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THE MONASTERIES OF THE FAYYŪM—*Continued*

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A HISTORICAL SKETCH OF THE FAYYŪM MONASTERIES

The history of Egyptian monasticism has an enduring fascination for the many who are interested in early Christianity, both doctrinal and institutional. Not only has the subject as a whole received expert attention at the hands of many workers, but specific monasteries, or groups of them, have likewise been the object of much interest and labor for scholars of both the Old and the New World. To the works on the monasteries of the city of St. Menas, Bawīt, Tabennēse, and Thebes there has recently been added a monumental work by Evelyn-White on the most famous of all Egyptian monastic groups—the monasteries of Nitria and Scetis.<sup>1</sup> Our interest centers for the time being on yet another group of monasteries, frequently met with, but almost as frequently ignored except for a passing mention—the monasteries of the Fayyūm.

There is every reason to believe that Christianity found its way into the Fayyūm region if not simultaneously with, then shortly after, its entrance into the Delta or Lower Egypt. The Fayyūm of the first centuries of our era was at the height of prosperity, and frequency of contact between it and both Lower and Upper Egypt is

<sup>1</sup> See Hugh G. Evelyn-White, *The Monasteries of the Wādi 'n Natrān* (Metropolitan Museum of Art, Egyptian Expedition, "Publications," Vols. II, VII, VIII [New York, 1926, 1932-33]).

widely evidenced in both the Latin and Greek sources and the later Coptic and Arabic accounts.

Taking area and population into consideration, there would be, to begin with, fewer Christians and therefore fewer anchorites and hermits in the Fayyūm than in the much larger and equally thickly populated Delta or along the borders of the Nile. This may be one reason why the Coptic saints and martyrs from these latter regions so far outnumber those from the Fayyūm.<sup>2</sup> Another reason may prove to be that documents from and about the Fayyūm monasteries have not yet come to light, either by purchase or by excavations. Such source material may now be completely lost to us by reason of the economic decline of the Fayyūm in the Middle Ages, which, reacting on the monasteries, doubtless caused some of them to die a slow natural death, while the reputed prosperity and wealth of a few made them victims of violent robberies and fatal attacks. Then, too, the Fayyūm has not had its share of Western travelers, whose curious and observant eyes and rescuing hands might have given us more and richer evidence of the monastic units of the region. These may be some of the reasons why the history of the churches and monasteries of the Fayyūm still remains to be written. If they are indeed the only reasons, then that history may never be written. But the situation does not seem so hopeless. For even the published materials that might be of help have not been investigated, let alone exhausted, while unpublished manuscripts, both Coptic and Arabic, scattered in several libraries and museums await the coming of workers. This preliminary sketch, inadequate as it must perforce be, is offered as a possible bait for both workers and patrons who would be interested in such a project.

But to return to our present problem. So much has already been written on early Christianity in Egypt that it is hardly necessary, in a sketch like this, to go into even an outline of it. Suffice it to say that it is safe to assume that in the first two centuries of our era Christian practices and conditions in the Fayyūm were similar to those existing in the rest of Egypt. Our available sources give no specific data on the subject for the Fayyūm of that period. Parallelisms, however, of existing conditions are frequently met with from the third

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Amélineau, *Les actes des martyrs de l'église copte* (Paris, 1890), p. 3.

century on, beginning with the episcopate of Nepos,<sup>3</sup> bishop of the Fayyūm in the first half of the third century, who was an outstanding millennialist and a writer whose psalmody was still the delight of many in the days of Eusebius. Our next definite materials deal with the well-known Decian persecution of the Christians in A.D. 250. The Fayyūm itself has yielded us several papyrus documents mentioning that time, especially in connection with the offering of the imperial sacrifice.<sup>4</sup> The Diocletian persecution claimed its martyrs from the Fayyūm as from the other regions, and ancient records have left us the names of a few.<sup>5</sup> Among these are Theophilus and his wife Patricia, from the city of Fayyūm, both of whom suffered martyrdom at the hands of Antihipotos, the governor, for refusal to offer sacrifices in the temple of Jupiter.<sup>6</sup> Another Christian couple, Bartholomew and his wife, also natives of the city of Fayyūm, were buried alive by the (same?) governor.<sup>7</sup>

Two monks who were martyred in Diocletian's time stand out. The first was Abba Nahraw<sup>8</sup> of the city of Bawīt in the Fayyūm.<sup>9</sup> Leaving his pupil in the Fayyūm, he sought martyrdom in far-away Antioch, where he is supposed to have had an interview with Diocletian himself, who personally urged him to renounce his faith and offer sacrifices to the idols. His refusal brought torture and death, but his courageous martyrdom caused six thousand people (so the Coptic!) to turn Christians, saying: "There is no God but Jesus Christ, the God of Nah-

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Alfred Baudrillart, *Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastiques*, IV (Paris, 1930), 760-62; Eusebius *Church History* vii. 24 ("A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church," 2d ser., ed. P. Schaff and H. Wace, I [New York, 1904], 308 f.).

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Wessely, "Les plus anciens monuments du christianisme," *Patrologia Orientalis* (hereafter called *PO*), IV (1908), 112 ff., and XVIII (1924), 341-98, esp. chap. I (pp. 354 ff.).

<sup>5</sup> Two martyrs of the Fayyūm, Abba Stephen (Budge, *The Book of the Saints of the Ethiopian Church* [Cambridge, 1928], II, 563 f.) and Abba Hellas or Elias (*Synaxarium Alexandrinum* ["Corpus scriptorum Christianorum orientalium," *Scriptores Arabici*, 3. ser., t. XVIII-XIX], I, 329-32; *PO*, III, 436 ff.), are mentioned whose dates cannot be ascertained, though it is more than likely that they belong in the third to the fourth century. For yet another Fayyūm martyr, Macarius, see Quatremère, *Mémoires géographiques et historiques sur l'Égypte* . . . (Paris, 1811), I, 391. A monk, Michael of Kalamūn, otherwise unidentified, is mentioned in Budge, II, 371.

<sup>6</sup> Budge, I, 263 f.; *Syn. Alex.*, I, 68; *PO*, I, 348; Amélineau, *Actes*, p. 67.

<sup>7</sup> Budge, I, 167.

<sup>8</sup> Budge, I, 213 f.; *Syn. Alex.*, I, 93; *PO*, III, 257 f.; Walter Till, *Koptische Heiligen- und Märtyrerlegenden* ("Orientalia Christiana Analecta," No. 102 [Roma, 1935]), pp. 3 ff.

<sup>9</sup> Amélineau, *La géographie de l'Égypte à l'époque copte* (Paris, 1893), pp. 3-5.

raw."<sup>10</sup> His body was brought back to his home city in the Fayyūm by a certain Julius who was then in Antioch.

The second monk was Abba Kāw,<sup>11</sup> who dared to defy Cilicianus with anathemas for his persecution of the Christians. Cilicianus, taking pity on the monk's old age, overlooked this at first and urged Abba Kāw to sacrifice to his favorite idol of Apollo and go free. Instead the monk broke the idol in two, which caused the enraged Cilicianus to give orders for his torture. He was bound and taken to the Christian center, the city of Bahnasa, and then imprisoned at Anṣanā (Antinoë), where he was eventually executed, his martyrdom being shared by some five to eight hundred of the company of the saints. His body was brought back to his cell near his native city of Bimāy,<sup>12</sup> and a church was erected over it in his honor.

