

**THE COPTIC CHURCH TOWARDS THE END OF THE
20th CENTURY:
FROM A NATIONAL TO AN INTERNATIONAL
CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY**

By
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With this rather pretentious title I do not claim to be able to supply a complete and an all inclusive account of the various aspects of the Coptic Church during the second half of the 20th century. In fact, I shall limit this essay to a few pertinent issues which might be considered as a kind of supplement to my recent contribution on «Aspects of the Popular Religion in the Light of the Present Coptic Renaissance».¹

Four important concerns have determined recent developments within the Coptic Church. These shall be presented in the following pages. There exists the deep and profound interest of Pope Shenûdah III to erase the blemish, the stains of heterodoxy or even of heresy from the historical and popular anathematisations of Western and Byzantine Christians. The numerous christological and theological debates, conferences and communiques with Roman Catholic, the non-Chalcedonian and Byzantine Orthodox hierarchs and theologians are clear evidence of the desire of the Copts to be fully and unequivocally accepted as Orthodox Christians by all members of World-Christianity, both Occidental and Oriental.

The second chapter deals with the Coptic Church of the Emigration, a new and dynamic development of the second half of the 20th century. Although not fully complete and up-to-date because of the progressing and evolutionary nature of the Coptic emigration, the listing of the Coptic

1. Meinardus, O., *op. cit.*, *Texts and Studies*, VIII-X, 1989-1991, 410-445. *Ἐκκλησία καὶ Θεολογία*, Vol. XII (1993-94).

Ἐκκλησία καὶ Θεολογία Vol. XII (1993)



His Holiness Pope Shenûdah II

communities overseas, in Europe, the United States of America, Canada and Australia constitutes an attempt to provide an idea of the world-wide ministry of the Coptic Church under the leadership of Pope Shenûdah III.

In the third chapter I shall attempt to throw some light upon the recent missionary efforts of the Coptic Church in Africa. Special attention is given to the historic relationship of the Coptic Church to Ethiopian Christianity. The fourth and final chapter is devoted to the thorny questions of the Copts in the Holy Land, their property rights and claims throughout the centuries. This background information is vitally important on account of the present considerations pertaining to some of the Coptic claims in Jerusalem. These issues are relevant for the Coptic ecclesiastical relations to the Church of Ethiopia and Egypt's political relations to the State of Israel!

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I. The Oecumenical Efforts of the Coptic Church: Towards the «mia physis»

The recent theological activities of the hierarchs and theologians of the Coptic Church for the purpose of discussing mainly christological but also ecclesiological issues with members of the Western and Byzantine Churches were instigated by Pope Shenūdah III. Motivated by the desire to enter into a meaningful dialogue with the other churches Pope Shenūdah III expected from these meetings and conferences a better understanding of the historical, theological and non-theological factors which have led to the Coptic position.

These theological discussions were conducted during the past twenty years with representatives of the Roman Catholic Church, the Greek Orthodox Church and the non-Chalcedonian or Oriental Orthodox Churches.

The relationship of the Roman Catholic Church to the Coptic Church can be traced to the 15th century. Throughout the past centuries it was the aim of the See of St. Peter to unite the so-called schismatic Copts with the «Mother Church of Rome». The first approach towards union with the Church of Rome was made in 1439. The Coptic Pope John XI (1427-1451) had commissioned Yuhannes, hegoumenos of the Red Sea Monastery of St. Antony to attend as an observer the Council of Florence. Although the Greek delegates had already departed, a decree was issued stating the reunion of the Coptic Church with the other churches. The desert father from Mount Clysma signed the «Act of Union», which united Latins, Greeks and Jacobites. At least for a few days, the whole of Christendom was united.² During the patriarchate of Anbā Ghobrīāl VII (1515-1568) Pope Pius VI (1561) sent two Jesuits, Christopher Rodriguez and John Baptist Eliano, to negotiate the submission of the Coptic Church to the See of Rome. The attempt failed, although several years later the issue was taken up again in 1582 by the Coptic Pope John XIV.

