

## Wall-Paintings in the Monastic Churches of Judaea

by

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The idea of gathering and listing the wall-paintings in the churches of the Byzantine monasteries of Judaea was first crystallized by Prof. Dr. Anton Baumstark. In his study "Wandmalereien und Tafelbilder im Kloster Mar Saba," Professor Baumstark provides a list of some of the wall-paintings and icons of the Church of the Annunciation in the Monastery of St. Saba, and concludes his article with the suggestion, that this list be completed.<sup>1</sup>

The purpose of this study is to execute this suggestion and to establish an inventory of the wall-paintings of the principal Byzantine churches, and also to list some of the noteworthy icons. A detailed iconographical study and a critical evaluation of the art, however, does not fall into the domain of this article.

Beginning with the Church of the Annunciation, the *Kouvouklion* of St. Saba and the Refectory in the Monastery of St. Saba in the Wâdî an-Nar; we shall list the wall-paintings and the noteworthy icons in the Church of St. Theodosios, Dair Dosî; the Church of SS. John and George of Choziba and the Church of the Holy Virgin in the Monastery of SS. John and George of Choziba in the Wâdî Qilt; the Church of the Annunciation in the Monastery of the Mount of Temptation, Jericho; the Church of St. Gerasimos and the Church of the Holy Family in the Monastery of St. Gerasimos (Qasr Hajla) in the Plain of Jericho; the Church of St. John the Baptist in the Monastery of St. John the Baptist (Qasr al-Jehud) in the Plain of Jericho; the Church of the Colloquy in the Convent of the Colloquy in Bethany; the Church of St. Elias in the Monastery of St. Elias between Jerusalem and Bethlehem; and the Church of the Holy Forefathers in the Monastery of the Holy Forefathers, Hebron.

### *The Church of the Annunciation in the Monastery of St. Saba*

The Church of the Annunciation, also known as the Church of St. Saba, was built in 502 A.D. It is one of the very few churches in Palestine, which escaped destruction. In the beginning of the XVIIIth century, the church was restored by Dositheos II, Patriarch of Jerusalem (1669-1707) and by Chrysanthos, Patriarch of Jerusalem (1707-1731).

*The wall-paintings of the west-narthex of the Church of the Annunciation are:*<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Baumstark, Anton, Wandmalereien und Tafelbilder im Kloster Mar Saba, *Oriens Christianus* N.S. IX, 1920, 123-129.

<sup>2</sup> For convenience sake, we omit the title "Saint" (ΑΓΙΟΣ), which appears in front of all names.



*North-wall*: John, the son of Xenophon, Xenophon, Arcadios, Jacobos the Brother of Christ, Gregory the Theologian, John Chrysostomos, Basilios the Great, Luke the Stylite, Saba, Michael the Archangel, the Apparition of the Virgin to Saba.

*South-wall*: Gabriel the Archangel, the Falling-Asleep of the Holy Virgin, Euthymios, Mary the Wife of Xenophon, Sophia the Mother of Saba.

The four corners of the narthex are adorned with paintings of the Four Evangelists. The ceiling is adorned with wall-paintings of the Transfiguration, the Platytera, the Resurrection and the Philoxenia of Abraham.

*The wall-paintings and icons of the north-narthex of the Church of the Annunciation are:*

*South-wall*: Twelve wall-paintings representing the sacred events mentioned in the Creed.

*East-wall*: Twenty-four icons representing the sacred events mentioned in the Acatistos Hymn.<sup>1</sup>

*North-wall*: Icons of Cyril of Alexandria, Athanasios of Alexandria, Jacobos, Sophronios, the Resurrection, the Crucifixion, the Last Unction, Theophanês Graptos, Theodoros Graptos, Païsios, Abramios, Theodosios Coenobiarch, Euthymios, Saba, John of Damascus, Cosmas the Hymnograph, the Annunciation.