The story of Panine and Panaw,<sup>13</sup> of the days of Diocletian and Maximianus, is another that has its setting, in part at least, in the Fayyūm. Panine, the son of a priest whose home was in Terot Saraban, was sent to his maternal uncles at Anṣanā (Antinoë) to be educated. The youth soon outdid his fellow-pupils in the school and so incurred their hatred and jealousy, to the extent that his monitor, envious of his excellent penmanship, twisted and broke several of his fingers. Only one fellow-pupil, Panaw, befriended the unhappy youth, and together the two went back to Panine's home town. They soon became inseparable, developing a David-Jonathan friendship based on their common piety and great desire for saintliness. Young and ignorant of the northern country, they nevertheless set out in that direction, seeking "the three saints of the desert." On the way they were met by the archangel Michael, in clerical disguise, who guided them to the three saints—Timothy, Theophilus, and Christodorus—of the mountain of Ḳalamūn in the Fayyūm. Here they stayed (eight months or three years?) until their training for the monastic life was completed, after which they returned southward to Psoi in the district of Akhmīm. They went to the near-by mountain of Ebot, where they

<sup>10</sup> Till, p. 10.

<sup>11</sup> Budge, II, 559; *Syn. Alex.*, I, 432-35; *PO*, XI, 736-42; Amélineau, *Actes*, pp. 69-71.

<sup>12</sup> Bimāy was not far from the city of Fayyūm; cf. Amélineau, *Géog.*, p. 101. It must have been to the south near the mountains, where later the monastery of Naklūn was located, for we find the body of Abba Kāw reported as being in the monastery of Naklūn (Budge, II, 559).

<sup>13</sup> Till, pp. 55 ff.; *PO*, III, 388 ff.; *Syn. Alex.*, I, 316-19.

found a company of monks and pilgrims worshiping in a church not large enough to hold them. It was decided to build a new and larger church, and Panine was commissioned to seek out Abba Psoti, bishop of Akhmīm, who had fled from persecution and was in hiding, to come and consecrate the new church—a mission in which he was successful. Panine and Panaw were then consecrated by this same bishop, the one as priest and the other as deacon. Though moving about freely in the Thebaid, their headquarters seem to have been the mountain of Ebot, where they stayed for a “long time.” Eventually they were martyred at Edfu, as had been prophesied by Timothy of Ḳalamūn, in the time of Maximianus, who was persecuting the Christians throughout Egypt.

These stories are significant in that they point to the deserts of the Fayyūm in general, and to the mountain of Ḳalamūn in particular, as the home of hermits and of small groups of monks from as early as the second half of the third century,<sup>14</sup> since Abba Kāw, of the older of the two generations represented, is already an aged man in 303, the year of Diocletian’s persecutions. The stories further illustrate the constant movement of these earlier devotees between the Fayyūm and Syria as well as both Upper and Lower Egypt.

It was partly due to the combination of the natural desire for asceticism and the equally natural impulse to flee persecution that Christian monasticism originated and spread in Egypt. The hermits Paul (A.D. 281?–341), Amon (275–337), and Antony (251–356), the last destined to become the father of Christian monasticism, typified the first element, while the persecutions of Decius, Diocletian, and Maximianus drove larger and larger numbers of would-be ascetics farther and farther into the outlying deserts and mountains throughout the country. Thus was created a demand for a more or less grouped, and presently—particularly in the south—an organized, form of monasticism. The immediate tangible results in the north are to be found in the foundation of the monasteries of St. Paul and St. Antony in the Eastern Desert and in the emergence of the monastic communities in Nitria and Scetis southwest of the Delta—all in the first half of the fourth century of our era. The first steps thus having

<sup>14</sup> Though hermits are thus early definitely linked with Ḳalamūn, it does not necessarily follow that *organized monasticism* first located here.

been taken, the turn of the wheel in favor of Christianity and Christian institutions in the days of Constantine (324-37) and of Theodosius I (379-95) made the fourth century primarily one of liberty and prosperity for Christianity—a situation which, in turn, reacted favorably on the growth and prosperity of monasticism.

We should expect, then, to find the Fayyūm monasteries founded about the same time; for the advantages for monastic settlements were fully as good in the Fayyūm as in Nitria and the Wādī Habīb. They were both far enough removed to be free from too much interference from both the civil and the patriarchal authorities at Alexandria. Besides, the Fayyūm provided not only mountains with numerous caves but water in near-by springs and canals, and those features were about all that a monastic unit then needed. On the other hand, the disadvantages of the northern localities were somewhat minimized for the Fayyūm in that the latter was not as easily accessible to marauding expeditions or to factional troops, though, as we shall presently see, it did not escape these entirely.

That some Fayyūm monasteries were indeed founded in this period and received personal encouragement from Antony is evidenced repeatedly. Traveling in the desert regions, establishing and strengthening the monks everywhere, crossing and recrossing the Nile from the Eastern Desert to the Naṭrūn Valley, he had the opportunity to size up the situation in the Fayyūm and envisage its future possibilities. The Arabic version of the Jacobite *Synaxarium* states expressly that when Antony, after twenty years of hermit life, felt the urge to benefit humanity in general and to teach men the fear and worship of God, he went to the Fayyūm and strengthened the brothers that were there and then returned to his monastery.<sup>15</sup> The Ethiopic *Synaxarium* in reporting this incident states: "And he departed to the district of the Fayyūm, and made monks of many of the brethren who were there, and he confirmed them in the Law of God (now there were there many religious houses that were [full of] monks and spiritual fighters)."<sup>16</sup> Evagrius Pontius, writing in 356, gives further evidence of Antony's interest in and direct connection with the Fayyūm, since he tells of an epistle sent by Antony to Arsinoë

<sup>15</sup> *PO*, XI, 663; *Syn. Alex.*, I, 227 f.

<sup>16</sup> Budge, II, 533. The addition is all the more significant since the Ethiopic version is frequently briefer than the others.

(Fayyūm) and its parishes.<sup>17</sup> In all likelihood this epistle must have followed after the personal visit, which in turn must have taken place not long after the emergence from the twenty-year period of asceticism and the foundation of Antony's own monastery in 305.<sup>18</sup> These accounts, taken together, leave us with the fact that monastic communities of the Antonian type were in existence in the Fayyūm in the early years, if not the first decade, of the fourth century.