In 1630 a Capuchin mission was established in Cairo. The purpose was to penetrate the Coptic desert monasteries, especially the Monastery of St. Antony and the Monastery of St. Macarius. The strategy was to bring the Coptic desert fathers to accept the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church, thereby automatically effecting the union with the See of Rome, since the leadership, the bishops and the pope were chosen from the desert monks.³ In 1636, Fr. Agathangelus, ofm, stayed for the period of four

2. Hofmann, G., «Kopten und Äthiopier auf dem Konzil von Florenz», *Orient. Christ. Period.*, VIII, 1942, 11-24.

3. Meinardus, O., «The Capuchin Missionary Efforts in the Coptic Monasteries», *Studia Orient. Christiana, Collectanea*, 20, 1987, 187-202.

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months in the Monastery of St. Antony, where two of the fifteen Coptic monks are said to have become Roman Catholics. However, the prospect of reconciliation with the Coptic Church was wrecked by the evil conduct of the Latin residents in Egypt and of the Consul of France in particular.⁴ In 1741, Athanasius, the Coptic Archbishop of Jerusalem (1725-1766), accepted the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. Thereupon, Pope Benedict XIV consecrated him the first Coptic Catholic Metropolitan for Egypt. However, Athanasius continued his residence in Jerusalem and appointed a priest named Yustus Maraglic as his vicar general in Egypt.⁵ In the 18th century, Raphael Tukhî of Girga edited and published Coptic liturgical texts in Rome and was awarded the titular bishopric of Antinoë. In 1824, Maximus Joed was nominated Catholic Patriarch of Alexandria, but the nomination was not put into effect. Thirty years later, in 1854, Pope Pius IX nominated Athanasius Khusam as administrator of the Catholic Copts.

The Coptic Catholic Patriarchate of Alexandria was finally established in 1895 by the apostolic letter «Christi Domini». In 1908 the Coptic Catholic Patriarch Cyril II Macarius resigned and the patriarchal throne remained vacant until the nomination of Patriarch Marcus Khusam in 1947. He was followed in 1958 by Anbâ Stephanus I Sidarus who occupied the throne until 1986. Presently the Coptic Catholic Patriarch is Anbâ Stephanus II Ghattas. In comparison to the Orthodox Copts the number of Coptic Catholic members appears almost negligible and unimportant. At the same time the influence of this church is considerably more significant than the mere number of members show. The church claims 147.000 members in seven dioceses. The patriarchal diocese of Alexandria (Anbâ Stephanus II) with 35 parishes, 78 priests and 37.000 members; the diocese of Asyût (Anbâ Yûhanna Nuer, ofm) with 46 parishes, 38 priests and 35.547 members; the diocese of Luxor (Anbâ Ighnatiûs Yaquûb) with 19 parishes, 22 priests and 18.000 members; the diocese of Minya (Anbâ Antûniûs Naguib) with 23 parishes, 32 priests and 21.631 members; the diocese of Ismailia (Anbâ Athanâsiûs Abadir) with 9 parishes, 4 priests and 5.000 members and the diocese of Sôhag (Anbâ Murqus Hakîm, ofm) with 22 parishes, 18 priests and 13.000 members.⁶ There is no doubt that the mere existence, but especially the growth, the missionary outreach and the

4. Coppin, J., *Relation des voyages fait dans la Turquie, la Thèbaïde, etc.*, Lyons, 1720, 307. Meinardus, O., *Monks and Monasteries of the Egyptian Deserts*. Cairo, 1961, 48.

5. Meinardus, O., *The Copts in Jerusalem*. Cairo, 1960, 38. Also Edith L. Butcher, *The Story of the Church of Egypt*. London, 1897, II, 315.

6. *Der Christliche Osten*, Würzburg, XLI, 1986, 5/6, 276.

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social and educational efforts of the Coptic Catholic Church constitute a certain threat to the otherwise harmonious relations of the Copts with the See of Rome.

