurrection. Lord, permit me to get a taste of the joy of the Resurrection and to feel Your wounds together with the women and the disciples.

“And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshipped him” (Matt. 28:9)

Jesus my Lord, after Your feet have led me back from the stray path, I now approach to touch them in worship. The nail in Your feet was put there because of my sins, and because of this and amidst the joy of the Resurrection I do not cease from kissing the wound from the nail . . . because this wound is what saved me from the stray path.

I - I hold onto Your feet

I hold them tightly so that when Your feet move, mine may move too, and when Your feet stop, I may stop too, holding onto them. I do not wish to have feet other than Your feet. My Lord Jesus, do not permit my feet to move except when Yours move; “that you should follow in his steps” (1 Peter 2:21). “May I shoe my feet with

the equipment of your Gospel” (cp. Eph. 6:15). “May your words be a lamp to my feet and a light to my path” (Psalm 119:105). Then I can register my actions according to Your words . . . I no longer have a separate identity from You but through my freedom of will I hold onto Your feet. This is why I offer You the symbols of my freedom.¹

I hold onto Your feet because You are the way (John 14:6). The way began from the manger to Calvary, to the grave, then the Resurrection. The saints, the martyrs and the ascetics who held onto Your feet travelled the road with You and through You. Then they accompanied You up to the Cross where they died with You to the world, and where their sins were buried through Your grave and it was then that You raised them and seated them with You in the heavens. My Lord Jesus, You alone are my way—I will hold onto Your feet all my life even to the Cross so You can lead me to the joy of Your Resurrection. “I have been crucified with Christ, it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.” (Galatians 2:20)

When I hold Your feet I will not let You go (Song of Solomon 3:4). The Church which does not hold onto You firmly sentences itself to perish because “Thou art the life of us all, the salvation of us all, the hope of us all, the healing of us all and the resurrection of us all.”²

Nowadays the churches which are preoccupied with material worldly affairs have no hope for salvation but through holding onto the feet of Jesus and never letting them go. The human spirit which is wandering and disturbed has no other recourse than to hold onto the feet of the Lord Jesus . . . only Jesus; then will it reach a state of stability through the strength of the Lord’s Resurrection.

Jesus alone! Beware O my soul lest you try to hold the feet of Jesus together with the feet of this world; they go in opposite directions. Hold, O my soul to the feet of Jesus only . . . and you my Church . . . only Him. We believe in One God—hold on tightly to the feet of the Lord Jesus only, and do not let go, so you can rejoice with Him in the splendor of His Resurrection.

2 - I worship Thee

The Lord Jesus asks you my soul, to worship Him in truth and spirit. Kneeling down in worship after the Resurrection has many meanings to the worshipping soul.

My soul, if you have experienced worship in humility during the Great Lent, now the time has come for you to experience worship with joy during the period of Pentecost. Hold O my soul to the feet of the Lord and kneel down in worship with Mary Magdalen.

A - Worship with Joy

It is the joy of Him Who rose and conquered death. Death, whose pangs all human beings without exception have felt, is now broken by the Resurrection of the Lord. The sting of death is sin and the Lord Jesus condemned sin in the flesh. He

was put to death for our trespasses and raised for our justification' (Rom. 4:25). Kneel down my soul with Mary Magdalen who worshipped with joy because He freed her from the lusts of the flesh, from the seven demons, and from the chains of the love of this world. Rejoice O my soul because the death of sin (sin of the world, the flesh and the devil) no longer has power over you; because Jesus has broken the sting of death. Jesus, Your wounds bring happiness to me because they witness to the battle that took place on the cross and to Your victory in it.

B - Worship with gratitude

Gratitude of a man in debt which debt the Lord has forgiven: The woman who was a sinner owed five hundred denarii and He forgave her, and because of this, she loved much . . . and gave thanks (Luke 7:36-50). O my soul, you are accustomed to give thanks for worldly success or for material gifts but you forget to thank Him Who paid the debt and freed you from slavery to Satan. "We are debtors . . ." (Rom. 8:12). "And he died for all, that those who live might live no longer for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised." (2 Cor. 5:15)

Gratitude for Him Who loved me to the end (John 13:1): He has loved me and offered himself for me. He gave me His Body, His Blood and His Spirit. He took what is mine and gave me what is His. He has adopted me, "but you have received the spirit of sonship. When we cry, 'Abba! Father!'" (Rom. 8:15)

Gratitude that leads to an overflow of love: It is the love that turns to kissing of the feet (Luke 7:45). The woman who did not cease from kissing His feet is the same woman who held onto His feet. The woman who anointed His feet at the time she repented is the same woman who went to anoint His Body at daybreak on Sunday, and there she found the Lord out of the sepulchre . . . There she held onto His feet and worshipped Him. "Lord all my longing is known to thee" (Psalm 38:9). "He put a new song in my mouth" (Psalm 40:3).

C - Worship in Submission

My soul, remember that Jesus did not spare Himself but gave Himself up for your sake, 'will He not also give us all things with him?' (Rom. 8:32) My soul, how can He Who died and rose for you ever forget you. My soul, the Lord Jesus is a strong God Who rose and defeated death. He is a loving God to the end. Thus, resign your life to Him and say, "Everything works for good with those who love God." (Rom. 8:28) . . . All life belongs to Him . . . He died for it . . . You then should not live for yourself my soul, but for Him Who for your sake died and was risen (2 Cor. 5:15).

Because of this, my Lord, I bow down to You in worship placing and dedicating all my life to Your will as I say, "I offer to Thee, my Lord, the symbols of my freedom."¹

“He showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad...”
(John 20:20).

1 - For the first time, the disciples discover that the wounds of Christ *bring joy* to the soul and later on they come to understand that their sufferings are themselves the source of their joy and glory. “For this slight momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison.” (2 Cor. 4:17). After the Resurrection the wounds of the Lord were eternal proof of His love for you O my soul, and your own suffering for the sake of Jesus proclaim your love for Him, and are the reason for your eternal glory, and the source of your happiness. Suffering is no longer a punishment but a grace. “For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake (Phil. 1:29). The cross is no longer a source of pain but a force of joy that is beyond expression.

“The martyrs come bearing their sufferings.
 The righteous come bearing their hardships.
 The Son of God comes in his Father’s glory
 and rewards every one according to his deeds”³

At the First Ecumenical Council in Nicaea (AD 325), many of the 318 Fathers who were present had gone through persecution by the pagans. Among them were those with amputated hands and feet, some had their tongues cut off, while others had their eyes plucked out. The Emperor Constantine used to kiss those wounds and the Church rejoiced in them. There the Fathers sat, those wounded people, and with joy in their hearts, they wrote down for us our Christian Creed.

2 - The wounds of the Lord are *a source of repentance* that cheers the soul. Whenever I think of the wounds of Christ and the fact that He suffered for my sake, I hate sin and repent. It is then that the power and splendor of the Resurrection become active within me. Because of this O Lord, I believe that Your wounds bring remorse and grief for my sins. “For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation and brings no regret, but worldly grief produces death” (2 Cor. 7:10). Peter the Apostle has spent the remainder of his life after the Resurrection hearing the crow of the cock, and with this his repentance was renewed and he rejoiced in the Lord Jesus who looked at him and raised him up from his fall. As for St. Thomas, all his life he kept remembering the open side which he touched after the Resurrection, and then he would feel within him the power of the Resurrection and repentance for having ever doubted.