In the face of these facts it is somewhat tantalizing, to say the least, to find that the foundation of the earliest definitely known and named monastery of the Fayyūm—none other than the Naqlūn monastery of our Oriental Institute Arabic document No. III—is shrouded in dark mystery, pierced only by the feeble light of a fantastic Coptic Christian tale. This is the "History of Aūr," of which there is both a Coptic<sup>19</sup> and an Arabic<sup>20</sup> version, to the first of which I have unfortunately no direct access. With the Arabic version I have been more fortunate, for Oriental Institute No. A 12063 (Moritz Collection), an Arabic manuscript of the sixteenth century (1552), contains among nineteen homilies and stories the story of Aūr (أور), copied for the priest-monk Gabriel, "chief of the notables and clerks of St. Macarius." The copyists are two monks, Gabriel and Abraham, possibly the same Gabriel and his nephew Abraham who were working in the library of the Syrian monastery of Scetis in 1493.<sup>21</sup> Amélineau has given us a French translation of the story based on the Arabic,<sup>22</sup> and Budge an English one based on the Coptic.<sup>23</sup> Neither of the translators throws any light on the date either of the "events" or of

<sup>17</sup> *Patrologiae cursus completus . . . . Series Graeca* (hereafter called *PG*), ed. J. P. Migne (Paris, 1857–66), LX, 981.

<sup>18</sup> See Evelyn-White, Part II, pp. 13 f., for Antony's chronology.

<sup>19</sup> See Budge, *Egyptian Tales and Romances* (London, 1931), pp. 12, 29, and 247–63 (trans. only).

<sup>20</sup> *Catalogue des manuscrits arabes de la Bibliothèque Nationale*, ed. W. M. de Slane (Paris, 1883–95), Nos. 148 (A.D. 1655) and 154 (A.D. 1604–7); Blochet, *Catalogue des manuscrits arabes* (suppl. to the foregoing), Nos. 4796 and 4888; Vansleb, *Nouvelle relation . . . d'un voyage fait en Egypte* (Paris, 1698), p. 276.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Evelyn-White, Part II, p. 451, and W. Wright, *Catalogue of Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum*, No. MXXXIII.

<sup>22</sup> *Contes et romans de l'Égypte chrétienne* (Paris, 1888), I, x f. and 109–43.

<sup>23</sup> Budge does not indicate his Coptic source for the story, though from his p. 12 it is clearly not in the British Museum. Information as to its whereabouts would be appreciated.

the author of the story. Abū Ṣālih<sup>24</sup> tells us that the church in this monastery was founded by Aurā (Aūr) in the episcopate of Abba Isaac, whose time he does not specify, though an unsupported note by Evetts (the translator) puts the founding "early in the fourth century." Our study so far does, indeed, point to this early date for the events; and the date of authorship must fall between the fourth and the seventh century or at the latest in the eighth, since it was during that period that Coptic Christian tales and romances took form.<sup>25</sup>

Leaving the questions of date and authorship aside for the moment, let us look into the story itself. Stripped of much of the magic of Abrāshīt and the miracles of Gabriel, who appears throughout as the guardian and guide of Aūr, the story runs thus: Abrāshīt, a much-favored magician in an eastern pagan court, fell in love with the king's daughter, who bore him an illegitimate son whom she named Aūr ("that is to say, 'he who has been conceived secretly and furtively,' or in other words 'the disgrace of his parents' "). For eight years the queen kept the secret of Aūr's birth from the king, but on being questioned then as to the boy's identity she told him the truth. The king was so furious that Abrāshīt thought it best to take his two older sons and the boy Aūr and flee the court to a place of safety. He started out for Jerusalem, but was led (by Gabriel) to change his course for the Fayyūm in Egypt, where the family settled in the mountain of Naqlūn and grew prosperous practicing the arts of magic. The father died some five months after their arrival, and some time after that the three sons were converted to Christianity (through the miraculous appearances of Mary, Gabriel, and Michael) and began the building of a church in honor of Gabriel (who, together with Mary, chose the site and planned the church). In the meantime the oriental king had been succeeded by his son, who yielded to his mother's request for the return of her grandson Aūr. Aūr was received with great joy at the court, but he was restless now and anxious to get back to his monastery in the Fayyūm. Loaded with gifts and riches, he returned to his mountain. The small church of sun-dried brick was now replaced with a larger and more pretentious one of baked bricks, and this new church was consecrated amid a great gathering of

<sup>24</sup> *The Churches and Monasteries of Egypt . . . .*, trans. . . . by B. T. A. Evetts (Oxford, 1895), pp. 205 f.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Amélineau, *Contes*, I, xliv f.



the people of the Fayyūm by the bishop of that district, Abba Isaac, at the same time that he ordained Aūr as priest. On the death of this bishop the people of the Fayyūm requested the Patriarch (unnamed) at Alexandria to make Aūr their bishop. He granted the request; but Aūr himself seems to have returned to stay at the mountain of Naqlūn, building "habitations for large numbers of monks, and cells for the brethren, and houses for the use of the people who flocked thither on pilgrimage." As his death drew near, Aūr called to him the anchorite John, one of the monks, and committed his story to him; and it is this John, speaking in the first person, who reports this last event and informs us that he is recording the story of Aūr for the use and benefit of the monks and the brethren.

The name of our chief character, Aūr, deserves some attention. It is but natural to regard it, on first thought, as a variation of Or or Hor and so to connect it with the Egyptian god-name Horus. But monastic literature presents us with no Abba Or or Hor in the Fayyūm of the early centuries, though several are found in other parts of Egypt. Among these is Abba Hor of Nitria,<sup>26</sup> who was visited by Melania and who is said to have died before 390. Little else is known about him except that his main virtue was humility. A second Hor,<sup>27</sup> this time of the Thebaid, has been frequently confused with the first, though he was still alive in 394, when a party of seven touring monks visited him at Lycopolis. This Hor is reported to have moved about, founding several monasteries in the Thebaid. Knowing as little as we do about both of these, it is hardly possible to attempt an identification of either of them with Aūr.

From the story as it stands it is clear that Aūr was not an Egyptian but a stranger from some eastern land. Again, it is but natural to connect the name with the Semitic name Ḥūr,<sup>28</sup> readily found not only in both North and South Arabic<sup>29</sup> but also in the Hebrew<sup>30</sup> and

<sup>26</sup> *The Lausiac History of Palladius*, ed. Cuthbert Butler (Cambridge, 1898-1904), I, 39 f., 177, n. 2; II, 29, 190, n. 17; Evelyn-White, Part II, pp. 52-54.

<sup>27</sup> Sozomenus in *PG*, LXVII, 1370 f.; *Lausiac History of Palladius*, I, 39 f.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. W. F. Albright, "The Canaanite God Ḥaurōn (Ḥōrōn)," *AJSL*, Oct. 1936, pp. 1-12.

<sup>29</sup> Ibn Doreid, *Genealogisch-etymologisches Handbuch*, hrsg. von Wüstenfeld (Göttingen, 1854), p. 228; G. Ryckmans, "Inscriptions sud-arabes," *Museon*, XLVIII (1935), 169.

<sup>30</sup> Gesenius' *Hebräisches und aramäisches Handwörterbuch* (17. Aufl.; Leipzig, 1921), under "ḥwr." As Aūr, it might be connected with Ur of the Chaldeans and with the proper names Uri, Uriel, and Uriaḥ; or again it might be connected with ḥr, found also as ḥrah, the latter meaning "light" in Ps. 139:12 and "happiness" in Esther 8:16.

Ethiopic.<sup>31</sup> Again, we may take the name just as it stands in the Arabic version and, by accepting the interpretation given it in the story, limit Aūr's origin to the courts where North Arabic was the common language. It is true that we do not find it as a personal name elsewhere, but this can perhaps be explained by its meaning, for few could be expected to name an illegitimate child "the shame of his parents." If we are to accept the name as Aūr, then Abrāshīt may, indeed, be either a corruption of ʿAbd al-Rashīd, as suggested by both Budge and Crum, or perhaps even a corruption of Abū al-Rashīd.