In view of the rather ambivalent history of the Roman Catholic-Coptic Orthodox relationships, the recent oecumenical developments are remarkable and should be evaluated as a serious theological effort of both parties concerned. Special mention must be made of the pioneer work of the ecclesiastical foundation «Pro Oriente» under the chairmanship of Franz Cardinal König of Vienna/Austria and Professor Dr. Philipp Harnun-court. Beginning in 1971 Roman Catholic and Coptic Orthodox theologians have regularly convened to discuss the very theological issues which had separated the two churches since the decisions of the Fourth Oecumenical Council of Chalcedon in 451. Between 1971 and 1988 these theologians, hierarchs and professors have met five times. In October 1991 over 120 Roman Catholic and non-Chalcedonian theologians, Copts, Ethiopians, Armenians, Syrians and Indians met in Dair Anbâ Bishoî, Wâdî 'n-Natrûn, to clarify the terminology and the content of the 5th century statements, to agree on the «μία φύσις» christology⁷ and to end the historic theological and popular polemic which for centuries had mistakenly accused the Copts for denying the «human nature» of Jesus Christ. Agreement was reached that the christological mystery was expressed in different words and in different traditions, though adhering to the same fundamental faith.

From May 4-10, 1973 Pope Shenûdah III accompanied by eight Egyptian and two Ethiopian metropolitans visited the Vatican where they were graciously received by Pope Paul VI. At this occasion the two pontiffs signed the document of agreement pertaining to the meaning of the christological formula of St. Cyril of Alexandria, the famous «Μία φύσις τοῦ Θεοῦ Λόγου σεσαρκωμένη». This was the first time since 451 that an Egyptian pope had visited the Holy See of Rome. During the celebrations in commemoration of the 1.600 anniversary of the death of St. Athanasius the Great, Pope Paul VI presented Pope Shenûdah III with a finger relic of the great church-father and 25th Egyptian Pope of Alexandria. This precious relic reposes on the groundfloor of the Coptic Cathedral of St. Mark in Abbasiyah, Cairo. At the same time, the two pontiffs initiated a theological study commission to support the Roman Catholic and Coptic Orthodox consultations of «Pro Oriente». This new commission met in Cairo

7. It was St. Cyril of Alexandria who coined the statement «Μία φύσις (ὑπόστασις) τοῦ Θεοῦ Λόγου σεσαρκωμένη», one nature of the incarnate God-Logos.

from March 26-30, 1974, again studying and debating the issues of the creedal statements of the Early Church.

Following up on these initial contacts and discussions, Franz Cardinal König visited Pope Shenûdah III in Cairo in November 1975. A delegation of Coptic bishops met with Roman Catholic theologians in Rome in June 1979. Problems pertaining to the relationship of the Orthodox Copts to the Catholic Copts were discussed by a joint committee from October 27-November 1, 1975 in Dair Anbâ Ruwais, Abbasiyah. A year later, in August 1976, three Coptic bishops met for the third 'Pro Oriente' conference with the Roman Catholic theologians in Vienna. After having reached a consensus on an acceptable christological formula, discussions were held in 1978 between Orthodox and Catholic Copts about the theology of the means of grace, the holy sacraments and their relation to a believer's salvation. The 1978 meeting (September) under the aegis of 'Pro Oriente' was primarily concerned with ecclesiological questions of church leadership in the East and in the West.

The Dialogue Commission consisting of eight Coptic Orthodox bishops, two lay-theologians and five delegates each from the Coptic Catholic and the Roman Catholic Church convened for the seventh time under the joint chairmanship of Bishop Bishoî of Damietta, Secretary of the Holy Synod, and Msgr. Pierre Duprey, Secretary of the Pontifical Council for Christian Unity, in April 1991 in Dair Anbâ Bishoî, Wadî 'n-Natrûn. On the agenda were such pressing theological issues as the different views regarding purgatory, the *filioque*, the Immaculata and the sinlessness of the Holy Virgin. On the occasion of the 20th anniversary of Pope Shenûdah's accession to the throne of St. Mark in the fall of 1991, Franz Cardinal König conferred upon him the honorary title of «Protector of Pro Oriente». 120 Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Coptic, Armenian, Ethiopian, Syrian and Indian bishops and theologians followed the invitation of Pope Shenûdah III to come to Dair Anbâ Bishoî in October 1991 to end once and for all times the christological polemic, to remove the mutual anathemas and to discuss the questions of mixed marriages and rebaptisms for those changing their ecclesiastical affiliation. It was also agreed that these consultations should continue on an annual basis for the next few years.⁸

The relationships of the Coptic Church to the other non-Chalcedonian sister churches, the Ethiopians, Armenians, Indians and Syrians are neither strained nor clouded by christological or theological issues. On the

8. The Communiqué of the seminars about the Councils by Pro Oriente in *St. Markus*, Kröffelbach, Sept. 1992, 21-26.

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contrary, non-Chalcedonian oecumenicity used to be practised in the Desert of Scetis, the Wâdy 'n-Natrûn, from the 11th – 13th century when Nubians and Ethiopians (Dair Mâr Elias), Syrians (Dair as-Suriân) and Armenians (visit of Gregory II) lived in harmony with the Coptic desert fathers.

