

COPTIC CHURCH REVIEW

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- *Severus of Antioch as Seen by Modern Coptic Historians*
- *The Sacred Linen-Cloths of Christ's Passion in Egypt*
- *The Anamnesis "Remembrance" in the Eucharist*



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SEVERUS OF ANTIOCH AS SEEN BY MODERN COPTIC HISTORIANS

Youhanna Nessim Youssef

In a previous article, we highlighted the image of Severus of Antioch in the book of the *History of the Patriarchs*.¹ We also concluded in another study that from the tenth century, the cult of Severus of Antioch in Egypt enters into a decline after the Arab conquest.² In this article we will review the image of Severus of Antioch in the modern books of Coptic history. We will compare this image with what is known about his life from other sources, namely:

- The biography of Severus by his friend Zacharias the Rhetor. The whole life is preserved in Syriac.³
- The biography of Severus by John of Beith Aphthonia. The whole life survives in Syriac⁴ and a part of this biography was found in the Monastery of Epiphanius,⁵ and in a fragment preserved in John Rylands Library.⁶
- The biography of Severus by Athanasius of Antioch. We have a few fragments, in Sahidic Coptic, which were published by W.E. Crum.⁷ Others were published

¹ Youhanna Nessim Youssef, "Severus of Antioch in the History of the Patriarchs of the Coptic Church," *The VI International Conference on the Christian Arabic Studies - The University of Sydney* Sydney Sunday 2 July -Wednesday 5 July.

² Youhanna Nessim Youssef, "Notes on the cult of Severus of Antioch in Egypt," *Ephemerides Liturgicae* 115 (2001), pp. 101-107.

³ M. A. Kugener, *Vie de Sévère Patriarche d'Antioche, par Zacharie le Scolastique*, *Patrologia Orientalis* 2/1 (Paris, 1904), pp. 1-115.

⁴ M.A. Kugener, *Vie de Sévère, par Jean Supérieur du monastère de Beith Aphthonia*, *Patrologia Orientalis* 2/3 (Paris, 1904), 205-264.

⁵ W.E. Crum & H.G. Evelyn White, *The Monastery of Epiphanius at Thebes (The Metropolitan Museum of Art -Egyptian Expedition)*, Part II, (New York, 1926; Reprint, 1973), N° 81 p. 25 (text), p. 172 (translation).

⁶ W.E. Crum, *Catalogue of the Coptic Manuscripts in the Collection of John Rylands Library Manchester* (Manchester, 1909), N°99, p. 51.

⁷ E. Goodspeed and W.E. Crum, *The Conflict of Severus Patriarch of Antioch by Athanasius*, , *Patrologia Orientalis* IV/6 (Paris, 1908), p. 578[10].-585 [17].

by W. Till,⁸ Munier,⁹ and Orlandi.¹⁰ A fragment of a Bohairic Manuscript also survives.¹¹ The Arabic version will be published soon,¹² and the Ethiopian version was published by Goodspeed.¹³

- The homily of George Bishop of the Arabs, which survives only in Syriac.¹⁴

- In addition to this, a Sahidic Coptic homily on Saint Leontius by Severus of Antioch contains an autobiographical section.¹⁵

Modern Coptic Historians

1. To our knowledge, the first book dedicated to the *History of the Coptic Nation* was written by Ya'qub Nakhlah Rufailah. This book treats mainly the history of the Copts after the Arab conquest. He mentions that the main reason for the schism between the Copts and the Greek (*Rum*) was motivated by the aspiration to authority.¹⁶

2. The second is the book of the *Precious Pearl for the History of the Church* by the Bishop Isidorus (two different editions).¹⁷ The Author of this book is of Syrian origin; hence he stresses the role of the patriarch of the Antioch for the Coptic Church. He included some references from Syriac manuscripts, which follow in translation:

⁸ W. Till, *Koptische Heiligen und Martyrerlegenden*. Orientalia Christiana Analecta 102, (Rome, 1935), p. 188-200. W. Till, *Koptische Heiligen und Martyrerlegenden*. Orientalia Christiana Analecta 108 (Rome 1936), p. 141-143.

⁹ H. Munier, *Manuscrits coptes (Catalogue Général des Antiquités Égyptiennes du Musée du Caire)*. (Cairo, 1916), p. 52-53.

¹⁰ T. Orlandi, "Un Codice Copto del 'Monastero Bianco' Economii de Severo di Antiochia, Marco Evangelista, Atanasio Di Alessandria," *Le Muséon* 81 (1968), pp. 351-405, and especially p. 371. I would like to thank Professor Orlandi who kindly attracting my attention to this reference.

¹¹ Goodspeed and Crum, *The Conflict.*, p. 585 [17].

¹² M. Simaika, *Catalogue of the Coptic and Arabic Manuscripts in the Coptic Museum, the Patriarchate, the principal Churches of Cairo and Alexandria and the Monasteries of Egypt*, Vol. I/part II (Cairo, 1945), p. 154 n°357 (190 Theol). G. Graf, *Catalogue des Manuscrits Arabes Chrétiens conservés au Caire*. ST 63, (Vatican, 1934), pp. 121-123. n°333 (394).

¹³ Goodspeed, *op.cit.*,

¹⁴ K.E. McVey, *George, Bishop of the Arabs, A Homily on blessed Mar Severus, Patriarch of Antioch*, CSCO 530 (Louvain, 1993), (text) Syr 216, 531 Syri 217 (Translation).

¹⁵ G. Garitte, "Textes Hagiographiques orientaux relatifs à Saint Léonce de Tripoli," *Le Muséon* 79 (1966), pp. 357-358 §IV.

¹⁶ Ya'qub Nakhlah Rūfailah, *Kitab tarikh al-Ummah al-Qibtiyah, [The book of the history of the Coptic Nation]* (Cairo, 1898), p.27.

¹⁷ The first edition is signed by a monk of the Monastery of our Lady Baramus, Cairo 1883. Severus is mentioned briefly in pages 302-303, without any biographical data except that he was Orthodox and zealous, and the king Justinian summoned him to a council in Constantinople and he escaped to Egypt.

Mar Severus: He was born in the Persian country as a pagan. He studied science in Beirut and receive baptism in Tripoli in Phoenicia. He became a monk in a monastery near Gaza. After several years, he went to Alexandria and became one of the followers of the Pope Peter Mongus (mentioned in the first part). Severus was very proud to keep the orthodox faith and zealous in resisting the opponents. After remaining for a while in Alexandria, he went to the capital with two hundred monks, one of them was Philoxenus bishop of Mabbug (mentioned in the first part). They asked the emperor Anastasius to tear off the Tome of Leo and the decision of the council of Chalcedon; these were preserved in a box with some relics of some martyrs. They took them off and they burned them. Then he was chosen as patriarch of Antioch in the year 512 AD. He remained seven years fortifying the orthodox faith and struggling with the opponents till the death of the emperor Anastasius, the orthodox. This emperor was succeeded by Justinian, who was a supporter of council of Chalcedon. As soon as he reigned, he started to persecute the bishops, exiling the orthodox patriarchs and replacing them by the opponents. He condemned Severus by cutting his tongue if he did not accept the council of Chalcedon, and when we knew this he escaped from his seat to Egypt. The patriarch of Alexandria, at that time, Timothy the third hid him. And for some reasons he (Severus) was obliged to leave the city of Alexandria and he went to the inner land to a famous city in the province of Gharbiyya called Sakha; he went to a noble, pious and religious person called Lord Dorotheus the Archon.

