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- *JOHN CASSIAN*
- *THE HOLY FAMILY IN EGYPT*
- *POPE SHENOUDA III AND THE
RENAISSANCE ART*



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JOHN CASSIAN: AUTHORITY AND THE “DOUBLE TRADITION”

*Rev. James V. Smith**

Introduction and Thesis

John C. Dwyer has noted, "During the fourth and early fifth century, the (Christian) faith was preached throughout what was thought to be the civilized world, and by the end of this period it had become the faith of the majority of citizens of the Empire."¹ This was an era of councils, creedal formulations and the development of Christian monasticism. Each sought to address differing issues of authority in the Church. This paper will seek to address the third element of the development of Christian monasticism and more specifically the contribution of John Cassian.

As we examine Cassian's life and writings, we will be able to discern what he considered authoritative for the fledgling monastic enterprise in the West. We will find that *Cassian believed in a "double tradition" of authority with regards to Christian monasticism and that this "double tradition" was in fact a synthesis of Scripture, the monastic tradition of the elders, experience and obedience. While Cassian considered the ecclesiastical hierarchy to be in some sense "authoritative", we will also find that in his mind, the "double tradition" was to be considered more authoritative for Christian monasticism than the official*

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1 John C. Dwyer, *Church History: Twenty Centuries of Catholic Christianity* (New York: Paulist Press, 1985), 123.

Church hierarchy. In order to more clearly discern Cassian's attitudes as to what he considered authoritative for the early Western monastic experience, we will briefly consider his life situation and background in order to highlight those experiences which would prove to be so formative in his views upon monastic authority and which will be considered in greater detail later in this paper.

I. The Life and Background of John Cassian

Prior to H. I. Marrou's important study entitled, "La Patrie de Jean Cassien"², scholars were generally uncertain about the birthplace of John Cassian. In addition to the general uncertainty of his birthplace, scholars were uncertain about Cassian's date of birth as well. Leon Christiani succinctly summarized this scholarly impasse in 1946. "Les origènes de Jean Cassien demeurent enveloppées de la plus grand obscurite. La date et le lieu de sa naissance nous sont pareillement inconnus."³ Since Marrou's study in 1947, it has become the general scholarly opinion that Cassian was born in the Roman province of Scythia Minor which is now modern Romania, near the town of Dobruja on the shores of the Black Sea. Unfortunately, there remains a great deal of uncertainty concerning the date of his birth.⁴ While AD 360 would appear reasonable, all that may be said is that John Cassian was born early in the second half of the fourth century.⁵

John Cassian appears to have been born into an affluent and devout Latin Christian home according to his own testimony.⁶ In light of his excellent Latin writing style and ability to converse with Greek monks in their own language, Cassian must have received an excellent education prior to his entrance into the monastic life.

According to Johannes Quasten, Cassian left for Palestine sometime around AD 380 with his friend Germanus and sought admission to a monastery in Bethlehem in order to learn the coenobitic life.⁷ After two years, Cassian and Germanus received permission from the elders of the monastery to visit Egypt.

2 Henri I. Marrou, "La Patrie de Jean Cassien," *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 13 (1947): 588-596.

3 Leon Christiani, *Jean Cassien: La Spiritualite du Desert*, vol. 1 (Paris: Editions de Fontenelle, 1946), 35.

4 Hans-Oskar Weber notes that Cassian was born sometime around AD 360. He bases this date upon the work of Levain de Tillemont entitled, *Memoires pour servir a l'histoire ecclesiastique des 6 premiers siecles* published in 1709. This does not seem to hold credence with any majority of modern scholars who prefer to remain "agnostic" in this matter. See, Hans-Oskar Weber, *Die Stellung des Johannes Cassianus zur Ausserpachomianischen Monchstradition* (Munster: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1961), 3.

5 Philip Rousseau, *Ascetics, Authority and the Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), 169. See also, Owen Chadwick, *John Cassian*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 9.

6 *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*, vol 2 *Collationes XXIV.I.II trans.* Michael Petschenig, Vindobonae: C. Geroldi Filium Bibliopolam Academiae 1886, 674-676 (henceforth, *CSEL*).

7 Johannes Quasten, *Patrology* vol. 4 (Allen, TX: Christian Classics, n.d.), 512.

Pilgrimages to visit Egyptian monks were common in the fourth century. Cassian was not alone in his desire to learn from the desert monks. When Athanasius published the *Vita Antonii* between AD 356-362, it became immensely popular in both the West and the East.⁸ A steady stream of pious Christians as well as curiosity seekers began to visit Egypt.⁹ Both men and women traveled from all over the Roman Empire to visit the Abbots and Ammas of Egypt. However, the elders were not eager for the two young monks to be away from monastic discipline and rule, so Cassian and Germanus were made to swear an oath that they would soon return to Bethlehem. Needless to say, the two men were captivated by Egyptian monasticism, particularly as it was practiced in Scete. They returned briefly to Bethlehem after seven years but soon returned to Scete in AD 386/7.¹⁰

Cassian was an educated and foreign monk in Egypt. Neither of these qualities characterized the average Coptic monk who often viewed "worldly" education as a hindrance to spiritual progress and distrusted foreigners for obvious historical reasons. Political and philosophical differences between Alexandria and Constantinople would ultimately result in schism at the close of the Council of Chalcedon in AD 451. Fissures within Church unity between these two Christian Sees were obvious by the time of the Origenist controversy in AD 399.

Philip Rousseau has observed that there is no explicit reference in any source stating that Cassian left Egypt for Constantinople in AD 399 in the wake of Theophilus of Alexandria's condemnation of Origenism.¹¹ Nevertheless, Chadwick rightly notes that it remains a "fair inference."¹² One such reason is that Cassian's writings clearly betray Origenist tendencies via Evagrius Ponticus.¹³ In addition, it is clear that many Origenists fled to Constantinople under the protection of John Chrysostom.

In addition to Chrysostom's homilies which infuriated the Empress Eudoxia, he was not appreciated for harboring foreign monks such as Cassian. Chrysostom had also made a habit of ordaining monks to ecclesiastical office. Cassian was clearly impressed by Chrysostom and over twenty five years later, Cassian lavished praise upon Chrysostom's memory calling him, "Iohannis fide ac puritate mirabilis"¹⁴, while condemning Nestorius as a heretic. For reasons not entirely

8 trans. Rober C. Gregg, *Athanasius: The Life of Antony and The Letter to Marcellinus* (New York: Paulist Press, 1980), 1-3.

9 Coptic monks continue to be visited by the pilgrims and tourists today in Egypt. They generally have little interest in satisfying the curiosity of the average tourist but will often grant admission to special liturgical services and libraries to pilgrims who persevere in their requests out of a desire for spiritual edification.

10 Cassian explains the details of the trip back to Bethlehem as well as the prompt return to Egypt in *Colatio XVII.XXI* in *CSEL* vol. XVIII, 498-499.

11 Rousseau, *Ascetics*, 171.

12 Chadwick, *John Cassian 2nd ed.*, 30.

13 See *Colatio X.II* which is further highlighted by the pathetic example of Serapion in *CSEL* vol. XVIII, 286-289 where Cassian calls Egyptian anthropomorphism, "inept" and that Egyptian monks embraced this "heretical" error owing to their "simplicity" of mind.

14 *De incartione VII.XXXI.IV* in *CSEL* vol. XVII, 390

apparent, Cassian agreed to be ordained to the deaconate by Chrysostom. However, Cassian would remain with him for only three or four years.

It would seem that Cassian was destined to be a wanderer, though not entirely by choice. The young man from Scythia Minor who was introduced to the monastic life in Palestine had believed that Egypt contained the ideal expression of Christian monasticism. Despite the victory of Anthropomorphism in AD 399 which seemed to have forced him to seek refuge in Constantinople, Egypt would always remain his "psychological" home.

Perhaps Cassian agreed to ecclesiastical ordination in order to assist Chrysostom who bore the authority of a **πατηρ πνευματοφορος**

From Constantinople, Cassian traveled to Rome as a supporter of Chrysostom bearing a letter of appeal to Pope Innocent from the clergy of Constantinople. It is unlikely that he could have carried such a letter if he lacked the proper ecclesiastical authority himself. He appears to have stayed in Rome for quite some time. It is uncertain whether or not Cassian ever returned to Constantinople. In Rome, he met the future Pope, Leo the Great and it is also in Rome that Germanus "disappeared", or as Weber notes, "Germanus . . . im dunkel."¹⁵

In AD 415/6, Cassian moved from Rome to Marseilles and founded one coenobium for women and two coenobia for men. Aelred Sillem suggests that Cassian was ordained to the priesthood in Marseilles. The monastic movement had been growing in momentum in Gaul during this era and Proclus, a bishop of Gaul, would seem to have been the one who promoted Cassian to the priesthood.¹⁶ While other Roman provinces in the West were being overrun by barbarians, Provence remained stable for the remainder of Cassian's life from AD 414 to AD 435. This enabled Cassian to pen his three famous works.