In January 1959 Anbâ Ighnâtiûs XXXIX Yaqûb III Sawîrûs, Patriarch of the Syrian Orthodox Church, visited Pope Cyril VI and the Dair as-Suriân⁹). Two years later, in May 1961, Pope Cyril VI followed an invitation by the Syrian Orthodox Patriarch to visit Damascus.¹⁰ At the first conference of the non-Chalcedonian churches in January 1965 in Addis Ababa under the chairmanship of Pope Cyril VI it was agreed among other things that the Coptic Church should increase all efforts for missionary work among the new nations of the African continent. A follow-up conference of the non-Chalcedonian churches was held in Cairo in January 1966.

The relations with the Ethiopian Church are dealt with in the discussions on «Coptic African Missions» and the «Copts in the Holy Land». The relations with the Syrian Orthodox Church were always friendly. The practice of exchanging synodical letters between Alexandria and Antioch can be traced back to the 3rd century, when Dionysius the Wise of Alexandria sent a letter to Fabius of Antioch informing him of the stories of the martyrs during the persecutions of the Emperor Decius in 250. Apart from a small number of Syrians who came to Egypt in the 3rd and 4th centuries, a Syrian colony emerged in the 7th century in and around Alexandria, especially in the famous Ennaton. Today, the Syrian Orthodox community in Egypt is very small and the Syrian bishop in Cairo is Anbâ Sawîrus Hara.¹¹ It was Pope Shenûdah III who in 1972 adopted for the Coptic monks the traditional Syrian clerical black cap, the *qolunsua* with the thirteen embroidered yellow or white crosses symbolizing Christ and the Twelve Apostles.¹²

The relationship of the Egyptians to the Armenians can be traced to the Justinian period. An Armenian general, Nerseh Pasentzi, is said to have conquered parts of Africa. During the Fatimid period, the Armenian community spread from one part of the country to the other and Armenian churches were built throughout the Nile Valley.¹³ Today the Arme-

9. Meinardus, O., *Monks and Monasteries, etc.*, 281.

10. *Al-Ahram*, May 1961.

11. Meinardus, O., *Christian Egypt Ancient and Modern*, Cairo, 1977, 555-556.

12. It is noteworthy that more than 100 monks of the Dair Abû Maqâr under the leadership of Abûnâ Mattâ al-Miskîn do not wear the *qolunsua*, which is said to have originated from St. Antony.

13. Meinardus, O., *op. cit.*, 552-555.

nian community has significantly decreased in numbers and in influence. In the conferences of the non-Chalcedonian churches the Armenians have actively participated. In February 1967, the Armenian Catholicus of Sis (Antelias) convened in Beirut a General Synod of all non-Chalcedonian churches where the principal christological and ecclesiological issues were being discussed.

The relationship of the Coptic Church to the Greek Orthodox Church in Egypt is somewhat complicated on account of the long history of distrust, antagonisms and mutual prejudices and rebukes. As a result of the decisions of the Fourth Oecumenical Council in 451, the Egyptians appointed their own Pope of Alexandria. On the other hand, the Byzantines consecrated a successor to Dioscorus who had been deposed by the Council. Thus it came about that since the 5th century there are two lines of Popes of Alexandria, one Chalcedonian or Byzantine and one non-Chalcedonian or Egyptian (Coptic) pope. For many centuries, especially during the early Middle Ages, these two Alexandrian sees competed with each other for being the legitimate Christian representatives at the Islamic courts.