3 - The disciples rejoiced when they saw your wounds . . . “looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross . . . so that they may not grow weary or fainthearted.” (Heb. 12:2, 3) O my soul, be glad, have courage and strength . . . before you stands the Pioneer of Faith, the wounded Jesus . . . Struggle and do not give up because the Resurrection is a fact. Jesus Christ Who rose from the dead is Himself the wounded Christ.

Spiritual strife is no longer pain, denial or oppression . . . but rather it is joy, freedom and carrying of the cross following the Pioneer of Faith the victorious risen Christ Who bore the wounds in His body. The wounds after the Resurrection were proof of the victory at the battle on the Cross. They are a witness for victory, victory over this world, over Pilate's power, over the pride of the Jews, over Herod's tyranny, and over Satan's lies and power.

My dear youngmen, the risen Lord and His wounds are the greatest proof of the power of the Resurrection of your bodies that are bruised by the sufferings of this world. While you walk on this earth you are wounded but victorious. Be strong and courageous, be glad and keep your eyes on the Pioneer of your faith, the wounded, risen, victorious Jesus. "Do not grow weary or fainthearted" (Heb. 12:3), but rejoice with the disciples when He shows you His hands and His side.

Translated by Lily Soliman

Notes

1. "I offer to Thee, my Lord, the symbols of my freedom: my actions are a copy of Thy words." (From the Coptic liturgy of St. Gregory.)
2. The Gospel prayer in the Coptic Liturgy.
3. Conclusion of the '*Batos Theotokia*', which is the last song in the *Divine Office* for Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays.

A SERMON ON PENITENCE ATTRIBUTED TO ST. CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA

John S. Jorgensen, AB

First of two parts

Introduction

This sermon translated from a Boharic MS. is attributed to St. Cyril solely by its title and content. Like other works of this genre, the attribution is probably a spurious one, such as is common in patristics and Church liturgy. As Chaîne states in his introduction to a previous translation of this MS. (see *Mélanges de la Faculté Orientale Université Saint-Joseph* vol. 6), that the work may be falsely attributed to St. Cyril, “in no way nullifies the veracity of the account which it [the MS.] contains.”

The sermon opens with a section introducing the theme—repentance and the mercy of the Lord—along with the readings from the gospels (the Morning’s Lessons) that includes a short poem enumerating the blessings of the Church and Christianity. The body of the sermon consists of two accounts used to illustrate and build upon this theme. In each of the two accounts, those who are perceived of as wicked in the eyes of the Lord and following their own paths of destruction are led back into the sheepfold of Christ.

One of the two accounts concerns Philoxenus and the miracle of the bleeding cross. In this narrative a cross (Gk. *stauros*), after being abused by an angry mob of Jews, begins to bleed. The blood from the cross is then collected by Philoxenus the Jew and is used to anoint his daughter’s blind eyes whereupon she gains her sight. The account concludes with the baptism of the Jews by St. Theophilus, the uncle of the alleged author.

The other account concerns a Manichaean woman who sends her daughter to a Christian school. Each day the little girl surrenders the portions of the Communion (Gk. *leipsanoi*) to her mother. As a way of determining whether the girl has been to school and heard the lessons from beginning to end, the woman pricks the portions and watches for them to bleed. Upon report of the woman’s custom, the Archbishop orders the portions siezed whereupon certain miracles surround the *leipsanoi*. This

account concludes with the repentance and baptism of the Manichaean woman and her daughter. A Greek MS. (that Chaîne makes mention of in his introduction) bears resemblance to the account of Philoxenus and the bleeding cross. The Greek version (from *Migna* vol. 23), however, concerns an icon (*Gk. eikonos*), rather than a cross (*stauros*) as in the Coptic MS. The icon in the Greek version, after being abused by a mob of Jews, begins to issue forth blood. In both accounts the blood is used to anoint the sick and the lame whereupon they are made whole. It is this account—namely that of the Beiruit Miracle—that may have been the inspiration for the Coptic account and given rise to the an Egyptian story as the backdrop for the 14 Mesore (20 August) Commemoration of the Great Miracle in the Coptic Church.

Saint Cyril is an important and grand figure in the history of the Coptic Church, and it is not at all surprising, being appropriate for his time, that one would attribute such an account to him. Cyril ascended to the archbishopric of the city of Alexandria in the year A.D. 412 following the death of St. Theophilus, his uncle, and held the seat until his death in the year A.D. 444. His period in office was marked by numerous attacks against other factions that were thought to be a threat to the existence of the Christian Church. Among these groups were the Neoplatonists, the Nestorians, and the Jews. Wilken (1971:57)¹ argues that the struggle for converts between Jews and Christians, which developed prior to the fifth century, must surely have continued on into Cyril's time and manifested itself in the anti-Jewish polemics that dominate his works. The story of Philoxenus, then, recalls Cyril's attacks on the Jews and, likewise, that of the Manichaean woman, on another cultic rival of Christianity.

The first of the two accounts is preserved in both the Arabic version of the Coptic Synaxarion and the Ethiopian Synaxarion (*Maṣḥafa Senkesar*) in the Ge'ez language. Both of these versions reveal interesting variations in local tradition. These discrepancies will be the subject of future articles in subsequent issues of the *Coptic Church Review*.

Notes

1. See Wilken, Robert L. *Judaism and the Early Christian Mind* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971.

Translation

A discourse of Saint Cyril, the Archbishop of Alexandria, which he proclaimed concerning repentance.

And moreover, (he proclaimed) that God bears with the sinful man and does His utmost until He brings him back to repentance; and (he proclaimed) that He does not wish anyone to perish because he is the work of His hands.¹

He spoke also concerning a Manichaean woman who was in the city of Alexandria in the days of his youth whom the Lord led into the number of Christians.²

Then he spoke also concerning Philoxenus, originally the chief of the synagogue of the Jews, who was baptized (and), by the omen³ that came to pass through the cross of Christ, became a Christian along with all his house and his daughter who saw clearly after being smeared with the blood—the blood that oozed out from the cross—upon the eyes of his daughter in the midst of the synagogue. A multitude among the Jews believed in Christ through the girl whom they saw. Through the peace of God. Amen.

A good mooring is the haven of the Church!

A place of free healing is the house of God!

A place of receiving good instruction is the sheepfold of Christ.

A good and honorable haven is the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Sweet medicines are the designs of the Scripture!

Refreshing poultices are the lections of the Holy Gospel!

The reading of the lection of the gospel that is read to us today, a great teaching, full of joy, into which we are led. What is it? Come, let us speak it.

“A man,” it says, “had 100 sheep. When one of them was lost, did he not leave the 99 upon the mountain and seek the one who was lost? And when he chanced to find it, he would place it upon his shoulders and rejoice on account of it (and) call to his companions and neighbors saying, ‘Rejoice with me, everyone, because I found my sheep that was lost.’ Thus there is joy in heaven before God and His holy angles over a single sinner who repents.”⁴

Moreover, it says, “Come to me, everyone who is weary and who is loaded with burden. *I* will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; because I am a gentle man and I am humble,⁵ and you will find a resting place for your souls.

For my yoke is mild, and my burden is light.”⁶

This means: “Those who are burdened with the burdens of their sins, those for whom the blows of their sins are many, come, and I will forgive you your sins. I do not want the death of the sinner.” The Lord spoke thus so that He might return him from his wicked path and so that he might live.¹ It also says, “There will be joy in the presence of the angels of God because of one sinner who repents.”⁷ If there will be such a joy for the sake of one sinner who repents before God and His angels, then how great is the joy of the heavenly and the terrestrial, of the angels and archangels, and of the heavenly authorities for the sake of a multitude of sinners if ever they repent?