*The wall-paintings of the nave of the Church of the Annunciation are:*<sup>2</sup>

*South-wall (lower row)*: Elias, Antonios the Great, Paul of Thebes, Onuphrios, John of Damascus, Saba, John Climacos, John the Hesychast, Sophia the Mother of Saba, Gerasimos, Abramios, Athanasios of Athos, Theodoros Sykeotis, Moses the Ethiopian, Arsenios, David of Thessalonica, Samuel the Prophet, Simeon Stylitês, Jacobos the Brother of Christ, Simeon Xenodochos, Cosmas, Damianos, Nikephoros, Ananias the Apostle, Joasaph the King of India, John of Choziba, Alexios, Christophoros, Barnabas, Sophronios, George of Choziba.

*South-wall (middle-row)*: Isidoros, Georgios, Saba Stratelatês\*, Eustratios, Auxentios\*, Eugenios\*, Orestes\*, Menas\*, Vikentios\*, Akindinos\*, Pegasios\*, Elpidiphoros\*, Anempodistos\*, Agathonikos (Nicos\*), Callinikos, Martyrios (Mammas\*), Zoson\*, Trophimos\*, Dormeton, Karpos\*, Papylos\*, Leontios, Gordios\*.

*South-wall (upper row)*: In the western part of the south-wall, there are the wall-paintings of four of the Seven Oecumenical Councils.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Acatistos (not sitting, because it was sung standing), the famous hymn in honour of the Holy Virgin consisting of twenty-four stanzas, each beginning with one of the twenty-four letters of the alphabet. The text is based upon the Gospel narrative of the Nativity.

<sup>2</sup> The names marked \* are listed in Baumstark, A., *loc. cit.*

<sup>3</sup> Nicaea (325 A.D.), Constantinople (381 A.D.), Ephesus (431 A.D.), Chalcedon (451 A.D.), Constantinople (553 A.D.), Constantinople (681 A.D.), Nicaea (787 A.D.).



*North-wall (lower row):* Euthymios, Theoctistos, Chariton, Cosmas and Stephanos, Ephraem, Theodosios Coenobiarch, Theodoros Graptos, Theophanês Graptos, John Sabaitês, Poïmen, Arcadios Sabaitês, Sisoës, Macarios, Païsios, Theodoros, Pachomios, Daniel Stylitês, Cýriacos the Hermit, John, Aniketos, Photios, Cyros, Barbara, Barlaam.

*North-wall (middle row):* Demetrios, Arsenios (Artemios\*), Theodoros Tyron\*, Theodoros Stratelatês\*, Gorgias\*, Procopios\*, Markos, Eustathios, Polyeuchos\*, Nicetas\*, Bacchos\*, Abibos, Marcianos, Mamas, Cyprianos\*, Mercurios (Kouros\*), Nestor, Porphyrios (Georgios\*), Hierotheos (Theodoros\*), Panteleemon.

*North-wall (upper row):* In the western part of the north-wall, there are the wall-paintings of three of the Seven Oecumenical Councils.

*Dome:* The dome is adorned with wall-paintings of God the Father with the Celestial Host, *i.e.* Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones, Dominions, Virtues, Powers, Principalities, Archangels, and Angels as well as with personages of the Old Testament.

*The Iconostasis:* The icons are listed from north to south: Peter and Paul, the Synaxis of the Archangels, the Holy Virgin, Christ, John the Baptist, Saba surrounded by twelve church-fathers and hermits.<sup>1</sup> The original set of XVIIth century icons belonging to the iconostasis adorn the west-wall of the nave.

On the south-wall, next to the episcopal throne, there is a new (1964) copy of the Panagia Tricherousa.<sup>2</sup>

### *The Kouvouklion of St. Saba*

The *Kouvouklion* of St. Saba, which was redressed in 1929 by the monk Silvester Sabaitês, has the following wall-paintings and icons:

From left to right: Theophanês Graptos, Theodoros Graptos, Saba (icon), the Falling-Asleep of Saba (icon, 1864), Michael the Archangel, Theodoros of Edessa, John of Damascus, Stephen the Archbishop, Cosmas the Hymnograph, John Colonias, Arcadios, Xenophon, John the son of Xenophon. Moreover, there are six wall-paintings portraying miracles of St. Saba.