However, there is the possibility, as Professor Sprengling suggests,<sup>32</sup> that the name may be of Iranian origin, derived from the Persian Hōrmazd, found also in the forms Ōramazd, Ormezd, and Aōrmizd.<sup>33</sup> The name, traveling westward, is to be found as Ormizd in the Armenian, Hormizd or Hormazd in the Syriac, Hurmuz in the Arabic, and Hormisdas or Hormesdes in the Greek.<sup>34</sup> The name is the earlier Persian Ahura Mazda, always compounded in the later literature into one word, but frequently written in the earlier literature as two words, either in succession or separated by other words or phrases in the sentence.<sup>35</sup> Since Ahura, outside of its connection with the god-name, means "lord" or "prince," it would indeed be a suitable name for the son of a Persian princess; and the father's name, Abrāshīt, might then well be a corruption of the Persian Afrasiab, while the Arabic interpretation given for the name can be readily accounted for by some Arab's overzealous love for etymology.

It is clear, then, that regardless of the form of the name, be it Aūr (اور), Hōr (حور), or Hūr (هور), the chief character of the story hailed from the East, and any one of the eastern courts of the fourth century could have been the place of his origin. Court magicians were the rule; and neither the story of the birth of an illegitimate child at court nor that of the subsequent flight to a safe distance is

<sup>31</sup> Ernst Trumpp, *Der Kampf Adams, Aethiopischer Text* (Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften, philosophisch-philologische Klasse, "Abhandlungen," Vol. XV, No. 3), p. 168.

<sup>32</sup> I am indebted to Professor Sprengling not only for the suggestion but for the references which follow.

<sup>33</sup> Heinrich F. J. Junker, *The Frahang i Pahlavik* (Heidelberg, 1912), p. 90; cf. Ferdinand Justi, *Iranisches Namenbuch* (Marburg, 1895), pp. 7, 130, 132.

<sup>34</sup> Heinrich Hübschmann, *Armenische Grammatik* (Leipzig, 1897), I, 62, No. 139.

<sup>35</sup> Christian Bartholomae, *Altiranisches Wörterbuch* (Strassburg, 1904), pp. 294 f.

an uncommon motif. In the Egypt of the third and fourth centuries conversions to Christianity and to monasticism took place on a large scale, and it is not at all strange that Aūr and his brothers should fall under that spell, or even that he should build a church and found a monastery that grows considerably during his own lifetime. Thus the essential facts of the story find a genuine setting in the known conditions of the early fourth century of our era.

No original list of the bishops of the Fayyūm has come to light so far. A list with many gaps is to be found in Baudrillart's *Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastiques* (IV, 761 f.), in which the Aūr of our story is placed in a gap covering the period from the last quarter of the fifth to the first half of the seventh century; but no reason at all is given for this position. The same list shows other gaps, among them one in the early and one in the late fourth century. Considering the evidence in favor of the presence and growth of monasticism and monasteries in the Fayyūm in the fourth century, it is my belief that the Aūr of our story belongs to one or the other of these two periods, though to which one it is extremely difficult to tell from the list alone, since we have no terminal dates given for any of the bishops listed, but only the dates of some outstanding contemporary person or of some well-known event. The problem is further complicated in that we must find a place not only for Aūr but also for his predecessor in the bishopric, namely Abba Isaac. As the list stands, it begins with Nepos<sup>36</sup> in the first half of the third century, followed by Apollonius, who held the see some time between 265 and 281. There is no way of telling whether his period of office ended within or extended beyond these dates. The next to be listed is Maximianus, one of the four famous Egyptian bishops who visited Constantine in Constantinople<sup>37</sup> shortly after the famous Edict of Nicaea of 325. His term ended some time between that event and 327, when we find his successor, Melas, in the bishop's see. Though not impossible, it is hardly likely that Maximianus was the only bishop in the period of about forty-six years between 281 and 327. Could we not place both Abba Isaac

<sup>36</sup> For the sources used in compiling the list see Baudrillart, *loc. cit.*, in which, however, the volume reference for the source for Apollonius should be corrected from Nov., 1890, to Nov., 1900. See also individual bishops in the same source and in the *Dictionary of Christian Biography*, ed. Sir Wm. Smith and Henry Wace.

<sup>37</sup> *Syn. Alex.*, II, 184; *PO*, XVII, 590; Budge, IV, 1028 (Maximus).

and Aūr between Apollonius and Maximianus? This would place Aūr early in the fourth century, perhaps in the first decade—the period in which Antony, as we have already seen, was traveling in the Fayyūm, strengthening the brothers in their several monastic houses.

Following Melas there are three bishops in succession: Calosiris I, who died before 341; Silvanus, mentioned in 341; and Andrew, mentioned in 347 and 362, though it is impossible to tell whether one or two Andrews are involved in the long period. Again, it is impossible to tell how far beyond 362 the period really extended, for it is here that the second gap occurs, stretching from 362 to about 444, when Calosiris II was already in office. This gap is larger than the first and therefore gives us more time for the episcopates of both Isaac and Aūr, with the possibility of throwing that of the latter into the early fifth century. But apart from this advantage of more leeway of time—which, however, may be cut shorter with further research leading to a more complete list of bishops—everything so far would make the earlier period preferable. The spread of monasticism in the Fayyūm itself; its geographic location where it was bound to be influenced by the progress of Antonian monasticism east of the Nile and the Nitrian organization to the north; the location of the mountain of Naqlūn itself, just a short two hours' journey from the city of Fayyūm (the earliest practice of monks and hermits was to keep close to the cities or villages); and the indirect testimony of both Abū Ṣāliḥ and Maḳrīzī, who list the monastery of Naqlūn first in their accounts of the Fayyūm monasteries—all these point to the earlier date.

This brings us back again to the author of the story and his time. We have already pointed out that the story itself mentioned a certain monk named John as the author; since he was contemporary with Aūr, the story, if we are correct so far, must have been written in the fourth century. But is the story, as we have it now, in the form in which John left it, or has it been retouched by a later hand? Amélineau states, though without citing the documents, that Coptic manuscripts ascribe the authorship to an Isaac, bishop of the Fayyūm.<sup>38</sup> At any rate, this could hardly be the Bishop Isaac of the story itself, since he died before Aūr, who then succeeded him. The bishops' list

<sup>38</sup> *Contes*, I, xxxiii.

already referred to has no bishop named Isaac, though one may have come in the gap from 484 to 645 or in that from about 768 to 1078. The author of the *Life* of the more famous Samuel of Ẓalamūn was a certain Abba Isaac,<sup>39</sup> abbot of that same monastery toward the end of the eighth and the beginning of the ninth century; but he does not seem ever to have been a bishop. All that we can say definitely is that the story, as we have it now, was written before the days of Abū Ṣāliḥ.