Now, my beloved, we should not despair of ourselves⁸ because of our sin, for there is not a sinless one except God himself.⁹ And even if the devil casts us down with sin through his guile and closes our hearts through our pleasures, let us run to God’s kind-heartedness¹⁰ and beseech Him in complete humbleness. For He is kind-hearted, and He shall forgive us our sins. He cares for us. Do not say:¹¹ “I sinned

great and heavy sins; the matter is (too) difficult for the Lord to forgive me of.”¹² Beware, do not speak thus, for no sinful act is (too) heavy for God to forgive us of. If you are a sinner, remember the harlot who made her eyes a basin of water and washed the feet of our Lord Jesus and wiped them off with her hair.¹³ If you are a tax collector, remember the tax collector who became an evangelist.¹⁴ If you are a robber, remember the robber who confessed to the Lord on the cross and received forgiveness of his sins in an instant.¹⁵ But then again you will say to me, “I am a magus.” Remember the magi who brought a gift to Christ;¹⁶ they received forgiveness of their sins in an instant. But now, O beloved, do not be without hope in the grace of God because of the causes of sin. For our God is compassionate and merciful. He does not wish for any man to perish, rather that He might turn him from his wicked path and live.¹ Therefore, let yourselves know that these words that I speak are true. Listen, (and) I will tell you of a great episode that occurred in the city of Alexandria and you shall marvel at this account.

In the days of my father, Abba Theophilus the Archbishop, while I was still young (and) being taught in school, there was a Manichaean woman living in the neighborhood of my teacher. And there was a small child of hers who was about to turn nine or ten years old. (As for) the girl, her mother used to clothe her attractively and send her to the church of the Christians at the beginning of the service¹⁷ saying to her, “Behold, do not go out until the peace is given; that which the priest gives you, do not eat before you bring it here to me” Then that little girl would go and mix with the crowd of Christians from the time of the beginning of the service until the peace was given. (Afterwards) she would hasten to the altar with the women and hold out her hand to the Archbishop, and she held the life-giving Body of the Lord in secret, and she waited until the peace was given and brought it to her mother. Whenever she took the portion from him she brought it to her in secret. And then every time she would bring it to her, (the woman) would take it with a ravenous heart and make an examination of it to know whether the girl had heard the reading through to the end. Then immediately she brought a needle or spike to prick it. If blood came forth she would take it immediately and wrap it in a napkin of linen. And she took it and placed it in a golden casket to guard in her house. And the woman arose and sent her small daughter to the church as was customary so that she might receive a portion. And when she came forth, the small girl found some slave children of her district and amused herself with them so that she scarcely dashed to the church in time for the singing of psalms for the liturgy. She hastened again with the throng to the altar and reached out to the priest and received the mystery and brought it to her mother in secret. And her mother wished to know whether she had heard the lessons through to the end, so she took again the needle and pricked according to her manner, but it did not emit blood because (the girl) did not hear the lessons. Then the woman knew that the girl had not gone to the church and heard the lessons. Furthermore, she took her daughter and beat her nearly to the point of

death because of her wrath. But my teacher heard the beating when the woman gave it (to the girl), since my teacher's house was next to hers, as I have already said. Moreover, he watched for a day when her mother was not present and spoke with the small girl with flattery saying, "What is it that you have done that you have come to this great grief and this sort of great pain?" And she revealed the deed to my teacher saying, "My mother sent me thus to the church of the Christians to receive the portions of the Lord (and) to bring them to her." He said to her, "what does she do with them?" And she said she threw them in a golden casket to keep them in it. Then my teacher was not at all neglectful of this matter, but arose and hastened to the church and revealed the matter to the Archbishop, Abba Theophilus. Immediately, he sent clerics and soldiers (and) they brought the woman along with her small daughter before they knew anything (and) gathered them into the church. The Archbishop spoke with the woman saying, "I adjure you by God, O woman,¹⁸ what do you hope to do; how then have you left the fear of God since you stole the parts of Christ and sold them for money?"¹⁹ Then the woman confessed immediately without inquiry²⁰ saying, "I did not yet sell them, but behold, I guard them in my house." And immediately he sent elders, deacons, and other faithful orthodox to the house of the woman. And when they approached the place where the casket was,²¹ they saw great, fiery lightning, and after they prayed, a procession was formed, and they lifted up the small, gold casket and brought it to the Archbishop. After they opened it they found the holy portions in it emitting a pleasant odor. Then fear of the Lord came upon the woman and she kissed the Archbishop saying to him, "My patriarchal lord, if mercy is possible for my sinfulness, forgive me; I will repent." And the Archbishop prescribed for her a fasting of forty days, instructed her first, and had the baptistry prepared and baptized her with her daughter in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit and gave them the mysteries, the body, and the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. And indeed the woman gave freely of all her money and distributed it to the poor, and her great house she had rebuilt as a church. (Abba Theophilus) then had their heads shaved and they became nuns and dwelt in the abode of virgins which is in Alexandria, until the day when they completed their lives in an orthodox manner. This marvel came to pass in the city of Alexandria in the time of my childhood, as I said in the beginning. It is for love of you that I speak these things when I inform you that God walks always²² seeking after His sheep who have strayed (and) brings them back to His spiritual sheepfold.

Now, O my beloved, do not despair of your own salvation because of sins. Do not say, "I have sinned great and heavy sins; God will not pardon me of them."¹² Behold, do not speak in this manner. This is sin's potency. If ever the Devil leads you astray in a great, ponderous sin, hasten to God's kind-heartedness and pray to Him in tears saying, "God, pardon me, a sinner." Seek the heart of His mercy and His mercy shall reach you. Indeed He said, "While you are yet speaking, behold, I am in this place." He does not want the death of the sinner (but) that he turn himself from his wicked path and live.¹

Notes

1. Ezekiel 33:11
2. Chaîne, in his translation, makes note of this as a problematic term. Instead of the literal “into the number of Christianity,” he translates this as “into the number of Christians,” arguing that it is a scribal error. Likewise, in view of the awkward alternative, I too have translated this as “Christians.” This seems to me to be clearer and to make much more sense.
3. Amend *shōm* = *shēm*
4. Luke 15:4-7
5. literally “low of heart” ie. “humble”
6. Mt. 11:28-30
7. Luke 15:7
8. literally “wash our hands of ourselves”
9. Mark 10:18; Luke 18:19
10. Literally, “run to God’s love-of-man.” I have chosen to translate this as kind-heartedness, a somewhat less awkward term, though the literal meaning should be kept in mind.
11. Amend *npergos* = *mpergos*
12. Genesis 4:13 (Chaîne page 501)
13. Luke 7:37-38
14. Matthew 9:9; Mark 2:14; Luke 5:27
15. Luke 23:39-43
16. Matthew 2:1; 2:11
17. literally “from the time when the first book is (customarily) read” ie. “at the beginning of the service.”
18. Amend *so* = *ō*
19. The verb *kōl* (*p*) may be a mistake for (*k*) *ōl*, “to take, collect.”
20. The Greek loan word *basanos* “inquiry” implies testing or torture.
21. Amend *mmof* = *mmou* “there”
22. Amend *nspou* = *nsop* “always”

* Biblical verses are translated from the Coptic MS.

* Coptic and Greek words have been transliterated.

* I would like to acknowledge the kind guidance and help of Dr. Orval Wintermute and Dr. Melvin Peters of Duke University, and Andrew N. Blatt for *prendre patience*.