Coenobia were being formed throughout Provence and questions of what was to be considered authoritative for the monastic life were being asked. At this time, Bishop Castor of Apt turned to the experienced John Cassian for advice. Cassian's first work, *De institutis coenobiorum* (Institutes), were written approximately in AD 425. They were written in twelve books with Books V-XII concerning eight chief vices. Cassian's second work, *Conlationes* (Conferences), were written shortly after the Institutes between AD 426-428. The Conferences are divided into twenty four books which ostensibly record twenty four conversations with fifteen Egyptian monks. Sillem has rightly stated, "Bishop Castor had evoked one of the great spiritual classics of all time."¹⁷ Finally, *De incarnatione Domini, contra Nestorium* (Incarnation) was written in AD. 430. Chadwick notes, "Cassian showed a striking ability to develop, in a polemical text, ideas on ascetic discipline and the monastic life."¹⁸ This work was written in seven books and Cassian notes

15 Weber, 3.

16 Aelred Sillem, "A New Study of John Cassian," *Downside Review* 69 (1950-1951): 335.

17 Ibid

18 Chadwick, *John Cassian 2nd ed.*, 227.

that it was written at the command of Leo the Great.¹⁹ In AD 435, John Cassian died and was soon thereafter regarded as a saint in the East as well as the West. However, he was never formally canonized in the West.

II. Cassian and "Double Tradition"

As one reads John Cassian's three extensive treatises, one will begin to get the distinct impression that Cassian's understanding of what he considered authoritative for Western monasticism was in fact a synthesis of many elements. This is particularly the case in his understanding of what Douglas Burton-Christie has critically termed *double tradition*. Burton-Christie writes, "The words of the elders and of Scripture constituted a *double tradition* of authority for those living in the desert."²⁰ Such a synthetic double tradition included the authoritative testimony of the Scriptures, the oral traditions of the Egyptian monastic predecessors coupled with the (then) current wisdom, experience and practice of Egyptian monastic elders. Rousseau rightly states that Cassian's understanding of the monastic elder was as "a man of experience, insight, deeply rooted in the Scriptures and inspired by God."²¹

The Coptic monks who filled the Egyptian desert in the fourth and early fifth century were commonly uneducated and illiterate. Their culture was primarily oral and their "texts" were often transmitted orally from one monk to another. A common vehicle for the transmission of such a synthetic double tradition was either in a question and answer format or extended conversation/conference. The *Apophthegmata Patrum*, which is a written compilation of diverse oral "texts" or sayings, "captures" a common question posed by junior monks to a monastic elder. The question often took the form of, "Εἶπε μοι λογον, αββα", and the answer was often given in the form of a brief interpretative Scriptural quotation. This functioned as an invitation to a kind of Christian midrash or a commentary on Scripture and its continued relevance for the life of a monk.²² While such a double tradition is "synthetic", it must not be considered "artificial". Tim Vivian beautifully captures this notion of double tradition as a living and fruitful synthesis. "This double tradition, like good root stock, forms the secure foundation of the apophthegmata or sayings of the early desert monks; the sayings like roses, or branches filled with grapes, rise from that stock."²³

Cassian clearly supported such an understanding of double tradition. While double tradition functioned as Christian midrash or commentary on the Scriptures,

19 See *De Incarnatione, Praefatio* in *CSEL* vol. XVII, 235-236

20 Douglas Burton-Christie, *The Word in the Desert: Scripture and the Quest for Holiness in Early Christian Monasticism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 110.

21 Rousseau, *Ascetics*, 187

22 Tim Vivian, "Words to Live By: A Conversation that the Elders had with one another: Concerning Thoughts," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 39:2 (1995) 127

23 Ibid

Cassian, like the Egyptian desert monks, did make an important distinction. The proper understanding of the Scriptures was not merely acquired through casual reading and education but rather to be approached through purity of heart.²⁴ Cassian's *Colationes* begin with a discussion by Abba Moses concerning the immediate aim or goal of the monk which is purity of heart. If purity of heart is not acquired, then the end goal of the Kingdom of Heaven can never be realized.²⁵ Cassian further exhorts his readers through Abba Theodore not to spend their time pouring over the work of commentators but rather to spend time "purifying the heart"²⁶, which according to Abba Moses is the same as purity of love.²⁷ As Chadwick notes in his introduction to Colm Luibheid's translation of the *Colationes*, "To become pure in heart, you need to grow in moral decision. You need to put aside passion, and strengthen your power to resist temptation. This is the ladder toward God which the soul fancies that it climbs."²⁸ Thus, "moral purity gave the elder/holy one the authority to speak with power."²⁹

One of the means to such purity of heart was the practice of Scriptural meditation. As a monk purified his heart in obedience to the teaching of the monastic elder who rightly understood Scriptural truth through experience, the monk could confidently assume that he was being faithful to the authority and tradition of Scripture. In short, Burton-Christie notes that the words of the monastic elders were often seen as carrying the same weight as Scripture itself and that "the holy person became a new text and a new object of interpretation."³⁰

Educated men such as Cassian came to the Egyptian desert with an understanding that their education was incomplete.³¹ In a very real sense, the Egyptian desert functioned to "reeducate" such men of letters. The sophistication of "worldly" education was to give way to the "spiritual" knowledge of the simple Coptic monks.³² Cassian, whose previous education included the study of pagan literature, confessed to Abba Nestorios that his mind often wandered in prayer back to the

24 *De Institutis V.XXXIII* in *CSEL* vol. XVII, 106

25 *Colatio I.I-V* in *CSEL* vol. XVIII, 7-12

26 *De Institutis V.XXXIV* in *CSEL* vol. XVII, 110

27 *Colatio I.VII* in *CSEL* XVIII, 13-14

28 trans. Colm Luibheid, *John Cassian: Conferences* (New York: Paulist Press, 1985), 25.

29 Burton-Christie, 109

30 Burton-Christie, 20, 109

31 One such clear example can be seen in the person of Abba Arsenius. "One day Abba Arsenius consulted an old Egyptian monk about his thoughts. Someone noticed this and said to him, 'Abba Arsenius, how is it that you with such a good Latin and Greek education, ask this peasant about your thoughts?' He replied, 'I have indeed been taught Latin and Greek, but I do not know even the alphabet of this peasant.'" See, trans. Benedicta Ward, SLG, *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers* (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1984), 10.

32 Various scholars have criticized the Christian monastic enterprise at times for being ignorant of and unconcerned with historical-critical issues. An example might be the modern "3rd" quest for the historical Jesus. Such an enterprise would have been either unintelligible or offensive to Egyptian monastic sensibilities. What "captured" their minds was not the "historical" Jesus but rather Jesus as "Word and Wisdom". See, Chadwick, *John Cassian 2nd ed.*, 85-86

memory of pagan poets and battles. Abba Nestorios suggested shifting his thoughts to the fruitful reading and meditation of the Scriptures.³³ Evidently, Cassian received the advice from Abba Nestorios as authoritative. Jean-Claude Guy notes, "it is rather remarkable that Cassian whose culture, both profane and religious, was so great, doesn't anywhere set out a program of spiritual reading for his monks; the only book recommended for reading is the Book *par excellence*, the Bible."³⁴

While one may notice various sayings from the *Apophthegmata Patrum* describing the Coptic tendency to devalue the private reading of religious works including the Scriptures, both the private life of the solitary as well as the coenobitic liturgical life was filled with the recitation of Scriptural prayers and Psalmody. The written text was simply not to be an end in and of itself. The problem to be avoided was "storing away" the Word instead of "fulfilling" it.³⁵ The canonical system of the daily hours were filled with dozens of Psalms. Cassian outlines in detail the canonical system of the daily and nocturnal prayers and Psalms as practiced in many of the coenobia of Lower Egypt that he had visited in *Colatio II*. He notes that monks were encouraged to return to their cells following the end of the final office in order to repeat by heart some Psalm or passage of Scripture.³⁶ Such a practice of Scriptural exposition by monastic elders, liturgical recitation, reading and memorization of the Scripture for spiritual edification which lead to the purifying of the heart provided a kind of hermeneutical circle for the *double tradition*.

III. The Egyptian Ideal and Obedience

As young men, Cassian and his friend Germanus headed to Bethlehem in order to learn the monastic life in the place of Christ's birth. However, as was the case with many monks, they heard the stories of the Egyptian desert monks and longed to visit them and see them for themselves.

Indeed, they had unwittingly met and known an important Egyptian ascetic in the person of Abba Pinufius. Pinufius had been the superior of a large coenobitic community in Panephysis and had fled in order to be freed from the responsibilities as both a monastic superior and an ordained priest. Cassian records that Pinufius eagerly desired to live a life of humility which could not be found in his position of authority. He first fled to a Pachomian monastery in the Thebaid where he lived for three years before being "discovered".³⁷

33 *Colatio XIV.XII-XIII* in *CSEL* vol. XVIII, 378-384

34 Jean-Claude Guy, *Jean Cassien: Vie et doctrine spirituelle* (Paris: P. Lethielleux, 1961), 44.

35 This may be highlighted by the saying ascribed to Antony, "A certain philosopher asked St. Antony, 'Father how can you be so happy without the consolation of books?' Anthony replied: 'My book, O Philosopher, is the nature of created things, and any time I want to read the words of God, the book is before me.'" See, Thomas Merton, *The Wisdom of the Desert: Verba Seniorum* (New York: New Directions, 1960), 62.