While remaining in the house of this noble, Severus spent his time struggling against the heretics who were in Egypt, becoming a great supporter of his colleague Theodosius the Patriarch of Alexandria, especially in resisting Julian the Phantasist. This one was from the capital and became bishop in Halicarnassus in Asia Minor. This miserable man followed Apolinarius, from the fourth century, the bishop of Laodicea, who was fought by Mar Ephrem the Syrian, and died with his teaching. Julian deployed his effort to revive this heresy and he was preceded by the Archimandrite Eutyches, who mixed the Divinity of Christ with his Humanity. This one, Julian, taught that the body of Christ was imaginary, and he was exiled from his seat. He went to Egypt diffusing his poisons in the minds and the bodies of the monks of the desert of Scetis. Then, the hero of the orthodox faith started to refute the arguments of this opponent and this epistle is included in the *book of the Confession of the Fathers* kept in the Coptic Patriarchal library. And this text denies any false accusation that the teaching of this Orthodox (Severus) and the heretic Eutyches are the same.

Severus lived twenty-nine years after resigning from the patriarchate. He went once to the capital depending on the protection of the Empress Theodora, who was of Coptic origin, and a great defender of the faith of the Egyptians, despite the will of her husband. Severus, and those who were with him did not succeed in resisting the Chalcedonian party, but on the contrary the king oppressed them, and without the help of the queen he would have been exterminated. With great difficulty Severus succeeded in escaping and he died after arriving in Sakha in 542 AD, and a church was built on his relics for many generations.

The main language of Severus was Greek but his writings were translated into Syriac during his lifetime by Paul, bishop of Callinice in Mesopotamia in the city of Edessa. As this is mentioned in a marginal note in one of his books in the Vatican library, saying that this manuscript was completed in the month of Nissan 830, which is 519 AD in the city of Edessa in Mesopotamia, by the care of Paul bishop of Callinice who translated from Greek to Syriac the work of the blessed pious Severus. That is the great book refuting Julian and the refutation of the Manicheans and the Philalethes, and he (Severus) has 295 poems on the octagonal rhyme translated by the above-mentioned bishop. Bar Hebraeus mentioned that he composed a book called the lover of truth, which could be the Philalithes mentioned here, refuting the arguments of the Dyophysites and he explained the Henoticon of the King Zeno. I remember that I found that book in the Coptic Patriarchal library.¹⁸

Comments

This book contains the most detailed account about Severus of Antioch. We can mention several positive points. Most importantly, this is the first and only source that identifies the book of the Philalethes in the Coptic Patriarchal Library.¹⁹ Second, the section concerning the translation of the works of Severus is accurate enough.

Negative points:

- a- Severus is born in Persia
- b- He came to Alexandria after becoming a Christian, which is wrong because the biography of Severus by Zacharias attested that he was a pagan while studying in Alexandria and he had never been one of the followers of Peter Mongus.

¹⁸ Bishop Isidorus, *al-Kharidah al-Nafisah fi Tarikh al-Kanisah [The precious pearl in the History of the Church]* (Cairo, 1923), Vol 2, pp. 7-10.

¹⁹ Cf. Youhanna Nessim Youssef, "Arabic Manuscripts of the Philalethes of Severus of Antioch," *Proche Orient Chrétien* (in press).

- c- The story of burning the Tome of Leo and the decision of Chalcedon is invented.
- d- The story of cutting out the tongue of Severus is not attested in the main sources.
- e- Severus met Dorotheus of Sakha at the end of his life, not after his arrival to Egypt.
- f- The date of his death (in the year 542 AD) is not due to a different calendar. The same author gives the correct dates for the patriarchate of Severus, i.e. 512 –518 AD. His biography, as well as the Synaxarium, mentions that his body was translated to the Monastery of the Ennaton, not buried in Sakha.

Despite these negative points, bishop Isidorus is the unique “Coptic” historian to show such interest in Severus of Antioch.

3. The *Book of the Good Conduct in the History of the Patriarchs and Kings* by bishop Isidorus, which treats only the first seven centuries, mentions an encounter with Timothy III, the 32nd patriarch of Alexandria.

The king summoned a council where he invited Father Severus of Antioch who accepted the invitation with the doctors of the church and the bishops among them Philexinos, the pious master the bishop of Mabbug. When they arrived in the city, the king asked them to approve the decisions of the fourth council with any discussion, they refused, so the (the king) threatened them with exile from their seats; they did not care and fear this but they remained firm in their opinion. So the king nominated a person called Paul, who was Chalcedonian, as patriarch of Antioch and dismissed the Father Severus. He put him in jail with some bishops and he (the king) exiled some others. So the Father Severus escaped to the land of Egypt and he was welcomed by Timothy the third, the Alexandrian Patriarch. Fearing the violence of the government, Father Severus went from Alexandria to Sakha in the province of Gharbiyya and remained in the house of a pious man called Dorotheus, known by his charity and his love for the monks and monasteries. Some events happened in the Egyptian country, forcing Father Severus to go out from his hiding place and to appear to the people and also to write several treatises. It happened that Julian of Halicarnassus from Constantinople renewed the heresy of Apolinarius of Loadacea and Eutyches, saying that the flesh of Christ is incorruptible and he misled a great number of the monks of the desert of Scetis... So Father Severus was forced to write to the heresiarch showing the orthodox faith and this letter is included in the *book, the confessions of the Fathers*, and refutes the sayings of Julian and Eutyches. This letter denies any accusation that Severus was Eutychian.²⁰

²⁰ Bishop Isidorus, *Kitab Husun al-Sulūk fi Tarīkh al-Batarikah wa al-Mulūk*, [the book of the good conduct in the History of the Patriarchs and the kings] (Cairo, n.d.), p. 185.

4. In the *History of the Coptic Church*, by Father Menassa Yuhanna, Severus is mentioned as sending a synodical letter to John II.

The Patriarch of Antioch, Severus, sent a synodical letter to him after his ordination on the seat of the great Ignatius wherein he mentioned the common faith and announcing the agreement between them concerning the Orthodox unique faith... And also the pope John wrote a letter to Saint Severus answering his letter and explaining the Orthodox faith.²¹

Again, Yuhanna wrote concerning Pope Dioscorus II:

As soon as he was ordained, he sent a letter to the Father Severus mentioning the repose of the blessed John and his ordination on the Apostolic seat. So he (Severus) wrote a letter of consolation, informing him that he was in common faith with him and was keeping and teaching it.²²

And while talking about Timothy III, the author mentioned:

And this emperor summoned a council and forced the Pope of Alexandria Timothy and Severus the patriarch of Antioch to attend. The pope of Alexandria refused to attend... But Father Severus of Antioch accepted the invitation of the emperor to attend the council of Constantinople. He went to this in the company of several scholar-bishops among them Philoxenus of Mabbug. When he arrived in Constantinople the emperor honored him exceedingly in order to make him approve the Chalcedonian faith and the Tome of Leo. And when it was the day of the council, the brave Father Severus asked the attendants to anathematize the Tome of Leo and the council of Chalcedon. And soon, the emperor ordered him (Severus) to be persecuted and he was thrown in jail with the bishops and some of them were exiled. And after two years he released him after the intercession of the faithful queen Theodora. So he escaped from Constantinople to the Egyptian country where he was received with great honor by pope Timothy. Fearing the violence of the government, he (Severus) used to flee from one city to another and from one monastery to another until he arrived at the end of Sakha (in the province of Gharbiyya), and he hid himself in a house of an Archon called Dorotheus, who was known for his care to the elders and the monks who refused the misleading of Julian the heretic. And Father Severus used to correspond with his fellow bishops who were in Alexandria consoling them and begging them to remain firm.²³

²¹ Menassa Yuhanna, *Kitab Tarikh al-Kanisah al-Qibtyah*, [The book of the History of the Coptic Church], 2 ed. (Cairo, 1979), pp. 309-310.