### *The Refectory in the Monastery of St. Saba*

The wall-paintings of the refectory are the art-work of Zacharias de Dosperski of Bulgaria (1880).

<sup>1</sup> On the left: Theodosios Coenobiarch, Ephraem the Syrian, Onuphrios, Xenophon, Arcadios, John. On the right: John of Damascus, Cosmas the Hymnograph, Joseph, Chariton, Theodoros Graptos, Theophanês Graptos.

<sup>2</sup> According to tradition, John of Damascus placed his right hand, which had been cut off by the iconoclasts, on an icon portraying the Holy Virgin. The icon of the Virgin restored his hand. The miraculous icon was kept at the Monastery until the XIIth century, when it was taken to Serbia and from there to the Khilandari Monastery, Mount Athos. There, the icon is considered as being the "superior" of the Monastery.



*South-wall (lower-part)*: Dionysios, Anthimos, Athanasios, Antonios, Pachomios, Macarios, Cyriacos.

*South-wall (upper-part)*: The Falling-Asleep of the Holy Virgin.

*West-wall (lower part)*: Theophanès Graptos, Theodoros Graptos, Lazaros Stylitès, Theodoros, Michael the Martyr, Chariton, Maximos the Confessor, John Colonias, Basilios the Great, John Chrysostomos, Gregory the Theologian.

*West-wall (upper part)*: Christ with Luke(?) and Cleopas at Emmaus. Mary and Martha of Bethany.

*North-wall (lower part)*: Cyril of Jerusalem, Sophronios of Jerusalem, Jacobos the Brother of Christ, Spyridon, Cyril of Alexandria, Athanasios of Alexandria.

*North-wall (upper part)*: The Mystical Supper.

*East-wall (lower part)*: Nicolas, Simeon Stylitès, Saba, Euthymios, Theodosios Coenobiarch, Daniel Stylitès, John of Damascus, Gerasimos, Alypios, John the son of Xenophon, Xenophon, Arcadios, Luke Stylitès, Ephraem the Syrian.

*East-wall (upper part)*: The Holy Virgin with the Angels and Archangels. Christ and the Apostles at the Lake of Galilee.

*Southern dome*: The Transfiguration, the Philoxenia of Abraham, the Ascension, the Resurrection.

*Northern dome*: The Baptism of Christ, the Annunciation, the Nativity, the Trinity.

The corners of the two domes are adorned by wall-paintings of the Apostles.

*The Church of St. Theodosios in the Monastery of St. Theodosios (Dair Dosi)*

In 1914, construction of the new Church of St. Theodosios was begun. The church was consecrated on October 28th, 1955. The church has no wall-paintings, and the following list enumerates the principal icons.

*South-wall*: Sophronios of Jerusalem, the Three Hierarchs, Athanasios of Alexandria and Cyril of Alexandria.

*West-wall*: The Falling-Asleep of the Holy Virgin, Christ's Entry into Jerusalem, the Falling-Asleep of St. Theodosios.

*North-wall*: The Life of St. Theodosios (six miniatures), Theodosios Coenobiarch, Modestos of Jerusalem, Euphrosyne.

*The Iconostasis*: The icons are listed from north to south: The Holy Virgin (1762), Saba, the Holy Virgin, the Annunciation, Christ, John the Baptist, Bartholomew,<sup>1</sup> Christ (1762).

In the Cave-church of St. Theodosios, north of the altar, there is a copy (1909) of the icon of the Holy Virgin of Iviron, known as the Portaitissa.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The monastery and the church were restored by Bartholomew, Archbishop of Madaba, who also resides in the monastery.