A QUALITY OF SPIRIT

Jack Phillips, M. Min.

It has been nearly five years since my last visit to Egypt, which was in itself short-lived. I hosted a tour of the Holy Land for a small Protestant and Roman Catholic group that I had organized. This was in the Spring of 1983, before the field season of our excavations in the Negev at Tel Halif. His Holiness Pope Shenouda was still in exile.

My first trip to Egypt in 1980 was a short leave from our work in the Negev. At that time, I was a student at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. I had no formal contact at the time with the Coptic Church.

It was the next spring, however, that changed my life. I was a graduate student at McCormick Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Chicago, and part of a traveling seminar visiting the ancient Patriarchates. We spent Holy Week and Easter 1981 in Egypt, the guests of the Coptic Church and Bishop Samuel of Cairo.

Shortly after we arrived, we had an extensive audience with His Holiness Pope Shenouda. My question was the first. I asked for an explanation of the upcoming liturgies. The Pope offered no explanation. Instead, he told us to fast and pray.

Actually, he could not have prepared us for what followed on Good Friday. St. Mark's Cathedral was filled with a powerful, sacred presence, a quality of spirit, a dimension of being that was a sanctuary not only in space but in time. For someone like me, a mainline Protestant with the verbal-cognitive demystified orientation that I carried with me, it was life changing. And on Easter, my friends and I were invited to enter the sanctuary and gather around the altar, for which we had to remove our shoes. But for me, it would have made sense to remove my shoes for the entire liturgy and even for the entire visit.

The message of that visit lives inside of me and continues to change me. When asked how he could spend so much time in prayer and away from his administrative duties, Pope Sheneuda explained that the sun will rise without his help, but that he cannot give drink to the thirsty with an empty cup.

On another occasion, we attended a reception with many local dignitaries present. I sat next to a bearded and robed man, who asked me about my studies. I expressed frustration. He leaned close and whispered, "the desert is the world's largest university." I later learned this man was Bishop Youanhes, Dean of Seminary at Tanta.

One day as we visited the monastery of St. Macarius, the monks insisted that we stay for lunch. We had an extremely full itinerary and we were all hot and tired. We were led into a cool, dark room where we relaxed and even fell asleep. After a while the monks brought in trays of fresh baked goods, eggs, cheese, fresh fruit and cold water. A feast! This experience was a realization of the presence of God in creation—the loving monks, the warmth of bread, the coolness of water. I could taste and see that the Lord is good.

To this day I live with a radically changed understanding of Christianity. When I have coffee with my Coptic friend, Magdi, when I attend the Divine Liturgy, when I receive the Eucharist, when I read Coptic literature—I realize the Spirit dwelling in me—a quality and dimension of the sacred enlivened in me at St. Mark's Cathedral, in the Wadi Natrun, and in the presence of the holy people of Egypt.

THE APOCALYPSE OF PSEUDO-PESYNTHEUS:
COPTIC PROTEST UNDER ISLAMIC
RULE*

L.S.B. MacCoull, Ph.D.

As a by-product, in part, of research on the Byzantine reaction to the loss of large portions of the empire to the Arab conquests of the seventh century, recent scholarly attention has begun to focus on the apocalyptic literature produced by the Christian communities of the newly conquered territories, especially Syria and Egypt. The work of Dr. Javier Martínez has concentrated on the apocalypses of pseudo-Methodius in Syria and those of pseudo-Athanasius¹ and pseudo-Samuel of Kalamun in Egypt. (It can readily be seen that these apocalyptic texts are usually circulated under pseudonymous authors' names.) He has also called attention to another text from Egypt², the apocalypse attributed to Pesyntheus of Coptos, transmitted (like that of ps. - Samuel) in Arabic but clearly from a Coptic original. This text repays close study from the point of view of the cultural historian.

The Pesyntheus text, attributed to a real historical figure, the actual bishop of Qeft (Coptos), Pesyntheus, who did witness the Persian occupation of Egypt in the 620s A.D.³, is transmitted principally in four Paris Arabic MSS. ranging in date from the sixteenth to the early nineteenth centuries⁴. The *editio princeps* is that by A. Périer in *Revue de l'Orient chrétien* 19 (1914); there is no modern critical edition. (As one can see, the practice was widespread of attributing these apocalyptic visions of the terrible consequences of the Moslem conquest to actual historical patristic figures, in order to lend them as great as possible an aura of authority and community credence.) The Apocalypse of Pesyntheus purports to be in the form of a letter dictated by Pesyntheus on his deathbed to an amanuensis, his *syncellus* John, and addressed to the people of his whole diocese. The letter contains Pesyntheus' 'prophecy' about the ills which would befall Egypt at the hands of the Arab 'nation' (the loaded word *'umma*).

The writer's concern is above all theological: his most urgent worry is that members of the Christian community will either lose their faith or compromise it irretrievably. Some, he says, have abandoned the orthodox way to follow error, at peril of their immortal souls. After citing the great heresiarchs of the past, such as Arius,

Nestorius, Eutyches, Meletius, and Pope Leo, he laments that embracing heresy has come to bring material and social advancement. Such heresies are, first, a blurring of the Three Persons of the Trinity, apparently in response, or appeasement, to the Moslem brand of monotheism. This is expressed in the text in a phrase that testifies directly to the Coptic-language origin of the Apocalypse. The heretics, says the writer, refer to 'FatherSonHolySpirit' all together, 'omitting the *mu* and the *nu*', that is, the Coptic preposition MN; 'and' or 'with'. And the second heresy is the position that the Son is non pre-existent but is a creature, in fact, in the classic Moslem formulation, that he is only a prophet (*nabi*). Further, the writer adduces the other classic Moslem accusation that the one who was crucified was not Jesus himself but a substitute resembling Jesus who was smuggled into the crucifixion and then spirited away. People who believe that, says the writer, will be damned. In fact, what the writer of this text is doing is placing Islam in the line of Christian heresies (as does John Damascene), denying as it does the reality of the Incarnation and the Passion. He is also denouncing that state of society in which conversion to Islam is what brings material and social rewards, which former Christian believers value more than their own souls. The writer concludes this first section with a long creedal formulation of what is the right faith, in the Trinity, Incarnation, and Atonement, and prophesying (in the mouth of Bishop Pesyntheus) that 'many will leave the faith of Christ to follow a foreign faith'. By the writer's time, conversion has become a real problem⁵. (Remember that already by A.D. 717-720 Umar II's decree had exempted converts from the poll-tax.)

In the next section, the writer of the Apocalypse denounces the social evils, from a Christian's point of view, that will befall a Moslem-dominated society, a society in which Christians define themselves in terms of what Moslems expect of them. First on the list come Christians (here called *messi-hīn*) who inform on their fellow-Christians and turn them in to the tax authorities in order to get a monetary reward (this says something about the changing financial structure of the caliphate); and those who testify falsely against their fellow-Christians in court in order to take away their property. Such evildoers 'shall be strangers to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit': this is a direct translation of the Coptic legal penalty-clause formula (using the word ⲙⲣⲏⲟ, 'stranger') familiar from eighth-century Coptic legal papyri. Next come Christians (here called *nasranī*) who take advantage of Moslem marriage laws to commit bigamy, and Christian women who commit adultery with Moslem men. The misdeeds of priests also come in for censure: partying too noisily and with too high a profile on feast days (fear is already creeping into people's lives), practicing favoritism in distributing communion (this must mean letting the rich notables, who have ingratiated themselves with their political masters, go first in line, perhaps even for a bribe: something not unknown in the twentieth century). The Pseudo-Pesyntheus prophesies the sticky end that such people will come to, and he does it in Biblical phraseology: 'people will come and bind us and lead us along

paths we do not want to go—a reference to the martyrdom of Peter, and a scriptural parallel to what was happening in the society: rich Christians, clerical and lay, being held hostage for their community until they pay enormous bribes, as we find documented often in the *History of the Patriarchs*.

