

Recent Developments in Egyptian Monasticism

(1960-1964)

by Otto F. A. Meinardus

With the accession of Anbâ Kîrillus VI to the Patriarchal Throne of Alexandria in 1959,¹ Coptic monasticism received a new inspiration and a new impetus. For many years, the Patriarch had set an example of ascetic discipline while living as an anchorite in a cave near the Monastery of al-Barâmûs in the Wâdî 'n-Naṭrûn and later in one of the deserted windmills on Gebel al-Guyushî, east of Babylon (Old Cairo). Moreover, for several years the Patriarch had served as *hegoumenos* of the isolated Monastery of St. Samuel in the mountains of al-Qalamûn, where he was also the *pneumatikos* of some of the most devout anchorites of the Coptic Church. Anbâ Kîrillus VI, who is a deeply spiritual person, has retained his interest in the monastic life, although, so far he has not paid a visit to all of the Coptic monasteries, which are under his jurisdiction. He is a genuine *thaumaturgos* with extraordinary spiritual gifts. Among other things, he has stopped the evil and widespread practice of simony, at least with regard to the episcopacy. Edward Wakin correctly concluded in his appraisal of the Patriarch, when he said: "Not only has a monk become a Patriarch, but the Patriarch has remained a monk."²

1. *The Desert of Maryût*

One of the first projects, to which Anbâ Kîrillus VI gave his attention after his enthronement was the rebuilding of the Monastery of St. Menas (Dair Abû Mînâ) on the ancient site of the Desert of Maryût. On November 27th, 1959, the foundation-stone of the new monastery was laid, and on November 25th, 1961, the Patriarch dedicated the first cells and the Church of St. Samuel, which constituted the first part of the new monastery. Several icons which adorn the new Church of St. Samuel were transferred to Maryût from the Church of St. Menas, south of Old Cairo. On February 15th, 1962, some of the relics of St. Menas were translated from the Dair Mârî Mînâ in Cairo,³ where they had been kept from the middle of the XIVth century, to the Desert of Maryût. A new Church of St. Menas has been built south of the Church of St. Samuel. For the

¹ Meinardus, O., *Monks and Monasteries of the Egyptian Deserts* (= MMED). Cairo: The American University at Cairo Press, 1961. 156-158.

² Wakin, E., *A Lonely Minority*. New York: William/Morrow & Co., 1963. 118.

³ Meinardus, O., *Christian Egypt Ancient and Modern* (= CEAM). Cairo: Cahiers d'Histoire Egyptienne, 1965. 202.

time being, the water-supply is still a real problem, and all water has to be transported from Bahîg to the monastery. It is hoped, however, that the General Desert Development Organization will drill a well for the use of the monks and the bedouins in the general area in and around the monastery.

The Monastery of St. Menas is now inhabited by seven monks, though so far the monastery has no *hegoumenos*. The *oeconomos* is Abûnâ Murqus as-Suriânî, who is assisted by Abûnâ Angelus as-Suriânî. Abûnâ 'Azâr al-Bishoi, one of the few iconographers of the Coptic Church, has painted several new icons in the Churches of SS. Samuel and Menas. He also resides in the monastery. In September 1964, Anbâ Kîrillus VI ordained the first three monks for the Monastery of St. Menas. They are Abûnâ Mînâ al-Maryûtî (formerly Sulaïman the personal deacon of the Patriarch), Abûnâ Mûsâ al-Maryûtî and Abûnâ Makarî al-Maryûtî. Since 1960, the Patriarch has frequently withdrawn to the new Monastery of St. Menas to spend several weeks and even months in solitude.

