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The Life of Pambo

Translated from Coptic by Tim Vivian



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COPTIC PALLADIANA I: THE LIFE OF PAMBO

(LAUSIAC HISTORY 9-10)

*Translated, with an Introduction,
by Tim Vivian**

PREFACE

Five years ago Gabriel Bunge and Adalbert de Vogüé published a groundbreaking work, based on previously published articles by the two authors, *Quatre ermites égyptiens: D'après les fragments coptes de l'Histoire Lausiaque* (Spiritualité Orientale 60; Begrolles-en-Mauges: Bellefontaine, 1994). In this volume they offer a French translation of four monastic *Lives*, preserved in Coptic, that are clearly related to the *Lausiaca History* of Palladius but that also differ dramatically from the same *Lives* in the Greek *History*. Vogüé provides translations based on much improved texts, while Bunge, in a thorough introduction, discusses the relationship between the Coptic *Lives* and the *Lausiaca History* and argues for their importance as primary documents witnessing to the early years of Egyptian monasticism.

The purpose of the present publication of the Coptic Palladiana as a four-part series in the *Coptic Church Review* is modest: to offer English translations of the four Coptic *Lives* and to provide an introduction to them that distills the work of Bunge and Vogüé and makes these works more accessible to a modern audience. These four *Lives* are: Pambo, Evagrius, Macarius of Egypt, and Macarius of Alexandria.¹ A General Introduction is offered here before the *Life of Pambo*; each of the *Lives* will have its own brief Introduction.

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¹ These *Lives*, together with translations of Coptic texts relating to Saint Macarius of Egypt, will appear in my forthcoming *Disciples of the Souls Beloved: Pambo, Evagrius, Macarius of Egypt, and Macarius of Alexandria*. Because of considerations of space, in the present series I have dropped all textual notes and numerous other notes; these will appear in the forthcoming volume.

ABBREVIATIONS

- A É. Amélineau, *Histoire des monastères de la Basse-Égypte* (*Annales du Musée Guimet* 25; Paris: Leroux, 1894)
- AP *Apophthegmata Patrum* (*Sayings of the Fathers*)
- Butler *The Lausiac History of Palladius*, ed. and trans. Cuthbert Butler (2 vols.; Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1898 and 1904)
- BV Gabriel Bunge and Adalbert de Vogüé, *Quatre ermites égyptiens: D'après les fragments coptes de l'Histoire Lausiaque* (*Spiritualité Orientale* 60; Begrolles-en-Mauges: Bellefontaine, 1994)
- Crum Walter Ewing Crum, *A Coptic Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1939)
- EH *Ecclesiastical History* (by Socrates or Sozomen)
- Evelyn White Hugh G. Evelyn White, ed. by Walter Hauser, *The Monasteries of the Wâdi 'n Natrûn*, 3 vols. (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1926-1933 [repr. Arno Press: New York, 1973]). Part I: *New Coptic Texts from the Monastery of Saint Macarius*, Part II: *The History of the Monasteries of Nitria and Scetis*, Part III: *The Architecture and Archaeology*
- Gk Greek
- Lampe G.W.H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1961)
- LH Palladius, *Lausiac History*
- LSJ Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, rev. Henry Stuart Jones, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1968).
- LXX The Septuagint; *Septuaginta*, ed. Alfred Rahlfs (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung Stuttgart, 1935)
- Meyer *Palladius: The Lausiac History*, trans. Robert T. Meyer (New York: Newman Press, 1964)
- PG *Patrologia Graeca*
- Ramsey *John Cassian: The Conferences*, trans. by Boniface Ramsey (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1997)
- V Adalbert de Vogüé
- Ward Benedicta Ward, trans., *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers: The Alphabetical Collection* (rev. ed.; Kalamazoo: Cistercian, 1984)

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Palladius (363-64 to before 431)

Palladius was born in Galatia fifty years after the Peace of the Church;² little is known of his early life, though he appears to have had a good classical education. Around 386 he became a monk and in 390 traveled to Egypt: first to Alexandria, then to Nitria, and then on to Kellia, where he lived for nine years.³ He may have been driven from Egypt in 399 during the persecution of the Origenist monks by Theophilus, the patriarch of Alexandria (see below for a discussion of the controversy); he went to Constantinople, where he became the friend and defender of its besieged patriarch, John Chrysostom. Around 400 he became bishop of Helenopolis in Bithynia.⁴ When Chrysostom was exiled by the emperor, Palladius defended him at Rome before Pope Innocent I; when he returned to Constantinople in 406 he was banished to Egypt. Allowed back, he returned home to Galatia, where he became bishop of Aspuna.⁵ He wrote the *Lausiatic History* around 420 and probably died before 431.⁶

Palladius and Evagrius

One eminent scholar has declared, correctly, that the *Lausiatic History* is “a work written in the spirit of Evagrius.”⁷ Certainly Evagrius holds an exalted place in the *History*: he is almost always “blessed Evagrius” or, like Saints Peter

² In LH 35.5, Palladius tells John of Lycopolis that he is “a stranger come from Galatia.”

³ For Palladius’ account of his experiences, see LH 1-7; see C.H. Turner, “Palladiana II: The Lausiatic History. Questions of History,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 22 (1921): 21-35 and 138-55.

⁴ In LH 35.10 (Meyer, 101-2) Palladius recounts the amusing interchange between himself and John of Lycopolis. When John asks Palladius if he wants to be a bishop, the latter replies that he already is. John, quite naturally, says “Where?” and Palladius says “In the kitchen and shops, over the tables and pots. I examine them, and if there is any sour wine I excommunicate it, but I drink the good. Likewise I inspect the pots, too, and if any salt or other spices are lacking, I throw these in and thus season them and eat them. This is my diocese, for Gluttony has ordained me for her child.” John, “smiling,” tells Palladius to “stop playing with words,” that being a bishop entails much suffering and tribulation.

⁵ According to Socrates EH 7.36, Palladius was “transferred” from Helenopolis to Aspuna; we have this information because Socrates, in defending translations of bishops from one see to another, cites Palladius’ case as one among many.

⁶ On the thought and spirituality of the *Lausiatic History*, see Nicolas Molinier, *Ascèse, contemplation et ministère d’après l’Histoire Lausiaque de Pallade d’Hélénopolis* (Spiritualité orientale 64; Bégrolles-en-Mauges: Bellefontaine, 1995).

⁷ See René Draguet, “L’Histoire Lausiaque, une oeuvre écrite dans l’esprit d’Évagre,” *Revue d’Histoire Ecclésiastique* 41 (1946): 321-364; 42: 5-49. Jeremy Driscoll, in agreeing with this assessment, sees Evagrius as part of the mainstream of early Egyptian monasticism and nuances Draguet’s phrase: “Thus, ‘a work in the spirit of Evagrius’ needs to mean that we have to do here not just with the spirit of one peculiar innovator but rather with the tradition that he represents.” See Driscoll, “Evagrius and Paphnutius on the causes for abandonment by God,” *Studia Monastica* 39.2 (1997): 259-86; 261.

and Paul, he is joined at the canonical hip with (tellingly) Ammonius, the Origenist leader of the Tall Brother (on them see below).⁸ This close association must have been widely known throughout the desert: when Palladius goes to visit John of Lycopolis, John says (drily? matter-of-factly? humorously?), “I presume that you are from Evagrius’ community [*sunodias*].” Palladius “admits” (*hômologêsa*) that he “belongs to Evagrius’ group [*hetaireias*].”⁹ Undoubtedly, the feelings between Palladius and Evagrius were mutual: Palladius venerates Evagrius as “my teacher,” and Evagrius reciprocates by embracing Palladius as his “brother.” The historian Socrates agrees with Palladius, terming him a “disciple of Evagrius.”¹⁰

As Palladius himself says in the Coptic fragment of his *Life of Evagrius*, “Indeed, it was also he who taught me the way of life in Christ and he who helped me understand holy scripture . . . for the whole time I was in that monastic community I was with him, each of us living enclosed and apart. I was by his side Saturday night and during the day on Sunday.” This testimony survives only in Coptic, and may have been excised from the Greek manuscripts of the *Lausiatic History*. The discipleship, or friendship, or brotherhood of Palladius with Evagrius, however we term it, was to get Palladius in trouble during his lifetime and, after his death, cause his *History* the mutilation of censorship and expurgation. Why should this have been so? Who was Evagrius, and why did he theologically contaminate Palladius and his writing?

Evagrius (345-99)

According to Palladius (LH 38), Evagrius was from Pontus; he was born in 345 or 346. Made a reader by Basil of Caesarea and ordained a deacon by Gregory of Nazianzus, Evagrius moved in the highest ecclesiastical circles; in 381 he accompanied Gregory to the Synod of Constantinople.¹¹ An (apparently unconsummated) indiscretion with a highly-placed lady caused him to quickly flee Constantinople and sail for the Holy Land, where the renowned monastic patroness Melania welcomed him. Evagrius, however, had not really changed his ways; *Lausiatic History* 38.8 says that the Devil “hardened his heart” and that he was “vainglorious,” while the Coptic *Life* reports that he was somewhat of a dandy, often changing his clothes. After he was struck with a God-given illness, Melania got him to embrace the monastic life and leave for Egypt, probably in

⁸ “Blessed”: LH 11.1, 35.3, 47.3, 86.1; “Saints Ammonius and Evagrius”: LH 24.2. Gabriel Bunge, “Evagre le Pontique et les deux Macaires,” *Irénikon* 56 (1983): 215-27, 323-60, has observed, 324, that Palladius uses more honorific titles for Evagrius than for Macarius of Alexandria.

⁹ LH 35.5.

¹⁰ LH 23.1 (Meyer, 81), Evagrius Epistle 51.1, and Socrates, EH 4.23.

¹¹ On the “historical and theological links” between Evagrius and the Cappadocians, see Elizabeth A. Clark, *The Origenist Controversy: The Cultural Construction of an Early Christian Debate* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1992), 60-61.

383. He lived in Nitria for two or three years, then came to Kellia in 384-85, where he became a disciple of Macarius the Alexandrian and apparently knew Macarius of Egypt.¹² Here he lived the rest of his life “in truly apostolic fashion,” dying in 399, just before the Origenist storm—or cataclysm—swept over the monastic settlements of Lower Egypt, dividing communities and driving hundreds of monks, including Palladius, Ammonius, and the Tall Brothers, into exile. Hugh G. Evelyn White considered Evagrius’ death a *felix opportunitate mortis* (he died at an opportune time).¹³ One wonders if some of Evagrius’ friends and disciples, on their way out of Egypt and into bitter exile, did not stop at his grave and envy him the peace that they believed he most surely had obtained in the kingdom of God. Such peace, unfortunately, was not to attach to his posthumous name on earth. Unlike the great Origen, he was not so much calumniated as just “disappeared.”