If we are to accept the fourth century origin (early or late) of the monastery of Naqlūn, we must assign to it some of the famed growth of monasticism in the Fayyūm in the days of Serapion, the abbot of all the monasteries in the region of Arsinoë (Fayyūm) and director of ten thousand monks, whose needs he supplied with great care and whose industry helped him practically to banish pauperism in the district and to send gifts to the needy in Alexandria.<sup>40</sup> Petronius, who visited him in 394 (or between 385 and 394), bears personal testimony to these facts.<sup>41</sup>

The story of Aūr itself contains a "prophecy" which throws some light on the early history of the monastery of Naqlūn. We quote from Budge's translation (*Egyptian Tales . . .*, p. 261); Gabriel is speaking!

Peace be to thee, O Aur, friend of God! I testify that I am pleased with thy noble work . . . . But I say unto thee, this placē is a desert, and those who come hither will wish for what is necessary to satisfy their needs. Send none away, neither rich nor poor . . . . Many marvellous things shall be performed in this church, and its fame shall be noised abroad in all the countries of the earth. . . . This mountain shall prosper, and shall become as crowded as a dovecot by reason of the immense multitudes of people who shall come to visit it from all countries of the earth; and their prayers shall mount up to God.

How much of this came to pass in the late fourth century it is difficult to tell, for the subsequent history of the monastery through several centuries fulfils in a general way such a prophecy.

<sup>39</sup> *Syn. Alex.*, I, 153 ff.; *PO*, III, 443. Budge (III, 782) merely mentions "Isaac the abbot"; cf. Paul van Cauwenbergh, *Etude sur les moines d'Egypte* (Paris, 1914), pp. 46 f.

<sup>40</sup> Hieronymus, *The Histories of the Monks*, chap. xxix, in *The Paradise of the Holy Fathers*, ed. Budge (London, 1907), I, 380.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. *Dict. of Christian Biography*, IV, 613, "Serapion," No. 10.

Even allowing for exaggeration of numbers, there is ample evidence that large monastic communities actually existed throughout Egypt. Butler, in writing of this and the following centuries, says:

The number of monks and monasteries in Upper Egypt [he uses the term to cover all Egypt except the Delta] from the fourth century onwards, seems to have been prodigious. Rufinus relates that in the region about Arsinoë he found ten thousand monks: at Oxyrynchus the bishop estimated his monks at ten thousand, and his nuns at twenty thousand, while the city itself contained no less than twelve churches. Pagan temples and buildings had been turned to monastic uses: the hermitages outnumbered the dwelling houses: in fact the land 'so swarmed with monks, that their chaunts and hymns by day and by night made the whole country one church of God.' . . . But, with all due allowance for oriental weakness in arithmetic, it is certain that every town of importance along the valley of the Nile had its churches and friars, while many parts both of the country and the desert were occupied by vast monastic settlements.<sup>42</sup>

The fifth century yields but one reference to the Fayyūm monasteries, but it is a significant one. In about 444 the Patriarch Cyril (412-44) sent to Calosiris II,<sup>43</sup> bishop of the Fayyūm, a letter to be read in all the monasteries of his diocese, especially in one that stood on a very desolate mountain called Ḳalamūn, against anthropomorphism and against confounding idleness with sanctity. The same bishop, in Ephesus in 449, declared that he had always maintained communion with Eutyches. The Fayyūm, then, as it was natural to expect, from the days of Nepos on took part in and was influenced by the religious controversies of the day.<sup>44</sup> This fact was reflected in the monasteries, where in the Fayyūm as in the Nitrian and other groups monks of "heretical" tendencies were to be found with the "orthodox." For us the main significance of Cyril's Epistle 83 lies in its reference to a monastery at Ḳalamūn. We have already seen how this mountain was visited by Panine and Panaw about A.D. 300, but hitherto the existence of a monastery of Ḳalamūn has always been linked with the times of Samuel of Ḳalamūn. Now we know definitely that, though Samuel founded a monastery there, it was not the first monastery at Ḳalamūn. We find it clearly stated in his biography

<sup>42</sup> Alfred J. Butler, *Ancient Coptic Churches* (Oxford, 1884), I, 341 f.

<sup>43</sup> *Dict. of Christian Biography*, I, 393; *PG*, LXXVI, 1066 ff.

<sup>44</sup> For the presence of the heresy of Hierax and that of Origen among monks of the Fayyūm see Evelyn-White, Part II, pp. 117, 127.

that when he first went to Ḳalamūn he occupied a small deserted church, whence he was taken captive, and that when he returned it was to this church that he came and to the cells surrounding it.<sup>45</sup>

How soon after 444 this first monastery of Ḳalamūn was abandoned we cannot at present tell. Perhaps it suffered from the barbarian invasions of that same year, when the third sack of Scetis took place,<sup>46</sup> and perhaps its misfortunes came about 570, when the fourth sack of Scetis occurred.<sup>47</sup> Samuel's *Life*, however, tells us that when he first went to Ḳalamūn it had been abandoned for a "long time," the church being then invaded by sand.<sup>48</sup> From 444 on we have no mention of either Naqlūn or Ḳalamūn until the coming of Samuel and the linking together of these two ancient monasteries. Among the various factors which must have contributed to this long silence the barbarian invasions must be reckoned. The Mazican invasions<sup>49</sup> from the Libyan Desert had already not only penetrated the Nitrian settlements, which were sacked no less than thrice in the first half of the fifth century (407, 434, 444), but had likewise worked their way into the valley of the Nile, and in all probability also into the Fayyūm, as they certainly did when Samuel of Ḳalamūn was carried into a three years' captivity in about 635. Religious controversies and persecutions, foreign invasions, and beginning economic decline, which characterize the history of the whole of Egypt of the Byzantine period, doubtless played their part in the Fayyūm.

Cauwenbergh's study,<sup>50</sup> which limits itself to this period (451-640), details these conditions. In combining the Scetis and the Fayyūm groups<sup>51</sup> he brings out their close connection in general. So far as the

<sup>45</sup> Cauwenbergh, pp. 109 f., 114 f. The *Ethiopic Synaxarium* (Budge, II, 341) confuses Samuel's stay at Naqlūn with his stay at Kalamūn, but straightens out the story of his being carried away from the church in the desert of Kalamūn, to which he returned from his captivity. *Syn. Alex.* (I, 142) and *PO* (III, 406-8) do not mention Naqlūn, but only Kalamūn—all excusable since their accounts are brief and since Kalamūn and Naqlūn are not really far from each other. Again, the Arabic sources give Kalamūn as the monastery from which Samuel was chased by Cyrus; Coptic sources give it as Naqlūn; Ethiopic sources mix the two. Amélineau also at first confused the two by identifying them with each other; cf. *Journal asiatique*, Nov.-Dec., 1888, p. 398.

<sup>46</sup> Evelyn-White, Part II, p. 164.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 249 f.

<sup>48</sup> Cauwenbergh, p. 109.

<sup>49</sup> Evelyn-White, Part II, pp. 151-53.

<sup>50</sup> *Etude sur les moines d'Egypte*.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 81 ff.