At present, the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria comprises twelve metropolitans and one bishop. The head of the Alexandrian Patriarchate is «Parthenios III, the Most Blessed, Most Divine and All-Holy, Pope and Patriarch of the Great City of Alexandria, of Libya, the Pentapolis, Ethiopia and all the Land of Egypt, Father of fathers, Shepherd of shepherds... Thirteenth Apostle and Judge of All the Earth...» Once numerous and influential, the Greek community in Egypt has been considerably reduced through the exodus of large numbers of Greeks to other countries.¹⁴

During the past thirty years there have been numerous meetings and conferences of Coptic churchmen with the hierarchs of the Byzantine Orthodox churches. A Coptic delegation was invited as observers at the Pan-Orthodox Conference at Rhodes in September 1961. For the millennial celebrations of the monastic Republic of Haghion Oros, Pope Cyril VI sent Bishop Shenûdah (the later Pope) to represent the Coptic Church. In October 1972 Pope Shenûdah III paid a visit to the patriarchs of Moscow, Constantinople, Bukarest, Tiflis and the Armenian Catholicus in Erivan.

Important for the oecumenical dialogue between the Coptic Church and the Byzantine churches were the four unofficial consultations of theologians of the two Orthodox families in Aarhus 1964, Bristol 1967, Geneva

14. Meinardus, O., *op. cit.*, 549-552.

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1970 and Addis Ababa 1971.¹⁵ The first official «Joint Commission of the Theological Dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches» took place in Chambésy from December 10-15, 1985. Co-presidents of the Commission were Anbâ Bishoî, Bishop of Damietta for the Coptic Church and Professor Dr. Chrysostomos Konstantinides, Metropolitan of Myra for the Oecumenical Patriarchate.¹⁶ The second meeting of the Joint Commission took place at the Dair Anbâ Bishoî from June 20-24, 1989. The 23 participants came from 13 countries and represented 13 churches. The meetings were co-chaired by Bishop Bishoî of Damietta and by Metropolitan Damaskinos of Switzerland. Agreement was reached on the christological formula of St. Cyril of Alexandria, the famous «μία φύσις τοῦ Θεοῦ λόγου σεσαρκωμένη». Moreover they agreed on the use of the four following adverbs which qualify the mystery of the hypostatic union belonging to our common tradition, without confusion (ἀσυγχύτως), without change (ἀτρέπτως), without separation (ἀχωρίστως) and without division (ἀδιαιρέτως). Those among us who speak of two natures in Christ, do not thereby deny their inseparable, indivisible union; those among us who speak of one united divine-human nature in Christ do not thereby deny the continuing dynamic presence in Christ of the divine and the human, without change, without confusion. We are agreed also in our understanding of the Person and Work of God the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from the Father alone, and is always adored with the Father and the Son.¹⁷

The third meeting of the Joint Commission of the Theological Dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches took place from September 23-28, 1990 at the Orthodox Centre of the Oecumenical Patriarchate in Geneva.¹⁸ At this meeting a report by the Joint Pastoral Sub-Committee was received which had met in Egypt in Dair Anbâ Bishoî from January 31 – February 4, 1990. The declarations were signed by the Metropolitan Damaskinos of Switzerland, Bishop Bishoî of Damietta, Metropolitan Petros of Axum, Mâr Yuhâna Ibrâhîm of Aleppo, Professor V. Phidas and Mr. Joseph M. Faltas. On the agenda were discussions pertaining to the preparation for unity, the relations to the World Council of Churches and the other Christian Churches, cooperation

15. *Greek Orthodox Review*, X, 2, 64/65; XIII, 2, 68; XVI, 1,2,71.

16. «Christologie gemäss dem Verständnis der nicht-chalcedonischen orthodoxen Kirchen», Kröffelbach, 1988.

17. *St. Markus*, Kröffelbach, Dec. 1989, 17-19; June 1990, 20-22.

18. *St. Markus*, Kröffelbach, March 1990, 21-24. *Irènikon*, 63, 1990, 362-364.

in the propagation of the common faith and tradition and the service to the social and economic issues of the world.¹⁹

From «mono» to «mia»! Until recently the Copts were spoken of as «Monophysites», an incorrect description for it placed the Copts into the christological vicinity of the Eutychian heresy. Monophysitism suggests the exclusion of all natures, miaphysitism, on the contrary suggests the one united nature as St. Cyril used to say: «*Μία φύσις τοῦ Θεοῦ Λόγου σεσαρκωμένη*».²⁰

II. The Coptic Emigration

The Coptic Emigration²¹ during the second half of the 20th century is undoubtedly one of the most significant demographic movements in the history of the Coptic Church. The exodus began already in the late fifties, then in the sixties, the seventies and eighties on account of the repressive political and economic measures by the Government. Already in 1963 Edward Wakin wrote:

«The attachment of the Copts to their Egyptian homeland is dramatized in the small-scale diaspora of the young, the educated and the qualified who have begun to leave Egypt.