36 *De Institutis II.XV* in *CSEL* vol. XVII, 30-31

37 *De Institutis IV.XXX* in *CSEL* vol. XVI, 68-70

Pinufius wept and complained that he had been "cheated" of his opportunity to practice monastic humility because of the "envy" of the Devil. However, he was able to escape once again and this time he headed for Palestine securing entrance as an anonymous novice in the monastery which Cassian and Germanus resided in their youth. The charismatic authority of a **πατηρ πνευματοφορος** could not remain "hidden" forever.³⁸ He was "discovered" once again by his searching children who recalled him back to Egypt "through their prayers".³⁹

Cassian admits that he and Germanus had become intimate friends with Pinufius in Bethlehem. Later when they visited Egypt, they carefully sought him out. *De Institutis VI.XXXII-XLII* contain a purported conference given by Pinufius in Egypt which Cassian and Germanus heard.⁴⁰ It would seem to be a "fair inference" then that the memory and experience with Pinufius in Bethlehem served as a catalyst in encouraging Cassian and Germanus to seek a leave of absence in order to "briefly" visit Egypt.⁴¹

It would appear that Cassian and Germanus deeply desired to place themselves in obedience under the authority of such a monastic **πατηρ πνευματοφορος** as Pinufius. Pinufius would have embodied the notion of "double tradition" in a way that Cassian would have found compelling. However, Cassian and Germanus had previously obediently placed themselves under the authority of the Bethlehem elders. In order to be released from their authority, they would have to be obedient to their demands which stated they would return to Bethlehem. They did return later to Bethlehem and were able to secure permission to return to Egypt "permanently" or at least until AD 399. Thus, obedience was a highly prized monastic virtue in the desert.

Monastic elders often imposed ridiculous or even shocking tasks upon junior monks in order that they might learn perfect obedience. Cassian records the example of John of Lycopolis as a model of obedience. John was one of the most celebrated of all Egyptian monks.⁴²

John was commanded by his elder to water a dry stick that had been stuck in the ground. Twice each day, John carried water from the Nile which was two miles

38 See, Fairy von Lilienfeld, "Anthropos Pneumatikos - Pater Pneumatophoros: Neues Testament und Apophthegmata," in *Studia Patristica*, ed. F. L. Cross, vol. V, pt. III (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1962), 382-392.

39 *De Institutis IV.XXXI* in *CSEL* vol. XVII, 70-71

40 See *CSEL* vol. XVII, 71-77

41 The notion of intimate soul friends or *anamchara* would reach its loftiest expression during the height of the Celtic monastic enterprise in the late fifth and sixth centuries in Ireland. Bridget, the famous female monastic who was even dubbed, "bishop", was reported to have said that, "anyone without a soul friend (anamchara), is like a body without a head." See Edward C. Sellner, *The Wisdom of the Celtic Saints*, (Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1993), 73

42 John of Lycopolis' influence can be seen upon Palladius. See, trans. Robert T. Meyer, *Palladius: The Lausaic History* (Westminster, MD: The Newman Press, 1965), 98-103. The anonymous writer of *Historica Monachorum in Aegypto* was so impressed by the Lycopolite that his entire first chapter is dedicated to John. See, trans. Norman Russell, *The Lives of the Desert Fathers: The Historica Monachorum in Aegypto* (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1981), 52-62.

away to water the stick. Despite illness and inclement weather, John faithfully watered it for an entire year without complaining.⁴³ On another occasion, he was commanded to throw a costly jar of oil out a window⁴⁴ and yet on another occasion, he was commanded to push a heavy stone that was impossible to move due to its great weight and size.⁴⁵ To the undiscerning, tasks such as trying to push the stone would undoubtedly appear "crazy". However, the monastic elder who was a man of pneumatic authority, who "knew" that while such tasks appeared to be meaningless, if performed in obedience, had the potential for great spiritual progress. Cassian exalted the example of John of Lycopolis who through obedience to his elder also became a great elder of authority himself. Thus, the "double tradition" of authority was continually "passed on" from a previous elder to a "new" elder.

IV. Cassian and the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy

We have found that the monastic "double tradition" of authority was a synthesis of Scripture, the monastic tradition of the elders, experience and obedience. This "double tradition" was *more* authoritative than ecclesiastical authority in Cassian's opinion. However, this does not mean that he considered the ecclesiastical hierarchy to be non authoritative, but rather, it was *less* authoritative. The question which remains is, why did Cassian believe that ecclesiastical office was less authoritative than the monastic "double tradition" of authority? If the aim of the monk and the perfection of his heart relied on the continual and unbroken perseverance in prayer⁴⁶ which was characterized by obedience to a monastic elder, then the active life of the ecclesiastical hierarchy was in fact detrimental to such a life of prayer and contemplation. Chadwick in his introduction to Luibheid's translation puts it more bluntly. "If wordless apprehension is the highest, what need is there of congregations, where babies cry, and dogs bark, and young men ogle, and priests show off their voices, and old women practice superstition? Might it be that holy anarchy is nearer to God than ordered ecclesiasticism?"⁴⁷

In a very real sense, those of the Egyptian desert functioned as both an ideal and an elite that Cassian would carry with him for the duration of his life. Monasticism in Egypt as well as the East was primarily a lay movement⁴⁸ and in Cassian's work, bishops are nearly absent. However, embedded within his discussion concerning vainglory in *De Institutis XI*, Cassian explicitly states that a monk

43 *De Institutis IV.XXIV* in **CSEL** vol. XVII, 63-64. Sulpitius Severus records a similar story with a "happier" ending. After a stick was watered in obedience for three years, it rooted and sprouted. It was later housed in a monastery as a testimony to perfect obedience. See, *Dialogus I.XIX* in **CSEL** vol. I, 171-172.

44 *De Institutis IV.XXIV* in **CSEL** vol. XVII, 63-64

45 *De Institutis IV.XXVI* in **CSEL** vol. XVII, 65

46 *Colatio IX.II* in **CSEL** vol. XVIII, 250-251

47 Luibheid, 30

48 Monasticism in the Orthodox Churches of the East continues to be a lay movement and unlike the West, the ordained monk remains the exception and not the rule.

should by all means flee from both women and bishops. He further warns his readers that neither will allow a monk to care for quiet and contemplation.⁴⁹ Nevertheless, Cassian did not completely repudiate the ecclesiastical hierarchy.

Cassian, particularly in his monastic career prior to AD 399, was not all that impressed with ecclesiastical ordinations. As Chadwick has observed, "To ordain a man may be to take him away from the life of the Spirit and set him to serve tables, to be a treasurer for giving out alms, or for administering all the organizations of a congregation."⁵⁰ In other words, to borrow from the theme of Mary and Martha as taken from Luke 10:38-42 which would figure so prominently in later mystical and monastic literature, the monk was Mary who had chosen the better part in contrast to the ecclesiastic who had chosen the part of Martha.⁵¹ Herein lays the great tension and apparent contradiction for Cassian. A monk who desired and sought after ecclesiastical ordination was simply being "fooled" by the Devil in his estimation.⁵² However, on the other hand, to be a priest or bishop was an "honor" in Cassian's mind as well. It also happened to be an "honor" that Cassian and many monks sought to avoid if at all possible. For Cassian, pride could just as easily level the man who despised ecclesiastical offices as well as the one who either sought or held such an office.

Reflecting back upon his own past, Cassian recalled his own ordination almost with a sense of shame. The monk-bishop John Chrysostom, who ordained Cassian to the diaconate, represented a kind of synthesis that would capture the heart and mind of the East.⁵³ Chrysostom, as a *πατηρ πνευματοφορος*, would have clearly commanded an authority based on a kind of double tradition that Cassian and the Egyptian monastic enterprise would readily recognize.⁵⁴ While it is uncertain why Cassian accepted ordination, it is certain that Chrysostom was in the habit of ordaining fellow monks.

Nevertheless, Archebius, the bishop of Panephris, whom Cassian greatly admired, represented an all too common *topos* in the world of late antiquity. Archebius complained and lamented that he was carried off from his monastic community and consecrated as a bishop. Yet, his "pain" was mitigated by helping Cassian in his search for the "gospel pearl" that Archebius confessed that he did not possess. In all probability, this was because he was taken from his "angelic" life in

49 *De Institutis XI.XVIII* in *CSEL* vol. XVII, 203.

50 Luibheid, 30.

51 The "better part" of Mary as the contemplative life vs. the active life of Martha can be clearly seen in the High Medieval work entitled, "The Cloud of Unknowing". See, ed. James Walsh, S.J., *The Cloud of Unknowing* (New York: Paulist Press, 1981), 163-165.

52 *Colatio I.XX* in *CSEL* vol. XVIII, 29-32

53 Today, bishops in the Orthodox Churches must be taken from the celibate priesthood and *ideally* from a monastic background.