<sup>2</sup> The Portaitissa or Thyrra, "the Guardian of the Gate" is the icon of the Holy Virgin above the gates of the Monastery of Vatopedi and the Monastery of Iviron



*The Church of SS. John and George of Choziba in the Monastery of SS. John and George of Choziba*

Known at one time as the Church of St. Stephen the Protomartyr, the Church of SS. John and George of Choziba is a square building, which was restored by Callinicos, a Greek monk, who settled in the Wādī Qilt in the latter part of the XIXth century.

*North-wall:* Joachim and Anne.

*West-wall:* George, Demetrios, Theodoros.

*Dome:* The Platytera surrounded by the Holy Forefathers and the Holy Apostles. Noteworthy are the icons of SS. John and George of Choziba and of SS. Barbara, Helena, Constantine and Pareskeve.

*The Church of the Holy Virgin in the Monastery of SS. John and George of Choziba*

The walls of the nave are adorned with wall-paintings of the XIXth and XXth century, many of which were painted by Dionysios, a Russian artist.

*North-wall (lower part):* Aberkios of Hieropolis, Athanasios of Athos, Cosmas and Damianos, the Holy Virgin, Joachim,<sup>1</sup> unidentified Saint,<sup>1</sup> Gerasimos.<sup>1</sup>

*North-wall (upper part):* The Baptism of Christ, the Raising of Lazarus, the First Miracle at Canaa, the Transfiguration, Christ's Entry into Jerusalem, the Ascension.

*West-wall (lower part):* John Colobos, John and George of Choziba, Charalampos, Theoctistos, Theodosios Coenobiarch, Zosimos and Mary the Egyptian.

*West-wall (upper part):* The Falling-Asleep of the Holy Virgin, the Resurrection, the Zoodochos Pegi.<sup>2</sup>

*South-wall (lower part):* Joannes and Barsanuphrios, Joasaph and Barlaam, Martinios, Callinicos, Chariton, Cyriacos, Saba, Laurentios, Stephanos, Euthymios, Panteleemon, John of Choziba.

*South-wall (upper part):* The Presentation of Christ in the Temple, Mary and Elizabeth, Daniel Stylitês, Xenophon, Arcadios, John the Son of Xenophon, the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste, Thomaïs, Euphrosyne and Matrona, Metrophanês of Constantinople.

The walls of the sanctuary are adorned with the following paintings:

*North-wall:* Athanasios of Alexandria, Cyril of Alexandria, Epiphanius of Cyprus, Nicolas, the Sacrifice of Abraham.

(Mt. Athos). During the Greek War of Independence, a Turkish soldier fired a shot at the icon of Vatopedi. The Virgin was wounded in the neck, from which blood flowed, which was piously collected. The Portaitissa of Iviron was wounded in her cheek. The soldier was found some days later hanged on a tree near the Monastery.

<sup>1</sup> These paintings are considerable older and belong to the period prior to the restauration of the monastery.

<sup>2</sup> "The life-giving spring." The name of the miraculous icon of the Holy Virgin, the Blacherniotissa, at the well in front of the gate of Constantinople.



*South-wall*: The two Theodori, Eustathios Stratelâtês, Georgios, Demetrios, Parmenos, Nicanor, Constantine and Helena, and above these paintings: The Philoxenia of Abraham and Gethsemane.

The *semi-dome* of the sanctuary is adorned with wall-paintings of the Presentation of the Holy Virgin in the Temple, Christ and the Annunciation, and below these paintings, there are those of Jacobos the Brother of Christ, Spyridon, Gregory the Theologian, John Chrysostomos, Basilios the Great, Callinicos of Constantinople, Modestos of Jerusalem and the Archangel Michael.

The *iconostasis* is of recent date (1942), except for the Royal Doors with the icons of the Annunciation, Gregory the Theologian, John Chrysostomos, Basilios the Great and Nicolas, which are attributed to the XIIth century.

The most noteworthy icons in the Church of the Holy Virgin are: The Falling-Asleep of St. George of Choziba with Sophronios of Jerusalem, John Chrysostomos, Saba, Nicolas, Andreas and Panteleemon.