2. *The Desert of the Wâdî 'n-Naṭrûn*

Within the Coptic Church ecclesiastical power and prestige was never confined for any length of time to one or two monasteries. On the contrary, the history of Coptic monasticism demonstrates a constant shifting of ecclesiastical influence from one institution to another. From the Vth to the XIIIth century, the Monastery of St. Macarius in the Wâdî 'n-Naṭrûn supplied almost exclusively the Church with the candidates for the patriarchate. Then, for a relatively short time, in the XIVth and XVth century, the Coptic patriarchs were elected from the Monastery of the Holy Virgin (Dair al-Muharraq) in the Nile Valley. In the XVIIth, XVIIIth and XIXth century, the Red Sea Monastery of St. Antony increased in importance, and supplied not only the candidates for the patriarchate, but also the Abûnâ for Ethiopia and the Metropolitan for Jerusalem. In the middle of the XXth century, the ecclesiastical leadership passed more or less into the hands of the monks of the Monastery of the Syrians in the Wâdî 'n-Naṭrûn.⁴ Four monks of this monastery have been consecrated to the episcopacy by Anbâ Kîrillus and have been placed into key-positions in the Coptic Church. Abûnâ Antûniûs as-Suriânî,⁵ now Anbâ Shanûdah, was consecrated Bishop for Theological and Educational Institutions of the Coptic Church (September 1962), Abûnâ Makarî as-Suriânî, now Anbâ Samwîl, is Bishop of Oecumenical, Social and Public Affairs of the Coptic Church (September 1962), Abûnâ Mitîâs as-Suriânî, now Anbâ Dumadiûs, was consecrated to the bishopric of al-Gizeh (March 1963), and Abûnâ Makariûs as-Suriânî,

⁴ *MMED*, 279-282.

⁵ *MMED*, 280, 281.

now Anbâ Athanâsiûs, received the diocese of Beni Suef and Bahnasa (September 1962).

Under the leadership of Anbâ Tawfilus, the Bishop of the Monastery of the Syrians, some of the younger monks seriously attempted to revive the coenobitic or Pachomian monastic life. This attempt, however, failed, and by 1961, the semi-anchoritic form of monasticism was adopted again by all the monks of the monastery. Since 1959, several old cells, those at the south-wall of the monastery, were abandoned and torn down. Eighteen new cells are completed, and additional cells are being constructed for the increasing number of monks, who have joined the monastery. In the near future, the XIXth century guest-house with the library and the museum will be torn down so as to make room for a new building. Moreover, it is hoped, that a new well will be drilled east of the qasr.

In 1961, the Supreme Council of Youth Welfare organized the first international youth-camp in the Wâdî 'n-Naṭrûn. The camp was established in the immediate proximity north of the Monastery of St. Bishoi and the Monastery of the Syrians. From July 1st until September 30th, 2,100 young people were engaged in agricultural projects, *i.e.* the planting of trees and the digging of irrigation canals.⁶ Repeatedly, both the Bishop of the Monastery of the Syrians as well as the patriarchate have tried to exert their influence with the authorities to have the youth-camp withdrawn from the proximity of the monasteries. However, these attempts have failed. The temporary camping facilities have been exchanged for permanent facilities and every summer an international youth-camp will be held in front of the desert monasteries.⁷ In order to protect the monastic discipline, Anbâ Tawfilus ordered in 1961 that the Monastery of the Syrians should be closed to all visitors. This restriction, however, was waved in 1964, and visitors are permitted to enter the Monastery of the Syrians, provided they have obtained a letter of introduction.⁸ On July 24th 1964, Kwame Nkruma, President of Ghana, visited the Monastery of the Syrians.⁹

The Monastery of the Syrians is inhabited by thirty monks. The *hegoumenos* of the monastery is Qummus Mitrî as-Surîânî, the sub-*hegoumenos* is Abûnâ Agatûn as-Surîânî, and the librarian is Abûnâ

⁶ *Egyptian Gazette*, March 30, 1963.

⁷ Incidentally, youth-camps are also established near monasteries and churches in Yugoslavia. Cf. "Report of a Visit to Yugoslavia by an Anglican Ordinand". *Sobornost*, Spring 1959, ser. 3, No. 24, 633.

⁸ Visitors are not permitted to enter the monastery during the seasons of fasting, *i.e.* the forty-three days before the Feast of the Nativity, the three days commemorating Jonah in the Whale, the fifty-five days of the Fast of Heraclius and Lent, the fast of the Holy Apostles and the fifteen days in commemoration of the Assumption of the Holy Virgin.

⁹ Mrs. Nkruma, who is from Egypt, is a Copt Catholic.