54 See, Philip Rousseau, "The Spiritual Authority of the Monk-Bishop: Eastern Elements in some Western Hagiography of the Fourth and Fifth Centuries," *Journal of Theological Studies* 23 (1971): 380-419.

order to "wait on tables".⁵⁵

Finally, Cassian's example of Abba Paternucis may be viewed as an example of the pneumatic nature of monastic succession in the desert.⁵⁶ Paternucius entered the monastic life bringing his small son with him. Through perseverance, he was able to secure entrance into a monastery along with his son. In order to test Paternucius, his little son was treated poorly to see if he had "died to the world". The monastic superior observed that he remained undaunted and later demanded that Paternucius cast his son into the Nile. Without hesitation, he picked up the boy and was about to throw him into the river when he was ordered to stop. Cassian likened Paternucius' obedience to Abraham.⁵⁷ The monk's obedience was rewarded with an "Elijaic" succession as Abbot of the monastery upon the death of his superior. Authoritative succession then in the Egyptian desert as well as in Cassian's mind was primarily pneumatic and not based on ecclesiastical office.⁵⁸ Thus, "the links between one generation and another were traced with care. Only in this way, it was felt, could they preserve *η κληρονομια των χαρισματαων*."⁵⁹

V. Conclusion

The fourth and early fifth century was an era of councils, creedal formulations and the development of Christian monasticism. This paper has sought to specifically address John Cassian's contribution to the development of Christian monasticism. We have examined John Cassian's life and writings and have discovered that Cassian's own monastic life and experience, particularly in Egypt, greatly influenced his understanding of what should be considered authoritative for the monastic life.

Cassian considered Scripture, the monastic tradition of the elders, experience, obedience, and to a much lesser degree, the ecclesiastical hierarchy as authoritative for the monastic life. However, we have found that Cassian did not view these as distinct categories, but instead tended to combine them. Cassian combined the Scriptures and the monastic tradition of the elders along with experience and the virtue of obedience to form what Douglas Burton-Christie has called, a "double tradition" of authority.

55 *Colatio XI.II* in *CSEL* vol. XVIII, 314-315.

56 *De Institutis IV.XXVII-XXVIII* in *CSEL* vol. XVII, 65-67

57 A similar story is found in the *Apophthegmata Patrum*. A monk was commanded to throw his child into a burning furnace to which he immediately obeyed. The furnace was said to have become like "fresh dew". This act of obedience was likewise compared to Abraham. See, trans. Benedicta Ward, SLG, *The Wisdom of the Desert Fathers*, 47.

58 Theodore, who was Pachomius' favorite disciple "fell" from favor through presumptuously taking "headship" over the monasteries when Pachomius was on his deathbed. Pachomius subsequently recovered and stripped Theodore of all "position" and imposed a two year penance upon him. See, Philip Rousseau, *Pachomius: The Making of a Community in Fourth Century Egypt* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985), 178-182

59 Rousseau, *Ascetics*, 24

Thus we may conclude, that *Cassian believed in a "double tradition" of authority with regards to Christian monasticism and that this "double tradition" was in fact a synthesis of Scripture, the monastic tradition of the elders, experience and obedience. While Cassian considered the ecclesiastical hierarchy to be in some sense "authoritative", we have also found that in his mind, the "double tradition" was to be considered more authoritative for Christian monasticism than the official Church hierarchy.*

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NOTES ON THE TRADITIONS CONCERNING THE FLIGHT OF THE HOLY FAMILY INTO EGYPT

*Youhanna Nessim Youssef, Ph. D. **

The flight of The Holy Family into Egypt has been studied by several scholars; for example Meinardus, who studied the Armenian Infancy Gospel and other mediaeval sources², G. Viaud, while studying the Pilgrimage centres, mentioned also some places as considered by the Local tradition as visited by the Holy Family³, and L.MacCoul.⁴

In order to get a clear view on the question it is important to set each source and to study its value by comparing with other sources. It is not easy to date for example the Vision about the Flight into Egypt attributed to Theophilus which is not preserved in Coptic but in Arabic, Syriac and Ethiopic, while Quasten thinks that it is of Coptic origin⁵, or the Homily of Zakarias of Sakha which is preserved in Arabic only.⁶ We have preferred to limit our field of investigation by studying other documents, especially those which have been published after these studies, in order to follow the development of this tradition (or traditions).

I- *The History of the Patriarchs*

In the 11th century, John (Yûhannâ) Ibn Said al-Kulzumi, wrote in this work⁷:

"Traces of our Lord and his Holy Mother are in the land of Egypt in many places, among which are,

St. Mary Church ***al-Mu'allaqah*** in Cairo, and her Church known as "At the Steps" in Cairo, and other churches at ***Banî Wâyîl***,⁸ and at ***Bastah***, and ***Miniyat-Tanah*** and ***Samnûsah***, and the Mountain of ***Al-Kaff***, and the ***Monastery of Paisus***, and ***al-Ashmunein***, and ***Filis***⁹ and ***Koskam*** and the ***Mountain of Ishnin***¹⁰ and ***al-Muharraq***. From al-Muharraq the holy Family returned to Cairo."

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II- In the 12th century *Abû al-Makarim*¹¹ wrote his book about the *Churches and Monasteries* in which he mentioned some steps of the Holy Family:

a- Haret al Roum¹² When The Holy Lady returned from the well of Balsam she arrived at an old well. This well was in the desert before Cairo came into existence; in its place now is a bath known as "**Babin**" (the two doors), in the Lower *Haret al Roum*.

b- *Matarieh*¹³ (the feast is the 24 Pashons)¹⁴

c- *Meniat Surd* (Musturd)¹⁵

d- *Heliopolis* (Ain Shams), where the idols fell on their faces on the ground at the entry of the Saviour into the city¹⁶.

e- *Sammusah*¹⁷

f- *Meniat Tana*¹⁸ Monastery of *Pikha Isus*

*f'- Al-Aiton: it is not mentioned clearly as a step but the commentary of Abû al Makarim suggests that it was for a while considered so.¹⁹

*f"- Baltim: it is not mentioned clearly as a step but the commentary of Abû al Makarim suggests that it was for a while considered so.²⁰

g- Al-Mahamah, The name of this location is derived from the Arabic word that means "Bath."²¹ This Church has been reconsecrated by Anba Gabriel Bishop of Ashmum on Paoni 8 in the year 901 E.M. (1185 A.D.)²²

h- Basta²³ The people of this city did not give water to the Holy Family.

i- Martuti, Adawiya²⁴

j- Gabal al kaf²⁵

k- Paisus²⁶

l- Ashmunein²⁷ This step is very well attested by early Sources.

1- *Historia Monachorum in Aegypto* - written in 394 A.D.²⁸

"We visited another holy man, named Apollo, in the territory of Hermopolis in the Thebaid, where the Saviour went with Mary and Joseph in fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah which says 'Behold, the Lord rideth upon a swift cloud and shall come to Egypt. And the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence and shall fall to the ground'. And indeed we saw there the temple where all the idols fell on their faces on the ground at the entry of the Saviour into the city."²⁹

2- *The Martyrdom of Paese and Thecla* - written after the fifth century: "The holy Virgin Mary said to her (Thecla) 'I was dwelling in the City of Shmoun, I and my little Son *feeding at my breast*; and I left that place, and my Son grew up, till He was thirty years old, and the Jews crucified Him."³⁰ The phrase '*feeding at my breast*' shows that this part was written after the Council of Ephesus; it is repeated in the Coptic Theotokia of Friday.³¹

m- Muharra³²

III- *Liturgical Books*³³

a- *Antiphonary* from Pierpont Morgan N°58 (written after the 7th century death of Samuel of Qalamun and the consecration of the Church of Misayil of Qalamon,

before 893 A.D.) fol 64v 24 Pachons³⁴

b- *The book of Glorifications*³⁵

The commemoration occurs only for the 24 Pachons and no cities are mentioned.

c- *Bohairic Difnar*³⁶

1- 6 Hathor³⁷, mentions that the Holy Family stayed for 3 years in the mount of Koskam.

2- 24 Pachons no steps are mentioned³⁸

3- 8 Paoni³⁹, mentions two steps only- Misr: (Abu Sergah) and Mahamah

d- *Diaconal*, no steps are mentioned.

e- *Synaxarion*⁴⁰

1- 6 Hathor⁴¹

2- 24 Pachons⁴²

3- 8 Paoni including the Upper Egypt Synaxarion⁴³, absent only in the Edition of Ludolf.

4- *The Ethiopian Synaxarion*, under

6 Heder⁴⁴

8 Sane

24 Genbot, as Colin highlighted "la version éthiopienne est sensiblement plus développée que l'arabe". It mentioned these steps: Basta, Smanoud, Kha Isous, Scetis, Héliopolis (Ain Shams - Matarieh), Behnasa, Ashmonein⁴⁵, Quesqam, Mesr (Vieux Caire = grotte de l'Eglise de Saint Serge), Matarieh, Mehamah⁴⁶

f- *Psali*⁴⁷

i- *Psali Batos*⁴⁸.