²² Ibid., p. 310.

²³ Ibid., p. 312.

The last section concerning Severus is included in the biography of Theodosius: “And this father (Theodosius) maintained a good relationship with Father Severus, bishop of Antioch... Father Severus wrote some books; by them he overcame the supporters of the two natures and remained in struggle all his life since he was ordained patriarch of Antioch, and he endured persecutions till he rested and enjoyed the meeting with the Savior.”²⁴

Comments

The book did not provide any biographical data of Severus before his ordination. The main source of our text is the *Book of the History of the Patriarchs of the Coptic Church*, although there are some details that are not attested elsewhere, such as the imprisonment of Severus of Antioch in Constantinople for two years. It is important to mention that no dates are given to the Council of Constantinople or the Patriarchate of Timothy or Severus.

5. *The Story of the Coptic Church founded by Saint Mark the Apostle*, by Iris Habib al-Masri. As this book is by definition the Story of the Coptic Church, Severus is mentioned only occasionally.

And at that time God shewed forth his wonders, and raised up royalty and priesthood together for the Church. The royal priesthood was by Severus the Patriarch of Antioch,²⁵ James the bishop of Sarug and many other stars in the Egyptian deserts among them the pope John the second, who was known by his science and philosophy in addition to his piety.²⁶

And Severus of Antioch answered the synodical letter sent by John the Second where he shows the faith of the Antiochene Church and affirms that he was firm in the teaching of the great fathers, Athanasius, Cyril and Diocorus.²⁷

²⁴ Ibid., p. 317.

²⁵ This part is taken word for word from the *History of the Patriarchs*, cf. B. Evetts, *History of the Patriarchs of the Coptic Church of Alexandria II, Peter I to Benjamin*, *Patrologia Orientalis* 1.4 (Paris 1904), p. 449.

²⁶ Iris Habib al-Masri, *Qisat al-Kanīṣah al-Qibṭyah wa hya Tarīkh al-Kanīṣah al-Uthuduxia al-Misryah allati assasaha Mar Marqus al-Bashīr*, [*The story of the Coptic Church which is the History of the Egyptian Orthodox Church founded by Saint Mark the Apostle*] (Alexandria: Church of Saint George Sporting, 1979), p. 122 § 159.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 122 §160.

Speaking about Dioscorus the Second she stated: “As soon as he (Dioscorus the Second) was ordained to the seat of Mark, he renewed communication with Severus, bishop of Antioch, and the other orthodox bishops. He received from them letters confirming the straight faith. These letters were full of loyalty to him and the joy in his sublime honor. He answered them with letters full of love and loyalty”²⁸

While talking about a council summoned by the emperor Justinian, which the Coptic Pope Timothy II refused to attend, she mentions:

But Severus of Antioch accepted the invitation of the emperor and went to Constantinople. The council condemned him and excommunicated him, but God, let his name be praised, prepared an honest friend, i.e. the empress Theodora so she interceded with her husband on behalf on this Antiochene pontiff who remained in the Orthodox faith; for the friends of the emperor excited him against Anba Severus of Antioch so he wanted to cut his (Severus’) tongue. But the intercession of the empress was a great success so he released the patriarch Severus and he prevented him from returning to his seat. So he (Severus) was forced to leave his own country and he came to our generous country fleeing from the followers of the emperor. He found in Egypt safe shelter as his Lord did when He came to this ancient valley. It is amazing that the council which was formed from less than forty bishop and excommunicated Severus from his bishopric title, gave the title of Oecumenical to the bishop of Constantinople for flattering the emperor Justinian.²⁹

She mentioned the name of Severus after narrating the three chapters story, and the ordination of the bishop of Philae and the missions to Nubia, she said: “Although the debates were engaged, the Egyptians took the great share of the disturbance, although their pope returned back from exile, but he (pope Timothy III) and Severus of Antioch were pursued from city to another city and from a monastery to another...”³⁰ And again, “Anba Timothy continued his travels with Severus of Antioch, inspiring people to remain firm in their orthodox faith and at the end they took refuge in monastery away from the eyes of the Byzantines, so they found some peace and wrote letters of consolation to their peoples.”³¹

²⁸ Ibid., pp. 125-126 § 167.

²⁹ Ibid, p. 132 § 175-176.

³⁰ Ibid., *op.cit.*, p 137 § 178.

³¹ Ibid., *op.cit.*, p. 138 § 178.

Comments

It is easy to detect the main historical source of this text—not mentioned by the author in the footnotes—as the *History of the Patriarchs of the Coptic Church*, but the Coptic Patriarch always plays the main roles. It is amazing that even liturgical sources such as the Synaxarium are not used as a reference for this section. Severus played according to this text a secondary role, just confirming the role of the Copts. We cannot find any allusion to the activities of Severus. The safe refuge is not historical but it helps the author to give a rosy end to her story!

The author confused the decision of the Council of Constantinople in 535 AD with the famous 28th Canon of the Council of Chalcedon.

6. The book of the *History of the Coptic Church*, from the homilies of Bishop Yuannis.

The name of Severus of Antioch is mentioned briefly: “At that time Saint Severus of Antioch (512-518 AD) distinguished himself as the great defender of doctrine of the Monophysitism.”

And under the impression of the queen Theodora... The emperor summoned a council in Constantinople in order to discuss the problems and to establish the unity of the church and hence Severus of Antioch was able to go in peace in Constantinople in 532 with a great group of Egypt and he remained there for one year.³²

Comments

These two pieces of information are accurate but they are too brief to give a complete idea about the great role of Severus of Antioch in the history of the “Monophysite” Church in general and especially his theological activities.

Summary

Except for the book of bishop Isidorus, the life of Severus is completely ignored by modern Coptic historians. They depend on the book of *the History of the Patriarchs* and add some inaccurate events. The book of bishop Isidorus is the first book to mention some of the theological works of Severus, and identifies the book of the Philalethes in the Coptic Patriarchal library. This information was not considered by Graf and Simaika who wrote the catalogue of the manuscripts of that library.

³² Anba Yuannis, *Tarikh al Kanisah al-Qibtya Qabl wa Ba'd Magma' Khalqidunya* [*The history of the Coptic Church before and after the council of Chalcedon*] (New York, 1989). Preface by Father Wissa Sami, p. 83.

It is important to mention that bishop Isidorus was motivated to study Severus because he (Isidorus) was of Syrian origin. He became a monk in 1885, and was ordained a bishop on October 17, 1897. For some reason, he was excommunicated and remained in Cairo where he bought a house and a printing machine. He published several books and a magazine called *Sion*. He died on January 19, 1942.³³

³³ Samuel Tawadrus al-Suriani, *Tarikh Babawat al-Kursi al-Askandari 1809-1971* [History of the popes of the Alexandrian Seat 1809-1971] (Cairo, 1977), pp. 108-109.

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THE SACRED LINEN-CLOTHS OF CHRIST'S PASSION IN EGYPT

Otto F. A. Meinardus

Christians in the East and West have always considered the linen-cloths, napkins and shrouds associated with the passion and death of Jesus Christ as a visible and tangible proof of his resurrection. These included the towel, the *lin-teum domini*, with which Christ had girded himself as he washed his disciples' feet and then wiped them with the towel (Jn 13:4, 5); the napkin, the *sudarium domini*, which had been placed on his head (Jn 20:7); the linen shroud, the *sin-don munda*, in which Joseph of Arimathea had wrapped the body of Christ and laid it in his own new tomb (Mt 27:59); and finally the loin-cloth of Christ, the *lin-teamen*, with which Byzantine iconography ever since the 9th century used to portray the crucified Savior. This loin-cloth is not mentioned in the New Testament.