Antûniûs as-Suriânî.¹⁰ Abûnâ Makariûs as-Suriânî is responsible for the twelve feddans of cultivated desert land south-east of the monastery. The printing-press under the famous tamarind tree of St. Ephraem is out of order, due to the lack of spare-parts. Ever since 1952, the Monastery of the Syrians has attracted young educated Copts to enter the monastic life. In 1963, nine monks joined the monastery, of whom five had completed their university education. These monks are: Abûnâ Antûniûs (B. A. Com.), Abûnâ Mitîas (B. A. Com.), Abûnâ Anastasius (B. A. Com.), Abûnâ Wissa (B. Sc.), Abûnâ Makariûs (B. A. Agr.), Abûnâ Zusîmûs, Abûnâ Misâil and Abûnâ Bidjîmî.

Since the death of Anbâ Basiliûs (December 1963), Bishop of the Monastery of St. Bishoi, Anbâ Tawfilus of the Monastery of the Syrians has held the administrative responsibilities for the Monastery of St. Bishoi.¹¹ The sub-hegoumenos of the Monastery of St. Bishoi is Abûnâ Makariûs al-Bishoi. For several years, the monks of the Monastery of St. Bishoi were troubled by administrative difficulties, in so far as the hegoumanship was frequently changed. Ever since the deposition of Anbâ Ghobriâl as head of the Monastery of St. Antony (1960), the bishop has lived in the Monastery of St. Bishoi.

Due to the temporary closing of the Monastery of St. Bishoi and the Monastery of the Syrians, the Monastery of St. Macarius (Dair Abû Maqâr) has received an increased number of visitors. In spite of the fact, that no single track leads through the desert to the monastery, several groups of visitors have succeeded to visit the ancient patriarchal residence. The Bishop of the monastery is Anbâ Mikhâil, who is also Bishop of Asyût.¹² In 1963, Abûnâ 'Abd an-Nûr al-Maqârî was relieved of the hegoumanship of the monastery, and Abûnâ Matta al-Maqârî became the new *hegoumenos*. In 1963, Abûnâ Timûtâûs al-Maqârî was appointed priest of the Church of St. Mark in Kuwait, Persian Gulf, in order to relieve Abûnâ Angelos al-Muharraqî.

With regard to the Monastery of Barâmûs (Dair al-Barâmûs), no basic changes have taken place.¹³ The bishop of the Monastery is Anbâ Makariûs, who resides in the monastic dependency at Tûkh al-Dalaka, and the *hegoumenos* is Abûnâ Tâdros al-Barâmûsî. Abûnâ Yuhannis al-Barâmûsî and Abûnâ Ibrâhîm al-Barâmûsî are still engaged in Coptic calligraphy and the drawing of Coptic crosses and designs, similar to those which can be seen in the famous "Book of Crosses" by the Patriarch Makariûs III (1942-1945) in the library of the Monastery of St. Bishoi. The copying of liturgical texts is done by Abûnâ Shanûdah al-Barâmûsî and Abûnâ 'Abd al-Masîh al-Barâmûsî. Abûnâ Yaqûb al-Barâmûsî,

¹⁰ Not to be confused with Abûnâ Antûniûs, who is now Anbâ Shanûdah.

¹¹ *MMED*, 236-238.

¹² *MMED*, 204-210.

¹³ *MMED*, 150-156.

who represented the Pope and Patriarch in Alexandria, was consecrated bishop of Manfalût and Abnûb and assumed the name of Anbâ Luqa. On November 28th and 29th, 1964 fifty seminarians of the Coptic Catholic Theological Seminary of St. Leo the Great at Ma'âdi visited the Monastery of Barâmûs and participated in an ordination service, which was conducted by Anbâ Makariûs, the Bishop of the monastery. Abûnâ Antûniûs al-Barâmûsî has lectured for several years in church-history at the al-Aklirikiyah, the Coptic Orthodox Theological Seminary at Abbassiyah.

3. *The Monastery of the Holy Virgin* (Dair al-Muharraq)