It seems that this psali was written in a late period in Upper Egypt for these reasons:

a- The first stanza is taken from the psali of Friday.⁴⁹

b- There are some mistakes in Coptic $\text{ΟΥΨΦΗΡΙ ΕϞΜΕϞ ΝΩΟΥ}$ instead of ΟΥΨΦΗΡΙ ΕϞΜΕϞΩΟΥ

ΜΕΝΕΝϞΑ ΝΔΙ

c- The Cave of the Church of Abû Sergah is a late tradition.⁵⁰

d- The stanzas are arranged according to the Arabic model example

$\text{ΑΛΗΘΩϞ ΓΑΡ ΔΙΤΗΠΛΟΥϞ ΕΟΥΝΙΨΤΗΚΕΦΑΛΕϞΗ}$

$\text{ΕΤΕ ΦΔΙ ΠΕ ΠΙΡΔΗ ΝΟΥϞΔΙ ΝΤΕ ΠΧϞ ΠΟΥΡΟ ΝΝΙΕΨΗ}$

- Nimeshoti (Lower Egypt) it is hard to know whether this means valleys or is a toponym.⁵¹

-The City of Misr (Babylon)

-Behnasa⁵²

-Ashmunein

-Koskam

ii- Psali Adam⁵³

-Pa Isus

-Ashmunein

-Koskam

g- *Doxologies*⁵⁴

No steps are mentioned.⁵⁵

IV- *Sermons and Homilies.*

These were studied before⁵⁶ We will mention them briefly. It is important to notice that the attribution is more than doubtful and hence the dating is not easy..

a- *Theophilus of Alexandria*⁵⁷. This was probably written before the 12th century because it is used as source by Abu al Makarim (Vol 2 fol 78b). It is noteworthy that Ibn Kabar did not mention this Sermon.⁵⁸

b- *Zakaria of Sakha*⁵⁹

c- *Cyriacus of Behnasa*⁶⁰

V- *The Apocryphal Gospels of Infancy*, studied by Meinardus.⁶¹

VI-*An Addendum, Reflecting a Local Tradition.*

The 'Martyrdom of Apater and Irai' reflects a local tradition of a small village next to Ashmonein. Christ appeared to St. Apater and informed him that he (Apater) has to go to a village called Chinilahm near Ashmounein, where Christ, Virgin Mary and Joseph have stayed there. This tradition is not attested elsewhere. It is noteworthy that this vision of Christ reveals to the saint the same itinerary of the flight of Egypt i.e. Terenouthi, Babylone and Ashmounein by the Nile.⁶²

Conclusion

To conclude the table on the next page, shows the sources and the steps of the Holy Family mentioned in each.

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City	Abul-Makari m	Difnar	HPEC	Psali	Synaxarium	Synaxarium (Ethiopian)
Haret al Roum	X					
Matarieh	X				24 Pashons 8 Paoni	24 Genbot
Meniat Surd	X					
Heliopolis	X					24 Genbot
Samnusah	X		X			
Meniat Tana	X		X		24 Pashons	24 Genbot
al Aiton	?					
Baltim	?					
Mahamah	X	8 Paoni			24 Pashons 8 Paoni	24 Genbot
Basta	X		X		24 Pashons	24 Genbot
Adawiya	X					
Gabal al Kaf	X		X			
Ashmu- nein	X		X	X	24 Pashons	24 Genbot
Paisus	X		X	X		24 Genbot
Koskam Moharraq	X	6 Hathor	X	X	24 Pashons 8 Paoni 6 Hathor	24 Genbot 6 Hedar
Abû Sergah		8 Paoni		X?	24 Pashons 8 Paoni	24 Genbot 8 Paoni
Samnoud					24 Pashons	24 Genbot
Wadi n'Natrun					24 Pashons	24 Genbot
Bahnasa				X		
Bani Wayil			X			
Filis			X			

Notes

- 1 I would like to thank M. Piers Crocker who suggested several ameliorations to my text.
- 2 O. Meinardus, *The Holy Family in Egypt*, Cairo 1987, 2ed, pp. 23, 68-69.
- 3 G. Viaud, *Les Pèlerinages Coptes en Egypte*, BEC XV 1979, pp. 33, 34, 35, 37, 39, 40, 44, 46, 48, 52. cf also *Coptic Encyclopedia* p. 1117-1118.
- 4 L.S.B. MacCoul, "The Holy Family Pilgrimage in Late Antique Egypt, the Case of Qosqam" *Akten des XII Internationalen Kongresses für Christliche Archäologie -IAC* 20, 1995, p 987-993.
- 5 M. Geerard, *Clavis Patrum Graecorum*, Vol II, Turnhout 1974, p124-125 N° 2628.
a In Arabic Codex Vat. Ar 698 (1371 A) fol 102v-131v. M. Guidi, *Rendiconti della R. Accademia dei Lincei Serie V*, Classe di Scienze storiche 26 (1917), p441-469. *Kitab Mayamer wa 'agaib* Cairo 1902, p56-72, id Cairo 1927, p.81-106.
Recensio retracta in Codice Vat Ar 170, fol 195r-219r M.Guidi, *l.c.*, 30 (1921-1922) p.217-237.
Syriac Guidi, *l.c.* (1917) p.391-440 textus, *l.c.* 31(1922-1923) p.174-309 (translation) - A. Mingana, "Vision of Theophilus" in Woodbrooke Studies III, *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 13, 1929, p1-92. F. Nau "La version syriaque de la vision de Theophile sur le séjour de la Vierge en Egypte" *ROC* 15, 1910, p125-132. cf *Analecta Bollandiana* 29, 1910, p.457
Ethiopic C.Conti Rossi, *Rendiconti della R. Accademia dei Lincei Serie V*, Classe di Scienze storiche 21 (1912) p401-441 (text) p.442-471 (translation) for various versions M. Richard, "Les écrits de Théophile d'Alexandrie" *Le Muséon* 52, 1939, p.33-50.
- 6 We will discuss this point later.
- 7 A.S. Atiya, Y. Abd al-Masih and O.H.E. Burmester, *History of the Patriarchs of the Egyptian Church known as the History of the Holy Church*, Vol II, Part III, Le Caire, fol 79 r p.227 (text), p.361 (translation). For this book cf J. Den Heijer, *Muwahub Ibn Mansur Ibn Mufarrig et l'historiographie Copto-Arabe*, CSCO 513, Subs 83, Louvain 1989, pp.217-220.
- 8 Timm, op. cit, Vol 1, p.336-338.
- 9 Timm, op. cit, Vol 2, p.958-959.
- 10 Timm, op.cit. Vol 3, p.1194 -1197.
- 11 Our references refer to the edition of Samuel al-Suriani, *Tarikh al-kana'is wal-'adyara*, Cairo 1984, 4 Vol., and also B.T. Evetts and A.J.Butler, *The Churches and Monasteries of Egypt and some Neighbouring countries, attributed to Abû Salih the Armenian*, Oxford 1895. For specific studies cf. Samuel al-Suriani, "Icônes et iconographie d'après le manuscrit d'Abu el-Makarim, publié en arabe au Caire 1984" *Le Monde Copte* 18, 1990, p78. (For codicology and Composition) U. Zanetti, "Abu L-Makarim et Abu Salih" BSAC 34, 1995, p85-133. (For the Authorship and Influence) J.Den Heijer, "The Composition of the History of the Churches and Monasteries of Egypt -Some preliminary remarks " *Acts of the Fifth International Congress of Coptic Studies Washington 12-15 August 1992*, ed D.Johnson, Vol 2 Part 1, Roma 1993, p209-219. (Social study of the Delta) M.Martin, "Le Delta chrétien à la fin du XII° s" OCP 63, 1997, p181-199. Youhanna Nessim Youssef, "Multiconfessional Churches in the XII century" *Acts of the First Conference of St Shenouda, California State University, 31-July to 1 August 1998* (in Press)
- 12 Vol 1 fol 9a. G. Viaud, *Le secret des mystérieuses rues du Caire*, Le Caire p2, Meinardus, *Christian Egypt Ancient and Modern*, Cairo 1977, Hereafter CEAM.p304-305
- 13 Vol 1 Fol. 20b, 21a-b, 22a-b, cf also U Zanetti, "Matarieh" *AB* 111, 1993, p.21-62. Youhanna Nessim Youssef, "A propos d'un terme ambigu chez about el Makarim" GM 145, 1995; p.101-103
- 14 S. Timm, *Das christlich-koptische Ägypten in arabischer Zeit*, TAVO 41, Wiesbaden 1988, Vol 4, p.1613-1620.
- 15 Vol 1fol 22a. Timm, op. cit., Vol 4, p.1663-1666.
- 16 Vol 1 fol 25b Timm, op. cit., Vol 2, p.910-914. cf *Historia Monachorum in Aegypto*.
- 17 Vol 1 Fol 41b. Perhaps a strange spelling of Sanbat Timm, op. cit., Vol 5, p.2275-2277.
- 18 Vol 1 fol 45a Timm, op. cit., Vol 4, p1667-1668. This is the ultimate place reached by our Lord in Egypt with his Mother, our Lady the pure Virgin and Joseph the righteous. It is said that there is a base of a Column which the father hid when the Arabs came and conquered the city where the ...