They leave with reluctance, talking not of greener pastures elsewhere but of closed doors at home. Feeling deprived of the traditional Coptic right to market their skills at a reasonably high price, they turn to the last resort of departure and dispersion.

Yet the trappings of the Coptic identity are not suited to long journeys. Its symbols and ceremonies need the church and clergy which are left behind, while departure breaks the closed circle of community life.²²

Many Copts left for the United States, Canada, Australia and the European countries, while others found attractive economic possibilities in the Eastern parts of the Middle East, in Lebanon, Jordan or in the Gulf States and Emirates. Wakin described the situation of the emigrant Copt in the late fifties: «Copts, already Westernized, become invisible in a Western country. In another Middle East country, they blend into the mosaic of

19. *St. Markus*, Kröffelbach, March 1992, 30-32.

20. *Cf.* note 16.

21. By referring to the exodus of the Copts, H.H. Pope Shenûdah III prefers to speak about «emigration» rather than «diaspora».

22. Wakin, Edward, *A Lonely Minority. The Modern Story of Egypt's Copts*. New York, 1963, 160.

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Arab Christian minorities. If the Copt continues to attend church abroad, he will go to a Greek Orthodox Church or an Eastern Catholic Church. Sometimes he chooses a Protestant church. It's a matter of personal predilection.²³ This was the situation to which Pope Kírillus VI responded when he authorized Anbâ Samwîl, Bishop of Social and Public Affairs,²⁴ to consider and plan the establishment of Coptic churches overseas to serve the Copts in their new environment. In the middle of the sixties the first Coptic churches were founded in the United States. In 1965 Abûnâ Ghobrîâl Amîn was sent to Jersey City, N.J., Abûnâ Rufâil Yunân to Montreal in 1967 and Abûnâ Bishoî Kâmel to Los Angeles, Cal., in 1969. The demand for more Coptic churches increased incessantly throughout the seventies and eighties. Today, there are more than fifty Coptic congregations in the United States and Canada. Most of these congregations are served by married Coptic priests.²⁵ In many cities the Copts have acquired their own church building, e.g. in Detroit, Chicago, Washington, East Brunswick, Thornton and Los Angeles. A Coptic Monastery dedicated to St. Antony was founded in Los Angeles and Coptic Theological Seminaries staffed with Egyptian professors were opened in Jersey City and in California. A special pontifical residence in the United States was established in Jersey City, N.J. This is being staffed by Qummus Ghôbrîâl as-Sayyed.

During the enforced exile of Pope Shenûdah III by President 'Anwar as-Sadat from September 5th 1981 until January 1985, twenty-two Coptic priests in the United States and Canada accepted the Pontifical Committee consisting of five hierarchs that was commissioned by the Egyptian Government.²⁶ Only three priests refused to recognize the members of the Pontifical Committee.²⁷

The following documentation of the Coptic Churches in the Emigration does not claim to be all-inclusive or to be up-to-date. Due to the expanding nature of the Coptic emigration there is naturally a great deal of

23. *Ibid.*

24. The former Abûnâ Makârî as-Surîânî was consecrated Bishop for Social, Public and Ecumenical Affairs in 1962.

25. For the Coptic Churches in Europe and the Middle East H.H. Pope Shenûdah III has appointed mostly Coptic monks, there are only very few married priests in these churches.

26. Members of the Pontifical Committee were: Anbâ Samwîl, Bishop for Social, Public and Ecumenical Affairs; Anbâ Gregôriûs, Bishop for Higher Theological Studies; Anbâ Maksîmôs, Bishop of Qalyûbiyah; Anbâ Yuhânnâ, Bishop of Gharbiyah; Anbâ Athanâsiûs, Bishop of Beni Suef and al-Bahnasa.