The Three Sacred Linen-Cloths of Christ's Passion Korneümünster, 1468



Darstellung des Schütztuches

The towel or *lin-teum*



Darstellung des Schwißtuches

The sweat-cloth or *sudarium*



Darstellung des Grabtuches

The linen shroud or *sin-don*

In the early days the deceased used to be wrapped in their own garments, often even with some of their personal commodities. In the days of Jesus, however, hands and feet of the dead were bound with bandages while the face was wrapped with a cloth (Jn 11:44). Normally, the lamentations occurred in the presence of the relatives and friends. The funeral procession to the grave was led by the wailing women. Since a woman, namely Eve, had caused the death for mankind, there were to lead the deceased to his grave.

The belief in the resurrection of Jesus Christ was conducive for the veneration of certain objects which were associated with his passion and death. Therefore, Christians collected what they believed to be the various biblical instruments of the passion for their veneration. There were the spear which pierced his side (Jn 19:34), the sponge of vinegar and the reed (Jn 19:29), the bonds of Christ, the nails, the scarlet robe (Jn 19:5) and the crown of thorns (Jn 9:2) to mention only some of the relics which were collected and found their way into the principal ecclesiastical centers of the East and the West. To these were added numerous sacred linen-cloths and shrouds which also served as tangible reminders of the resurrection. To some of these cloths believers used to attribute miraculous therapeutic qualities. Thus, all kinds of diseases, tumors, oedema, warts, etc. were healed by the application of some of these cloths.

I. The napkin or sudarium of Memphis around 570

A napkin (handkerchief) or *sudarium* had been placed on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen cloths but rolled up in a place by itself (Jn 20:7). According to the Roman legend, Veronica, a pious woman of Jerusalem, moved by pity had offered her handkerchief to Jesus who carried his cross on the way to Golgotha, so that he might wipe the drops of agony from his brow. Jesus accepted the kindness and after using the kerchief he returned it to her with the imprint of the image of his face upon it. This event is still commemorated in Jerusalem at the 6th station of the Roman Catholic "Way of the Cross", presently served by the Little Sisters of Jesus. According to another version, Veronica had ordered a portrait of Christ to be painted which she presented to the emperor Tiberius who suffered from an incurable disease. The picture of Christ not only cured the ailments of the emperor but also led to his conversion. Ever since, Beronice, the original name of this woman was altered into "Vera Icon" or the true image. In the Byzantine tradition the Apostle Thaddaeus (or Addai) had received from his Lord the cloth "not made by human hands", the *acheiropoiton*, which showed the image of Christ. Upon royal request he presented this miraculous cloth to King Abgar V. of Edessa which healed his incurable diseases. The king ordered the image of Christ to be placed upon the city-walls to protect Edessa from the various assaults by the Persians. Known as the *mandylion*, this cloth enriched by the "divine sweat", was considered to be the most precious relic of the passion

of Christ. In the 10th century, the Byzantine emperor Eomanos I. Lekapenos (920-944) had the *mandylion* transferred to Constantinople where it was placed in the treasury of the imperial Bukeleon Palace in Constantinople. There it remained until 1453, the fall of the city.

Ever since 817, the Benedictine monks of Kornelimunster near Aachen claimed to possess the napkin or *sudarium* together with the towel or *linteum* and the shroud of *sindon* of Christ. At the occasion of the great pilgrimage, every seven years, these three famous relics of the passion of Christ are publicly displayed.¹

The Egyptian Tradition

During the second half of the 6th century, a pious pilgrim of the city of Piacenza on the banks of the Po left his native country to visit the biblical sites in the Holy Land. He traveled via Constantinople, Cyprus, Galilee and Judea to Egypt. While visiting Jericho and the traditional site of the baptism of Christ he heard that there was the very napkin which was placed upon the face of our Lord.²

In Egypt, the anonymous pilgrim was the first foreign visitor to the Coptic Monastery of St. Paul the Theban near the Red Sea. From there he crossed the desert to the Egyptian Babylon on the Nile (Old Cairo) and from there to the ancient pharaonic city of Memphis with its palaces, temples and tombs. At that time Memphis was an important Episcopal see. Bishop Antiochos of Memphis represented his diocese at the First Ecumenical Council of Nicea in 325. After the Arab Conquest bishop Menas of Memphis assisted Pope Khail I. (744-746) in the prayers for the rising of the Nile. Around the 5th century monks had gathered around the famous necropolis of Memphis, the pyramid of Saqqara. In or around 470 the Monastery of St. Jeremia was founded.³ Sometimes between 518 and 530 the Archeadon Theodosios mentioned the city of Memphis where “Joseph’s master took him and put him into prison” (Gen 39, 19f). There were two monasteries, one belonging to the Vandals, namely that of St. Jeremia and the other to the Romans known as St. Apollonius.⁴

The significance of Memphis as historic center and as temporary residence of the Holy Family on their flight to Upper Egypt were sufficient reasons for the north-Italian pilgrim to stop there. This is his account: “There was a temple, nowadays a church. One of its main entrances was closed to our Lord as he and

1 Müller, Manfred, Die biblischen Heiligtümer von Kornelimünster. Kornelimünster 1986.

2 “Der Pilger von Piacenza um 570” in Donner, H., Pilgerfahrt ins Heilige Lnd. Stuttgart 2002, 226-295.

3 This is not the Old Testament prophet, but an Upper Egyptian desert father.

4 The “religio Vandalorum” is the North African Arianism, while the “religio Romanorum” is that of the Byzantine Church. In the Coptic tradition there are at least two 4th/5th cent. saints named Apollonius!

the holy Virgin Mary were there. This cannot be opened to this day. There we also saw the linen pallium on which one can see the countenance of the Savior. It is being said, with it he had wiped his face and the imprint remained on it. At certain times it is being venerated. We also venerated it, however, on account of the brightness we could not accurately see it. The closer you looked at it, the more it modified itself in your eyes.”⁵

Today, traditions of the sacred napkin with the imprint of the face of Christ are completely extinct among the Copts.

II. The Linen-cloths of Christ in the Metanoia Monastery at Kanobos (Abu Qir)

According to the report of the 7th century Coptic bishop John of Nikiou the monks of the Metanoia Monastery at Kánobos used to venerate several famous relics of Christ. In addition to a part of the venerable Cross of Christ, they also possessed the napkin, the sacred *mandy lion* with the imprint of the holy face and the towel with which Jesus had girded himself when he washed the feet of his disciples.⁶ The mentioning of the *mandy lion* at this time in the proximity of Alexandria is not surprising since Western and Eastern traditions about its origin were widely circulated. On the other hand, the reference to the towel or *lin-teum* in Egypt is of some significance since it is one of the earliest historic references to the Christian *lin-teum*-tradition.

The Metanoia or Penitence Monastery was a 4th century foundation of Pachomian monks of the Upper Egyptian Tabennesi. Kánobos was famous for its Serapeum with its incubation-oracles (Strabo 18, 801) which was destroyed by Pope Theophilus (384-412). Later Pope Cyril I. transferred to Kánobos the relics of the Christian physician-martyrs Cyrus and John, thereby providing a Christian continuation of the healing cult. Undoubtedly the monks profited from the popular therapeutical practices. Even in the 9th century, Sophronios I. the *Greek* Orthodox Patriarch of Alexandria (830-859), was healed at the Metanoia from his eye-disease.⁷

The relics of Christ's passion must have been a real asset to the monks of the Metanoia. If the sacred *mandy lion* had healed King Abgar V. of Edessa of his incurable diseases, it certainly would help the needs and pains of pious believers. Also the spiritual message of the sacred towel was a visible testimony to the monastic virtues of humility and lowliness.