In the third section, what is put into the mouth of the pseudo-Pesyntheus is even more historically concrete prophecies of what evils (*ālām*, suffering, lamentation) will befall the *chora* of Egypt at the hands of ‘this pitiless nation, the Arab nation (*‘umma al-‘arabiyya*) or foreign race (*jins al-gharbi*)’. They will build a new *palation* at Babylon (Fustat), luxurious castles (*qusūr*), and a port for the fleet. And the worst thing of all will be, of course, the taxation. They will appoint *walis* (= pagarchs, provincial governors) and *raʿīses* (= *protocometai*, village headmen) for each place to collect the *kharaj* or landtax and the *ashur* or tax of one-tenth (*dekātē*) on trade engaged in by non-Moslems (historically quite true). They will make ever more extensive and detailed tax registers and cadasters (*qarāʾīs*, from *chartēs*, papyri), and will enter in census records all the names of those subject to the *jizya*, the famous poll-tax. (This is perhaps an allusion to the census and cadaster made under the caliph Hisham starting in A.D. 730: equally historically true.) Also prophesied are the outright destruction of churches (such as took place under al-Mutawakkil), the confiscation of churches in order to make them over for secular purposes including into stables (this is partly, but only partly, a *topos*), and the seizure of church plates and linens to make secular jewelery and clothes. The Moslems’ greed for money is seen as the root of all evils for the Christian population. Low Nile floods and bad harvests (such as actually happened in the 730s) will bring matters to the point where no Sunday liturgies are being said in churches because the church lands can no longer produce wheat and grapes for the Eucharistic species: everything is being seized for ever-higher taxes.

The next prophecy is of a plague. This might be partly a *topos* of apocalyptic writing: but thanks to the work of Michael Dols⁶ we do know that there was, e.g., a plague pandemic right at the end of Umayyad rule, in A.D. 743-749, that lasted in Fustat until 751. This kind of detail might well be a historical clue for placing the present text in a firmer context.

The writer returns to the theme of gold: and the gold being collected, being squeezed out of all taxpayers, is in the form of gold coins minted by the Moslem state. ‘Instead of the image of the Cross and the figure of our Lord Jesus Christ,’ says the writer, ‘the invader will write on the gold coins the name of the *imam* of his nation whose religion he follows. And this name is ⲙⲁⲛⲁⲗⲁⲛⲓⲟⲩⲥ, of which the number, letter by letter, is in Coptic 666, and this is the name of their prophet.’ Now here we have a detail that has been noticed by a number of scholars of Islamic numismatics. The isopsephism of adding up the numerical values of the letters in various Coptic spellings of the name of Mohammed so that the total comes out to be the Number of the Beast of the Apocalypse is well-known (it is ⲙⲁⲙⲉⲧⲧⲟⲥ in the Coptic Fourteenth Vision of Daniel)⁷; and it is found in Arabophone Coptic

literature, in the thirteenth-century commentators on the Book of Revelation, Bulus al-Bushi (whose Apocalypse commentary is newly edited by Dr. Shawqi Talia of Catholic University) and Ibn Katib. This text, the pseudo-Pesyntheus, may well be the second earliest appearance of the 666 symbolism for the name, coming after the occurrence of the *topos* in the Apocalypse of pseudo-Athanasius, whose editor, Dr. Martinez, dates it to circa A.D. 744. But it would be of interest to pin down just what gold coins are being alluded to, if we can push the text that hard. The text seems to be conflating two things: the first appearance ever of the name of Mohammed on the still-iconic coinage of 'Abd-al-Malik between A.D. 692, and the purely epigraphic coinage of A.D. 697, with the text 'God does not beget nor is he begotten' (supposed to be a countermove to the Byzantine gold solidi of the time, those of Justinian II with the portrait of Christ); versus the full-fledged Abbasid gold issues from A.D. 750 on, with the classic fully-epigraphic 'There is no God but Allah, Mohammed is the prophet of Allah'. (The coinage reference also appears in the Fourteenth Vision of Daniel as one of the classic 'bad things' that are to oppress Egypt's Christians.) These four *topoi*—rising taxes, cadasters, censuses of poll-tax payers, and explicitly Moslem coinage—are treated in the Pesyntheus text in reverse order to that in which they appear in the pseudo-Athanasius apocalypse. A possible relation between the two texts is still not clear at the present state of our knowledge.

Two more things are prophesied: the appearance of a last and worst caliph 'having the same name as their prophet', i.e. Mohammed (that could be anyone), and the appearance of a 'king of the Romans' (i.e. a Byzantine emperor) who will capture Fustat, deliver Egypt's Christians, convert many Moslems, and hold a summit conference with the emperor of Ethiopia to settle once for all the question of which theology is superior, the Chalcedonian or the Non-Chalcedonian. Now of course we are in the realm of pure storytelling, complete with a happy ending: the two parties hold competing liturgies in the manner of Elijah and the priests of Baal, stipulating that whichever altar the Holy Spirit descends upon will be the winner. Of course the Dove settles upon the altar of the Non-Chalcedonians, the Chalcedonians abjure Chalcedon and burn their books, etc. (The end-time will follow shortly, with Antichrist, the Second Coming in the Valley of Josaphat, and the vindication of those who have done good works and remained steadfast, i.e. not converted to Islam.)

When, we must ask, was this edifying story composed, and in what language? Clearly the Arabic is not the original, which, thanks to linguistic clues in the text such as the *mn-* mentioned earlier, we can infer was written in Coptic, a language which continued to produce original works throughout the eighth century and into the early ninth. The historical clues already mentioned, of things that actually happened in the eighth-century Moslem administration of Egypt, may help to point to a date. The work of Martinez has already made us aware that an outburst of creative activity in apocalyptic writing took place in the Christian community of Egypt when they realized, some generations after the actual conquest, that the Moslems were not just visiting raiders, but had come to stay for a long time. By the middle of the eighth

century the Copts, themselves already defined by religion by their alien rulers and administrators, were beginning to experience the anxiety brought upon them by a mind-set in which they were obliged to regard themselves, not in terms of their own historic identity as defined by the victory over paganism and the special brand of Christianity evolved in the landscape of the Nile Valley, but in terms of what roles their Moslem masters expected them to play. Coptic thinkers and writers began to ask 'Where did we go wrong?' and 'What can be done to cope with this situation?'. The Abbasid revolution, with its flight from the Mediterranean and its much more activist definition of the all-encompassing Moslem theocratic *Volksstaat* which allowed of no exceptions, exacerbated this process. I should like to advance the hypothesis that the Apocalypse put into the mouth of the revered holy man Pesyntheus of Coptos is the second major work of Egyptian Christian apocalyptic (after the pseudo-Athanasius), composed in Coptic by an unknown Coptic writer in the 760s A.D., at the time of the first organized Coptic revolts against Abbasid rule. By the 760s the Coptic community was beginning to be aware that the situation they were in needed some sort of drastic reversal that was receding further and further into the realm of futuristic hope. This hope was rendered articulate by original apocalyptic writings such as the Apocalypse of Pseudo-Pesyntheus. These writings encouraged the valuable idea that the Moslem domination was not necessarily permanent: that *it could have an end*. It is a deep irony that this text should be preserved only in a late transmission coming from a time when Arabic, with its totally different thought-forms, had become, in place of Coptic (and in a cultural change of painful self-destructiveness), the language understood and spoken by the Coptic people.