Fayyūm proper is concerned, he leaves untouched the earlier part of the period, beginning only with the time of Samuel. He thus overlooks the mention of the first monastery of Ḳalamūn and the general condition of the monasteries in the episcopate of Calosiris II, which extended beyond 449. He overlooks, also, the further testimony to the general monastic trends in the early sixth century afforded by two Greek papyri from the Fayyūm dated 512 and 513.<sup>52</sup> In each document a certain Eulogius, formerly a Meletian monk but now turned orthodox (monophysite), is selling a monastery to other Meletians. The Meletians had been prominent enough in the Fayyūm to have one of their members a bishop of that province in 327.<sup>53</sup> These documents show that the sect still held its own in the province and in the country as a whole. Denying that they were heretics and remaining dissidents, some of them were to be found in monasteries and some in the deserts until the patriarchate of Michael I (744–68). The monasteries which Eulogius was selling were located in Mount Labla in the district of Arsinoë (i.e., around the city of Fayyūm) in the province of Arcadia (Fayyūm). Mount Labla itself was situated on the outskirts of the city of Fayyūm. The boundaries of the first monastery sold are given as follows: to the south, the mountain and the monastery of the priest Andrew; to the north, the monastery of the priest Naharaos; to the east, the mountain; and to the west, the public road passing by the monastery of Peter the Deacon. The boundaries of the second monastery were as follows: to the south, an abandoned monastery; to the north, the monastery of the priest Naharaos; to the east, the mountain (as well as the passage to and from the same monastery); to the west, the public road passing by the monastery of Peter the Deacon. We have here three named monasteries, those of Andrew, Naharaos, and Peter, and three unnamed ones, the abandoned one and the two being sold. A seventh monastery in this group is one specified as the monastery of Labla, whose monks are buying the property from Eulogius. An eighth monastery, that of orthodox Macrouphyon, for which Eulogius left the Meletian Labla, is also described as on the outskirts of the city of Fayyūm. But, since we

<sup>52</sup> *Revue des études grecques*, III (1890), 131–44; H. I. Bell, *Jews and Christians in Egypt* (London, 1924), p. 42.

<sup>53</sup> Baudrillart, *Dict.*, IV, 761; *PG*, XXV, 375.



have no way of telling in which directions Labla and Macrouphyon lay, we have no way of telling their locations relative to each other.

How large were these monasteries, and how were the seven situated in Mount Labla related to one another? Was the monastery of Labla itself the leading one (its purchase of the other two may be indicative of prosperous growth), and had it any organic relationship with the three others named? Did it eventually purchase the abandoned monastery too? These are questions that we cannot now answer definitely but that are likely to repay looking into. It is hardly possible that seven monasteries of any pretentious size would locate on a single mountain so close to the city. The size of the two monasteries sold is perhaps indicative of that of the others. The first of these is described as a property consisting of the entire monastery with all its cells, together with all the extent of land situated in front of these cells; the second is specified only as the entire monastery with all its cells. This suggests the early *laura* type, that is, unwalled monasteries consisting only of groups or rows of cells for hermit monks.

Such, then, was the general monastic situation in the Fayyūm from the fourth to the sixth century. Our sources show that, from about the middle of the seventh century on, the influence and the fame of the monastery of Ḳalamūn begin first to approach and then to surpass that of Naḳlūn. It is therefore our purpose to sketch here the history of Ḳalamūn, which at this point is linked with the life of its most famous abbot—the most famous in the whole Fayyūm—Samuel of Ḳalamūn. Cauwenbergh has given us a full account of his monastic career,<sup>54</sup> and we need touch here only the high points. Born between 598 and 603, Samuel lived to the good age of ninety-eight years. He was eighteen when he joined the monastic settlement of Abba Macarius at Scetis, where he remained for sixteen years, leaving it under the violent pressure of the persecution by Cyrus in the decade 631–41, specifically for his opposition to the Chalcedonian doctrines and his refusal to subscribe to the *Tome* of Leo. He turned his face to the south, accompanied by four disciples, to the monastery of Naḳlūn in the Fayyūm, where he stayed for three and one-half years, ap-

<sup>54</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 46–50 and 88–122. Cf. *Syn. Alex.*, I, 141–43; *PO*, III, 405–8; Evelyn-White, Part II, pp. 252–55. See also Amélineau in *Journal asiatique*, Nov.–Dec., 1888, pp. 261–410, and in *Mission archéologique française au Caire, Mémoires*, IV (1888), 516–20, 770–89.

parently exerting his influence on its inmates, for on the approach of Cyrus to Naḳlūn he persuaded the two hundred lay members and the one hundred twenty monks to flee (to the mountains) and hide. Cyrus' wrath on reaching the deserted monastery knew no bounds. Returning to the Fayyūm he ordered Samuel brought before him, submitted him to severe questioning, and was about to have him publicly flogged when the civic authorities saved him. He was, however, driven out of his monastery (Naḳlūn), going to that of Takinash,<sup>55</sup> where he stayed but six months. He was carried into a three years' captivity by the barbarian Mazices, who invaded the valley of Ḳalamūn whither he had gone to live in a small abandoned (in 444?) church with cells attached. Set at liberty in return for the (miraculous) healing of his captor's wife, he returned to his valley, summoned his four disciples, and set about the establishment of his monastery. Some two years later the group consisted of forty-one monks, fourteen of whom had come from the neighboring monastery of Naḳlūn and five more from the monastery of Takinash, while seventeen were new recruits. The new community won the favor of the people, who contributed freely toward its support. George, bishop of Ḳais, visited Samuel, who healed him of a grievous disease, in return for which Ḳais sent rich gifts of provisions and some livestock for the use of the monastery. Presently there were sufficient funds to build a new church, which was consecrated by Joseph, bishop of the Fayyūm. Fifty-seven years of Samuel's life were spent here, the fame of his monastery growing the while as his disciples increased to one hundred twenty monks at his death. One of these, Stephen, was elected bishop of Pemdje (ancient Oxyrhynchus, modern Bahnasa),<sup>56</sup> in or near which city the monastery of Takinash was situated. Samuel's powers of spiritual and administrative leadership earned for him a place among monastic stars of the first magnitude (Basil, Gregory, Severus, Antony, Macarius, Pachomius, and Shenūte),<sup>57</sup> his reputation helping to keep alive the fame of his monastery so that it rivaled and sur-

<sup>55</sup> Cauwenbergh, p. 105, n. 3. W. E. Crum (*Coptic Manuscripts Brought from the Fayyum* [London, 1893], No. XLV [see note, p. 67]) places it in or near the Fayyūm; Amélineau (*Géog.*, p. 121) places it in the province of Bahnasa.

<sup>56</sup> Cauwenbergh, p. 117.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 121.

passed that of the earlier monastery of Naqlūn. Through the centuries that followed, at first both, then now one, now the other, of these two ancient monasteries of the Fayyūm come in for their share of attention at the hands of writers and travelers.