Although the towel of Christ never gained the liturgical significance, as did the other textiles, the clergy of Kornelimunster exhibit it with its measure of

5 Donner, H., loc. cit.

6 Zotenberg, H. (transl. & ed.) *Chronique de Jean, évêque de Nikiou*. Paris 1883, 125 f.

7 Gascon, Jean, "Metanoia", *Copt. Encycl.* V, 1608.

2.30 x 1.28 together with the other linen. According to medieval legend, the dark imprint on the cloth is said to be the footprint of Judas.

Neo-Coptic iconography by Isaac Fanus has recovered the spirituality of the footwashing. Since 1973 St. Bishoi's washing of Christ's feet has become the most popular icon of the 5th cent. desert-father. The icon of Christ washing the feet by Fanus is part of the series of icons of Christ in the Church of the Holy Virgin, Los Angeles, 1993.

III. The Shroud of Christ in the White Monastery (Dair al-Abiad) at Sohag

For several centuries the shroud of Christ (*shindon*) has received maximum attention. Questions are constantly raised about the genuineness and authenticity of the "Burial Shroud of Turin" with its blood-stains and imprint of a masculine body (4.37 x 1.11 cm).⁸ The recorded history of the Turin shroud begins in 1353 when Geoffroy de Charny, Lord of Savoisie and Lirey, founded a collegiate church in which he exposed for veneration the "true burial sheet of Jesus Christ".⁹ In 1452 Margaret de Charny presented the precious relic to Louis, Duke of Savoy. In the 16th century the shroud was transferred to the Cathedral of Turin where several popes – Paul II., Sixtus IV., Julius II., Pius XI. – sanctioned its veneration. The last exhibitions of the Turin shroud cored in 1898, 1931, 1978, 1998 and 2000. On May 24, 1998 Pope John Paul II visited the relic: "This is not an object of our faith". In view of about 24 claims of churches possessing the true shroud, one should disavow the historic genuineness of the Turin cloth.

According to the biblical records, Joseph of Arimathea had wrapped the body in a clean linen shroud and laid it in his own new tomb (Mt 27, 59). John mentioned that they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews (19:40). There is no reference to a particular cult of the shroud prior to the 7th century. In 680 the Gallic Bishop Arculf reported to the Abbot Adomnanus of the Monastery of Iona about his Holy Land pilgrimage. In Jerusalem he had seen a large linen cloth with pictures of Jesus and the apostles which were drawn by the Holy Virgin. This, however, was not the shroud for he also saw a sweat-cloth (*sudarium*) with a length of eight feet.¹⁰ St. John of Damascus, the Arab church-father (7th/8th cent.) mentions that the shroud of Christ is among the relics of the Lord which are to be venerated.

8 Rinaldi, Peter, *Is this the Face of Jesus? A Study of the Shroud of Christ*. New York 1972.

9 This Geoffroy de Charny is not the preceptor of Normandy of the medieval Templars. He was killed by the Inquisition and Philip the Fair in 1314.

10 "Der Bischof Arkulf und der Abt Adomnanus um 680". in Donner, H., 330-331.

The Egyptian Tradition

The oldest and most impressive painting of the cross with the shroud of Christ swung over the horizontal cross-beams is in the southern apse of the Church of St. Shenute in the White Monastery (Dair al-Abiad) on the western edge of the desert south of Sohag in Upper Egypt. The cross with the shroud is within an aureole which is supported by two angels. To the left of the aureole stands the Holy Virgin, above her is a sun with nine rays. To the right, standing beneath the moon, is John the Baptist. The shroud is swung over the horizontal beams in form of the letter "M". The length of this cloth would correspond to the actual length of the shroud, though the width of the linen is difficult to discern.

Throughout the last centuries several archeologists, Coptologists and architects, etc. have studied the various aspects of the monastery and the church. Yet, none of the scholars seems to have been concerned with an interpretation of the message of the cross with the shroud in the southern apse. In recent days, well-known Egyptologists and art-historians have studied the iconography and remarked: "une extraordinaire image de la croix portant une étoffe entre la Vierge et Jean Baptiste" without mentioning the Easter-message of the resurrection.¹¹ In his major study on the architecture of the Coptic churches and monasteries Massimo Capuani merely states: "The wall-painting of the south apse shows a great blue cross which has a piece of red material hanging from its arms and is encircled by a halo held by angels; this principal composition is framed by the images of the Holy Virgin and St. John."¹²

The fresco of the southern apse was painted by the same artist who created the center fresco showing Christos Pantocrator. Two texts of this fresco, one in Armenian the other in Coptic identify both period and origin of these paintings. According to the Armenian text of 1073, Theodore, painter and scribe of the Province of Kesum near the bridge of Snjeoy, of the village of Maxtile...may God have mercy upon him and upon all Armenians serving in Egypt during the days of Bishop Gregor, the nephew of Gregor Vahran.¹³ The Coptic text informs us about the donor of the paintings. "May the Lord Jesus Christ bless and preserve the life of the God-loving, charity loving brother, the archdeacon Shenute, the monk of this monastery, the son of the late Paphnute. For he it was who pro-

11 Sauneron, Serge, "Travaux de l'Ifao en 1972, 1973" BIFAO 73, 1973, "Monastère Blanc de Sohag", 234-237.

12 Capuani, M., *Christian Egypt. Coptic Art and Monuments*, etc. Collegeville, Minn. 2002, 204.

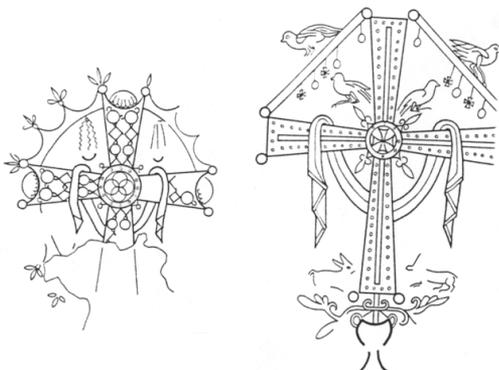
13 Strzygowski, J., *Die Baukunst der Armenier und Europa*. Wien 1918, II, 731, 732. In 1075 the Armenian Catholicos Gregor Vahran of Ani (1065-1105) traveled to Jerusalem. In 1076 he went to Egypt where he nominated his nephew Gregor as Armenian Bishop in Egypt. Cf. HPEC III, I, 30.

vided for this picture in the days of our father Abba Paul the archimandrite, my father Zedekiel, the second in authority. Jesus Christ being king over us, A.M. 840.¹⁴

IV. The Shroud of Christ in the Monastery of the Holy Martyrs (Dair as-Shuhada) at al-Hawawish, east of Akhmim

The four wall-paintings of the cross with the shroud of Christ are obviously parallels to the apse-fresco in the Church of St. Shenute of the White Monastery. These paintings are on the eastern wall of the main altar-room (*haikal*). The church is a typical Upper Egyptian broad-church with four altars and a baptis-