Trouble, dissension and turmoil have characterized again the last five years of the history of the Monastery of the Holy Virgin (Dair al-Muharraq), which is situated in the Nile Valley, some 65 km. north of Asyût.¹⁴ This is not surprising, if one is aware of the internal tensions and difficulties within the monastery. On March 24th, 1959, Qummuş 'Abd al-Quddûs Armaniûs al-Muharraqî was murdered in his cell. Known throughout Upper Egypt for his practice of magic, the monk had collected an estimated fortune of LE 35.000 (\$ 100.000). Just two weeks before his assassination, he had purchased six hundred pounds of gold, which he kept in several suit-cases in his monastic cell.¹⁵ After the discovery of the murder, forty of the eighty monks left temporarily the monastery and dispersed all over the country. In December 1961, Qummuş Farag Mikhâil al-Muharraqî, who was in charge of the bakery, was assassinated. He was the first one to discover the murder of Qummuş 'Abd al-Quddûs Armaniûs. Farag Mikhâil was found with seventeen stabs in his face and body. In May 1962, Anbâ Bakhûm II, the Bishop of the Monastery of the Holy Virgin, was relieved of his responsibilities, and Anbâ Kîrillus VI appointed Qummuş Quzmân Bishaî al-Muharraqî head of the Dair al-Muharraq. Qummuş Quzmân Bishaî, who had served for several years as *pneumatikos* of the nuns of the five Coptic convents in Cairo, was at first prevented by the monks from entering the monastery. In order to enable Qummuş Quzmân Bishaî to enter the monastery, the Governor of Asyût ordered the police to open the gates. In protest to the Governor's orders, the monks became even more obstinate, until finally the police entered the monastery by fire-ladders. Protest against government interference was voiced by Anbâ Aghabiûs, Bishop of Dairût and Sanabû. In September 1964, Anbâ Bakhûm II died of "unknown reasons" (!). At the time of the death of Anbâ Bakhûm II, notice was served that the custom of consecrating abbots to bishops, which was begun by Anbâ Yûsâb II (1946-1956) would henceforth be abolished. Yet, at the same time, certainly not all the monks of the Monastery of the Holy Virgin

¹⁴ *MMED*, 295-301.

¹⁵ *Al-Akhbar*, March 29, 30, 31, 1959, April 1, 1959.

are "rebels." Abûnâ Angelos al-Muharraqî, one of the candidates for the patriarchate in 1959 and for many years librarian of the patriarchal library in Cairo, was commissioned by the Patriarch to Kuwait, Persian Gulf, to minister to the Copts working in the oil industry. In March 1963 Abûnâ Angelos was consecrated bishop of Qalyubiyah, and assumed the name of Anbâ Maksîmûs. Abûnâ Bulus al-Muharraqî has assumed the functions of Abûnâ Mitîâs as-Suriânî (now Anbâ Dumadîûs) as secretary to the Patriarch. In 1964, Dr. Wahîb Atalla Girgis, archdeacon and wakîl of the Theological Seminary, Abbassiyah, joined the Monastery of the Holy Virgin and became Abûnâ Bakhûm al-Muharraqî. After the death of Anbâ Aghabîûs (1964), Abûnâ Bakhûm was offered the diocese of Dairût and Sanabû. However, he declined and resumed his former functions at the Theological Seminary in Abbassiyah. In March 1965, Abûnâ Bulus al-Muharraqî was consecrated bishop of Dairût and Sanabû, and assumed the name of Anbâ Aghabîûs. Some months before, Abûnâ Aghabîûs al-Muharraqî was consecrated bishop of Ummdurman and Nubia, assuming the name of Anbâ Istâfânûs. In March, 1965, the Russian Orthodox deacon John Chrysostom joined the Monastery of the Holy Virgin and assumed the name of Abûnâ Diosqûrus al-Muharraqî.

4. *The Monastery of St. Samuel*

The most isolated of all the Coptic monasteries is still the Monastery of St. Samuel at al-Qalamûn, south of the Oasis of the Fayyûm.¹⁶ During the last few years, several Western geologists and land-surveyors studying the Wâdî Rayân have called on the monks. From 1956 to 1960, the monks of St. Samuel's were joined by Abûnâ Mattâ al-Maskîn and his group of six disciples. The reconstructions and repairs, *i.e.* the construction of the new Church of the Holy Virgin and the new cells, were carried out under the leadership of Abûnâ Mattâ al-Maskîn. However, following the suspension of Abûnâ Mattâ al-Maskîn and his group, because of their disobedience of the patriarchal order to return to the monasteries of their origin, Abûnâ Mattâ al-Maskîn and his disciples withdrew from the Monastery of St. Samuel. The *hegoumenos* of the monastery is Abûnâ Mînâ as-Samwîlî. Abûnâ Bûlûs as-Samwîlî died in 1961 at the age of one hundred and eight. At present, the monastery is inhabited by Abûnâ Bûlûs (the younger), Abûnâ Shanûdah, Abûnâ Istâfanûs, Abûnâ Salîb, Abûnâ Murqus, Abûnâ Butrus, Abûnâ 'Azâr and Abûnâ Rafâîl a'-Habashî.