Notes

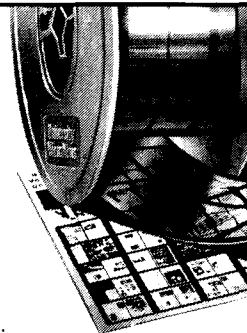
1. J. Martínez, *Eastern Christian apocalyptic in the early Muslim period: pseudo-Methodius and pseudo-Athanasius*, Ph.D. Dissertation, Catholic University, 1985.
2. J. Martínez, 'The king of Rūm and the king of Abyssinia in Coptic apocalyptic,' paper at the III International Congress of Coptic Studies, Warsaw, August 1984: to appear in the *Acta* of the Congress.
3. In addition to the usual literary sources, cf. L.S.B. MacCoull, 'Coptic Egypt under the Persian occupation: the papyrological evidence,' *Studi classici e orientali* 36 (1986) 307-313.
4. G. Troupeau, *Catalogue des mss. arabes de la Bibliothèque Nationale: mss. chrétiens* (Paris 1972-74), nos. 131.2, 150.3 (bought by Vansleb), 205.14, 4785.4 (made for Amélineau), 6147.2. The work is listed in Graf *GCAL* I 282.
5. No statistical study of conversion in Egypt has yet been made. It is disturbing to think that a high percentage of present-day Egyptian Moslems are the descendants of apostates.

6. See M. Dols, 'Plague in early Islamic history,' *JAOS* 94 (1974) 371-383.
7. Cf. e.g., O. Meinardus, 'A commentary on the XIVth vision of Daniel according to the Coptic version,' *OCP* 32 (1966) 394-449 and in *Ostkirchl. Stud.* 13 (1964) 153-170; H. Suermann, 'Notes concernant l'Apocalypse copte de Daniel et la chute des Omayyades,' *Parole de l'Orient* 11 (1983) 329-348.

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THE MESSENGER OF GOD IN THE SO-CALLED GOSPEL OF BARNABAS

Boulos Ayad Ayad, Ph.D.

Several times it is mentioned in the Koran that Mohammed is the Messenger of God and the Prophet of God. This also occurs several times in the so-called Gospel of Barnabas, which proves that this book is a Muslim book, not a Christian one.

The author of the so-called Gospel of Barnabas attributes many of the sayings in this book to Christ, but they do not agree with what Christ said in the Four Gospels. The statements in the Gospel of Barnabas agree, instead, with the Islamic faith.

The following statements are from the so-called Gospel of Barnabas.

The writing which Adam had seen in the Air:

“Then said God: ‘Be thou welcome, O my servant Adam. I tell thee that thou art the first man whom I have created. And he whom thou has seen (mentioned) is my son,¹ who shall come into the world many years hence, and shall be my messenger, for whom I have created all things: who shall give light to the world when he shall come;² whose soul was set in a celestial splendour sixty thousand years before I make anything.’”³

The Writing on Adam’s thumb nails:

Then God gave to the first man upon his thumbs that writing;⁴ upon the thumb-nail of the right hand it said: “There is only one God,” and upon the thumb-nail of the left it said: “Mohammed is messenger of God.”⁵

The writing which Adam had seen above the Gate:

“Then said God . . . ‘Go ye forth from paradise, and do penance, and let not your hope fail, for I will send your son in such wise that your seed shall lift the dominion of Satan from off the human race.’”⁶

“God hid himself, and the angel Michael drove them forth from paradise. Whereupon Adam, turning him round, saw written above the gate, “There is only one God, and Mohammed is messenger of God.”⁷

The words of Jesus concerning the Messenger of God:

“Jesus said . . . ‘But the messenger of God, when he shall come, God shall give to him as it were the seal of his hand, insomuch that he shall carry salvation and mercy to all the nations of the world that shall receive his doctrine.’⁸ He shall come with power upon the ungodly, and shall destroy idolatry,⁹ insomuch that he shall make Satan confounded.’”¹⁰

Jesus’ description of the Messenger of God:

“I therefore say unto you that the messenger of God is a splendour that shall give gladness to nearly all that God hath made, for he is adorned with the spirit of understanding and of counsel, the spirit of wisdom and might, the spirit of fear and love, the spirit of prudence and temperance, he is adorned with the spirit of charity and mercy, the spirit of justice and piety, the spirit of gentleness and patience.¹¹ . . . Believe me that I have seen him and have done him reverence, even as every prophet hath seen him.¹² . . . And when I saw him my soul was filled with consolation.”¹³

The rising of the Messenger of God and the other creatures:

“When the forty years be passed, God shall give life to his messenger (Mohammed), who shall rise again like the sun, but resplendent as a thousand suns. He shall sit, and shall not speak, for he shall be as it were beside himself . . . After this shall God cause Satan to be raised up, at whose aspect every creature shall be as dead, for fear of the horrid form of his appearance. ‘May it please God,’ said Jesus,¹⁴ ‘that I behold not that monster on that day. The messenger of God alone shall not be affrighted by such shapes, because he shall fear God only.’”¹⁵

The Messenger of God’s fear of the Judgement:

“Then the angel, at the sound of whose trumpet all shall be raised, shall sound his trumpet again, saying: ‘Come to the judgement, O creature, for your Creator willeth to judge you.’ . . . Then the messenger of God (Mohammed) shall fear, for that he shall perceive that none hath loved God as he should. But if the messenger of God (Mohammed) shall fear, what shall the ungodly do who are full of wickedness?”¹⁶

The union with the Messenger of God:

“Having made the prayer Jesus said: ‘Let us give thanks to God because he hath given to us this night great mercy; for that he hath made to come back the time that needs must pass in this night, in that we have made prayer in union with the messenger of God. And I have heard his voice.’”¹⁷

No true prophets will come after the messenger of God:

“Jesus answered: ‘There shall not come after him true prophets sent by God, but there shall come a great number of false prophets,¹⁸ whereat I sorrow. For Satan

shall raise them up by the just judgement of God, and they shall hide themselves under the pretext of my gospel.' ”¹⁹

The mission of the messenger of God:

“Jesus answered: ‘Verily I say unto you that if the truth had not been erased from the book of Moses, God would not have given to David our father the second. And if the book of David had not been contaminated, God would not have committed the Gospel to me; seeing that the Lord our God is unchangeable, and hath spoken but one message to all men.’²⁰ Wherefore, when the messenger of God shall come, he shall come to cleanse away all wherewith the ungodly have contaminated my book.’ ”²¹

The knowledge of the messenger of God:

“That glory shall be better revealed by the messenger of God, who (seeing God hath created all things for love of him) knoweth all things better than any other creature.”²²

The coming of the messenger of God:

“Jesus answered . . . ‘And this mocking shall continue until the advent of Mohammed, the messenger of God, who, when he shall come, shall reveal this deception to those who believe in God’s law.’ ”²³

Notes

1. Mohammed is not mentioned in the Koran as being the Son of God, as stated in the So-Called Gospel of Barnabas. The Koran denies that God has a son. See, A. J. Arberry, *The Koran Interpreted* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1967), Chapter 4, “The Women,” p. 169. According to the New Testament, the Son of God is Jesus Christ. (See Jn. 3:35-36, 5:19-47, 6:52-58, and 10:36.)
2. No mention was ever made that the Prophet of Islam, Mohammed, “shall give light to the world” as it is said in the So-Called Gospel of Barnabas. The one who gives light to the world is Jesus Christ who says about himself, “I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” (Jn. 8:12) It appears that many sentences from the New Testament were changed by the Muslim writer of the So-Called Gospel of Barnabas to fit the Islamic faith.
3. Lonsdale and Laura Ragg ed. and trans., *The Gospel of Barnabas* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1907); edited and translated from the Italian manuscript in the Imperial Library at Vienna; republished by Begum Aisha Bawany Waqf, 8th ed. (Pakistan, 1980), Chapter 39.
4. Adam existed during the prehistoric ages and did not know how to read or write.
5. See, *The Gospel of Barnabas*, op. cit., Chapter 39.