- and nobody knows where it is now. This monastery is called till now *pikha Isous* which is the foot of Christ. cf Martin. op.cit., p.194 Monastery of Dayr al Maghtas
- 19 Vol 1 fol 49a "A Church dedicated to the Christ when he entered the land of Egypt with his mother our Lady Mary and Joseph the carpenter."
 - 20 Vol 1 fol 52a " Church dedicated to Christ when he entered to the land of Egypt with his mother our Lady Mary and Joseph the carpenter. It is known as the feast of Basta"
 - 21 For the tradition concerning the Bath of Jesus in Early Christianity Iconography cf. V. Juhel, "Le Bain de l'Enfant-Jésus" *Cahiers Archéologiques* 39, 1991, p.111-132. This toponym should be considered as the continuity of an Old Tradition attested in Egypt by relief from the Coptic Museum in Cairo from the VI century cf K. Wessel, *Coptic Art*, London 1965, p.153 fig. 92.
 - 22 Vol 1 fol 53a Timm, op. cit., Vol 4, p.1663-1666. Timm identified it as Meniat Surd, the text of Abū al-Makarim suggests it is another village.
 - 23 Vol 1 fol 53b. Timm, op. cit., Vol 1, p.362-365.
 - 24 Vol 2, fol 44a-44b. Timm, op. cit., Vol 1, p. 64-69.
 - 25 Vol 2, fol 75b-Timm, op.cit, Vol 2, p. 817-823.
 - 26 Vol 2, fol 76b
 - 27 Vol 2, fol 76b-77a. Timm, op. cit., Vol 1, p.198-220.
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 - 30 E Reymond and J. Barns, *Four Martyrdoms from the Pierpont Morgan Coptic Codices*, Oxford 1973, fol 69 Vi 15, translation p.167 note 55.
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 - 33 For these books cf H.Malak; "Les livres liturgiques de l'Eglise Copte" *Mélanges Eugène Tisserant, Vol III/2*, ST 233, Vatican 1964, p.1-35. U. Zanetti, "Bohairic Liturgical Manuscripts" OCP 61, 1995, p.65-94.
 - 34 L. Depuydt, *Catalogue of Coptic Manuscripts in the Pierpont Morgan Library, Corpus of Illuminated Manuscripts*, Leuven 1993, p.110.
 - 35 For this book of Youhanna Nessim Youssef, "Un témoin méconnu de la littérature Copte" BSAC 32, 1993, p.139-147. "Une relecture des Glorifications Coptes" BSAC 34, 1995, p.77-83. Attallah Arsenius Al Moharraqui, The book of the Holy Glorifications of the Virgin, the Angels the Apostles and the saints (title in arabic and Coptic), Cairo 1972, p.86-91.
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 - 37 De Lacy O' Leary, *The Difnar*, London 1926, Vol I, p53.
 - 38 Gabriel al Anba Bishoi, *Kitab al Difnar*, Vol II The Coptic Difnar (title in Arabic) Vol 2 , Cairo 1984, p178-179.
 - 39 Id., p207-208
 - 40 For a study of the different versions of this liturgical book cf R.G. Coquin, "Le synaxaire des Coptes, un nouveau témoin de la récitation de la Haute Egypte" AB 96, 1977, p.351-365. For this book cf. G. Colin, "Le Synaxaire Ethiopien: Etat actuel de la question" AB 106, 1988, p. 273-317.
 - 41 Meinardus, *CEAM*, p84.I. Forget, *Synaxarium Alexandrinum, CSCO* 47, 48, 49, Louvain 1963, p92. Except Ms N° 4869 from Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris edited by Basset, *Le Synaxaire Arabe Jacobite* cf Meinardus, *CEAM*, p.89.
 - 42 Meinardus, *CEAM*, p114. Forget, *Synaxarium Alexandrinum, CSCO* 67 Louvain 1954, p.135-137. R. Basset, *Le Synaxaire Arabe Jacobite, PO* 16, Paris 1922, p. 407-410 (1049-1052)
 - 43 Meinardus, *CEAM*, p117. Forget, Vol 2, p.156.

- 44 G. Colin, *Le Synaxaire Ethiopien Mois de Hedar*, PO 44, Turnhout 1988, p.254-255.
- 45 It seems that this text is an echo of what is said in *Historia Monachorum in Aegypto* "Notre Seigneur brisa les idoles qui s'y trouvaient ils demeurèrent là quelques jours auprès d'un homme du nom d'Apollon"
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- 49 cf. Labib, op.cit., p.236.
- 50 cf Ch Coquin, *Les édifices Chrétiens du Vieux Caire*, BEC 11, Le Caire 1974, p.96-98.
- 51 Timm, op cit, Vol 1, p.186-188.
- 52 Timm, op cit, Vol 1, p.283-301.
- 53 Labib, op. cit., p.721-725.
- 54 Y. Abd-al -Masih, "Doxologies in the Coptic Church. The Use of Doxologies" *BSAC* 4, 1938, p.97-113. Id. "Doxologies in the Coptic Church. Unedited Sa'idic Doxologies Volumes XIII and XIV of the Pierpont Morgan Collection of Coptic MSS." *BSAC* 5, 1939, p.175-191. Id. "Doxologies in the Coptic Church. Edited Bohairic Doxologies" *BSAC* 6, 1940, p.19-76. Id. "Doxologies in the Coptic Church. Unedited Bohairic Doxologies. I (Tût - Kyahk)" *BSAC* 8, 1942, p31-61. Id. "Doxologies in the Coptic Church. Unedited Bohairic Doxologies. II (Tûbah - An- Nâsi)" *BSAC* 11, 1945, p.95-158.
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- 57 Graf, *Geschichte der Christlichen Arabischen Literatur, Studi e testi* 118, Vol I, Citta del Vaticano 1944, p.227-228 and-317. (Hereafter GCAL) G. Troupeau, *Catalogue des Manuscrits Arabes -première Partie - Manuscrits Chrétiens*, Paris 1972, Vol 1, N° 73/7 p.54 fol.50-51 (for the flight into Egypt for the 6 Hathor) N°155/11 fol 94v-109v. A. Khater and O.H.E. Burmester, *Catalogue of Coptic and Christian Arabic Manuscripts of the Library of the Church of Abû Sargah in Old Cairo*, Cairo 1977, N°119 p.44, A. Khater and O.H.E. Burmester, *Catalogue of Coptic and Christian Arabic Manuscripts of the Library of the Church of Qasriat ar-Rihan in Old Cairo*, Cairo 1973, N°106 p.49, N°111 p.52.
- 58 L. Villecourt, "Les observances Liturgiques de l'Eglise Copte" *Le Muséon* 38, 1925, p.316.
- 59 Graf, *GCAL*, I, p.228-230 For this author cf T. Orlandi, *Elementi di Lingua e Letteratura Copta*, Milano 1970, p.110-111.
- 60 Graf, *GCAL*, I, p.232-233, 475-476. R.G. Coquin "Cyriacus of al-Bahnasa" *Coptic Encyclopedia* 3, New York 1991, p.668-670.
- 61 f Graf, *GCAL*, I, p.225-227. O.H.E. Burmester, "Fragments from an Arabic version of two infancy Gospels" *Studia Orientalia Christiana Collectanea* 7, 1962, p.101-114. Jan Gijzel, Rita Beyers, *Libri de Nativitate Mariae, Corpus Christianorum, Series Apocryphorum*9, Turnhout 1997, Ch XX-XXIV pp.458-481
- 62 Hyvernat, *Les Actes des Martyrs de l'Egypte*, Paris 1886 (reprint Olms Verlag, Hildesheim. New York 1977), p92

POPE SHENUDA III AND THE RENAISSANCE ART OF THE CINQUE CENTO

*Otto F.A. Meinardus**

In the long history of the Coptic Church only few papal hierarchs had concerned themselves with the theological contents of the fine arts. Alfred J. Butler, the famous late 19th century British Coptologist mentioned that “from time to time there seem to have been outbreaks of iconoclastic violence against the pictures in the churches in Egypt. Thus as late as 1854 Pope Cyril IV considering that too much reverence was shown to pictures, and being determined to put down the superstition, ordered paintings to be brought from all quarters, and made a great bonfire of them. No doubt many of the oldest and best thus perished, though in many other cases the order was fortunately disregarded.”¹ Moreover, many Coptic icons were also destroyed and used as fuel for the first coction in the preparation of the Holy Myron. This custom was already recorded by the 17th century Dominican historian Johann Michael Wansleben.²

For some time now, Pope Shenuda III has expressed his serious apprehension and sorrow about the influence of the European art of the *cinque cento* in the Coptic churches. As shepherd, theologian and teacher of a strictly biblical theology he feels rightfully concerned about the iconographical art in his churches. This is especially the case within a church that still suffers from an unproportionally high rate of illiteracy. Here Christian art still plays an important rôle in determining both piety and theology of the believers. Therefore, a biblically correct iconography must be of utmost importance for the creation and preservation of the spiritual climate within the churches.