5. *The Red Sea Monasteries*

The Red Sea Monasteries of SS. Antony and Paul had their normal personnel changes due to their practice of rotating their monks between

¹⁶ *MMED*, 326-332.

their dependencies at Bûsh in the Nile Valley and the desert monasteries. Normally, the monks spend two years in the dessert and one year in the dependency, though there are many exceptions to this rule. In 1960, Anbâ Ghobriâl, the Bishop of the Monastery of St. Antony, was relieved of his responsibilities, and Qummus Baniâmîn al-Antûnî resumed the functions of the head of the monastery.¹⁷ On April 18, 1965, Qummus Baniâmîn died and was replaced by Qummus Matta al-Antûnî. At the Monastery of St. Antony, the meteorological station near the unfinished Church of St. Paul has been withdrawn.

The Bishop of the Monastery of St. Paul is Anbâ Arsânîûs, who resides at the dependency in Bûsh.¹⁸ The *hegoumenos* of the monastery is Qummus Fîlibûs al-Bûlî. In 1960, the monks of St. Paul's built a guest-house *extra muros* so as to accommodate lady-visitors, who are not permitted to stay overnight within the walls of the monastery. Both Red Sea monasteries have received an increasing number of visitors over the past five years.

6. Hermits and Itinerant Monks

On account of the patriarchal order of 1960, monks are no longer permitted to leave their monasteries without the explicit permission by the bishop or the *hegoumenos*. However, there are some monks, who live as hermits or fulfil special ecclesiastical functions. Abûnâ 'Abd al-Masîh al-Habashî is the only anchorite in Egypt, who, over a period of thirty years (from 1935) has inhabited a cave some five kilometers south of the Dair al-Barâmûs in the Wâdî 'n-Naṭrûn.¹⁹ Anbâ Shanûdah, the Bishop for Theological and Educational Institutions, frequently returns for several weeks to his cave in the Wâdî al-Faregh, which is situated some 11 km. south-east of the Monastery of St. Bishoî.

From early mediaeval times onwards, hermits and monks have refused to accept ecclesiastical offices, e.g. bishop, metropolitan or patriarch, partly because of fear to be "exposed to the world," partly because of their concern to forfeit their genuine prophetic charismata. In the past, hermits and monks were forced to comply with the elections, and some candidates for ecclesiastical offices were even chained at the time of their consecration. This spirit of true humility was again demonstrated in the case of Abûnâ Antûnîûs as-Suriânî. For several years, Abûnâ Antûnîûs successfully withstood and avoided all pressures to be consecrated to the episcopacy. Because of some insignificant misunderstanding pertaining to the administrative affairs of the Dair as-Suriân, Abûnâ Antûnîûs was called to appear before the Patriarch. Persuaded by Anbâ Tawfilus, the

¹⁷ MMED, 77-85.

¹⁸ MMED, 108-116.

¹⁹ MMED, 154-156.

Bishop of the Monastery of the Syrians, Abûnâ Antûnîûs travelled to Cairo in order to apologize and receive forgiveness from the Patriarch. However, while kneeling in front of the Patriarch, expecting to be forgiven and requesting to be relieved from his administrative positions in the monastery and to be permitted to return to his cave, the Patriarch placed his hands upon the head of the hermit, thereby consecrating him Bishop of Theological and Educational Institutions of the Coptic Church. This consecration took place in the patriarchate on September 25th 1962. In reply to my letter of congratulation, Anbâ Shanûdah wrote:

"Grace and peace from our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ be upon you. I thank you for your gentle words of congratulation sent to me. I can never forget your friendship and love. As a matter of fact, however, a letter of consolation – not of congratulation – was fit for the occasion. How may a monk be congratulated on leaving the calmness of the wilderness and abiding again amidst the disturbance of the city? How can anyone congratulate Mary if she leaves her place at the feet of Christ and goes to labour with Martha in the kitchen? For me, it is, indeed, a matter of shame. I remember that day of my consecration to the Episcopacy in tears and lamentation. Indeed, the glory of solitude and contemplation is above measure. It may not be compared with that of the Episcopacy or even that of the Papacy. The true consecration, my dear friend, is the consecration of the heart as a holy temple for the Lord, Who on the Last Day will not ask us for our pastoral grade but for our purity of heart. I write this letter from my beloved cave at Bahr al-Faregh in Wâdî 'n-Natrûn, in which I expect to stay till Epiphany, and then return to Cairo."