27. Yanney, Rodolph, «Aspects in the Life of the Copts and their Church in the United States», *Coptologia*, 10, 1989, 65-70. Meinardus, O., «Die Krise in der koptischen Kirche», *Ostkirchliche Studien*, 32, 4, 1983, 326-332.

fluctuation. The clerical appointments to the Overseas Coptic Churches are generally made by H.H. Pope Shenûdah III in accordance with the recommendations of Anbâ Bishoî, General Secretary of the Holy Synod. On the occasion of the second seminar of the Coptic Clergy in the United States and Canada, held in September 1992 in Los Angeles, California, under the leadership of H.H. Pope Shenûdah III sixty Coptic priests and five Coptic monks attended the meeting.²⁸

The Coptic churches in Canada are: Toronto: St. Mark (1964) Murqus Y. Lutfî; SS. George and Ruwais (1989) Ruwais 'Awad. Mississauga: SS. Mary and Athanasius (1981) Athanâsius 'Iskânder, Mankârîôs 'Asad. Kitchener: St. Mary (1981) Ibrahîm Ateya. Montreal: St. Mark (1975) Bishoî Ishaq, Rufail Yunan; St. Mary (1977) Mûrqus Azîz Khalîl; SS. George and Joseph (1989) Arsânîûs 'Azîz. Ottawa: St. Maria (1977) Bisentî 'Abd al-Masîh. Edmonton: St. Mary and St. Mark (1987) Danial Rizk.

The Coptic Churches in the United States of America

I. New York and New Jersey

Jersey City, N.J.: St. Mark (1970) Ghobrîâl 'Abd al-Sayyed; SS. Mary and Shenûdah (1974) Antûnîûs Râgheb, Dâûd Bibawî. New Brunswick, N.J.: St. Mary (1977) Bishoî Dimîtrî. Rutherford, N.J.: SS. Antony and Menas (1989) Ignâtîûs K. Fârag. New York, Queens, N.Y.: SS. Mary and Antony (1972) Yûhanna Tâdros, Antûnîûs Makarîôs. Brooklyn, N.Y.: St. George (1973) Mînâ K. Yanni. Long Island, N.Y.: St. Abra'am of the Fayyûm (1976) Mikhail Tubia. Staten Island, N.Y.: SS. Michael and Menas (1980) Wissâ S. Bisâdâ. New York, N.Y.: SS. Mary and Pachomius (1989) Tâdros Ibrahîm. Rochester, N.Y.: St. Mark (1987) Mînâ Wahba Yûsuf.

II. East Coast

Washington, D.C.: St. Mark (1979) Shenûdah al-Barâmûsî. Boston, Mass.: St. Mark (1975) Angelus Doss. Philadelphia, Pa.: St. George (1972) Samuel S. 'Azar. Pittsburgh, Pa.: St. Mary (1982) Bishoî F. Mîkhâîl; SS. Mary and Menas (1987) Murqus Girgis. Raleigh W.Va.: St. Mary (1986) Shenûdah Ghâttas.

III. Mid-West

Cleveland, Ohio: St. Mark (1975) Mîkhâîl Edward Mîkhâîl. Chicago, Ill.: St. Mark (1975) Basîlius Sidrâq; St. Mary (1986) Bûtrus Tânios; St. George (1989) vacant. Detroit, Mich.: St. Mark (1989) Rûfâil Sûbhî Mîkhâîl. Minneapolis, Minn.: St. Mary (1978) Rûfâil 'Abd al-Mâsîh Girgis. St. Louis, Mo.: St. Mary (1989) Sidrâq Tâdros. Denver, Col.: St. Mark (1978) Angelos

²⁸ St. Markus, Kröffelbach, 17, 3, 1992 (Cover).

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Baghdâdî. *Lancaster, Nebr.:* ... (1989) Mîkhâil Mûrqus.

IV. Southern States

Houston, Tx.: St. Mark (1977) Ishâq S. Sulaiman. *Dallas, Tx.:* St. Mary (1985) Yûstus as-Suriânî. *St. Antonius, Tx.:* St. Antonius (1989) Antûniûs K. Girgis. *New Orleans, La.:* St. Mark (1989) Antûniûs K. Girgis. *Katy, Tx.:* St. George (1989) Antûniûs K. Girgis. *Tampa, Fla.:* St. George (1986) Bakhûm Habîb. *South Florida:* St. Mary (1988) Yûhanna Ramzî; SS. Mary and Michael (1988) Iglâdiûs H. Khalîl.