The icons of the *south-narthex*: The Falling-Asleep of the Holy Virgin, the Platytera, Euthymios, the Nativity of Christ, Joasaph, Peter and Paul, Gerasimos, George of Choziba, Anne, Nicolas, Mary the Egyptian, the Resurrection, Barbara, Paul.

*The Church of the Annunciation in the Monastery of the Mount  
of Temptation, Jericho*

The Cave-church of the Annunciation is built upon the site of an older church. The church, which was constructed by Abraham, the first hegoumenos of the monastery after its reconstruction, was consecrated in 1904. The church has no wall-paintings.

*The Iconostasis*: The icons are listed from north to south: Michael the Archangel, the Bodiless Living Creatures, the Annunciation, the Platytera, Christ, John the Baptist, Gabriel the Archangel, Abramios Eremitês.

On the *west-wall*, there is a collection of 107 small icons. The two pilae, which support the dome, are adorned with the icons of George, the Holy Virgin, Christ, John the Baptist, the Temptation of Christ.

In the southern part of the Church of the Annunciation, there are thirteen steps which lead up to the *Chapel of the Temptation of Christ*. Above the traditional stone, upon which Christ is believed to have sat, there is a wall-painting of the Temptation of Christ. The most noteworthy icons of the chapel are: Nyphon, Peter, the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste, Christ, the Holy Trinity, the Holy Virgin, the Falling-Asleep of the Holy Virgin, the Temptation of Christ.

*The Church of the Holy Family in the Monastery of St. Gerasimos  
(Qasr Hajla)*

On the ground-floor, below the narthex of the Church of St. Gerasimos, there is the Church of the Holy Family, which was built in commemoration of the stay of the Holy Family on their Flight to Egypt.



*The iconostasis:* The Philoxenia of Abraham, Euthymios and Saba, Catherine, the Mystical Supper, Zosimos and Mary the Egyptian, the Three Hierarchs, Joasaph.<sup>1</sup>

*The Church of St. Gerasimos in the Monastery of St. Gerasimos  
(Qasr Hajla)*

*North-wall (lower part):* George of Choziba, John of Choziba, Martianos, Antipas, Panteleemon, Theodoros Studitês, Simeon, Gennadios, Zosimos and Mary the Egyptian.

*North-wall (upper part):* The Nailing of Christ to the Cross, Elias the Prophet.

*West-wall (lower part):* Daniel Stylitês, Simeon Stylitês, Alypios Stylitês, John of Damascus, Cosmas, Conon, Luke Stylitês.

*West-wall (upper part):* The Holy Trinity, Christ before Pontius Pilate.

*South-wall (lower part):* Stephanos, Theodoros, Angelos and Pachomios, Hilarion and Thomas, Arsenios and Theodosios Coenobiarch, Chariton.

*South-wall (upper part):* The Nativity of Christ, the Baptism of Christ.

The four *pilae*, which support the dome of the church, are adorned with wall-paintings.

*North-east pila:* Isidoros, John Climacos, George, Saba.

*South-east pila:* Damianos, Euthymios, John.

*North-west pila:* Theoctistos, Serapion, Antonios, the Holy Virgin. Below the latter, the Flight of the Holy Family to Egypt.

*South-west pila:* Gerasimos, Onuphrios, Simeon, Christ. Below the latter, Christ and St. Photine, the Woman of Samaria.

*The iconostasis:* The icons are listed from north to south: Zosimos and Mary the Egyptian, Gerasimos, the Holy Virgin, Christ, John the Baptist, the Annunciation, Euthymios.

*The Church of St. John the Baptist in the Monastery of St. John the Baptist  
(Qasr al-Jehud)*

The barrel-vaulted nave of the church has no wall-paintings. However, the walls are adorned with icons.

*North-wall:* Peter, the Baptism of Christ, the Resurrection, Mary and Peter and Philip, Seraphim Moscovitês, the Holy Virgin, Mary of Egypt, John the Baptist, the Holy Virgin, the Annunciation, Theodoros and Dositheos, the Nativity, the Glycophylousa, the Falling-Asleep of the Holy Virgin and eleven small icons.