The Anthropomorphite and Origenist Controversy

Two hundred years after his death, Evagrius’ cell at Kellia was still considered to be haunted by an evil demon that had led “Evagrius astray, alienating him from the true faith, and it filled his mind with abominable teachings.” A brother “from foreign parts” came to Kellia and asked to stay in Evagrius’ cell. Possibly mindful of the saying of Saint Macarius of Egypt, “Do not sleep in the cell of a brother who has a bad reputation,”¹⁴ the priest tried to dissuade him, but the brother insisted. The first week he stayed there without incident, but the second week he failed to appear on Sunday; when the priest went to check on him he found that “the brother had put a rope around his neck and strangled himself.”¹⁵ This story undoubtedly circulated in monastic circles as a cautionary tale warning against “Evagian” tendencies.¹⁶ Other evidence, however,

¹² *Historia Monachorum* (Latin) 27; see also Evagrius, *Praktikos* 93. Socrates says that Evagrius was a disciple of both Macarii—Macarius of Egypt (the Great) and Macarius of Alexandria. The former, however, lived in Scetis, while the latter was at Kellia. Evagrius does say, *Capita practica ad Anatolium* (PG 40.1220), that he was at Scetis, but Evelyn White, 2.84-86, suggests that “Scetis” is a generic term for the three monastic communities of lower Egypt: Nitria, Kellia, and Scetis (Wadi al-Natrun). According to Palladius, LH 18.10, Macarius the Alexandrian had cells in several places: in the Great Desert, in Libya, at Kellia, and at Nitria. On Evagrius and the two Macarii, see Antoine Guillaumont, “Le problème des deux Macaires dans les *Apophthegmata Patrum*,” *Irénikon* 48 (1975): 41-59, and Bunge, “Evagre le Pontique et les deux Macaire.”

¹³ Evelyn White, 2.86.

¹⁴ AP Macarius the Great 29; Ward, 133.

¹⁵ John Moschus, *Pratum spirituale* 177; *The Spiritual Meadow of John Moschus*, trans. John Wortley (Kalamazoo: Cistercian, 1992), 146-47.

¹⁶ This story of Evagrius’ demon is a foreshadowing as it were of the condemnation of Origen in the sixth century where Evagrius, not Origen, is the real enemy; see Antoine Guillaumont, *Les “Kephalaia Gnostica” d’Évagre le Pontique et l’histoire de l’origénisme chez les Grecs et chez les Syriens* (Patristica Sorboniensia 5; Paris, 1962) and Brian E. Daly, “What did ‘Origenism’ Mean in the Sixth Century?” in *Origeniana Sexta*, ed. Gilles Dorival and Alain Le Bouleuc (Leuven: Peeters, 1995), 627-38.

shows that Evagrius' writings were still being requested by monks in Egypt in the seventh and eighth centuries.¹⁷ The *Virtues of Macarius*, assembled after 450, closely link Evagrius with Macarius the Great, one of the most eminent saints of Egypt.¹⁸ In them Evagrius is called "the wise," hardly an epithet applied to someone anathematized.¹⁹ Did this unfortunate "foreign" suicide at Kellia come from Asia Minor or Syria where Evagrius' works still circulated and where his ascetical teaching was still admired? Was this curse on Evagrius somehow a lingering memory of (some) Egyptian resentment against the earlier foreign (that is, Greek) interloper, a tension hinted at in the *Apophthegmata*?²⁰ If so, how representative was this resentment?

These questions are ultimately unanswerable, but they are suggestive. In none of the sources concerning the Anthropomorphite-Origenist controversy is Evagrius cast as a villain; nor does he come on stage as a hero. In fact, he does not appear at all; he simply disappears from the historical record. The *damnatio memoriae* against Evagrius was so complete that both sides in the controversy honored it, though undoubtedly for very different reasons (John Cassian, one of Evagrius' most ardent admirers, never mentions him by name, though his works are suffused with Evagrius' spirit).²¹ Our chief sources for this controversy are the Church historian Socrates and the monastic writers Cassian and Palladius, all of whom, to say the least, are biased against the Anthropomorphites and against Theophilus, the archbishop of Alexandria who ultimately took their side.²²

¹⁷ W.E. Crum, *Coptic Ostraca from the Collections of the Egypt Exploration Fund, the Cairo Museum and Others* (London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1902), #252 (Coptic, 46; English, 63): "I said to [Apa] Anthony that he should get The Paradise from Apa John and bring it to me. Otherwise, send the two (books) together. And please send Apa Evagrius." For other examples of ancient requests in Egypt for Evagrius' works, see Joseph Muyltermans, "Evagriana Coptica," *Le Muséon* 76 (1963): 271-76, esp. 272-73. Muyltermans believes that these requests were for the *Antirrhethikos* or the *Praktikos*.

¹⁸ For the *Virtues*, see the forthcoming *Disciples of the Soul's Beloved* (n. 1 above); excerpts will appear beforehand in *Hallel*. See Bunge, "Evagre le Pontique et les deux Macaires," 346-47. As Bunge says, parts of the *Virtues* are very ancient; the ties between Macarius and Evagrius were undoubtedly forged much earlier than the seventh century (the century in which he believes the *Virtues* were compiled), but it is worth noting that later editors and scribes did not see the need to excise Evagrius from the text.

¹⁹ *Virtues* 69; Am, 185.

²⁰ AP Evagrius 7. Because of Evagrius' continued good name in Coptic tradition (in the synaxery versions of the LH and in the *Virtues of Saint Macarius*), Bunge, "Evagre le Pontique et les deux Macaires," 358 n. 208, wonders whether that tradition remembered him unfavorably or whether he was thought to be implicated in the Anthropomorphite controversy.

²¹ To give just one example outside of the *Lausiac History*: in the received Greek text of AP Arsenius 5, "someone" asks Arsenius why "we" with our education get nowhere while the uneducated Egyptian peasants acquire virtue. In several recensions, this "someone" is identified as Evagrius who, given the subject, is a likely interlocutor. Antoine Guillaumont, "Les *Kephalaia Gnostika*," 53 n. 20 has noted "the tendency of the Greek to make the name of Evagrius disappear."

²² See Socrates, EH 6.7 and Cassian, *Conferences* 10.2-3.

Scholars have seen two monastic camps: “Hellenic or Hellenized monks whose theology was more intellectual and more speculative than the naïve and literal beliefs of their Egyptian brethren.”²³ While this demarcation is suspiciously tidy and accepts the anti-Anthropomorphite biases of the ancient sources, it probably presents a reasonably, though not entirely, accurate picture.²⁴ The divide between Origenists and anti-Origenists, anti-Anthropomorphites and Anthropomorphites, was not entirely ethnic but also involved social networks, particularly among the Origenists.²⁵ In Conference 10.3, Cassian speaks highly of Paphnutius, a Copt, who opposed Anthropomorphism in Scetis. It is not a coincidence that in that same Conference, Paphnutius calls on a foreigner, “a certain deacon named Photinus” from Cappadocia, who informs the monks that “the Catholic churches throughout the East” interpreted Genesis “spiritually,” not in a “lowly” way like the Anthropomorphites.

As we have seen above, Evagrius’ roots were in Cappadocia, and the Cappadocians were very sympathetic to Origen.²⁶ We have also seen Evagrius’ close ties to Melania the Elder. According to our sources, it is to her that he owed his monastic vocation; if that is accurate, then it is reasonable to suppose that without Melania there might not have been Evagrius the “erudite theologian” of monasticism.²⁷ But Melania, more than being a way-station on Evagrius’ vocational journey, has even closer associations with Egypt and Origenism, and thus with the Anthropomorphite controversy.²⁸ She and Rufinus (345-411)—monk, historian, and befriender of Origen’s writings—met in either Rome or Egypt in the 370s; in 373-74 they visited Nitria and there met

²³ Evelyn White, 2.128.

²⁴ Graham Gould has challenged the traditional picture, “The Image of God and the Anthropomorphite Controversy in Fourth Century Monasticism,” in Robert J. Daly, ed., *Origeniana Quinta* (Leuven: University Press, 1992), 549-65.

²⁵ On this issue see particularly Clark, esp. chs. 1 and 2. Some of the Origenists—Pambo, Paphnutius—were Copts, while some—Evagrius—were Greeks. The Tall Brothers seem to have been Egyptian; three of their names (Dioscorus, Euthymius, and Eusebius) are Greek, while “Ammonius” is Egyptian in origin.

²⁶ Evagrius undoubtedly first came to know Origen’s works through the Cappadocians’ selection of the latter’s writings known as the *Philocalia*; see Socrates, EH 4.26, and Guillaumont, *Les “Kephalala Gnostica,”* 48-50; see also Nicholas Gendle, “Cappadocian elements in the mystical theology of Evagrius Ponticus,” *Studia Patristica* 16, 373-84. On Evagrius’ intellectual and spiritual connections with Origen, see Francis X. Murphy, “Evagrius Ponticus and Origenism,” in Richard Hanson and Henri Crouzel, eds., *Origeniana Tertia* (Rome: Edizioni dell’ Ateneo, 1985), 253-69, and Guillaumont, *Kephalala Gnostica*, 40-46, 81-123.

²⁷ The phrase is borrowed from Louis Bouyer, *The Spirituality of the New Testament and the Fathers*, Vol. 1: *A History of Christian Spirituality* (Minneapolis: The Seabury Press, 1963).

²⁸ Jerome, in rhythms worthy of Virgil, calumniated Melania, *cuius nomen nigredinis testatur perfidiae tenebras* (“whose black name testifies to the darkness of her perfidy”); Epistle 133.3 (CSEL 56.246).

Pambo, Dioscorus (one of the Tall Brothers), and “Isidore the Confessor.”²⁹ The *Lausiac History* 10 also connects Melania with Pambo, the teacher of the Tall Brothers. The Coptic *Life of Pambo* even gives her the honor of placing her in Pambo’s cell when he dies (par. 6); like Antony passing on his clothing to Athanasius and Sarapion, Pambo gives Melania a basket he has woven so she will remember him, a memento she keeps until her death. The Coptic *Life of Macarius of Alexandria* 2 glorifies Melania even more: there she is called “queen of the Romans” and, explicitly like Athanasius now, receives a sheepskin from Macarius just before his death. From Nitria, the Coptic *Life of Pambo* reports (par. 5), Melania “went into the great desert of Scetis and built a church for Abba Isidore the priest.”³⁰ This desert sojourn, however, was to end precipitously.