From the Red Monastery, Sohag



From the Monastery of St. Antony



14 Crum, W. E., "Inscriptions from Shenouti's Monastery", *Journal of Theol. Studies* 5, 1904, 556, 557.

tery. The principal altar dedicated to the Holy Martyrs – the second from the north – has five niches with an average height of 117 cm and width of 57 cm. The four crosses with the shroud are painted in dark red colour between the niches. They are without an aureole and attending persons. Their height is 113 cm, their breadth 73 cm. In all four crosses the original design has been more or less preserved, except for the shroud which is considerably smaller and has the appearance of a belt. According to the style and quality of the paintings they should be assigned to the late 18th or 19th century. Apparently the clergy of al-Hawawish desired the same kind of iconographical “attraction” in his sanctuary as the priests had at the White Monastery.¹⁶

V. Various designs of the Shroud of Christ in recently discovered monastic wall-paintings

1. Iconographical discoveries at the western and southern section of the west-wall of the court of the Red Monastery (Dair al-Ahmar) at Sohag show several beautifully decorated crosses with the shroud of Christ attended by pigeons and hares.¹⁷



The cross with the shroud of Christ, 11th Century southern apse, church of St. Shenute, White Monastery, Dair al-Abiad, Sohag

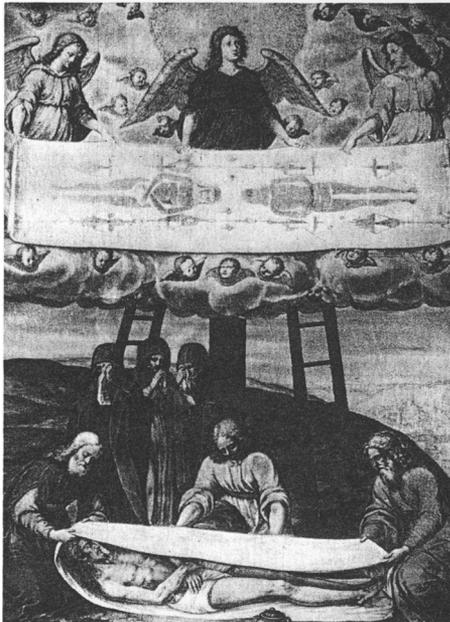
15 Buschhausen, H., “Das Mönchswesen in Abu Fano” in *Agypoten, Schätze aus dem Wüstensand*. Wiesbaden 1996, 59-68.

16 During the 19th century the monastery was uninhabited. It merely served the annual pilgrimages on January 10 and July 9.

17 Laferrière, Pierre, “Les Croix Murales du Monstère Rouge à Sohag,” *BIFAO* 93, 1993, 302-310, fig. 6, 10, 11.



**Two Coptic crosses with the shroud of Christ, 18th/19th century.
Church of the Holy Martyrs, Dair as-Shahid al-Hawawish, east of Akhmim**



The sacred Shroud by the Croation artist Georgio Giulion Clovio, 1458-1578

2. In the southern section of the west-wall of the Church of St. Gabriel in the Dair Malak Ghobrial, Naqlun, Fayyum, Polish archeologists discovered situated beneath the painting of the Holy Virgin flanked by two angels the design of the cross with the shroud of Christ draped over its arms.¹⁸

3. Due to the recent cleansing of the wall-paintings in the Church of St. Antony in the Red Sea Monastery of St. Antony, discoveries have been made in the Chapel of the Four Living Creatures. In the small niche, a beautifully decorated cross with twelve rosettes and with a cross medallion in the center has the shroud of Christ draped over the arms. The cross is attended by two angels.¹⁹ It is interesting to note that the nuns of the Monastery of St. Mercurius (Dair Abu 's-Saifain) in Old Cairo use in their devotional literature the cross with the shroud as a paragraph-marking.

The shroud of Christ is the only sacred cloth that has acquired symbolic meaning the Coptic liturgy. As altar-linen, *prospHEREin* (arab. *ibrusfarin*) it is a rectangular cloth with an embroidered cross (1.80 x 1.50 m) and serves as a constant reminder of the resurrection.

18 Godlewski, W, Parandowska, E, PAM III, 1991, 49, 50; VIII, 1996, 95.

19 Gawdat, G., Coptic Monasteries. Egypt's Monastic Art and Architecture. Cairo, 2002, 79, pl. 6.5.
Also E.S. Bolman (ed.), Monastic Visions. Wall Paintings in the Monastery fo St. Antony. Yale/ARCE, 75.

THE ANAMNESIS*

“REMEMBRANCE” IN THE EUCHARIST

By Rodolph Yanney

- “Do this in remembrance of me” (Luke 22:19; 1 Cor. 11:24).
- “I am the first and the last, and the living one; I died, and behold I am alive for evermore (Rev 1: 17,18).
- “You do proclaim my death, confess my resurrection and remember me until I come.” (Liturgy of St. Basil).
- “This day shall be for you a memorial day, and you shall keep it as a feast to the Lord; throughout your generations you shall observe it as an ordinance for ever” (Exodus 12:14).

As we stand before God in the Eucharist, recalling all his mercies and thanking him for his blessings, we discover that all our thanks have crystallized around salvation. The Eucharistic Prayer then moves imperceptibly from thanksgiving to the “remembrance” of salvation history. It is not a coincidence that this pattern is found in all liturgies, in all churches and in all ages. It is the fulfillment of the Lord’s command, “Do this in remembrance of me.”

It is essential that we start by clarifying the meaning of the Greek word *anamnesis*, which is translated into the English word “remembrance.” Other languages have also failed to give the sense of the original Greek term. “Words like “remembrance” and “memorial” have for us a connotation of something, itself absent, that are only mentally recollected. But in the Scriptures, both of the Old and New Testament, *anamnesis* and its cognate verb have the sense of re-calling or re-presenting before God an event of the past so that it becomes *here and now operative by its effect* (Num. 5: 15; 1 Kings: 17, 18; Heb. 10: 3,4).¹ Kittel’s

*This is a chapter from a forthcoming book *‘MYSTICAL AND THEOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF THE EUCHARIST’* IN SCRIPTURE, LITURGY, AND PATRISTIC WRITINGS

¹ Gregory Dix: *The Shape of the Liturgy*, London, 1945: 161.

Theological Dictionary of the New Testament says, in reference to Christ’s order to the disciples at the Last Supper,

This was not merely in such sort that they simply remember, but rather, in accordance with the active sense of the anamnesis and the explanation in 1 Cor 11: 26, in such a way that they actively fulfill the anamnesis. The making present by the later community of the Lord who instituted the Supper, and who put the new covenant into effect by his death is the goal and content of their action in which they repeat what Jesus and his disciples did on the eve of his crucifixion.²

It is significant that none of the heresies that appeared in the early Christian centuries, when Greek was universally understood, denied the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. Such teaching only appeared in the Middle Ages.

The closest example of the anamnesis in the Eucharist is the Jewish Passover. The Jews did not repeat the Passover; but rather, by doing what they did in the first one, they lived the same Passover, and experienced the salvation of God for his people, in spite of the fact that the exodus from Egypt was not repeated. Likewise, in the New Testament, God has saved us from the bondage of sin and death through his crucifixion and resurrection. However, we live anew the Mystery of Redemption, and experience it with all its blessings in every Eucharist.