*South-wall:* Paul, Christ's Entry into Jerusalem, the Transfiguration, Cosmas and Damianos, John the Baptist, the Baptism of Christ,

<sup>1</sup> In addition, there are icons of the Bodiless Living Creatures, the Holy Virgin, Christ and the Flight of the Holy Family. Note the omission of the Holy Virgin and St. John the Baptist from the iconostasis.



John the Baptist, Christ, the Head of John the Baptist, Spyridon, Gerasimos and Dionysios.

The *iconostasis* (1875) is adorned with forty-four icons showing scenes of the Life of Christ and the Lives of the Saints.

*The Church of the Colloquy in the Convent of the Colloquy in Bethany*

The Church of the Colloquy was built in 1879 by the Archimandrite Spyridon. The spacious *narthex* is adorned with the following icons:

*North-wall*: The Philoxenia of Abraham, the Ascension, the Holy Virgin, the Martyrdom of St. Stephen, Seraphim Moscovitès.

*South-wall*: The Colloquy at Bethany.

*East-wall*: On either side of the door to the nave, there are wall-paintings of the Archangels Michael and Gabriel.

The nave of the church is richly adorned with wall-paintings, most of which are the work of Païsius Damianos (1950).

*South-transept*: Jacobos the Brother of Christ, John of Damascus, Theoctistos, Hilarion, Gerasimos, Saba, Euthymios, Theodosios Coenobiarch, Antonios the Great.

*South-transept (upper part)*: The Raising of Lazarus in Bethany.

*South-wall*: Catherine, Demetrios and George.

*South-wall (upper part)*: The Colloquy at Bethany.

*West-wall*: Pelagia, Constantine and Helena.

*West-wall (upper part)*: The Ascension.

*North-wall*: Barbara, Theophania, Thecla.

*North-wall (upper part)*: The Resurrection.

*North-transept*: Febronia, Eirene, Theoctiste, Melania, Zosimos and Mary the Egyptian, Juvenalios of Jerusalem, Modestos of Jerusalem.

*North-transept (upper part)*: Christ's Entry into Jerusalem.

*The Iconostasis*: The icons are listed from north to south: The Raising of Lazarus, Meletios, the Holy Virgin, Christ, Spyridon, the Colloquy.

The most noteworthy icons in the nave of the Church of the Colloquy are:

*South-wall*: The Raising of Lazarus, the Holy Virgin.

*North-wall*: Panteleemon, the Colloquy, Paul the Apostle, the Annunciation, Mary Magdalene, Euphemia, Marnilla, Athanasios, Febronia and Thecla, Euphrosyne and Eupraxia.

*The Church of St. Elias in the Monastery of St. Elias between Jerusalem and Bethlehem*

The Church of St. Elias was restored by Bartholomew, Archbishop of Madaba, in 1939. Several icons in the church were damaged by the Arabs during the Palestinian war of 1948. The church has no wall-paintings, though there are numerous icons, which are noteworthy.

*South-wall*: John the Baptist, Athanasios of Alexandria, Cyril of Alexandria, Markos of Ephesus, George, the Holy Virgin. Here also is kept



an iron chain, which is attributed as being the Chain of St. George's horse.<sup>1</sup>

*North-wall:* The Entombment of Christ, Christ the Highpriest, the miracle-working icon of St. Elias, the Holy Virgin, Elias on Mount Carmel.

*West-wall:* The Holy Trinity, Six miniatures of the Passion of Christ.

*The Iconostasis:* The icons are listed from north to south: Nicolas, Michael the Archangel, the Three Hierarchs, Elias, the Holy Virgin, Christ, John the Baptist, Jacobos the Brother of Christ, George and Demetrios, the Synaxis of the Holy Apostles.