During Melania and Rufinus’ stay in Egypt, the emperor Valens (364-78), an Arian, ordered the persecution of Nicene Christians.³¹ In a striking foreshadowing of the rout of the Origenist monks in 399, because of persecution by the Arian archbishop of Alexandria Melania fled to Palestine with some Nitrian monks, including Ammonius, Paphnutius, Pambo, and Isidore of Alexandria; by late in the 370s Rufinus had joined Melania in Palestine.³² Evagrius came to see Melania around 382, and their relationship was obviously a close one: Evagrius wrote his *Ad virginem* either for Melania or one of her nuns, and his famous—or infamous—*Letter to Melania* was written either to Melania or Rufinus.³³ In this letter Evagrius posits an Origenist Fall of minds into bodies and declares that in that fall human beings have lost the image of God, a theological position that will figure prominently in the Anthropomorphite controversy (see below). Palladius later visited Melania, and speaks of her in glowing terms in *Lausiac History* 46, 54, and 55. When Evagrius arrived in Egypt, he

²⁹ LH 46.1 (Meyer, 123); Evelyn White, 2.75-76, who dates their visit to 373-74. Epiphanius, who may have instigated the Origenist crisis by attacking Origen in his works, was writing in the mid 370s, the same time that Melania and Rufinus were in Egypt; Guillaumont, *Kephelaia Gnostica* 58 n. 42, notes the “striking” agreement between the dates of Melania’s visit to “Origenist” monks in Egypt and Epiphanius’ attack on Origenism. On Isidore, see Socrates, EH 6.9. On Melania and Rufinus, see Francis X. Murphy, “Melania the Elder: A Biographical Note,” *Traditio* 5 (1947): 59-77 (he opts for their meeting in Alexandria, 67), *Rufinus of Aquileia (345-411): His Life and Works* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1945), and James Furman, *Rufinus: An Alexandrian in the West*, in *Coptic Church Review*, vol. 13 #1, 1992: 3-23.

³⁰ This Isidore is not the same as Isidore of Alexandria, “the Confessor” and enemy of Theophilus.

³¹ On this period see Evelyn White, 2.76-80. In 376 Valens revoked the sentences of exile on the Nicenes.

³² LH 46.3; Paulinus of Nola, Epistle 29.11; Rufinus, EH 2.2-4; Socrates, EH 4.24; Sozomen, EH 6.20, Cassian, Conference 18.7.

³³ On the *Ad virginem*, see Suzanna Elm, “Evagrius Ponticus’ Sententiae ad Virginem,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 45 (1991) 97-120. On the letter, see “Letter to Melania,” trans. Martin Parmentier, “Evagrius of Pontus’ ‘Letter to Melania,’” *Bijdragen, tijdschrift voor filosofie en theologie* 46 (1985): 2-38; Susanna Elm, “Evagrius Ponticus’ *Sententiae ad Virginem*,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 45 (1991): 265-95.

came under the care of “Isidore the elder, guestmaster of the church of Alexandria,” who had been a monk in the desert.³⁴ Evagrius thus had direct or indirect associations with numerous pro-Origenist figures, several of whom—Isidore, the Tall Brothers—would suffer banishment as a result of the Anthropomorphite controversy.

Evagrius seems to have been especially close to Ammonius, the most eminent of the Tall Brothers; according to Palladius, the latter was “a very learned scholar,” which would make him a natural friend for Evagrius.³⁵ In *Antirrheticos* 6.16, Evagrius reports a visit that he and Ammonius made to John of Lycopolis in the Thebaid, probably the same visit recounted in *Lausiac History* 35 (where Ammonius’ presence has been excised), made shortly before John’s death either at the end of 394 or the beginning of 395.³⁶ According to Palladius (LH 24.1), Evagrius and Ammonius were at the center of the Origenist group at Kellia.

Even more intriguing are Evagrius’ connections with two other great monastic figures who apparently escaped censorship or censure in later anti-Origenist inquisitions: Macarius of Egypt (the Great) and Macarius of Alexandria.³⁷ Evagrius begins par. 93 of his *Praktikos* with “The vessel of election, the elder Macarius the Egyptian, asked me . . . ,” which shows that Evagrius knew Macarius (the condensed version of this saying that passed into the *Apophthegmata* excises Evagrius).³⁸ Numerous apophthegms of the Coptic *Virtues of Macarius* are accounts of conversations, “not without some verisimilitude,” between Evagrius and Macarius.³⁹ In the Coptic *Life of Macarius* 2, in a sentence not found in the *Lausiac History*, the narrator says that “Abba Evagrius was also very close” to Macarius the Great, and that “he himself told me about a few of his virtues too.”⁴⁰ Given that Evagrius settled for good at the

³⁴ LH 1; Palladius says he even saw his cell in Nitria. Sozomen, EH 8.2, confirms Isidore’s position, but says he was a monk in Scetis. Palladius curiously notes that Isidore died a “peaceful death” fifteen years later and says nothing about his fall from Theophilus’ good graces.

³⁵ LH 11.1 (Meyer, 46).

³⁶ See Butler, 1.181-82.

³⁷ On this subject, see especially Guillaumont, “Le problème des deux Macaires,” and Gabriel Bunge, “Évagre le Pontique et les deux Macaires.”

³⁸ Evagrius Ponticus, *The Praktikos [and] Chapters on Prayer*, trans. John Eudes Bamberger (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1981), 39. Since Macarius the Great was at Scetis, one might suppose that this passage refers to Macarius the Alexandrian, but the condensed version is found under *apophthegmata* credited to Macarius the Great, and this attribution is supported by Guillaumont, “Le Problème,” 49-50. Since condensation is common in the *Apophthegmata*, the excision of Evagrius does not necessarily demonstrate censorship, though that remains a possibility.

³⁹ Guillaumont, “Le Problème,” 57. For the *Virtues*, see 17, 39, 42, 76, 77, 81; Am 137-38, 157-58, 160-61, 195-96, and 200-202.

⁴⁰ This may also suggest discipleship on Evagrius’ part. BV translate as “Évagre . . . était très lié avec lui,” and Chafne “Évagrius . . . qui était son grand élève.”

Cells (Kellia), his relationship with Macarius of Alexandria, who was a priest at Kellia, was probably even closer: in *Praktikos* 94 Evagrius reports that he “went over to see the holy Father Macarius [of Alexandria] at the very hottest time of day.”⁴¹ The chapter on Macarius of Alexandria in the *Lausiatic History* (18) is by far the longest chapter in the book (the chapter on Macarius of Egypt is the second longest). As Antoine Guillaumont, one of the foremost scholars on Evagrius, has concluded, “The relationship between this Macarius and Evagrius seems to have been very close, Macarius being in sympathy with the group of Origenist monks of which Evagrius was the most conspicuous.”⁴²

Thus, as Elizabeth Clark has pointed out, the Anthropomorphite clash owed something, perhaps a great deal, to “the personal associations of its contestants.”⁴³ Evagrius seems to have been the hub of these associations; indeed, the spiritual make-up of monasticism at Kellia may well have been more “Evagrian” than the *Apophthegmata* would lead us to believe.⁴⁴ One can not merely dismiss the persons associated with Evagrius as minor figures huddled around a heretic; the Macarii, two of the most eminent figures of the ancient—and modern Coptic—Church are involved. Furthermore (to take the other side for a moment), Palladius makes it abundantly clear that these personal associations were cemented together by (had their origins in?) an abiding respect for Origen, another “heretic”: both Ammonius and Melania had memorized hundreds of thousands of lines of “the highly reputable writings of Origen.”⁴⁵ For Socrates, the Anthropomorphite monks, unlike the Origenists, were “simple ascetics” unlettered in the higher realms of “philosophic” (that is, monastic) thought, and Theophilus, endowed with a “hasty and malignant temperment,” was greedy and acquisitive. For Cassian, the Anthropomorphites were “rather simple”; possessed of an “errant naiveté,” they were “ensnared” in error.⁴⁶ What was this “error”?

According to Socrates (despite his politicizing tendencies), the question was theological in origin: Does God have corporeal existence and human form, or is God incorporeal, without human or any other bodily form? The Anthropomorphites, following descriptions of God in scripture and the affirmation that human beings are made in God’s image and likeness, believed that God did in fact have anthropomorphite, human, form and characteristics. Those opposed to them, following Platonic—and Origenist—thought, believed that

⁴¹ Evagrius, *Praktikos* 94 (Bamberger, 40). On the identification here as the Alexandrian, see Guillaumont, “Le Problème, 52, and Bunge, “Evagre le Pontique et les deux Macaires,” 221 and 223.

⁴² Guillaumont, “Le Problème,” 52. For a list of occasions where Evagrius mentions the two Macarii in his works, see Bunge, “Evagre le Pontique et les deux Macaire,” 219; Bunge has also studied, 325-28, the similarities between the ascetics of Evagrius and Macarius of Alexandria.

⁴³ Clark, 44.

⁴⁴ Bunge, “Evagre le Pontique et les deux Macaire,” 356.

⁴⁵ The opinion is Palladius’, LH 11.4 (Meyer, 47); see also 55.3.

⁴⁶ For English translations, see Socrates, EH, 142-43 and Ramsey, 371-72.

God was incorporeal. Theophilus agreed with them and in his Paschal or Festal Letter of 399 (no longer extant) apparently condemned Anthroporphism; most of the monks, however (as Cassian reports), “very bitterly” received this letter. They went en masse to Alexandria, threatened Theophilus, and convinced him of the error of his ways. The archbishop, an astute politician, did an abrupt about-face: he now anathematized Origenism and convened a synod in 400 to effect the condemnation and excommunicate the Origenist monks the Tall Brothers; in the spring of 400, with soldiers and “a drunken rabble,” he attacked Nitria at night and drove the followers of Origen, perhaps three hundred monks, out of Egypt.⁴⁷

For Palladius and Socrates, Theophilus’ motives were entirely political and expedient: he desired to save his ecclesiastical hide and at the same time sought revenge against the Tall Brothers because they had sniffed out (they say) his cupidity; Palladius even charges that Theophilus bribed a young man to accuse Isidore of Alexandria of sodomy.⁴⁸ Theophilus had once supported Isidore for the see of Constantinople (against John Chrysostom), but turned against him and excommunicated him. According to the Church historian Sozomen, Isidore returned to the desert and joined the Tall Brothers, who interceded on his behalf.⁴⁹ Theophilus imprisoned one of the monks, but the others joined him, forcing the bishop to free them. This, says Sozomen, was Theophilus’ prime motivation for his hatred of the Origenist monks.⁵⁰ Theophilus routed the Origenist monks in 399; according to Palladius, Isidore and the Tall Brothers, along with priests and deacons and some three hundred other monks, fled to Palestine, then to Constantinople.⁵¹

Most scholars have concurred in this political/ecclesiastical assessment of a vengeful, vindictive, raging Theophilus.⁵² No doubt church politics played a part (they always do), but recent research has suggested that there was much more of a theological undercurrent to the controversy. Socrates himself hints at

⁴⁷ Palladius, *Dialogue 7; Dialogus de vita S. Joannis Chrysostomi*, ed. P.R. Coleman-Norton (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1928), 39. Socrates EH 6.7. See Guillaumont, “*Les Kephalaia Gnostika*,” 62-64. Guillaumont, 64 n. 72, following Butler (2.244), believes that Palladius left Nitria in 399, thus before the condemnation of and attack upon the Origenist monks.