Eucharist and Eternity:

As such, the anamnesis is not an easy task nor is it within human power. It is achieved because the salvation of God is an eternal event that transcends time and place. For “with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day” (2 Pet. 3:8). For him past, present and future are one eternal time. In the Liturgy we live a moment of eternity and we behold the Son of Man during his earthly life. We also unite with him in his ascension and Second Coming. The contemporary Russian theologian Paul Evdokimov explains this:

The liturgical *memorial* actualises the before and after
The liturgy freeing us from the weight of time, a weight caused by its non-existent dimensions, brings the divine presence into a man’s soul and permits him to recognize it. It is

² Kittel G: *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* Tr. By Bromiley GW, Michigan, 1978. Vol. I: 349

because Mary Magdalene was looking for her God following an image fixed and stabilized in her, and therefore non-existent, that she did not at once recognize her Lord at the tomb.³

This shows us the reality of the Divine Liturgy and how different it is from any other event in our lives. Every event happens within time, but the Eucharist is beyond time. When Mary Magdalene looked at the Lord through her human eyes she mistook him for the gardener. We fall into the same error when we participate in the Eucharist with our human mind and emotions. It is impossible to behold the Lord in it if we are watching the hours and minutes we are in church, or if we let our eyes be distracted by anything that hinders our soul from being deeply absorbed in the Liturgy and ascending with it to the heavenly altar. A Spirit-filled person forgets all what is around him during the Eucharist. For him, the icons, hymns, prayers and all other material rites and symbols are only windows through which his soul can enter into Eternity. He does not feel whether he is still in the body or not, as Evdokimov says:

In his ascent, “the man in Christ” learns the liturgical meaning of history; it suppresses all turning aside and leads him to the hidden reality. . . . In the Apocalypse, the sole occupation of men is “to prostrate and adore.” This is because every doxology—Eucharist, thanksgiving—“redeems the time,” which means that it opens it upon “the eternal present.”

In Remembrance of Me

“Do this in remembrance of me.” The words of the Lord are clear. In the Eucharist we do not remember anything or any single action of Christ, it is rather the Lord himself, Emmanuel, the Incarnate God, who comes for our salvation. “You shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins” (Mt 1:21-23). St. Athanasius, in his Discourse against the Aryans, says, “The Logos took flesh so that we may receive the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit who completes the redemptive work of Christ, and makes communion with the Divinity available to everyone.” The anamnesis is the liturgical aspect for the participation of every believer in this salvation throughout all its stages.⁴

³ Paul Evdokimov: *The Struggle with God*. Paulist Press, NJ, 1966: 213.

⁴ The Catholic belief in the Middle Ages, based upon the Scholastic Theology, explained the importance of the Sacraments for salvation as means of Grace and as essential conditions added to the work of Christ for us. The teachings of the Fathers regarding the individual salvation as synergy between the work of God and the will of man places the mysteries in their correct role as an indispensable part in God’s economy for our salvation (*Patristic Teaching on Salvation*. In *Coptic Church Review*, vol. 16: 2, 1995: 50-56).

The liturgy recalls these stages in more than one place:

- “He took flesh, became man and taught us the means of salvation.”
- “As we commemorate His Holy Passion, His Resurrection from the dead, His Ascension into Heaven, His sitting at Thy Right Hand, O Father, and His second Parousia, coming from heaven that is dreadful and glorious”

(From the Coptic Liturgy of St. Basil)

Thus, the Eucharist is the anamnesis of three stages that express the Mystery of Christ (which are one constant moment for God and for the heavenly spirits). The Divine Liturgy illustrates these three stages of Salvation History:

First—The Mystery of Christ who came and suffered in the flesh: “He was incarnate and became man. . . . He gave Himself up for our salvation” (past tense).

Second—The Mystery or the Word who rose from the dead to remain with us forever: “He is risen from the dead” (present tense).

Third—the Hidden Mystery of the Lord’s Second Coming: “He instituted a day of retribution in which He will come” (future tense).

The Eucharist represents Salvation History from creation till the end of time. Limiting the Eucharist to one action or one stage has caused much harm for the Church throughout history. Since the Middle Ages to the middle of the 20th century, the Roman Catholic Church stressed the first meaning. “Sacrifice” became the most popular term used both for the Eucharist and for the Divine Liturgy. The Offering of the Sacrifice became the essential role of the Priest (even in the absence of the congregation and the absence of Communion). All meditations were centered upon the Crucified Christ and his Passion in the flesh. On the other hand, Protestants lived with a futuristic spirit, awaiting the Second Coming (third meaning). For them, therefore, the Mystery has been limited to Communion; and the anamnesis became a mental recall or “memorial,” as if it were only a monument for a dead person, not an action that leads to the Presence Of the One who is “alive for ever more” (Rev 1: 18), and who has promised to be “with us always, to the close of the age” (Mt 28: 20).

The Church Fathers did not do that. They did not separate between the death of the Lord and his Resurrection, or between Resurrection and Ascension, neither in the liturgical cycle nor in the Eucharist.⁵ God’s economy for the salvation

⁵ St. Athanasius describes Easter in his Paschal Letters as ‘the feast of the Crucified’.

of man is not subject to time, although it was revealed to us in time. The Liturgy of St. Basil declares in one sentence the threefold object of the anamnesis:

For as often as you eat of this bread and drink of this cup you do proclaim my death, confess my resurrection, and remember me until I come.

The Anamnesis and Our Participation in the Divine Liturgy

The anamnesis is not limited to one sentence or several separate segments of the Liturgy. The true understanding of this word and its entrance into the innermost depth of the soul make it able to see the living Christ in the one Eucharist, even though it is divided into six different actions or parts.⁶ In every Eucharist we are there, in the night when He was betrayed, at Calvary, standing at the foot of the Cross-with the Marys and the Beloved Disciple. At the same time we are present before the empty tomb on Resurrection Day; and in the Upper Room, we share his appearance to the disciples; and at the Mount of Olives we follow our Forerunner (Heb 6:20) who comes in every Eucharist to take us and sit us with him in heaven according to his promise (Jn 14:3; Eph 2:6). We are also at the moment of his Second Coming together with the Angels and Saints at the last trumpet.

Everything is brought together in the Eucharist. There is neither barrier nor difference between Heaven and earth. Both “are filled with Thine Holy Glory.” Past and future become one. The Cross, Resurrection, Ascension, and Second Coming are all blended in one eternal moment. The Church, which is subject to time, has reached eternity and become the Kingdom of God. God and man meet together. The Eucharist destroys all material barriers, as described by a contemporary theologian:

“The Sunday Eucharist of the Church in the time dimension of this world transcends the bond of time. It recalls the past events of Christ’s death and resurrection into the present, and at the same time realizes in the present the future consummation. The presence of the living Christ in the midst of his own assures the Church that it not only communes together on the level of this-world existence but is also seated with him in the heavenly places whence it judges the world (Lk 22:28- 30).”⁷

⁶ Since man is subject to time, one can only participate in (or study) the Eucharistic Liturgy by following, in sequence, its six aspects or meanings: thanksgiving, anamnesis, sacrifice, presence of God, intercession, and communion.

⁷ Massey Shepherd: *Christian Idea of Education*.

We conclude with the words of Evdokimov:

“Give us this day our daily bread”⁸ means that the gifts of salvation and of the Kingdom may be granted us even now, even today, here and below. It is not a hope for future time, but an immediate requirement, here and now. We enter Paradise today.⁹

⁸ It is clear to the reader that this segment of the Lord’s Prayer speaks about the Eucharist.

⁹ Evdokimov, *op. cit.*

BOOK REVIEWS

Evagrius Ponticus: Ad Monachos.

Translation and Commentary by Jeremy Driscoll, O.S.B. Ancient Christian Writers 59; New York/Mahwah, N.J.: The Newman Press/Paulist Press: 2003. xiv + 398 pp. \$39.95. ISBN 0-8091-0560-8.