However, there are nowadays only a few monks in the Coptic Church, who are so dedicated to the monastic profession as Anbâ Shanûdah. In addition to the hermits, there are some itinerant monks. Abûnâ 'Abd al-Thalûth al-Habashî still inhabits a cell at Gebel 't-Tair, approximately 200 km south of Cairo on the east-bank of the Nile. His cell, which faces the Nile, is situated about 300 m north of the Church of the Holy Virgin of Gebel 't-Tair.²⁰ Another itinerant monk is Abûnâ Bûlûs al-Maqârî, who lives in al-Ghirizat near Sohâg. The administrative affairs at the Pilgrimage Shrine of St. Dimiana near Bilqâs, Mansûra, are carried out by Abûnâ Mînâ al-Antûnî.²¹

In February 1963, Abûnâ Mattâ al-Maskîn and his disciples (Abûnâ Mînâ, Abûnâ Istafânûs, Abûnâ Kîrillus, Abûnâ Mûsâ and Abûnâ Ish'ia) exerted significant upon the Coptic Patriarchate to cancel the proposed meeting of the Executive Committee of the World Council of Churches

²⁰ *CEAM*, 258–259.

²¹ *MMED*, 339–348.

in Cairo. The place for the meeting was subsequently changed to Geneva. Opposed to the Church's participation in the World Council of Churches, this group of conservative monks has published altogether three pamphlets accusing the World Council of Churches of weakening the patriotism of Christians and exhibiting an altogether too friendly an attitude towards the Jews (September 1962, October 1962, January 1963). Shortly after their withdrawal from the Monastery of St. Samuel in October 1960, Abûnâ Mattâ al-Maskîn and his group established themselves in several caves, which are situated about 30 km south-west of the Oasis of the Fayyûm. So far, this group of anchorites has prevented anyone from visiting them. Since 1964, the number of hermits of this group has increased. Two laymen, who joined the group are now Abûnâ Yeremiâh and Abûnâ Iliâh. Moreover, there are also two novices. Altogether, ten caves in the Wâdî Rayân are now inhabited. A large cave serves as a church, where Abûnâ Mûsâ and Abûnâ Mînâ celebrate the Divine Liturgy. The wooden altar-slab for the church was consecrated by Anbâ Baniâmîn, the late bishop of Minufiyah. More recently, this group has also established itself in the *Bait at-Takrîs li Khidmat al-Kirâzah* (The Fellowship of Consecration for the Service of the Church) in Helwân.²²

The implementation of the Republican Law of Agrarian Reform in 1961 has seriously diminished the land assets of some of the desert monasteries. So far, the monasteries are still permitted to retain up to two hundred feddans. Affected by this law are the Monastery of Barâmûs, the Monastery of St. Antony and the Monastery of St. Paul. The Monastery of the Holy Virgin (Dair al-Muharraḡ) has retained its 3,200 feddans.

7. The Coptic Patriarchate of Jerusalem

With regard to the Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate in Jerusalem and the Monastery of St. Antony and Dair as-Sultan in Jerusalem, there are the following recent developments.²³ In addition to Anbâ Basiliûs IV, the Coptic Archbishop of Jerusalem, the Copts have twenty monks in the Holy Land, of whom fifteen serve the Holy Places in Jerusalem, two monks are stationed in Jericho, one monk in the recently acquired Church of the Holy Virgin in Bethlehem, one monk in Jaffa and one monk in Nazareth. The *hegoumenos* of the Monastery of St. Antony is Qummuṣ Gaûrgiûs al-Antûnî, and the *oekonomos* is Qummuṣ Mattâ al-Barâmûsî. Whereas at one time, the Red Sea Monastery of St. Antony supplied almost exclusively the monks for the Coptic Patriarchate in Jerusalem, nowadays, most of the Coptic desert monasteries participate in the staffing

²² *MMED*, 334-335.