⁴⁸ Palladius, *Dialogue 6* (Coleman-Norton, 22-23); see Clark, 105-20.

⁴⁹ Sozomen, EH 8.12; Clark, 47.

⁵⁰ Evelyn White, 2.135-37.

⁵¹ Palladius, *Dialogue 7* (Coleman-Norton, 39); Sozomen, EH 8.13; Socrates, EH 6.9. Bunge, “*Evagre le Pontique et les deux Macaires*,” 356, believes that Origenists comprised almost all the monks of Kellia. Guillaumont, “*Les Kephalaia Gnostika*,” 59, suggests that on the whole that the number of Origenist monks was “quite restricted” while the Anthropomorphites made up the majority.

⁵² See Evelyn White, 135, and J.N.D. Kelly, *Golden Mouth: The Story of John Chrysostom* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1995), 192, although Evelyn White does recognize, 86, that Evagrius was the “intellectual center” of the Origenists and that his teaching was regarded by some as suspect. For Theophilus’ side of things, see Clark, 105-20.

this. When the Anthropomorphite monks confront Theophilus and demand a retraction, they interestingly make a single demand: “anathematize Origen’s book; for some drawing arguments from them oppose themselves to our opinion.” Theophilus says that he himself disapproves of Origen’s works. Socrates reports that Theophilus had had theological discussions about the incorporeality of God with the Tall Brothers who argued that God having human form “would involve the necessary accompaniment of the passions,” which had been “demonstrated by the ancient writers and especially Origen.”⁵³ The passions, and their abatement and even extirpation, were perhaps the chief concern of Evagrius. And Evagrius was known to be both a follower of Origen and closely associated with Ammonius, the leader of the Tall Brothers.⁵⁴ It seems that Evagrius was the “unindicted co-conspirator” of the Origenists, their theological and spiritual leader whose thought undergirded their opposition to the Anthropomorphites.

Although Evagrius is missing from the ancient accounts of the Anthropomorphite-Origenist controversy, his theology, “more origenistic than Origen himself,” was central to the conflict.⁵⁵ Evagrius’ starting point was the incorporeality, simplicity, and imagelessness of God. This is not mere Platonism. Trinitarian thinking lies behind Evagrius’ “iconoclasm.” In the Coptic *Life of Evagrius* (drastically condensed in Greek), three demons visit Evagrius, disguised as “servants of the Church”:

The first said to him, “I am a Eunomian. I have come to you so you might tell me whether the Father is begotten or unbegotten.” Apa Evagrius said to him, “I will not answer you because you have asked a bad question, for it is not right to talk about the nature of the Unbegotten and to inquire whether it is begotten or unbegotten” (par. 29).

Evagrius ruled out all attributes of God (quality, quantity, begotten, unbegotten), even biblical ones, so it follows that he rejected the Anthropomorphite belief that God has human attributes.⁵⁶ Evagrius, as Elizabeth Clark has put it,

⁵³ Socrates EH 6.7.

⁵⁴ See LH 24.2 for “Saints Ammonius and Evagrius.” For more on the Tall Brothers, see Evelyn White, 130-31, and for the later intertwining of their lives with that of John Chrysostom, Kelly, 191-202.

⁵⁵ Elizabeth Clark has recently demonstrated this, 43-84; she acknowledges, 44, that Antoine and Claire Guillaumont preceded her. Much of the following account is indebted to her careful study. The quotation belongs to Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Metaphysik und Mystik*, 42, cited by Murphy, 254, and Guillaumont, “Les *Kephalaia Gnostika*,” 32 (see his further comments on 32 n. 76). For a review of scholarly opinions on Evagrius’ Origenism, see Guillaumont, 40-42 and, for an outstanding summary of Evagrius’ Origenist thought vis-à-vis his opponents, Guillaumont, 102-23.

⁵⁶ Guillaumont, *Les “Kephalaia Gnostica”*, 50, shows the similarities between *Kephalaia Gnostica* 5.51 and *Theological Discourse* 2.3 of Gregory Nazianzus, thus pointing once again to Cappadocia.

was “radically anti-imagistic.”⁵⁷ For Evagrius, images arouse emotions and impede *apatheia*, the passionless peace required for contemplation of, and ultimate union with, God. The mind should be completely free of images so that God can illuminate the person praying.

Evagrius was especially anti-imagistic in his teaching on prayer; in fact, Evagrius’ teaching may have started the Anthropomorphite controversy.⁵⁸ It is important to understand here that this controversy was not waged in academic journals or conferences but was entered into, felt, by monks whose chief occupation in life was prayer; thus, the controversy was not abstract theological speculation but intimately affected the monks’ life of prayer. For Evagrius, the goal of such a life was to get beyond images, but this was not true for the majority of the monks. In Conference 10, John Cassian clearly and poignantly illustrates both sides. In Cassian’s (anti-Anthropomorphite) account, he tells about a certain Serapion, a “man so old and accomplished in so many virtues” who, however, “on account of ignorance and rustic naiveté,” had wandered “from the path of right faith up to the end.” We see here, in modern terms, the clear connection between orthopraxis, right practice, and orthodoxy, right belief. This old man,

when he realized that the anthropomorphic image of the Godhead which he had always pictured to himself while praying had been banished from his heart . . . suddenly broke into the bitterest tears and heavy sobbing and, throwing himself to the ground with a loud groan, cried out: “Woe is me, wretch that I am! They have taken my God from me, and I have no one to lay hold of, nor do I know whom I should adore or address.”

Cassian, despite his previous condescension toward the Anthropomorphites, quietly, almost guiltily, acknowledges that he and his companions were “greatly shaken by this.”⁵⁹ Clearly, if Serapion’s heart was “cleansed” of images, it was left broken; iconoclasm ceases to be theoretical here and has profoundly personal consequences.

This account takes place in the midst of a Conference by Abba Isaac devoted to “pure”—that is, imageless—prayer. Is Isaac a stand-in for Evagrius?⁶⁰ Cassian naturally (as a follower of Evagrius) thought that Serapion had been “led on by some new delusion of the demons,” but Isaac assures him that it was ignorance that caused the old man’s plight—“the ignorance that characterized the earliest pagans”: “For, as is the way of that error, according to which they used to worship demons in human form, now they also hold that the incompre-

⁵⁷ Clark, 63; see also 61-62.

⁵⁸ Guillaumont, *Les “Kephalaia Gnostica,”* 61.

⁵⁹ Conference 10.3.4-5; Ramsey, 373.

⁶⁰ Bunge, “Evagre le Pontique et les deux Macaires,” 342: “It is equally well known that this famous Abba Isaac speaks the language of Evagrius.”

hensible and ineffable majesty of the true Deity should be adored under the limitations of some image, and they do not believe that anything can be grasped and understood if no image of it is set up, which they can always approach with their petitions, circumscribe in their minds, and keep constantly before their eyes.”⁶¹

Against such “superstition” Isaac (Cassian, Evagrius) places pure prayer: to the extent that the mind

“withdraws from the contemplation of earthly and material things, its state of purity lets it progress and causes Jesus to be seen by the soul’s inward gaze But they alone see his Godhead with purest eyes who, mounting from humble and earthly tasks and thoughts, go off with him to the lofty mountain of the desert which, free from the uproar of every earthly thought and disturbance, removed from every taint of vice, and exalted with the purest faith and with soaring virtue, reveals the glory of his face and the image of his brightness to those who deserve to look upon him with the clean gaze of the soul.”⁶²

The goal of such contemplation for the solitary was union with God, when “one’s whole way of life and all the yearnings of one’s heart become a single and continuous prayer,” which Cassian describes in one of the most beautiful passages in patristic literature (Abba Isaac is speaking):

“This will be the case when every love, every desire, every effort, every undertaking, every thought of ours, everything that we live, that we speak, that we breathe, will be God, and when that unity which the Father now has with the Son and which the Son has with the Father will be carried over into our understanding and our mind, so that, just as he loves us with a sincere and pure and indissoluble love, we too may be joined to him with a perpetual and inseparable love and so united with him that whatever we breathe, whatever we understand, whatever we speak, may be God.”⁶³

Given this goal, and the imageless means of attaining it, it is hardly surprising that images were anathema to Evagrius. What may be more surprising is that Evagrius’ iconoclastic theology and spirituality presumed a more pessimistic anthropology than did the Anthropomorphites.⁶⁴ The latter, following the account in Genesis, believed that humans are made in the image and likeness of God and retain some form of that image, even after the fall. As a result,

⁶¹ Conference 10.6.1-2 (Ramsey, 374-75).

⁶² Conference 10.5.1 (Ramsey, 373-74).

⁶³ Conference 10.7.2 (Ramsey, 375-76).

⁶⁴ See Michael O’Laughlin, “The Anthropology of Evagrius Ponticus and its Sources,” in C. Kannengiesser and W. Petersen, eds., *Origen of Alexandria: His World and His Legacy* (Notre Dame: Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 1988), 357-73.

humans can form an image of God in their mind.⁶⁵ For Evagrius, following Origen, human beings had lost the image of God (a belief that Theophilus apparently originally held; see Appendix IV); therefore, all that remains for us are (false) images—thoughts, dreams, fantasies—that distract us from God.⁶⁶ Images imply bodies, and Evagrius followed Origen in teaching that bodies are a secondary addition to the pure, incorporeal “naked *nous*” created at creation. At the end, bodies will be discarded (destroyed, not transformed), and the *nous* will return to God.⁶⁷ Thus the Anthropomorphite controversy was, ultimately, for *both* those who followed Evagrius *and* for the Anthropomorphites (witness Serapion’s *cri de coeur*) soteriological. But for the Evagrians, the way to God was paved with broken images.