*The Church of the Holy Forefathers in the Monastery of the Holy Forefathers in Hebron*

On November 1, 1886, Antonin Kapuctin, who was in charge of the Russian Spiritual Mission to Palestine, purchased the site from Ibrâhîm Šaludî. The construction of the church was begun in 1906. In 1925, the Church of the Holy Forefathers was consecrated by Damianos I, Patriarch of Jerusalem. The church has three altars, which are dedicated to the Philoxenia of Abraham (north), the Holy Forefathers (centre) and the Holy Trinity (south).

The marble *Iconostasis* is adorned with the following icons:

*The Sanctuary of the Philoxenia of Abraham:* Laurentios the Deacon, the Holy Virgin, Christ, Stephen the Protomartyr. The *Royal Door* is adorned with the icons of: Bartholomew, Jude, Jacobos, John, Matthew, Simon.

*The Sanctuary of the Holy Forefathers:* Rachel, Rebecca, Sarah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob. Below these icons, there are those of: Melchisedek, the Sacrifice of Abraham, the Holy Virgin, Christ, the Philoxenia of Abraham, Abraham.

*The Sanctuary of the Holy Trinity:* Gabriel the Archangel, the Holy Virgin, Christ, Michael the Archangel. The *Royal Door* is adorned with the icons of: Andrew, Philip, Peter, Paul, Jacobos, Thomas.

Between the Sanctuary of the Philoxenia of Abraham and the Sanctuary of the Holy Forefathers, there are the icons of Seraphim, Alexander Nevsky and the Head of John the Baptist. Between the Sanctuary of the Holy Forefathers and the Sanctuary of the Holy Trinity, there are the icons of the Philoxenia of Abraham, the Holy Virgin, Mary and Elizabeth, and Alexis of Moscow.

*North-wall of the nave:* The Holy Virgin, Panteleemon, Germanos and Sergios of Moscow, Laurentios, the Holy Trinity, Zacharias and Elizabeth.

<sup>1</sup> The miraculous Chain of St. George's horse is shown in many churches throughout the Orient. *E.g.* in Cairo, the Greek Orthodox Church of St. George in Old Cairo, the Coptic Orthodox Convent of St. George in Old Cairo; in Jerusalem, the Coptic Orthodox Church of St. Dimianah; in Bethlehem, the Greek Orthodox Church of St. George al-Khadr.



*South-wall of the nave:* Christ, George and Demetrios, the Holy Virgin, Stephen the Protomartyr, the Holy Virgin.

Most of the Byzantine monastic churches in Judaea were either rebuilt or redressed in the latter part of the XIXth century. Therefore, the wall-paintings, which we have described, are almost all of recent origin. Only in some instances, *e.g.* at the Monastery of SS. John and George of Choziba can we still see some of the mediaeval wall-paintings.<sup>1</sup>

It is desirable, however, that some day a complete inventory of the still existing Vth–VIIth century and XIth–XIIth century Byzantine wall-paintings can be established. For that matter, this work is really pressing, since many vestiges of the Byzantine Period are rapidly disappearing in our days, largely on account of the devastations by the Arabs. I am thinking here particularly of the wall-paintings in the laurae and hermitages, *e.g.* the Laura of St. John the Hesychast in the Wādî an-Nar, the Monastery of St. Theoctistos in the Wādî Mukellik, the Scete of St. Anne in the Wādî Qilt, etc. The rapid deterioration of the wall-paintings of the Cave-church of St. Euthymios at Khirbet Mird illustrates this point. In 1936, Andreas E. Mader could still identify twenty-seven of the original thirty-six wall-paintings of the church.<sup>2</sup> In 1965, I was able to identify ten wall-paintings, the other seventeen having been destroyed in the past thirty years.

<sup>1</sup> These wall-paintings may be attributed to the latter part of the XIIth century, when in the course of the restoration of many Byzantine churches in Palestine by Manuel Comnenus, also this monastery was rebuilt.

<sup>2</sup> Mader, Andreas E., "Ein Bilderzyklus in der Gräberhöhle der St. Euthymios-laura auf Mardes", *Oriens Christianus*, XXXIV, 1937, 27–58, 192–212.