²³ Meinardus, O., *The Copts in Jerusalem*. Cairo: The Commission on Oecumenical Affairs of the See of Alexandria. 1960.

of the Monastery of St. Antony and the Coptic Holy Places in Palestine. Of the twenty monks, eight belong to the Monastery of St. Antony, five to the Monastery of St. Bishoi, two to the Monastery of the Syrians, two to the Monastery of Barâmûs, two to the Monastery of the Holy Virgin and one monk to the Monastery of St. Macarius. Qummuş Aqlâdiûs al-Antûnî, the *hegoumenos* of the Monastery of St. Antony in Jerusalem, was appointed secretary to the Pope and Patriarch in March 1965.

On November 13, 1964, Qummuş Yuakîm Hannâ al-Antûnî, the *hegoumenos* of the Coptic Monastery of St. Antony at Jaffa, was released from prison in Tel-Aviv. In June 1957, Qummuş Yuakîm was sentenced by the Israeli authorities to twelve years imprisonment on the charge of espionage against the Israeli Government, however, the sentence was commuted to eight years imprisonment.²⁴ The two Coptic sites in Israel, the Monastery of St. Antony in Jaffa and the Monastery of the Holy Virgin in Nazareth, are maintained by Abûnâ Girgis al-Antûnî and Abûnâ Isrâîl al-Antûnî, who are the only Egyptians resident in Israel.

8. *The Greek Orthodox Monastery of St. Catherine*

The Greek Orthodox Monastery of St. Catherine, Sinai is an autocephalous archdiocese, *i.e.* it is neither dependent upon the Patriarchate of Alexandria nor upon the Patriarchate of Jerusalem. The Archbishop of Sinai is His Beatitude Porphyrius III, who joined the monastery in 1903. The Sinai monastery is inhabited by eight monks and three novices. The *hegoumenos* and the oldest monk of the monastery is Archimandrite Nikeandros. Best known to visitors is Fr. Moises, the *xenodochos*. As Brother George the Hospitable he used to be in charge of the monastery-garden in the Oasis of Wâdî Feiran. The *skevophylactos* or treasurer of the monastery is Archimandrite Eugenius of Crete and the *oeconomos* is the Archimandrite Dionysius of Cyprus. The new calligraphic notices in the churches within and outside the monastery were painted by Fr. Andreanos of Greece. Fr. Basilios is in charge of the bakery. The responsibility for the churches within the monastery lies with Fr. Jeremias. Deacon Damianos serves as the librarian of the valuable manuscript collection.

Whereas prior to 1917, the Monastery of St. Catherine owned large properties in the Crimea and in Bulgaria, the monastery's wealth, though still considerable, has significantly decreased. The archiepiscopal residence with the Church of St. Catherine is situated at 18 Midân az-Zahîr, Cairo. The assistants to the archbishop are Archimandrite Gregorios and Archimandrite Daniel. At Tor, Sinai, the monastery maintains the Church of St. George, which is under the supervision of Fr. Andreas of Cyprus. On

²⁴ *Al-Akhbar*, Jan. 2, 1965.

the Island of Crete, the monastery possesses three churches, the Church of St. Matthew (Archimandrite Yakobos), the Church of the Holy Trinity (Deacon Elias, who until 1963 served as *oekonomos* at Sinai, and who constructed the water-pipe line from the Dair al-Arbain to the Monastery of St. Catherine), and the Church of the Holy Virgin (Archimandrite Eumenios). On the Island of Zakynthos, off the western shore of Greece, the monastery has the Churches of the Holy Virgin and St. Catherine, which are supervised by Fr. Chrysostomos, who, until 1963, served as *xenodochos* at Sinai. In Yannina (Epiros) in north-western Greece, the monastery's church is dedicated to St. Catherine and is supervised by Fr. Sophronios. On the Island of Chios, the monastery has one church, which is served by Archimandrite Clemens. On the Island of Cyprus, the Monastery of St. Catherine has altogether three properties, which are situated at Kouklia, the ancient city of Paphos, and at Kyrenia, where there are the Churches of St. Marina and St. Paraskevi (Archimandrite Agathangelos). The Church and the land in Tripolis, Lebanon, are maintained by Fr. Callistratos, and the Church of St. John the Baptist in Istanbul, Turkey, is served by Archimandrite Damianos.