*The Lausiac History and the Coptic Palladiana*⁶⁸

“The outcome of the Origenist controversy in Egypt clearly impacted the literary record of asceticism. The received tradition became an anti-Origenist tradition.”⁶⁹

In chapter 38.11 of the *Lausiac History* Evagrius debates three “demons disguised as clergy”: a Eunomian, an Arian, and an Apollinarian.⁷⁰ The debate does not last long; Palladius supposedly (the use of this adverb will be clear in a minute) devotes only a few lines to the contest and Evagrius defeats the faux clerics “with his knowledge and a few words.” This version, however, does not seem to be the one that Palladius originally wrote: the original was much longer. The Coptic *Life of Evagrius*, although fragmentary (it ends with this encounter, whose conclusion is missing), preserves a much longer account of Evagrius’ debate with the theologically-minded demons (par. 29). The Greek of the *Lausiac History*, by contrast, is obviously an epitome of the confrontation, one of three stories grouped together under the heading of “demons or spirits that bothered Evagrius.”⁷¹

At first one might suspect the longer Coptic version of being an expansion of a short Greek text, but this is highly unlikely, for several reasons. First, by

⁶⁵ Gould suggests, 550-52, that the question of whether or not human beings retain the image of God was more central to the conflict.

⁶⁶ See Clark, 75.

⁶⁷ Evagrius, *Kephalaia gnostica* 2.77, 3.66 6.20, 6.85; Guillaumont, Les “Kephalaia Gnostica,” 109. Evagrius, *Epistula ad Melanaim* 5-6 (Parmentier, 11-13).

⁶⁸ Portions of this section are paraphrased from BV with appropriate citation.

⁶⁹ James E. Goehring, *Ascetics, Society, and the Desert: Studies in Early Egyptian Monasticism* (SAC; Harrisburg: Trinity, 1999), 208.

⁷⁰ Such a debate might be modeled on Antony’s contest with pagan philosophers in *Life of Antony* 72-80.

⁷¹ The Coptic *Life* preserves the first two stories separately (pars. 22 and 23), at some remove from the third (par. 29). The structure of the Greek epitome is more evident in Greek than in the English (Meyer) or Italian (Barchiesi) translations I consulted.

chance a Greek version of this story has survived, one that is very close to the Coptic version and which the Coptic has clearly translated.⁷² The Greek text leaves us with two choices: either Palladius wrote a long version of the story and later considerably shortened it and “regrouped” it, or he wrote a long version and a later editor did the curtailing. Second, the long version is theologically accurate. The Arian denies the divinity of the Holy Spirit; this is not a classic Arian position, but precisely captures the point of view of the Homoians, whom Nicenes such as Athanasius branded as “Arian.”⁷³ The Eunomian’s concerns about whether the Father is begotten or unbegotten are equally accurate: the Eunomians argued that only the Father, strictly speaking, was *agennêtos*, unbegotten. The Apollinarian position, that Christ’s human intellect was replaced by divinity, is also accurate. Finally, Evagrius’ assertion, against the Apollinarian, of the fully human mind of Christ is more Greek than Coptic and is not likely to have emanated from post-Chalcedonian Egypt.⁷⁴

Even more importantly, Evagrius’ own writings corroborate the substance and details of the long version.⁷⁵ When the first demon, the Eunomian, asks Evagrius “whether the Father is begotten or unbegotten,” Evagrius replies, “I will not answer you because you have asked a bad question, for it is not right to talk about the nature of the Unbegotten and to inquire whether it is begotten or unbegotten.” In *Gnostikos* 27 Evagrius makes the same argument: “Do not speak about God inconsiderately and never define the Divinity. For definitions belong to created and composite beings.”⁷⁶ Eunomian theology sought to define the essence of God as “ingenerateness,” and since the Son was “generated” by the Father, then the Son could not be God. But Evagrius refutes this hyper-rationalism. In *Kephalaia Gnostika* 5.51 he attacks the Eunomians directly and in *Gnostikos* 41 declares: “Every proposition has as a predicate either a genus or a distinction or a species or a property or an accident or that which is composed of these—but in regard to the Trinity, none [of this terminology] that

⁷² The Greek text was published by J.-B. Cotelerius (Cotelier), in *Ecclesiae Graecae Monumenta* III (Paris, 1686), 117-20 and reproduced from Paris Gk 1220 f. 271v by Butler, 1.132-35. A French translation may be found in BV 173-75. Part II of the text, the confrontation with the Arian, is considerably longer in Greek than in Coptic; parts I, the Eunomian, and Part III, the Apollinarian, correspond closely in Greek and Coptic, although the end of Part III is missing in Coptic.

⁷³ See R.P.C. Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1988), 557ff.; for their views on the Spirit, see 740ff.

⁷⁴ For Evagrius’ Trinitarian views, see his *Epistula fidei*, long attributed to Saint Basil (as Epistle VIII) but now recognized as belonging to Evagrius; *Saint Basil: The Letters*, trans. Roy J. Deferrari (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1950), 46-92.

⁷⁵ I wish to thank William Harmless, S.J. for alerting me to these passages and for giving me his translation of the *Gnostikos*.

⁷⁶ Antoine Guillaumont, ed., *Évagre le Pontique: Le Gnostique ou a celui qui est devenu digne de la science* (Sources chrétiennes 356; Paris: Cerf, 1989), 132-33.

has just been said is admissible. Let the ineffable be adored in silence!"⁷⁷ It is reasonable to conclude, therefore, that Palladius, who knew Evagrius, wrote the longer—accurate—version of *Lausiac History* 38.11, found in the *Coptic Life of Evagrius*, which confronts us with a better, fuller text than the one found in the *Lausiac History*.⁷⁸ This leads directly to the question of the other Coptic *Lives* that represent longer versions than those preserved in Greek.

Palladius wrote the *Lausiac History* around 420 when he was a bishop, about thirty years after his sojourn in Egypt. What were his sources? More than one monk of whom Palladius speaks was dead before Palladius came to Egypt and he distinguishes between those whom he saw or learned from and those whom he learned about from others. Did he get other sources from Evagrius, his spiritual master? From primitive collections of the *Apophthegmata*? Evagrius concludes his *Praktikos* (91-100) with a small collection of "excellent sayings and deeds" of earlier monks, most notably Macarius the Great.⁷⁹ A passage in the *Coptic Life of Macarius of Alexandria* 1, the story of the visit of Macarius of Alexandria to the garden of Janes and Jambres, comes from Evagrius, *Antirrhetikos* 4.23, and thus shows the literary dependence of the *Coptic Life* on Evagrius.⁸⁰

The four Coptic *Lives*—Pambo, Evagrius, Macarius of Egypt, Macarius the Alexandrian—are principally contained in Coptic synaxeries where they were preserved for liturgical reading, but without a doubt were originally written in Greek.⁸¹ What is the relationship between the *Lausiac History* and these Coptic fragments? It is obvious right off that the latter are not mere translations of the former. One possibility is that there were two recensions of the *Lausiac History*, one short and one long, attested by fragments in Greek, Syriac, Latin, and Coptic. The suggestion of two recensions, though attractive, has too many problems associated with it. It is better to see these four *Lives* as, in Gabriel Bunge's words, a "lateral tradition," one with a distinctly Palladian character. This tradition is very well informed about details concerning Scetis; there is no indication that *Lausiac History* 72 and 73 (preserved in Syriac; see Appendix II) or the

⁷⁷ Guillaumont, ed., 166-67. See Gendle, 374-78. See Socrates, EH 3.7. The five technical terms (genus, distinction, species, property, accident) that Evagrius cites here are from ancient logic; Porphyry's *Eisagoge* attributes them to Aristotle's *Categories*. See Michael O'Laughlin, *Origenism in the Desert* (Th.D. Thesis, Harvard University, 1987), 196.

⁷⁸ The only other possibility is that a later (Greek) writer, with access to Evagrius' works, wrote the long version. Even if that is the case, the long version must belong to the fourth-fifth century.

⁷⁹ Evagrius, *Praktikos* (Bamberger, 39-41).

⁸⁰ BV 36-37. Guillaumont, "Le Problème," 52, points out that Evagrius, Palladius, and the Latin version of the *Historia Monachorum* attribute the story to this Macarius, and not to Macarius the Great as does the Greek *Historia Monachorum*.

⁸¹ BV 18. Since the mss. are in Bohairic, they are relatively late (10th c.), but undoubtedly rely on earlier mss. See Mark Sheridan, "Histoire Lausiaque 1141" (Review of BV), *Collectanea Cisterciensia* 57.3 (1995): 548-52.

long recension of the *Life of Evagrius* were ever part of the *Lausiatic History*.⁸² Therefore, one must make a clear distinction between “Lausiatic” and “Palladian”: the former designates material pertaining to the *Lausiatic History*, while the latter refers to writings that have Palladius as their author.

Certain indications within and outside the *Lausiatic History* lead to the conclusion that the Palladian material distributed throughout the Coptic synaxeries, but also attested elsewhere, belongs to another, earlier, work by Palladius. The parts that remain indicate that it was dedicated (exclusively?) to a history of Egyptian anchoritic monasticism in the fourth century. Socrates (EH 4.23) speaks of a “treatise” by “the *monk* Palladius, who was a disciple of Evagrius” (emphasis added) and relates three stories about Abba Pambo that are found in the Coptic *Life* but not in the *Lausiatic History*.⁸³ It is reasonable to suggest that Socrates is referring to a work that Palladius wrote when he was a monk in Egypt, long before he became a bishop (Socrates is aware elsewhere in his *History* that Palladius did become a bishop). We know little about this treatise except that it concerned the “deeds and experiences and discourses” of monks, both male and female. Besides deeds (*facta*) there were also “the things they said for the benefit of those who heard them [*verba*]”⁸⁴ In addition, Socrates makes the odd remark that “both Evagrius and Palladius flourished a short time after the death of Valens,” that is, after 378. Such a statement makes sense if Socrates had before him an early work of Palladius and was thinking of Palladius’ discipleship in the desert in the 380s and 390s and not of his later career as bishop, author of the *Lausiatic History*, and champion of John Chrysostom.

The *Lausiatic History* was destined for a high official, Lausus, in the court of Theodosius II and also for a wider audience; thus it was not limited solely to an Egyptian milieu but embraced equally the eastern world with Syria and Mesopotamia as well as the west with Rome and Campania. The whole was conceived as a form of autobiography in the form of a history of monasticism in the fourth century.⁸⁵ A number of persons who appear in the *Lausiatic History*, as we saw above, were associated with Origenism, either directly or indirectly: Evagrius, Macarius of Egypt, Macarius of Alexandria, the Tall Brothers, Pambo. The condemnation of Origen in 553 and the subsequent loss of many of his writings was also fatal for Didymus the Blind and Evagrius, virtually all of whose works disappeared in Greek. Around 553 began the systematic suppres-

⁸² BV 78.