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Notes

- 1 Butler, A., *The Ancient Coptic Churches of Egypt*. London, 1884, II, 96.
- 2 Vansleb JM: *Histoire de L'Eglise d'Alexandrie*. Paris, 1677:91. Also, Meinardus O: About the Coction and Consecration of the Holy Myron in the Coptic Church. In *Coptic Church Review* 12, 3, 1991: 82.

This observation was shared already several centuries ago. On December 3, 1563, at the final session of the Council of Trent, the Catholic hierarchs were deeply provoked and irritated about the widespread artistic representations of nudity in the chapels and churches. They considered these demonstrations of the Renaissance art of the cinque cento as a severe threat to the orthodoxy of the Catholic faith. Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475/1564) was publicly accused for his paintings of the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel which embodied the story of Genesis from Creation to the Flood. With his pictures of “the Last Judgement” and “the Creation of Adam” he was indicted for having profaned and desecrated the “holy of holies” of the successors of Christ to a mere “*stufa d’ignudi*”, a bathroom! Subsequently, during the days of Pope Pius IV (1559/1565) the zealous reformers succeeded in engaging a certain Ricciarello da Volterra - known as the “*brachettone*” or “fly-painter” - to cover up Michelangelo’s shocking and indelicate “indecencies!”

However, Pope Shenuda’s concern is not the threat of immodesty or morality in the arts but rather the non-biblical representations of biblical themes and persons. Of course, it was quite correct to portray Adam and Eve as naked persons. This used to be part of the Renaissance art-tradition as exemplified in the medieval Horologia or in Michelangelo’s fresco of the creation of Adam in the Sistine Chapel. But since Adam was not born of a woman, he should not have been portrayed with a navel. This, indeed, could lead the onlooker into heresy! This raises, of course, also the question whether artistic representations of the “Second Adam” should show his navel since he was of a virgin. The Christian art of the 6th-8th century showed the crucified Savior in a sleeveless purple robe. The teachings of the 11th-12th century stressing the eucharistic significance of the sacrificial passion and death eventually led to the well-known medieval crucifixion images that clearly showed the navel of the Savior.

It is significant that the neo-Coptic art of Professor Isaac Fanus of the Institute of Coptic Studies has avoided to portray the navel of the crucified Christ by introducing a larger loincloth.

One of the most popular pictures in the Coptic churches of Lower and Upper Egypt is doubtless the *Cenacolo* or “Last Supper” by the sculptor, architect, engineer and painter Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519). The *Cenacolo* (1494) was his greatest and by far his most expeditiously executed work in painting. Leonardo’s “Last Supper” with Carlo Dolci’s “Mater Dolorosa” (1616/1686) and Guido Reni’s “Ecce Homo” (1575/1642) ranks as one of the most frequently exhibited pictures in Coptic churches, often attached above the royal doors of the altar-screen.³ Leonard’s “Last Supper” became for all Christendom the most important representation of the holy scene. The serenity of the holy company was broken by the words of their Master: “One of you shall betray Me” (John 13:21). In the agita-

3 Meinardus O: “Carlo Dolci’s “Mater Dolorosa” and Guido Renis “Ecce Homo”. In *Orientalia Suecana* 41,1992: 155-165 and 43, 1994 149-154.

tion of the consciences, the disciples gathered in four groups of three along the table covered with a supply of various foods and dishes.

According to the notions and conceptions of Pope Shenuda III the representation of the institution of the Last Supper should portray merely the eucharistic elements, namely the cup and the loaf of bread. Indeed, the Pope wished that the non-biblical pictures of the Holy Meal be eliminated from the sanctuaries of Coptic churches.⁴ A modern variant of Leonardo's "Last Supper" realized the expectations of the Coptic pope. Seated behind an empty table, the disciples are presented in Leonardo's typical "triandrian" arrangement. Merely the eucharistic elements are placed in front of the Savior.⁵



Ever since the 13th century Byzantine iconography has portrayed St. John the Baptist as a lean, haggard ascete with beard and wings. After all, according to St. Mark he was known as "the messenger in the wilderness." This divine messenger or angel image with wings had even spread into the Western world.⁶ Since *angelos* could mean messenger as well as angel medieval iconographers never questioned to portray the divine messenger with wings. However, Pope Shenuda III has clearly stated that all icons of the Precursor should show him as the Baptist.⁷ This used to be the case in the 6th/7th century wall-paintings in Bawit⁸ and in the 11th century painting of the Baptist in the Chapel of St. Benjamin in the Monastery of St. Macarius.

In conclusion it is fair to state that Pope Shenuda's concern for modern Christian iconography serves as a serious reflexion upon the biblical messages. For him Coptic iconography has a multidimensional purpose, it serves as a medium for biblical instruction and exposition, as a means for the devotional life and as an instrument for the propagation of the Christian message.

4 Immerzeel M: His Holiness Pope Shenuda III visits Leiden University. *El-Keraza* 3, 6, 1994: 21 f.

5 This painting is exhibited on the first floor of the Mahaba Bookshop, 30 Sharia Shubra, Shubra, Cairo.

6 The crypt of the dome of Parma (15th cent.).

7 Attia, Maged: *The Silver Jubilee of His Holiness Pope Shenouda III*. Cairo, 1996: 46.

8 Chapels XVII and XXX of the Monastery of St. Apollo, Bawit.

DISCOVERY OF FOURTH CENTURY CHURCH IN THE EGYPTIAN WESTERN DESERT

*Drs. Cornelis Hulsman**

Archeologists have found in the middle of the Egyptian Western Desert the remains one of the oldest churches in the world. The church was found near the oases of Paris, south of the oasis of Kharga, the capital of the New Valley, 350 km west of Luxor.

The archeologist Dr. Lutfi Sherif dates the church from the fourth century, "The church was built of mudbricks, just outside the stone walls of the Roman fortress of Dush which dates from the end of the first century AD. It is unlikely the church is older because it is very unlikely the Romans would have given a permission to build a church near their fortress during the period of the Christian persecutions."

The fortress of Dushh is situated on a lonely hill in a wide sea of sand. Visitors rarely visit the place because the location is far too isolated. Until recently there was even no road leading to the fortress and the only way to visit the place was by landrover.

But the fortress of Dushh has become accessible and has attracted archeologists who started working there.

Egypt is developing the desert which was once blooming. The fortress and the church in Dushh, other Roman fortresses in the desert, the temple of Hibis in Kharga and the Christian cemetery of Baghawat are the silent witnesses of that period. The desert around Kharga, Paris and Dushh was between 1500 BC and 500 AD a flourishing agricultural area. Sherif says that in one of the pharaonic tombs in Luxor there is also a reference to this period of abundance, saying that the best wine comes from Kharga.

Egypt wants to bring this land in culture again. Roads and railway tracks are built. President Mubarak opened on December 1 the new track from Kharga to Paris. The once isolated fortresses has become accessible.

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The fortress of Dushh was built during the reign of Roman Emperor Trajan (emperor from 98-117). The Romans built in the fortress a temple dedicated to Trajan, which resembled a pharaonic temple. Emperor Trajan is depicted as the pharaonic god Osiris. This gives a perfect image of what the Roman cult to worship their emperors as God meant. They gave their political religion an Egyptian garb without deluding their aim; the worship of the emperor as God, the very thing the early Christians rejected and which led to their persecution.

Dushh was not only situated in an important agricultural area, it was also strategically situated on the so-called forty-day route, a 1720 km long caravan route from Darfur in Sudan to Assiut in Egypt. It took caravans approximately forty days to reach their destination, hence the name 'forty-day route'. Over 2000 years this was the main trade route along which caravans with ivory, ebony, incense, arabian gum, slaves and other products brought their trade from Sudan to Egypt. A string of forts had to protect the caravans against plundering Bedouins.

Agriculture had declined after the 5th century AD but trade continued to be important until the 19th century. Mamluks and others had tax stations in the area. A sign on the road reads 'max' which comes from the Arabic 'mekus' which means toll. That is probably a reminder of those days.

Historians estimate hundreds of thousands of people must have lived in the first century AD in the area of Kharga, Paris and Dushh which was at the time the breadbasket of the Roman Empire. That shows the importance of this area in a time when Egypt counted 2,5 million inhabitants. Today perhaps only 5000 people live in this vast area.

Christian businessman Wagih Sawirus is impressed by the fortress of Dushh, its ancient church and other fantastic historical sights on the train track between Safaga and Paris. This track which is now hardly used, goes through the mountains of the eastern desert along the Roman quarries of mount Gladianus to the temple of Dendera where the first Christians found shelter against the persecution of the Romans. At Qena the track crosses the Nile and the train crosses the sandplains of the Western Desert until it reaches Kharga, situated in a depression in the middle of the Sahara.

The track was used for the transport of phosphate from Kharga to Safaga. Now Sawirus wants to develop it for tourism. Why not have luxury trains with tourists run over this line? They would see monuments which otherwise would be difficult to visit.