Two hundred years after his death in 399, Evagrius Ponticus' cell at Kellia was still considered by some to be haunted by an evil demon that had led "Evagrius astray, alienating him from the true faith," a cautionary tale warning against "Evagrian" tendencies. Other evidence, however, shows that Evagrius' writings were still being requested by monks in Egypt in the seventh and eighth centuries. The controversy over Evagrius (and over his spiritual godparent Origen) has not stopped. Now Jeremy Driscoll weighs in on the side of Evagrius with this brilliant, groundbreaking, translation of and commentary on Evagrius' *Ad Monachos*, first published in different form in *Studia Anselmiana* 104. Driscoll is not just in Evagrius' corner, sponging him off and offering words of encouragement; he is in the middle of the ring, helping Evagrius ward off detractors and, more to the point, demons. Evagrius, Driscoll's edition shows, is a champion of the Christian spiritual life.

Evagrius' *Ad Monachos* is "a collection of 137 proverbs composed in a style that imitates the proverbs of biblical wisdom literature." Evagrius, Driscoll observes, "was among the first of the desert fathers to articulate in writing the wisdom of the spiritual tradition of the monastic movement." Contrary to those who consider Evagrius heterodox either wholly or in part, Driscoll argues that "the style of teaching in *Ad Monachos* stands squarely within the desert tradition," with "Evagrius at prayer or at work, the scriptures ever on his mind, and a monk coming for a word." With refreshing—and unusual—candor in a scholarly volume, in the Introduction Driscoll acknowledges his own involvement with *Ad Monachos*: "Why was this text so attractive to me and so compelling? . . . I had experienced a piece of spiritual literature of which I could not let go . . . Could the text's attraction be accounted for theologically or literarily? The following study is the result of these kinds of questions systematically posed." *Ad*

Monachos is the splendid fruit of Driscoll's personal, systematic, and involved study.

The volume opens with an Introduction that prepares the reader for reading the text and follows with four sections. Part One offers the Greek text of *Ad Monachos* with Driscoll's translation, proverb by proverb, beneath the Greek. Part Two, "the most original contribution of the study," "examines the structure of the whole text." Evagrius, Driscoll argues, "organizes his short sayings into particular patterns, but to my knowledge this is the first study that analyzes such patterns in detail throughout the entire work." Part Three, the most scholarly section, looks at Evagrius in his late antique, monastic, and Egyptian context. Here Driscoll "considers the phenomenon of proverbs in human culture in general and in the biblical culture in particular and the way this biblical culture functioned in fourth-century Egyptian monasticism." Part Four, the longest section, concludes the heart of the book with commentary "on a wide variety of individual proverbs taken from various parts" of *Ad Monachos*. This section provides the opportunity "for entering into theological discussion of various dimensions of Evagrius' thought, for understanding more deeply Evagrius' way of conceiving the monk's spiritual journey."

Why so much labor—400 pages—on such a brief, relatively unknown text? Why should one follow Driscoll on this spiritual journey? Because, he points out, "Evagrius has created a text whose structure is an image of the whole spiritual journey of the monk." And what, precisely, is this journey? Nothing less than "the whole journey of spiritual ascent from the first of the virtues to the heights of union with the Trinity." Thus, although Evagrius intended *Ad Monachos* for fellow monastics (hence the book's apparently original title: *To the Monks in Monasteries or Communities*), the book need not have such a narrowly targeted audience. It may be profitably read and studied by anyone attempting to live the Christian faith in the heart of the Trinity. Evagrius, however, is not Spirituality Lite. The *Ad Monachos*, Driscoll cautions, "requires of its reader a steep price: the price of practicing in actual living what is being read. It is an exercise, a spiritual exercise, which means to bring the reader into an experiential knowledge of the Holy Trinity." Such a journey asks for "deep levels of meditation" and profound engagement with the text.

This volume, then, is not for the browser or the faint of heart: "the proverbs of *Ad Monachos*," Driscoll warns, "are remarkable condensations of the already rather condensed writings of Evagrius." Driscoll's job, as he sees it, is to help unpack Evagrius' thought and expression. Like a good teacher, within his commentary he pauses from time to time with helpful "Reprises" that recapitulate the preceding discussion. If Driscoll is the teacher (with Evagrius the master), then perhaps the students he anticipates in this class are, as it were, graduate students rather than undergraduates. There are prerequisites to this Evagrian course. Greek in the body of the work is not transliterated or translated, thus a knowledge of Greek is assumed. French and German quotations in the body and notes are not translated.

Thus Driscoll assumes a scholarly audience—which may unnecessarily restrict the volume’s readership. This would be unfortunate, because *Ad Monachos* has much to offer a wide range of readers.

In this edition of *Ad Monachos*, Jeremy Driscoll wisely uses Evagrius to exegete Evagrius. The result of this is that as Driscoll teaches Evagrius is in the room, interacting with both teacher and students. Driscoll’s proverb by proverb commentary in Part Four becomes a mirror image of Evagrius’ own commentaries on scripture. With *Ad Monachos*, clearly a labor of years of love, Driscoll offers a thorough and rousing presentation of Evagrius as a “great mind” and “mystic” whose synthesis of Greek and Christian philosophical wisdom “ought to be considered authentically Christian.” This is one of the very best, most abiding, works of patristic scholarship that I have ever read. I wholeheartedly recommend it to anyone interested in monasticism, Christian theology, or the spiritual life—that is, life itself.

Bakersfield, California

Tim Vivian

A Mystical Portrait of Jesus: New Perspectives on John’s Gospel
 By *Demetrius R Dum, O. S. B.* \ *The Liturgical Press*, 2002.
 177 pp. 16.95 (paperback). ! SBN 0-846-2460-9.

This is a new study of St. John’s gospel that does not follow ordinary commentaries in describing the life and work of Jesus in a chronological order, but seeks to discover the spiritual aim of this book, gospel. . By starting with Eucharistic teaching in the miracle of feeding the multitudes, followed by the passion narrative, he stresses the main acts of Christ for our salvation.

R. Yanney

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2004 CALENDAR OF FASTS AND FEASTS

* *THE SEVEN MAJOR FEASTS OF OUR LORD*

** *The Seven Minor Feasts of Our Lord*

*** *Feasts of Virgin Mary*

**** *Fasts*

*January 7& 8 - *CHRISTMAS*

**January 15 - *Circumcision of Our Lord*

****January 19 - *Paramoni (1)*

*January 20 - *EPIPHANY*

**January 22 - *First Miracle of Our Lord at Cana*

***January 30 - *Dormition of Virgin Mary*

**February 16 - *Entrance of Our Lord into the Temple*

****February 21 - *Fast of Nineveh (3)*

****March 6 - *Great Lent (55)*

March 19 - *Feast of the Cross*

***April 2 - *Apparition of the Virgin at Zeitoun in 1968*

*April 7 - *ANNUNCIATION*

*April 23 - *ENTRANCE OF OUR LORD INTO JERUSALEM (PALM SUNDAY)*

**April 27 - *Holy Thursday*

*April 30 - *EASTER*

**May 7 - *St. Thomas' Sunday*

***May 9 - *Birth of Virgin Mary*

**June 1 - *Entrance of Our Lord into Egypt*

*June 8 - *ASCENSION*

*June 18 - *PENTECOST*

****June 19 - *Apostles' Fast (23)*

July 12 - *Martyrdom of St. Peter and St. Paul*

****August 7 - *Fast of the Virgin (15)*

**August 19 - *Trnasfiguration of Our Lord*

***August 22 - *Assumption of the Body of Virgin Mary*

September 11 - *New Year's Day (Feast of the Martyrs)*

September 27 - *Feast of the Cross*

****November 25 - *Christmas Fast (43)*

***Decembeber 12 - *Presentation of Virgin Mary into the Temple*