⁸³ Socrates EH 4.23. Pars. 2, (5, 10), and 12 (the last = AP Pambo 4).

⁸⁴ BV 78-79. Antoine Guillaumont has drawn attention to the importance of both word *and* deed among the early desert monks; see his “L’Enseignement spirituel des moines d’Égypte” repr. in his *Études sur la spiritualité de l’orient chrétien* (Begrölles-en-Mauges: Bellefontaine, 1996), 81-92.

⁸⁵ BV 79.

sion of all traces of Origenism in the work of Palladius (see Appendix I, “Seven Goals of Anti-Origenism”).⁸⁶ A century ago Dom Cuthbert Butler recognized that there were problems in the text of the *Lausiac History*, that certain “heretical or suspected names that occur throughout the book” had been eliminated and that the text he preferred (G) showed unmistakable anti-Origenist tendencies. The result of this tendency was to eliminate all trace of these “heretics”; in the words of René Draguet, a veritable *damnatio memoriae*.⁸⁷ Thus the Coptic fragments of Palladius’ theorized youthful “History of Egyptian Monasticism” assume great importance. The scholarly debate over these Coptic *Lives* has not been resolved.⁸⁸ It is not absolutely certain that Palladius did write an earlier version of the *Lausiac History*. The existence of the Coptic *Lives*, however, forces us to look at the *Lausiac History* anew, and especially to take a fresh look at questions regarding its editing and transmission in antiquity and the almost certain censorship regarding Evagrius and other Origenists.

There is now just too much evidence to accept the received text of the *Lausiac History* without question. The account of the follower of Hieracas, Evagrius’ debate with the three theological demons, the much longer Coptic version of the *Life of Evagrius*, chapters [72] and [73] of the Syriac *Lausiac History*, and the numerous differences between the Greek and Coptic versions force a reconsideration: either (1) Palladius wrote two versions of the *Lausiac History*; (2) wrote an earlier “Egyptian” version; or (3) the *Lausiac History* was heavily edited after his death and the Coptic has managed to preserve some earlier, unexpurgated readings. Whatever is finally decided about the origins of these four *Lives*, those who care about early Egyptian monasticism will be grateful for the precious information that these Coptic fragments have preserved for us.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ BV 24-25. On Evagrius’ link with Origenism in the sixth century, see Daly, “What did ‘Origenism’ Mean?”

⁸⁷ BV 20.

⁸⁸ See Sheridan, 548-52.

⁸⁹ BV 79.

THE LIFE OF PAMBO

INTRODUCTION

Pambo of Nitria

Amoun founded monasticism in Nitria about 315, and is closely associated with Pior, Or, and Pambo, all of whom figure in the *Lausiatic History*.⁹⁰ Pambo (Pamô in Coptic) was the master of the Tall Brothers and, thus, was connected to Origenism, a detail carefully erased by the anti-Origenist suppression in one manuscript tradition (G) of the *History*. He died in 373-74 at the age of 70 and thus was born at the beginning of the fourth century. Pambo probably came to Nitria not long after Amoun, perhaps influenced by Antony; the *Apophthegmata* show some knowledge of a connection between the two.⁹¹ One of Pambo's characteristics seems to have been silence: par. 2 of the *Coptic Life* (not preserved in Greek but reported by Socrates in his *Ecclesiastical History*) relates how Pambo kept silence for years until he mastered his tongue. A saying in the *Apophthegmata* confirms this characteristic: when Archbishop Theophilus comes to see him and he is asked to speak, Pambo tartly replies, "If he is not edified by my silence, he will not be edified by my speech."⁹²

Pambo seems to have been ordained a priest before 340 and was given the grace of healing.⁹³ He emphasized monastic poverty and charity: with regard to the former, he said that monks must work for their bread and clothing and that a monk's clothing should be such that he could throw it out of his cell and no one would steal it for three days.⁹⁴ With regard to the latter, he apparently instituted a system of giving by the monks.⁹⁵ He was well-known for his humility and was so humble that no one could look at him because of the glory that shone from him.⁹⁶ Antony said that the spirit of God dwelled in Pambo.⁹⁷ Abba Poimen saw three special virtues in Pambo: fasting, silence, and great manual labor.⁹⁸

⁹⁰ LH 8-10; for a full discussion, see Evelyn White, 2.45-54.

⁹¹ AP Antony 6, Poimen 75.

⁹² AP Theophilus 2. As Evelyn White observed, 2.53 n. 12, the attribution to Theophilus is probably incorrect: Pambo died in 373-74 and Theophilus became patriarch in 385.

⁹³ AP Macarius of Egypt 2; Evelyn White, 2.54.

⁹⁴ AP Pambo 6, pars. 8 and 15 below.

⁹⁵ Par. 16 below.

⁹⁶ AP Pambo 1.

⁹⁷ AP Poimen 75.

⁹⁸ AP Poimen 150.

The Coptic Life of Pambo

The most striking thing about the Coptic text of the *Life of Pambo* is what at first seems like a haphazard anti-Origenism, as though the scribe or editor set out to efface all trace of Pambo's links with suspicious Origenist characters (see the General Introduction above) but then grew drowsy or indifferent and forgot about his duties: instead of teaching the four Tall Brothers, Pambo instructs only two of them, and a fellow who unfortunately shares a name with the heretical Origen becomes "John" (Par. 3; LH 10.1); in the *Lausiatic History* this Origen is identified as Pambo's steward, but here the steward becomes "Theodore" (pars. 5, 6, 9; LH 10.3, 10.6, 10.7); however, a bit later (in a passage with no parallel in the *Lausiatic History*), Pambo takes some money and gives it "to his servant named Origen, who is still living and performing the job of steward that the old man gave him" (par. 14).

Although conspiracy theories can be attractive (and especially fun when, à la the Watergate Plumbers, the conspirators are incompetent bunglers), there is probably a better explanation for the seeming anti-Origenism of the Coptic *Life of Pambo*. The clue may well lie with the servant Origen: he is not excluded, but displaced. It does not seem plausible that an anti-Origenist editor excluded two of the Tall Brothers and turned the servant into Abba John, and then forgot to exclude the other two brothers and let the servant Origen show up later. If the editor really was anti-Origenist, why not exclude altogether even the names of Dioscorus & Amoun, the other two Tall Brothers, and "disappear" the servant named Origen?

Instead, what if this *Life of Pambo* was an early draft of what was to appear later in the *Lausiatic History*, an early work of (as Socrates says) "Palladius the monk"? When Palladius composed the Greek *Lausiatic History* some twenty-five years after his sojourn in Egypt, circumstances had decisively changed: there had occurred the bloody battle (both theologically and, apparently, literally) with Theophilus, the exile of the Tall Brothers, and the deposition of John Chrysostom. Twenty-five years after his time in the desert Palladius was revising things in light of drastically changed circumstances. In the 390s, Palladius the monk may have known only two Tall Brothers, or at least associated only two of them with Pambo. In the 420s, after the four Tall Brothers had become internationally famous, Palladius would associate all four with Pambo, thereby showing how venerable and traditional their monasticism was. In the 390s, Palladius saw Origen as Pambo's faithful servant. In the 420s, he remembered Origen in retrospect not simply as Pambo's faithful servant, but as the "nephew of Dracontius, a marvelous man." In the 420s, Origen has become a "priest" (LH 10.6) and a faithful witness to Pambo's death and to Pambo's humble habit of saying he really understood very little about scripture. Origen is also charged with the distribution of Melania's donation. It seems that, given the hundreds of monks living in Nitria at the time, Origen had a very significant job. And

Palladius highlights that role as he retells the story.⁹⁹ The material in the Coptic *Life* not found in Greek certainly has the feel of desert asceticism and comports well with what we know of Pambo from the *Lausiatic History* and other early sources.

* * * * *

The Dedication and Preface to the *Lausiatic History* and the *Life of Pambo* were read together on the fifth Saturday of Lent.¹⁰⁰

SYNOPTIC TABLE

THE COPTIC LIFE OF PAMBO & LAUSIATIC HISTORY 9-10

COPTIC LIFE	LAUSIATIC HISTORY
1. Pambo the Righteous	LH 9 (Abba Or)
2. Pambo Shows Extraordinary Patience	_____
3. Pambo Teaches Others	LH 10.1
4. His Hatred of Gold and Silver	LH 10.1
5. Melania Talks about Abba Pambo	LH 10.2-4
6. The Death of Abba Pambo	LH 10.5
7. Abba Isidore Speaks about Abba Pambo	_____
8. Abba Pambo's Final Teaching	LH 10.6
9. Abba Pambo's Patience in Speaking	LH 10.7
10. Abba Pambo Ignores a Large Sum of Money	_____
11. Abba Pambo's Good Works and Humility	_____
12. Abba Pambo Learns from a Prostitute	_____
13. The Faithful Disciple	_____
14. Origen the Steward	_____
15. We Work for what We Eat and Wear	_____
16. Giving to Others	_____
17. Abba Pambo Teaches Abba Pihôr a Lesson	LH 10.8

⁹⁹ The alternative, as BV suggest regarding the LH, is that the anti-Origenist Coptic text was corrupted by "purer" (non-anti-Origenist) texts.

¹⁰⁰ BV 42. The Dedication Letter and Preface are translations of the LH without containing supplemental material and thus have been omitted here.

CONCERNING APA PAMBO (LAUSIAC HISTORY 9-10)¹⁰¹

Pambo the Righteous (LH 9)¹⁰²

1. There appeared in the monastic community¹⁰³ of Pernouj¹⁰⁴ a certain person named Apa Pambo.¹⁰⁵ *He was second after Abba Antony.*¹⁰⁶ *Apa Pambo was thus called alêthênos, “the true or righteous one,”* concerning whose virtues the whole brotherhood testified. I myself did not meet him in my time there, but the brothers spoke with me about him, saying that that man never said a lie *nor ever committed a sin with his tongue*¹⁰⁷ *from the time that he became a monk;*¹⁰⁸ *neither oath nor curse ever came from his mouth, nor did he ever speak an unnecessary word.*¹⁰⁹ *He had a wife and two sons, but they themselves did not agree to become monks.*

*Pambo Shows Extraordinary Patience*¹¹⁰

2. *When he came to the brothers he went and found an old man and said to him, “Teach me a psalm,” for he was illiterate, and the old man began to teach him this psalm: “I said, ‘I will watch my ways so as to be unable to sin with my tongue.’”*¹¹¹ *And after the old man had given him the beginning of the text, Pambo stopped him, saying, “My father, since I haven’t yet learned the beginning of the text, I will not learn the rest.” And when Abba Pambo went to his*

¹⁰¹ Translated from the text edited by É. Amélineau, *De Historia Lausica, quanam sit huius ad Monachorum Aegyptiorum historiam scribendam utilitas* (Paris, 1887): 92-104, with corrections by Adalbert de Vogüé, based on Vatican Coptic Codex 64, “Les fragments coptes de l’Histoire Lausiaque: l’édition d’Amélineau et le manuscrit,” *Orientalia* 58.3 (1989): 326-32. Gabriel Bunge and Vogüé give a French translation of the corrected text. References to the Greek (Gk) text of the *Lausiac History* are to G.J.M. Bartelink, ed., *Palladio: La Storia Lausiaca* (Milan: Fondazione Lorenzo Valla, 1974), which is a modification of Butler’s. Translations of the Gk text are from *Palladius: The Lausiac History*, trans. Robert T. Meyer (Ancient Christian Writers 34; New York: Newman, 1964).