The mountain of Ḳalamūn<sup>58</sup> has been located in the southwest of the Fayyūm province; it is identified by Maḳrīzī with the mountain of al-Gharaḳ.<sup>59</sup> The identification fits in very well with information supplied by Abū Ṣāliḥ, who mentions that the mountain of Ḳalamūn lay opposite that of Rayyān. Further information, due mainly to Western travelers in the Fayyūm within the last century, has led to the identification of the Ḳalamūn region with the present Wādī Mawālīḥ(?) or "Salt Valley,"<sup>60</sup> south of the better-known Wādī Rayyān. The monastery itself is located in the northern part of this wadi, some thirty-four kilometers southwest of Ṭalit, according to Schweinfurth,<sup>61</sup> whose map is the only one that I know of that actually locates both Ḳalamūn and Naqlūn (marked as "Dēr Abu-schaschab" instead of "Dair al-Khashab"; see below). From the map Ḳalamūn is seen to be about fifty kilometers southwest of Naqlūn. This latter was situated near Ṭārif al-Fayyūm at the western foot of Gabal Sidmant, some two hours' travel by horse from the city of Fayyūm.

The first mention we have of Ḳalamūn after the time of Samuel seems to be that of the sacking of the monastery and the church at the hands of the Arabs. When this took place it is difficult to tell. The only account I know of it is to be found in the fourth miracle of St. Ptolemy, the writing of which is assigned to the eighth century at the latest by Nau.<sup>62</sup> The text of this miracle gives but two hints

<sup>58</sup> There seem to be several Ḳalamūns, and some of these have been sometimes confused. Besides Samuel's monastery of Ḳalamūn there was another in Palestine near the Jordan and a third fifteen miles south of Alexandria. The name was applied by early Christian writers to sites in Sinai and near Salonika also, and it still designates a village in the oasis of al-Dākhlah. The name is Greek in origin, meaning "reed bed," the reeds being papyrus, from which were made reed pens, the familiar *κalamos*, from which word we have Arabic *qalam*. See Cauwenbergh, pp. 110 f., and H. E. Winlock, *Ed Dākhleh Oasis* (New York, 1936), pp. 37-39 and Pl. I.

<sup>59</sup> See E. Quatremère, *Observations sur quelques points de la géographie de l'Égypte* (Paris, 1812), pp. 27 f., who assumes the mountain to be west of the lake of al-Gharaḳ.

<sup>60</sup> H. Munier *et al.*, "Notes sur le Ouady Mouellah," in Société Royale de Géographie d'Égypte, *Bulletin*, XVIII (1932), 47 ff.

<sup>61</sup> "Reise in das Depressionsgebiet im Umkreise des Fajūm im Januar 1886," in Gesellschaft für Erdkunde, *Zeitschrift*, XXI (1886), 96-149, esp. pp. 108-15, and map.

<sup>62</sup> *PO*, V, 699, with French trans. by Leroy on pp. 784-86.

of the time element, the first in the introductory sentence, which reads:

At the time when the Muslims conquered these territories and plundered many towns in the Fayyūm they departed and took with them captives from many settlements. Now while they were so doing they went astray. Some from among them sought the way and kept wandering in a daze till they came to the mountain of Ḳalamūn. There they took captive a large number of people from that holy church and turned out many of the brothers that were in the monastery. Then they went to Dair al-Dhakhil. . . .

The invaders were headed south. When they reached the church of Ptolemy at Ashnīn, Ptolemy, so the story goes, appeared in person and drove them away. They were so overawed that they urged one another to return all the captives and plunder they had taken on their expedition. When this had been done, the people came and took their liberated children, but presented all the plundered goods to the church of St. Ptolemy. Then Epiphanius, bishop of Ṭahā, returned to the church of the monastery of Ḳalamūn all the silver and gold vessels that had been taken from it. This Epiphanius, bishop of Ṭahā, I am unable to locate. If these events really belong to the period of the Muslim conquest, they must be connected with the invasion of the Fayyūm in 640 by ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀṣī.<sup>63</sup> But this would place us in Samuel's own time and too close to the foundation of his new church. Then, too, we are told that, in accordance with a promise of the Virgin Mary given to Samuel on his return from captivity, the monastery was not molested again (in his lifetime?).<sup>64</sup> Again, the incident may refer to the time of the advance of Marwān II into the Fayyūm in 750; but we have no definite information. At any rate, it is sure that Marwān himself did not penetrate so far southwest in the Fayyūm, though a company of his defeated and fleeing soldiers may have wandered that far. The second century of Islam (eighth century after Christ) saw many religious disturbances resulting in open rebellion, as in A.H. 107/A.D. 725, 121/739, 132/750, 135/752, 150/767, 156/773,<sup>65</sup> and the event reported may have occurred at any of these dates, preferably the first if one is to put faith in the statement that the sack was early in the times of the Arabs. To connect it with the

<sup>63</sup> Butler, *The Arab Conquest of Egypt*, pp. 218-25.

<sup>64</sup> Cauwenbergh, p. 114.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, II, 994.

first Arab sack of Scetis (fifth sack in the history of the monasteries), which took place about A.D. 817,<sup>66</sup> is to ignore this statement that the Ḳalamūn invasion took place in the time of the Arab conquest. On the other hand, the story of Abba Isaac of Ḳalamūn and of his famous disciple Miṣāʾīl<sup>67</sup> certainly gives evidence of an invasion which must have occurred in the late eighth or early ninth century. It tells of a large number of soldiers led by the governor coming to the monasteries, where much grain was stored. Their object seems to have been to confiscate these supplies. They were prevented from doing this through the intervention of the saintly Miṣāʾīl and the miraculous appearance of wandering ascetics who drove away the invaders. Is it not likely that Abba Isaac built the church in honor of Samuel after this (or a similar) invasion in his day? The story of Miṣāʾīl tells us further that his large inheritance was handed over by Athanasius, bishop of Miṣāʾīl's home province (not named, but not the Fayyūm), to Abba Isaac, who built with it a church in honor of Miṣāʾīl. From the story it is not clear where this church was built—whether it was at Ḳalamūn or in Miṣāʾīl's home town.

There seems to be a gap in the sources, so far as Ḳalamūn is concerned, from the time of Abba Isaac to that of Abū Ṣāliḥ, that is, from the ninth to the eleventh century.<sup>68</sup> The lost book of the monasteries by al-Shābushtī (d. 388 or 390/998 or 1000) must have contained some valuable information, part of which is probably reflected in the accounts of Abū Ṣāliḥ and Maḳrīzī. Abū Ṣāliḥ<sup>69</sup> gives the fullest account of the monastery as it was in A.D. 1178. The account is too well known to be quoted here in full. Briefly, he tells us of a walled monastery inclosing flourishing gardens, having twelve churches (some of them chapels?), four large towers (or keeps), and a high lookout whence approaching visitors (friendly or hostile) could be seen and so prepared for; that the monastery possessed land in several districts of Upper Egypt and sixteen feddans at Shubrā (which Shubrā?), salt marshes from which it received nearly 3,000 ardebs of salt, and a

<sup>66</sup> Evelyn-White, Part II, pp. 297 f.

<sup>67</sup> *Syn. Alex.*, I, 153-56; *PO*, III, 443-48.

<sup>68</sup> The monastery of Ḳalamūn is mentioned in a marriage contract of A.H. 448/A.D. 1056; cf. A. Grohmann, "Arabische Papyri aus den Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin," in *Der Islam*, XXII (1934/35), 68.