On November 26-29, 1998 the Friends of the Egyptian Railways (FREA) had a luxury train with a number of European Ambassadors and journalists run over this line. Seeing the ever changing colors and rock formations of the desert from a first class train and stopping at places where the most beautiful monuments could be visited was a success. Participants marveled about what they saw. Sawirus felt encouraged to go ahead with his plans.

BOOK REVIEWS

Short Notes on the Bible: The Pentateuch

Published by St. Mark's Orthodox Fellowship (PO. Box 6192, Columbia, MD 21045) and also available from Light and Life Publishing, Minneapolis, MN and from most Coptic Church bookstores. Pp. 49. \$ 4.95 (paper).

This short introduction to the first five books of the Old Testament is intended for individual, family or youth group Bible study. For each book there is an introductory summary that stresses its main subjects and personalities. The important doctrinal issues are then discussed in a question-answer format. The book includes a map of the exodus route from Egypt. Its beautiful illustration by famous classic painters makes it a suitable gift for Sunday School youth classes.

Perspectives on War in the Bible

By John A Wood. Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press. 1998. 184 pp. \$ 17.95 (Paperback). ISBN 0-86554-564-2.

Although the topic of war is highly significant in the Bible and always raises important theological and ethical questions, yet it is often ignored. In this book Professor Wood examines the different biblical traditions and attitudes towards war in the Old as well as in the New Testaments. Holy War was common among the Israelites, yet the author finds examples of the other attitudes towards wars and conflicts even from the time of the Patriarchs in Genesis. He gives examples of what is now called just war in the Old Testament and he highlights the peace initiatives, non-violent conflict resolutions and other examples of pacifism in both the OT and NT. The book is provided with many references and footnotes, and an appendix that describes 'Methods of Warfare' and 'Battle Strategies' in Ancient Israel.

Montanism

By Christine Trevett. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996. 313 pp. \$ 64.95 (Hardback). ISBN 0-521-41182-3

Montanism is an apocalyptic and prophetic movement that started in Phrygia by Montanus, its first prophet, in the latter part of the second century and quickly spread to North Africa. Its rise was important in the history of the early Church and

for centuries it was a challenge to the developing Catholic tradition. Montanism proclaimed that the heavenly Jerusalem would soon descend in Phrygia and it emphasized the prophetic and charismatic elements in the Church. It gave more roles to women in the Church as prophets and leaders. It called for more fasting and rigorous asceticism, disallowed second marriages, and encouraged martyrdom. Although the churches of Asia and Rome condemned Montanism, yet Tertullian, the greatest Western Church Father and Latin writer in the first three centuries, endorsed it. Montanists were considered heretics since the reign of Constantine. Their churches were confiscated and their books burned and they suffered legal impediments, banishment and even capital punishments. Although Montanism disappeared from the West during the fourth century, it remained in Phrygia till it was finally destroyed at the time of Justinian.

This book is the first study of Montanism in English since 1878 and it takes account of the scholarship of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In its first two parts, it gives the detailed history of the beginning and early history of Montanism which the author gathered from many ancient sources. She discusses its teachings in Part III. Part IV deals with Montanism and women. In Part V the fate of Montanism is discussed.

Married Saints

By John F. Fink. Staten Island, New York: Alba House, 1999. Pp. 177. \$ 9.95 (Paperback). ISBN 0-8189-0822-X.

Historically the Church has placed a greater value on virginity than on marriage, with the result that, except for the martyrs, any list of saints consists mainly of monks and celibate clergy. This book starts by reminding the reader that most saints in heaven are married since St. Paul defined saints as those persons who follow Christ (Col. 1:2). Although the laity and the married are underrepresented in the lists of canonized saints, this small book provides short biographies of 23 married saints that have been officially canonized in the Catholic Church. Among those included are prominent biblical personalities—St. Mary, St. Joseph her husband, and her parents Sts. Joachim and Ann, Sts. Zachary and Elizabeth, and St. Peter the Apostle. From the early Church we have the martyred saints Perpetua and Felicita, and St. Monica the mother of Augustine. The majority of the saints mentioned lived in the Middle Ages. Many were in the highest ranks of society who had great responsibilities like St. Louis IX king of France and St. Thomas More who paid his life for opposing King Henry VIII's divorce and remarriage. From the royal families of Europe we have the stories of Sts. Stephen King of Hungary, Elizabeth of Hungary, and Elizabeth of Portugal. On the other side of the scale we have the Spanish Sts. Isidore the farmer and his wife Maria. This book is very informative and beneficial for spiritual reading. It opens the door for publishers, authors and readers to many hidden treasures in the Church.

Egypt's Endangered Christians

By Paul Marshall and Joseph Assad. Published by Freedom House (1319 18th Street NW, Washington DC 20036), 1999. Pp. 127. \$ 8.00 (Paper.)

This new human rights report finds that Egypt's ancient Coptic Christians are persecuted by radical Islamic groups and at times by local police and other security officials and they are discriminated against and have their freedom to worship hampered by the Egyptian Government. The report is based on two 1998 fact-finding trips to Egypt and current ongoing research. The report concludes that:

- Egypt's 6 to 10 million Copts, dating back two thousand years, are by far the largest Christian community in the Middle East.
- The Egyptian government discriminates against Christians and hampers their freedom of worship, and its agencies sporadically persecute Muslim converts to Christianity. In particular it:
 - Enforces onerous restrictions on building or repairing churches.
 - Applies religiously discriminatory laws and practices concerning family law, conversions, education, and clergy salaries.
 - Restricts Copts from senior government, military, and educational positions.
 - Subsidizes media, which are used to attack Copts.
 - In several instances local police have been complicit in the coercive conversion of Coptic girls. The police at the local level frequently harass and sometimes even persecute Christians, particularly converts, because either the police sympathize with or fear Islamic radicals, or regard Christians as disturbing the social order.
- Islamic terrorists attack security forces, tourists, and the majority moderate Muslims as well as Copts, but the Copts are their major, Egyptian, civilian target. This is exacerbated by terrorist imposition of an extortionate jizya "tax" on thousands of Copts, primarily in Upper Egypt.

The book is concluded with 2 appendices. The first is a list of 40 Christians killed by Moslem terrorists after failing to pay 'protection money' to the extremists. The second is a collection of material documenting the torture by the Egyptian police of hundreds of Christians at El-Kosheh village in Upper Egypt during August and September 1998. Several pictures of these tortures, including those on women and children appear in the book.

Divorce and Remarriage: Biblical Principles and Pastoral Practice

By Andrew Cornes. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1993. 528 pp. \$ 24.99 (paperback). ISBN 0-8028-0577-9

With the increasing number of divorces and second marriages nowadays in most churches, this book is a call to return to the biblical Tradition. The book is divided into two major parts. The first part, Biblical Principles, examines marriage

and singleness in the Bible, with concentration on the teachings of Christ and St. Paul that do not allow divorce except for adultery, and forbid the remarriage of a divorced person.

In the second part, Pastoral Practice, the author tries to give the biblical message in compassion, love and care, combined with truth, scholarship and wisdom. He shows how to teach children, young people, and adults a Christian understanding of marriage and singleness. He offers directions for those going through marriage difficulties or divorce, and shows how to help separated couples work toward reconciliation.

BOOK NOTICES

St. Mark Coptic Orthodox Church (1600 S Robertson Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90035).

Theological and Dogmatic Differences between Orthodox and Catholics. By Fr. Markos Hanna. Pp. 58. \$3.00 (paper). Starting with the point of reconciliation concerning the nature of Christ, the book then discusses thirteen other differences in biblical (primacy of St. Peter, fasting, salvation of non-believers), doctrine (purgatory, papal infallibility, number of Ecumenical Councils), ritual (Differences in the rites of Baptism and Eucharist, orientation of churches) and Mariological issues (Immaculate conception).

The Book of Prostration According to the Rites of the Coptic Orthodox Church. Translated and compiled by Fr. Markos Hanna. Pp 145 (large size); \$12.00 (paper). The full text of the liturgy for the feast of Pentecost in Coptic, with the English and Arabic translations.

The Book of Laqan for the Feast of the Apostles. Translated, compiled and designed by Fr. Markos Hanna. Pp.55 (large size). \$ 8.00 (paper). Liturgy for the Blessing of the Waters in the Feast of the Apostles in Coptic, with the English and Arabic translations.

Oakwood Publications (3827 Bluff Street, Torrance, CA 90505)

We Magnify Thee. Tape Cassette, \$ 5.95. Compact Disc (CD), \$ 11.95. Traditional hymnology of both the ancient traditions of Eastern and Western Orthodox Christianity (Byzantine, Slavic and others).

Conciliar Press (P. O. Box 76 Ben Lomond, CA 95005)

Real Choices: Looking for Alternatives to Abortion. By Frederica Mathewes-Green. 211 pp. 12.95 (paperback) ISBN 1-888212-07-1. Instead of pitting the baby's rights against the mother's, why not look for ways to help them both. The recommendations in this book include fighting isolation with friendship, encouraging natural bonds, considering adoption, building employment plans and connection with those who care.



*Roman Fortress of Dushh, First Century
(Western Desert of Egypt)*



Remains of Ancient Church at Dushh
The high wall of the fortress is on the right side.
(Article on Page 59)