¹⁰² Section titles are my own. Portions in italics are lacking in Gk. Paragraphs without “LH” in parentheses lack parallels with the *Lausiac History*. Paragraph numbers do not correspond to LH but are given for ease of reference.

¹⁰³ Coptic: *pitôou* can mean “mountain” or “monastic community,” “monastery.”

¹⁰⁴ That is, Nitria, the monastic settlement some 50 kilometers southeast of Alexandria.

¹⁰⁵ His name in Coptic is “Pamô,” but since “Pambo” is the customary spelling I have adopted it here. In the Gk LH, this first paragraph refers to Abba Or (LH 9).

¹⁰⁶ In the first few paragraphs the text fluctuates between “Apa” and “Abba.”

¹⁰⁷ See the next par. (Ps 38:2 [LXX]).

¹⁰⁸ See the *Life of Antony* 65.1-5 where Antony, in a vision, is judged sinless from the time he became a monk.

¹⁰⁹ The text up to here parallels LH 9 which, however, gives the monk’s name as Or, not Pambo. The sentence referring to Antony is missing in LH 9 and in its place is a reference to Melania (see par. 5 below).

¹¹⁰ This story is recounted by Socrates, EH 4.23

¹¹¹ Ps 38:2 (LXX).

cell, he spent eight years putting into practice ¹¹²the saying that he had learned, for he came into contact with no one, saying, “Unless I first master my tongue, I will come into contact with no one lest I fall on account of my tongue.” After eight years, he went and paid a visit to the old man who had given him the psalm. The old man said to him, “Pambo, why haven’t I seen you until today? Why didn’t you come to learn the psalm?” Apa Pambo said to him, “Since I hadn’t learned the first verse, I didn’t return to you to get the second since God had not given me the grace until now to learn it. In order not to act as if I despised you, I have come to visit you, my father. For if I learn the first verse, I will come to see you again.” And when he returned to his cell, he stayed there another ten years and did not come into contact with anyone.

Pambo Teaches Others (LH 10.1)

3. Thus blessed Abba Pambo was in this monastic community. It was he who taught Abba Dioscorus and Abba Amôn and Abba John, the nephew of Abba Dracontius the bishop of the town of Hôr.¹¹³

His Hatred of Gold and Silver (LH 10.1)

4. This Abba Pambo was an admirable person, for his virtues and his accomplishments were great, but he was even more admirable on account of his hatred of gold and silver, as it is written in scripture with regard to this subject.¹¹⁴

Melania Talks about Abba Pambo (LH 10.2-4)¹¹⁵

5. Blessed Melania¹¹⁶ talked to me one time about him: “When I first arrived in Alexandria from Rome, Abba Isidore *the priest*¹¹⁷ told me about the virtues of Abba Pambo, and I begged him to lead me into the desert to where Abba Pambo lived so I could see him. And when he brought me to the monastic community, he spoke with him and took me further to the interior where he lived.¹¹⁸ When I threw myself to the ground and prostrated myself before him, he had me sit down. He himself was sitting and working with palm leaves. I

¹¹² Coptic *eferaskin* = Gk *askein*, “to train oneself through ascetic practice.”

¹¹³ This list differs in Gk: “He was the teacher of the four brothers, Dioscorus the bishop, Ammonius, Eusebius, and Euthymius, and also of Origen, the nephew of Dracontius, a marvelous man.” The first four were the Tall Brothers; see the General Introduction.

¹¹⁴ The Gk is more compact: “as the Gospel requires.” See Mt 6:19-21.

¹¹⁵ See the similar story below about Anatolius.

¹¹⁶ Melania appears earlier in LH 9. On her role, see the General Introduction.

¹¹⁷ On the different figures named Isidore in early monastic literature, see J.-C. Guy, “Introduction. Prosopographie des moines scetiotés,” *Apophtegmes des Peres: Collection systematique I-IX*, SC 387, pp. 57-59.

¹¹⁸ This seems to suggest that Isidore took Melania to the outer part of Nitria, left her in order to speak with Pambo and get permission for her to visit, then returned for her.

opened my bag and gave him a silver chest with three hundred silver coins inside.¹¹⁹ I begged him to look inside and enjoy for himself some of my wealth. But he sat plaiting palm leaves, *absorbed in his handiwork, nor did he raise his eyes to look at me*, but instead spoke to me *in a quiet voice*: ‘May the Lord bless you *for your troubles* and reward you *in heaven*.’ *And he spoke to me again* : ‘Put it on the windowsill.’

“He called Theodore,¹²⁰ his steward, and said to him, ‘*This woman has brought this for the stewardship of God; therefore take it and go, spend it, distribute it among the monks of the Cells and in Libya and among the brothers living in the rocks and on the islands, for those monasteries are poorer than all the others.*’ He ordered him: ‘Do not distribute it among the monasteries of Egypt, because those other places,’ he said, ‘have more physical needs than do the ones in Egypt.’¹²¹

“As for me,” she said, “I stood there, expecting that he would perhaps honor me or praise me, and I didn’t hear a single word from him. I said to him, ‘My father, I wish to inform you—so you know—that there are three hundred pounds of silver there.’

“But he did not lift his head from his work but said to me in a firm voice: ‘He to whom you have given them knows their number; he doesn’t need anyone to weigh them for him. He who “weighs the mountains in a scale and the hills in a balance” is not ignorant of the weight of this silver. Indeed, if you had given the money to me, then you’d do well to inform me about it, since I am a man. But if you give the money to God, then there is no need to tell me. God, who accepted the two small coins *from the widow*,¹²² *will accept your offering too. As for yourself, be silent; do not boast.*’ *In this fashion, then, God set me at ease and I left him.*”

And Melania said to me: “I found nothing of men in him at all.”¹²³ *And from there she went into the great desert of Scetis and built a church for Abba Isidore the priest.*¹²⁴

The Death of Abba Pambo (LH 10.5)

6. A few days later, Abba Pambo, the man of God, went to his rest at seven-

119 Coptic *lutra* for Gk *litra*, a silver coin of Sicily; as a weight, 12 ozs. (the Roman pound, *libra*), therefore 225 of our pounds, an immense weight and sum. Undoubtedly this amount will seem grossly exaggerated to us, but Melania was known for her great wealth.

120 Gk: Origen; see pars. 8, 9, and 14 below.

121 “Egypt” probably designates the Delta or the area around Alexandria, but in Coptic monastic texts can also mean the area around Babylon (Cairo).

122 See Mk 12:42.

123 For these last two sentences Gk has: “‘Thus,’” she said, ‘did the Lord show His power when I went to the mountain.’”

124 See Cassian, *Conferences* 18.15.3 and 7, 18.16.3.

ty years of age, *and no one knew that he had died that day*. He did not have a fever but sat weaving baskets of palm leaves. And when he approached his last breath, it happened that Melania paid him another visit. He beckoned to her to approach and come inside and when she came to him he said to her, “Take this basket, made with the labor of my hands, in order to remember me, for I have nothing else to leave you.”¹²⁵ *And then he gave his spirit into the hands of the Lord.*¹²⁶ *She directed his disciples to allow her to bury him*, and she buried him in precious linen garments. She left the desert, keeping that basket with her to the day of her death.

Abba Isidore Speaks about Abba Pambo

7. *Abba Isidore, the priest of Scetis, spoke to us about the virtues of Abba Pambo: “I begged him to lead me into the desert to where Abba Pambo lived so I could see him.”*

Abba Pambo’s Final Teaching (LH 10.6)

8. And these were the men, *his companions*, who, at the hour of his departure from the body, were standing around him: Abba Macarius the priest, and Abba Ammôn,¹²⁷ and Abba Theodore,¹²⁸ and a multitude of leaders from among the brothers, *and they said to him, “Our father, say a word to us by which we might live.”*

And the old man spoke to them thus: “From the day I came to this desert and built this cell and lived in it, I do not remember regretting a single word I’ve spoken¹²⁹ *or a single word that I should not have spoken, for unless I’ve ruminated on a word first and seen whether it is a word of death or a word of life, I have not spoken*. Nor am I aware of having eaten bread for nothing without working for it with my hands.¹³⁰ And I have not allowed myself to think that I have spent a single day as a monk. Even now, as I am about to leave, I do not say that I have spent a single day serving God, but I reproach myself because I have not done the will of God.”¹³¹

The brothers said to him, “Our father, aren’t you sure that your labor and your work are of God?”

He said to them, “Up to the present I’ve done my best to keep the com-

¹²⁵ Up to here Gk continues with Melania’s narration from the previous par.

¹²⁶ See Ps 30:6, Lk 23:46.

¹²⁷ = Ammonius.

¹²⁸ The Gk lists Origen, “the priest and steward,” to whom Pambo addresses his final words, and Ammonius, and they do not speak.

¹²⁹ See AP Pambo 5; Benedicta Ward, trans., *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers: The Alphabetical Collection* (Kalamazoo: Cistercian, rev. ed., 1984), 197.

¹³⁰ See 2 Th 3:8, AP Pambo 8, and *Life of Antony* 3.6.