<sup>69</sup> Pp. 206-8 and references there cited.

quantity of dates.<sup>70</sup> The monastery then had one hundred and thirty monks.<sup>71</sup> Yākūt (575–626/1179–1229) merely mentions the monastery, stating that it was famous and well known.<sup>72</sup> ʿUthmān ibn al-Nāblusī (about 643/1245) merely lists it among the thirteen Fayyūm monasteries mentioned by him.<sup>73</sup> Our next significant mention is the account of al-Maḳrīzī<sup>74</sup> (d. 1442), from which it is clear that the monastery was in his day already on the decline, as, indeed, was to be expected. According to al-Maḳrīzī it was still walled and possessed its gardens, but had only two instead of four towers; and nothing is said of its twelve churches or its high lookout. Two wells, one within and one without the walls, are mentioned. The monastery still profited from the salt marshes it owned, but neither its revenue nor the number of monks dwelling in it is mentioned.

The next evidence we have of the fame (if not of the prosperity) of the monastery is in the honor paid to its two leading figures, the abbot Samuel and Abba Miṣāʾīl, by including them in a painting done on a heroic scale for the chapel of al-Suwwāḥ (the Wanderers or Hermits) of the monastery of Abba Macarius in Wādī Ḥabīb. This polychrome painting shows nine figures, which represent the nine famous wanderers to whom the chapel was dedicated, the first—from right to left—being our Samuel, and the eighth Miṣāʾīl. It is the work of an Abyssinian priest, Teklas, done in A.D. 1517, in the patriarchate of Abba John XIII (1482–1524), so that the blessing of these wanderers “might descend, and that the monastery might be protected and built up by their prayers and supplications.”<sup>75</sup>

From that day to very nearly our own time both Eastern and Western writers and travelers have added little to our knowledge of this once so famous monastery. Vansleb, Pococke, the *Description de l’Egypte* by Napoleon’s scientists, Cailliaud, Wilkinson, and Curzon do not so much as mention it; Amélineau, Quatremère, Butler, and ʿAlī Paṣḥa Mubārak draw their information from Abū Ṣāliḥ and

<sup>70</sup> Quatremère (*Mémoires*, I, 474) gives 3,200 ardebs of salt and 200 ardebs of dates.

<sup>71</sup> Quatremère (*op. cit.*, p. 475) places the figure at 200 monks.

<sup>72</sup> *Dictionary*, ed. Wüstenfeld, II, 687.

<sup>73</sup> The full work is not available to me. Cf. Société Royale de Géographie d’Egypte. *Bulletin*, V, No. 5 (1899), pp. 253–59 and 277; also *BIFAO*, I, 72.

<sup>74</sup> *Khūṭat*, II, 505, and English trans. in Abū Ṣāliḥ, ed. Butler, p. 314.

<sup>75</sup> Evelyn-White, Part III (1933), pp. 68–71 and Pl. XIII.

Makrizī. Most of the nineteenth century travelers that do mention it report it as in ruins. Belzoni, who passed through the region in 1819, has this to say of it:

In this place [El Moele] I found the ruins of a small ancient village, and the remains of a very large Christian church and convent. Some of the paintings on the wall are very finely preserved, particularly the figures of the twelve apostles on the top of a niche, over an altar; the gold is still to be seen in several parts, and their faces are well preserved. This place is situated at the end of a long tract of land, which had been cultivated in former times, but is now left for want of water.<sup>76</sup>

Linant de Bellfonds indicated, in 1854, a "Wadée Moleh, couvent ruiné."<sup>77</sup> Schweinfurth, who explored the region in 1886, also reports it as "die Klosterruine in Moëleh";<sup>78</sup> but though he locates the place correctly, as we have already seen, he neither names it nor gives any further information as to the state of its preservation. Beadnell, in his description of a survey of the region in 1899,<sup>79</sup> is the first to report signs of a recent revival of the monastery. He writes:

Close to the north end of the valley, and about 33 kilometres from El Gayat, lie the ruins known as Der el Galamūn bil Muēla. At the time of our visit a new square stone building was in course of erection and five or six persons were inhabiting the place. There are several small palms scattered about to the south of the monastery and an excellent running spring of clear water five hundred paces to the south-west. A new well is being sunk within the premises.

Smolenski, who paid the monastery a one day's visit in 1908,<sup>80</sup> reports the new building to be a simple and unadorned one. Within an inclosure the ruins of the older structures, especially of the ancient church with its limestone and marble columns and immense and beautiful capitals, are still to be seen; the ruined walls still show traces of old paintings, now hardly recognizable. During building operations the monks had found several Coptic inscriptions, unfortunately nearly illegible, and used them in constructing the inclosing wall; also some fragments of art, including two interesting reliefs of a lion, were

<sup>76</sup> *Narrative of the Operations and Recent Discoveries . . . in Egypt and Nubia* (London, 1820), p. 433.

<sup>77</sup> Munier, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

<sup>78</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 108.

<sup>79</sup> *The Topography and Geology of the Fayum Province of Egypt* (Cairo, 1905), pp. 20 f.

<sup>80</sup> "Le couvent copte de Saint-Samuel à Galamoun," in *Service des antiquités de l'Égypte, Annales*, IX (1908), 204-7.

found. Smolenski suspects that the monks did not show him their treasures, though by chance he did get to see some fragments of Coptic manuscripts. The abbot of the monastery, Ibrahim, told him he had sent all the ancient books to a certain Shaikh Muḥammad at Ghayāḍah, near Gamhūd. Smolenski adds (cautiously, because the information is based only on the authority of his servant) that the monastery contains the relics of Samuel.

In the information supplied a few years later to Somers Clarke<sup>81</sup> concerning the monasteries of Egypt, Ḳalamūn is listed as "Dêr Amba Samouil," one of the eight monasteries left in Egypt and the only one in the modern district of Fayyūm, the eight monasteries altogether having from three hundred and fifty to four hundred monks. Recently Johann Georg, Herzog zu Sachsen, attempted to visit the monastery but on account of the unwillingness of his guides was prevented from reaching his goal. However, he expressed the hope of making a second attempt later.<sup>82</sup> We have no information that this hope was realized. Strothmann informs us that the present Ḳalamūn, now named "Deir Samūil," is the poorest of the monasteries, with but four monks, and is hardly recognized officially.<sup>83</sup>

The latest incidental reports of the monastery come from Munier, Hug, and Azadian,<sup>84</sup> who together visited the region in January, 1932, and from Jean Cuvillier.<sup>85</sup> They tell of no new improvement in the monastery itself, but the wide interest shown in the valley as a whole promises a somewhat brighter future for this once famous establishment.

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<sup>81</sup> *Christian Antiquities in the Nile Valley* (Oxford, 1912), p. 192.

<sup>82</sup> *Neue Streifzüge durch die Kirchen und Klöster Ägyptens* (Berlin, 1930), p. 20.

<sup>83</sup> *Die koptische Kirche in der Neuzeit* (Tübingen, 1932), pp. 126 f.

<sup>84</sup> In Société Royale de Géographie d'Egypte, *Bulletin*, XVIII, 47-63, esp. pp. 51, 54, and 61, and Pls. II-IV.

<sup>85</sup> "L'oasis de Mouellah et sa constitution géologique," *ibid.*, pp. 65-81, esp. pp. 66 f., and Pls. I-IV.

[To be concluded]