6. The one who removed Satan's dominion over the earth was Christ who died on the cross to give salvation from sin and from Satan to the human race. He was the only one who said, "I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming. He has no power over me." (Jn. 14:30)
7. *The Gospel of Barnabas*, op. cit., Chapter 41.
8. The Muslim writer of the so-called Gospel of Barnabas changed the truth, for Jesus Christ gave salvation and mercy to all the nations of the world according to what He said to his disciples, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned." (Mk. 16:15-16)
9. Since the appearance of Christianity, the Fathers of the Church and the Christians have destroyed the idols.
10. See *The Gospel of Barnabas*, op. cit., Chapter 43.
11. All these epithets were used for Jesus Christ by the early Fathers of the Church as prophecies that occurred in the Old Testament (see Is. 11:1-16). The Muslim writer of the So Called *Gospel of Barnabas* borrowed these epithets from the Christians and used them for Mohammed the Prophet of Islam.
12. None of the Old Testament prophets prophesied concerning Mohammed the Prophet of Islam. There is no mention of him in the books of the Jewish people or the Christian books before his appearance or after.
13. See *The Gospel of Barnabas*, op. cit., Chapter 44.
14. Such imaginary talk came from the Islamic writer of the so-called *Gospel of Barnabas* and not from Jesus Christ.
15. See *The Gospel of Barnabas*, op. cit., Chapter 54.
16. Loc. cit.
17. Ibid., Chapter 84.
18. No prophets will come after Christ, the Son of God, according to his teaching in the Four Gospels. (see Mt. 24:5-27)
19. *The Gospel of Barnabas*, op. cit., Chapter 97.
20. No changes have occurred in the Old Testament or in the New Testament, but one can notice many differences between them and the Koran. When the Muslims did not find an interpretation for such differences, they accused the Jewish people and the Christians of changing their books.
21. *The Gospel of Barnabas*, op. cit., Chapter 124.
22. Ibid., Chapter 176.
23. Ibid., Chapter 220.

CURRENTS IN COPTIC CHURCH STUDIES

The Monasteries of Wadi el Natron

By Dr. Mounier Shoukri. Society of Saint Mena the Miraculous, Alexandria, Egypt, 1962. 346 pp.

The Monasteries of Wadi el Natron contains an introduction on the monasteries beginning with the Roman period and continuing through the Byzantine, Arabic, and Medieval periods up to modern times. Each period is thoroughly studied along with the historical development of the monasteries of Wadi el Natron, the architecture of these monasteries, the monastic orders and the Fathers of these monasteries. The strengths and weaknesses of these monasteries are explored along with a discussion on the Berbers who periodically conducted raids against these religious institutions.

The author has adequately supported his statements with references from both Arabic and foreign languages. The book contains many pictures as well as a plan for the group of monasteries of Saint Macarius.

The Monasteries of Wadi el Natron is an original study of the highest quality and is of value to both specialists and students. The author is a true Coptic scholar well known for his studies of Coptology, and is currently head of the Society of Saint Mena the Miraculous in Alexandria, Egypt. This society has published many articles concerning the international Coptic legacy of Egypt which has passed down through the ages.

The reviewer suggests that the books of the Society of Saint Mena should be translated into various languages so that they may be available to all. Perhaps foreign language professors in various universities will be interested in aiding in these translations.

University of Colorado, Boulder

Boulos Ayad

The History of the Monastery of Es-Saida Al- 'dra Baramos

By Father Antonios Yostos el Baramosy. Cairo, 1960. 226 pp.

Five years after writing this book, Father Yostos was ordained as bishop of Minufiah by the name of Dioscorus. He died in 1976. Before his episcopate he was

Professor of Church history at the Coptic Theological Seminary in Cairo, a position he kept for 38 years.

Bishop Dioscorus described the geography of Wadi el Natron, giving the names of the various routes which lead to this Wadi. He then described the three founders of monachism in this area—Saint Ammon, Saint Macarius the Alexandrian, and Saint Macarius the Great, followed by the history of monachism in this valley, along with the number of monks and monasteries in Wadi el Natron. The origin of the word “Baramos” is then given with a discussion of the history of the monastery of Baramos.

At one time there were a number of monasteries in the Wadi el Natron, but for various reasons several of them merged, resulting in fewer but larger monasteries. The author describes the area of the Baramos Monastery and the other monasteries in the vicinity, and gives some insight into the history of those who dwelt in the area of Baramos in the 4th and 5th centuries, as well as the history of the famous Fathers of Baramos in different periods of time.

Bishop Dioscorus gives the biographies and deeds of the former monastery monks who became Popes, the current head of the monastery, and the monks who have resided in this monastery in the 20th century. He writes in detail concerning the buildings of the monastery at the time of writing. These buildings include the walls, the gate and its component sections, the two minarets, the castle or the old palace, the old church with its contents, the old refectory, the new church and the palace of visitors, the library, the cells of the monks, and the general facilities of the monastery.

The book is well organized and accurate; it contains many drawings and plans for the monastery and its property as well as pictures of the Popes, Bishops, and monks. A brief biographical sketch is given with each picture. The book contains an excellent map which locates all currently inhabited monasteries in the Wadi el Natron as well as those which are no longer used; there are various lists, including one giving the total number of monks in the area. However these numbers have multiplied since the book was published.

The reviewer believes this book contains a considerable amount of valuable and, to a great extent, accurate information. It is hoped that the book can be republished in Arabic and published in English to give scholars an opportunity to study the Coptic monasteries and the life of the monks in full detail.

University of Colorado, Boulder

Boulos Ayad

Christianity in Islam

By Father Ibrahim Luka. The Goodway Publication, Rikon, Switzerland.

The Late Father Ibrahim Luka was a Coptic priest in Saint Mark's Coptic Church of Heliopolis, Cairo, Egypt, and a very capable scholar who published several books and edited a journal under the title *Al-Yaqzah* (meaning *The Awakening*).

In his book *Christianity in Islam* (in Arabic, 208 pp.), Father Luka gathered together all the sentences from the Koran which referred to Christianity, including ones with reference to Christ, Saint Mary, Christian monks and priests, and Christians in general. He firmly believed that Islam did not fight the Holy Trinity of the Christian belief, but that Islam was fighting another Trinity—the belief that God has wives, sons, and grandsons, a far different belief from that of the Christians.