¹³¹ See AP Pambo 8; Ward, 197. Gk condenses this sentence to “and thus I go to God as one who has not even begun to serve him.”

mandments, but how will I know what will happen to me when I meet God? God's judgement is one thing, human judgement is another. Mercy is his. Whatever I've done, God has given me the grace to do it in love. If, however, he wishes to take an accounting of me, I will not be able to be blameless before him. I do not know that I will be able to speak confidently before him."¹³²

Abba Pambo's Patience in Speaking (LH 10.7)

9. Abba Ammôn and Abba Theodore and Abba Jacob¹³³ bore witness to us about him: If we asked for a word from scripture or some other thing, he would not give us an answer right away but would say, "I haven't figured out the meaning of this word yet; *give me two or three days to ruminate on the word and I will give you an answer.*"¹³⁴ It normally happened that he would spend two or three days or a whole week without giving us an answer, saying, "If I do not know what sort of fruit this word will bear, whether it is a fruit of death or of life, I will not speak."¹³⁵ Therefore, the brothers received the word that he would speak as though it had come from the mouth of God.¹³⁶

*Abba Pambo Ignores a Large Sum of Money*¹³⁷

10. *Jacob, his servant,*¹³⁸ *who resembled him in every ascetic practice except in language alone, bore witness to me: One time Anatolius the Spaniard came to see him; he had been a secretary, a relative of Albinus, who was from Rome, and he had renounced the world.*¹³⁹ *He filled a purse with gold which contained four thousand solidi and placed it before the feet of Abba Pambo, thinking that the old man would glorify him or be proud of him or exalt him on account of the money. But Abba Pambo did his handiwork in silence. He did not pay the money any attention nor did he say a word to him, and Anatolius said to*

¹³² Confident speaking, *parrêsia*, is an important monastic virtue. See Eph 3:12 and, for example, AP Pambo 14 (Ward, 198). BV accidentally omit this sentence.

¹³³ Gk: Origen and Ammonius.

¹³⁴ See AP Pambo 9; Ward, 197.

¹³⁵ Gk: saying that he had not comprehended it.

¹³⁶ Gk continues: approved and shaped by His will. He is said to have excelled even the great Antony and others in this virtue, namely, accuracy of speech.

¹³⁷ See the similar story in par. 5 above regarding Melania. This story, or the one in par. 5, seems to have a condensed version in Socrates, EH 4.23.

¹³⁸ BV translate "disciple," but *alou* means first a young person, then a servant. See pars. 13-16. R.-G. Coquin has spoken of "the master and his disciple-servant," and that seems to be the case in this *Life*. Coquin observes that at Kellia the first monastic dwellings were for a single monk or, at the most, for a master and his disciple; these dwellings evolved to house a number of disciples, perhaps up to a dozen. He even goes on to assert that "the Egyptian monks scarcely conceived the anchoritic life without the presence and aid of a companion, at one and the same time disciple and servant." See René-Georges Coquin, "L'évolution de la vie monastique," *Dossiers Histoire et Archéologie [Chrétiens d'Égypte au 4e siècle: Saint Antonie et les moines du désert]* 133 (December 1988): 60-65; 60, 63.

¹³⁹ In par. 14 Anatolius is a governor.

him, "My father, I have brought these necessities to provide for the poor."

The old man said to him, "I already know that, my son."

Anatolius said to him, "But I want you to know how much it is."

The old man said, "That which you have brought has no need for you to recount its number."

Therefore Anatolius placed the money before him and left. He spoke to the priests, "My soul has not profited from this large amount of money I brought as much as it has from the disposition and self-possession of the old man. He treated me as though I'd brought him one solidus!"

Abba Pambo's Good Works and Humility

11. Abba Pambo was admired by the whole brotherhood and by the laity as well for his good works and for the magnitude of his humility.¹⁴⁰

*Abba Pambo Learns from a Prostitute*¹⁴¹

12. They also said concerning him that Abba Athanasius sent for him one time and had him brought to Alexandria. When he entered the city he saw a woman of the theater adorned with finery. Immediately his eyes filled with tears. Therefore, when the brothers who were with him saw him, they said to him, "Our father, we beg you, tell us what caused these tears."

He said to them, "Two things move me at this moment: one is the destruction of this soul that I see now; the other is my own ungrateful soul which, in adorning itself with the virtues and in pleasing the Lord and his angels, does not even have the appearance or the finery of this prostitute."

The Faithful Disciple

13. He had a disciple who was very faithful in taking care of necessities. It was revealed to him by God that he loved the curse of Gehazi, the servant of the prophet Elisha.¹⁴²

Origen the Steward

14. Abba Pambo took the money of the governor Anatolius and gave it to his servant named Origen,¹⁴³ who is still living and performing the job of steward that the old man gave him.

¹⁴⁰ This is a common monastic usage, which speaks often of "the heights of humility." In addition, the phrase looks back to the story about Anatolius.

¹⁴¹ See AP Pambo 4 (Ward, 196). See also Socrates, EH 4.23. In the *Life of Pelagia* 3-4 the same story is told concerning Bishop Nonnus when he sees Pelagia pass by in Antioch.

¹⁴² See 2 Kings 5:19b-27 where Gehazi deceptively takes money from Naaman. When Elisha confronts him, he lies, and Elisha curses him and his descendants with leprosy.

¹⁴³ See the introduction above.

*We Work for what We Eat and Wear*¹⁴⁴

15. He gloried in the Lord while telling us numerous times, “Neither I nor my servants are aware of eating a single piece of bread given to us by someone else without working for it with our hands, nor have we clothed ourselves through the labor of strangers without working for it ourselves.”

Giving to Others

16. He would also do this other thing: he gave nothing for the service of servants unless it was to an old man, poor and infirm, who was unable to acquire bread for himself. Moreover, with regard to the monks who lived there, he did not give them anything from the provisions he had at hand but instead chose for himself ten faithful brothers whom he sent to the islands and to Libya each year¹⁴⁵ and to the lepers’ colony in Alexandria; loading the boats with grain and bread, they would distribute them to those in need and also to the churches of villages that were in need and to the churches of the interior deserts in barbarian territory.

I tell you this so you (pl.) will understand why he did not give anything to the monks who lived there. Seek and you (sing.) will understand that he began a custom among the brothers who lived in Egypt and Pernouj: each one would give an *artaba*¹⁴⁶ of grain per person each year and they would put them at the service of those in need, distributing them to the hospices for lepers and to the widows and orphans.¹⁴⁷ Each of the monks would have the responsibility each year to give the *artaba* of grain from his charitable labor, and this is their custom up to today.

Abba Pambo Teaches Abba Pihôr a Lesson (LH 10.8)

17. In addition, this *other wondrous* story is told about our father, *Saint Apa Pambo*: *Apa Pihôr* the ascetic, *the disciple of Abba Antony*, wanted to pay him a visit one time.¹⁴⁸ He had his bread with him *and two olives so he could go see him*. *Apa Pambo* said to him, “What are these things, *Pihôr*?”

Apa Pihôr said to him, “I decided to stay one day with you; therefore I’ve brought a few necessities with me.”

¹⁴⁴ See par. 8 above and AP Pambo 8.

¹⁴⁵ See par. 5 above.

¹⁴⁶ Coptic *ertob* comes from the Persian by way of Gk *artabê*, a measure ranging from 24 to 42 *choinikes*, roughly equivalent to English quarts. A *choinix* of grain was considered one person’s daily allowance.

¹⁴⁷ See Dt 14:29, Is 1:17, and Jas 1:27.

¹⁴⁸ On *Pior* or *Pihôr*, see Evelyn White, 2.51-52.

The old man understood that Pihôr had vowed not to eat another person's bread,¹⁴⁹ so later Abba Pambo wanted to teach him not to maintain his desire when he went to see the old men. Apa Pambo got up and paid a visit in turn to Apa Pihôr. He moistened his bread before he went to see him and also [took]¹⁵⁰ a bottle of water.

When he entered Apa Pihôr's dwelling, Apa Pihôr said to him, "My father, what are these things?"

The old man said to him, "It's my bread and my water. So I won't trouble you, I moistened my bread before coming to see you."

Apa Pambo did this in order to silently teach him a lesson.

¹⁴⁹ See pars. 8 and 15 above.

¹⁵⁰ The verb, missing in Coptic, is supplied by Am and BV.

BOOK REVIEWS

The Ladder of the Beatitudes

By Jim Forest ISBN 1-57075-245-1, Orbis Books, Maryknoll, New York 10545, 1999. \$13.00 pp. xi X 163.

This book did not come to me as a review copy. I bought it, though I cannot remember where or when. I have been happy to sit at the feet of Jim Forest in the past when he served as General Secretary of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation. He then converted to the Russian Orthodox Church and lives in the Netherlands where he leads the Orthodox Peace Fellowship. If we are students of Thomas Merton we are further indebted to Jim Forest for his fine study *Living with Wisdom: a life of Thomas Merton*. This is all mentioned to declare my interest in this volume.

According to the custom of modern publishing, a little notice on the back of the book identifies this as a work of 'Spirituality'. This is well and good, but it is not enough. I found this book to be a close, vigorous work of Christian Ethics, guidance about how to live as an instrument of God's peace in a world of anguish and alarm. As the title indicates, the book examines the Beatitudes (Matthew 5) as rungs in a ladder towards deeper Communion with God. The most appealing aspect of this work is that it is in fact a wonderful storybook, retelling stories of the

saints from the Desert Fathers to the pianist Maria Yudina in Stalin's Russia. It is one of Jim Forest's central themes that those who climb the ladder of the beatitudes are in the best company of that great cloud of witnesses we call the saints.

The costly death to self, which this essay sees as the way upward towards God, provides a challenge that each reader needs to be reminded about, and for which we must all be grateful.

John Watson

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A Horizon of Kindly Light: A Spirituality for Those with Questions

By Jan Kerkhofs ISBN 0-334-02743-8, SCM PRESS London, 1999. Sterling £14.95 pp. ix X 242.

Jan Kerkhofs is Emeritus professor of Religion in the Catholic University of Louvain. It is probably not too much to say that this book represents some conclusions from a lifetime's study of Light, as it appears in religious and philosophical thought and experience.

Kerkhofs' examines the triumph of light over darkness and sees a kindly light as the horizon of human existence. God gives us light to live our lives. We can experience this in the churches as 'houses of light'. We are guided through an examination of liturgical light, with an interesting digression on light in iconography. We are taught that some buildings, like Chartres cathedral, are such powerful expressions of spiritual light that they become "paradise regained".

The range of this 213-page essay is impressive. Kerkhofs reviews 'Light' in the Bible, Gnosticism., Augustine, Francis of Assisi, Cardinal Newman and Dionysius the Areopagite - to name only a few. His book might best be described as an anthology, or a sustained meditation about light. Certainly, it is a feast where the consumer is well advised to take a morsel for slow digestion. It does not have to be read through.

Light is presented as an image, a sign, an ontological, pre-rational symbol and a metaphor. Talk of light is a way of expressing our human and spiritual aspirations. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin captures this in his words: "Every being in the world stands somewhere on the slope that rises up from the shadows to the light". Light leads us, even through near-death experiences, into a Light, not into Dylan Thomas's 'dying of the light'.

This volume will be well used as a springboard for prayer and meditation.

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Articles: The Journal invites submission of articles on biblical, liturgical, patristic or spiritual topics.

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