He discussed the crucifixion of Christ, giving his own interpretation of some sentences from the Koran which he believed referred to Christ, His death, and His ascension into heaven. Father Luka then referred to parts of the Koran which spoke highly of St. Mary. Islam was fighting the idea that Saint Mary was a deity, which is also the belief of Christians. Father Luka then quoted parts of the Koran which refer to the Christians as being the people of the Bible and the fact that the Bible was given to them by God. The Koran also speaks highly of priests and monks.

In the fourth, fifth, and sixth chapters of his book, Father Luka proved that Christ is both God and man, and offered proof from the Koran that Jesus is the Word of God and the Spirit of god. He then referred to Christ as being the eternal One, based on His miraculous birth, His prophecies concerning the future, His power of creation and His ability to restore the dead to life. The Koran also refers to Christ as a fair judge and the origin of life as well as a prophet and messenger who has redemptive powers. Because all of these things were mentioned in the Koran, Father Luka came to the conclusion that the Koran agrees with the New Testament of the Christian Bible and with the belief of Christians throughout the ages before the appearance of Islam and during the time of Mohammed until the present time.

Christianity in Islam is very valuable for those interested in comparative religion as well as both Christians and Moslems, for the book is written in great depth by a very knowledgeable scholar. In order that this book may be made available to a wider segment of the population it is currently being translated into English by Father Luka's son-in-law, Mr. Youssef Kamel.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Death and Resurrection.

“Message of the Fathers of the Church, 22.”

By Joanne E. McWilliam Dewart. Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1986. Pp 198. \$15.95 (Cloth); \$9.95 (Paperback).

Most Patristic libraries in English have sets of whole works by the Fathers, with scholarly introductions and comments. Michael Glazier’s series aims at the parish and pastoral audience, without sacrificing its scholarly importance. Each book deals with an individual subject and not with a particular Father. Different books discuss theology, various sacraments, liturgy, Scripture, morality and social issues. Because the authors are scholars on their subject, they offer the reader, in a small book, the teaching of the early Church on that subject.

Death and Resurrection reviews the teaching of the afterlife in Scripture and in the writings of the Fathers from the first till the early fifth century. Important themes discussed include immortality of the soul, the status of the resurrected body, and millenarianism. This book is one of the best written in the series and Dr. Dewart should be commended for her extensive survey of the literature and her expertise in the thought of the Fathers. Beside the vast number of citations from their writings and her comments on them, she reviews the work of each Father on the subject of resurrection and shows his contribution to the understanding of this essential article of the Christian faith.

St. John Chrysostom: Homilies on Genesis 1-17.

“The Fathers of the Church, Vol. 74”.

Translated by Robert C. Hill. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1986. Pp. 246. \$29.95 (Hardcover).

Patristic commentaries and homilies on the Old Testament books have been very scarce in the English language. It is time now to correct this deficiency, which has created much misunderstanding of the thoughts of the Fathers and of their methods of exegesis. Unlike other modern major translation series (like ACW and The Library of Christian Classics), *The Fathers of the Church* is moving toward the Old Testament. In 1982 its translation of *Origen’s Homilies on Genesis and Exodus* appeared. The present book is the first of several volumes which will provide the

reader who cannot read Greek with Chrysostom's richest OT commentary. The sixty seven homilies on Genesis were delivered by St. John Chrysostom during Lent and Pentecost, about the year 385, when he was a deacon at Antioch. The first volume contains homilies 1-17 which deal with Genesis 1-3:19.

Beside the value of the homilies in themselves, they are important for the history of exegesis. Their translation brings to a wider audience a feeling of the Antiochene method of exegesis, of Chrysostom's love and respect for the Word of God in Scripture, and of the daily Christian life of fourth century Antioch. Faithful to the Antiochene School, Chrysostom sticks to the literal sense of the word and hardly ever goes to its spiritual sense which was favored by the School of Alexandria and which was later adopted by other Eastern and Western Fathers like Ambrose and Augustine. Because he was directed by his pastoral role and the needs of his congregation, Chrysostom stressed the moral issues in his homilies. Some of his critics described his interpretation of Scripture as "exhortation rather than exposition." Some theological material was completely passed over, or as Robert Hill puts it in the *Introduction*, "the dogmatic force of the text can yield to its moral content." But we must remember that we are dealing here with homilies and not commentaries.

Chrysostom has great reverence for Scripture. He describes it in such terms as a feast, an everflowing spring, and a spiritual treasure. Many times he reminds the listeners that it is Moses speaking—"or, rather, the Holy Spirit speaking by his tongue." He urges the people not to pass heedlessly by any small detail and says repeatedly, "Sacred Scripture says nothing idly or by chance; every single sound and syllable has a treasure contained in it."

The homilies were delivered to a congregation that took its spiritual life seriously. They went daily and with great joy to a lengthy scriptural homily on an empty stomach in Lent. They were not merely passive recipients, but they had portions of the Scriptures at home which they studied by themselves. They had Bible discussion groups and used the Scriptures to teach and admonish others as well as to refute heretics. Chrysostom's love for Scriptures was passed to his hearers; and we are sure many readers will be able to appreciate him through this translation, aided by the detailed introduction and the frequent scholarly notes.

BOOKS RECEIVED

Paulist Press (Mahwah, New Jersey)

Comfortable Compassion? By Charles Elliott, 1987. Pp. 194. \$7.95 (Paperback).

A call for Christians to confront the corrupt powers in their own societies and in the whole world, not in a spirit of condemnation or anger, but in the spirit of

the redeeming love of Christ, by sharing in the wounds of the inflicted, revealing the cause of the injustice and looking for total transformation, not ameliorative reform.

I Am Awake. By Rev. Stephen J. Rossetti, 1987. Pp. 101. \$3.95 (Paperback).

A guide to the contemplative life with practical insights into such problems as distractions, asceticism, discernment and the dark night of God's absence.

Magnificat. By Elizabeth Ruth Obbard, 1985. Pp. 84. \$3.95 (Paperback).

Meditations on one's life in the Spirit based on the virtues of Virgin Mary, with illustrations from biblical women and from the writings of two spiritual masters—St. John of the Cross and St. Julian of Norwich.

Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. (Grand Rapids, Michigan).

The Eerdmans Bible Dictionary. Edited by Allen C. Myers, 1987, Pp. x+ 1094. \$29.95 (Cloth).

An up-to-date, scholarly and concise reference for biblical persons, books, places, cultures and theology; an immediate and reliable guide for serious Bible study.

Prophecy in Early Christianity. By David E. Aune, 1983. Pp. 522. \$29.95 (Hardcover).

A scholarly and comprehensive study of Christian prophecy and of the role of prophets in the NT and in the early Church.

St. Mary and St. Mena Coptic Orthodox Church of Rhode Island (8 Pendleton Street, Cranston, RI 02920)

St. Athanasius Theology: Articles for Today - The Incarnation of Christ. By Fr. Matthias F. Wahba, 1987. Pp 72 (English and Arabic) No price.

From the words of St. Athanasius the Great, the author explains how God was incarnated and became man; His divinity was united to a whole man (body and soul), for the goals of our salvation and of manifesting Himself to us.

St. Athanasius Theology: Articles for Today - The Baptism of Christ. By Fr. Matthias F. Wahba, 1988. Pp. 48. (English and Arabic) No price.

St. Athanasius shows, with many OT & NT references, that when Christ was washed in Jordan, humanity was baptized in Him (thus establishing the Christian Baptism with its effects of rebirth, new creation, adoption and illumination); and that the descent of the Holy Spirit on Him was for the sake of humanity which receives the Spirit through Him and by Him.



ST. PESYNTHEUS BISHOP OF QIFT (COPTOS)