V. West Coast

Los Angeles, Cal.: St. Mary (1973) Antûnius Hinein, Antûniûs Yunân; St. Mark (1969) Bishoî Ghobriâl. *Bellflower, Cal.:* St. George (1980) Bishoî Mîkhâil. *Riverside, Calif.:* St. Menas (1981) Ibrâhîm Azîz. *San Diego, Cal.:* St. Michael (1982) Filîmûn Mahrûz. *Bakersfield, Cal.:* St. Athanasius (1986) Bishoî Azîz. *San Francisco, Cal.:* St. Antony (1977) Mûsâ as-Suriânî. *Seattle, Wash.:* St. Mary (1975) Angelos M. Sa'ad.

The Coptic Monastery of St. Antony (Los Angeles, Cal.) was founded in 1977 (Karâs Anbâ Bishoî, Bulikarpos Anbâ Bishoî, Baniâmîn al-Barâmûsî, Shenûdah al-Antûnî). In 1993 the Holy Synod recognized the Coptic Monastery of St. Antony in California, and Abûnâ Karâs was consecrated Anbâ Karâs, Bishop of the Monastery of St. Antony, on the day of Pentecost 1993.

The Coptic Orthodox Theological Seminary in Jersey City, N.J. was ceremoniously opened by H.H. Pope Shenûdah III on September 9, 1989. The Coptic Theological Seminary in Los Angeles commenced its academic work on November 12, 1989 in the presence of H.H. Pope Shenûdah III.

The first Coptic Church in Australia was established by Abûnâ Mînâ Labib Ni'matallah in Sydenham, Sydney (St. Mary) 1970. One year later another Coptic Church of St. Mary was opened by Abûnâ Bûqtor Rûfâil in Melbourne. Today, there are thirteen Coptic Churches in Australia. As H.H. Pope Shenûdah III arrived in Sydney on November 18th 1989, he was welcomed by Anbâ Murqus of Qalyubiya - who is responsible for the Coptic Churches in Australia - and seventeen Coptic priests serving Coptic churches. Today, there are seven Coptic churches in Sydney and four Coptic churches in Melbourne. The Coptic Church in Adelaide, South Australia, is served by Abûnâ Mînâ Diosqorus, the Coptic Church in Perth by Abûnâ Tâdros as-Suriânî. The Coptic Church in Brisbane is served by the Coptic clergy from Sydney and from Melbourne.

A Coptic Theological College, part of the University of New South Wales, serves as the first Coptic institution of Higher Learning in Australia. The only Australian Coptic Monastery of SS. Antony and Bishoi is situated north-west of Melbourne at Heathcote, Victoria.

In the course of his visit to Australia, the Pope gave lectures at the University of Sydney and at Larobe University in Melbourne. In an historic meeting, Pope Shenûdah III met with the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference at the Sacred Heart Monastery in Sydney. In welcoming His Holiness, Cardinal Clancy said: «The Coptic community has played their part in developing this country and its Christianity by bringing to it their ancient tradition».²⁹ The entourage included Anbâ Bishoî for the Holy Synod, Anbâ Sarabâmûn for the Coptic Churches in Canada, Anbâ Mûsâ for the Coptic Churches in the United States, Anbâ Tâdros, Private Secretary to His Holiness, Anbâ Bûlâ for the Clerical Council and Anbâ Sera-pion for Public, Social and Ecumenical Affairs. A pastoral visit by Pope Shenûdah III is planned for the fall of 1993.

According to Coptic tradition the relationship of the Egyptian Church to Europe can be traced to the period of the Diocletian persecutions in the latter part of the 4th century. Tradition has associated the Saints Maurice,³⁰ Verena,³¹ Cassius and Florentius³² with the martyrs of the Theban Legion, an Egyptian military unit that served under the emperors Diocletian and Maximianus in Switzerland and in the Rhine Valley.

The part played by early Egyptian monasticism in the conversion of England is a matter that still has to be determined. «It is more than probable that we are indebted to the remote hermits for the first preaching of the Gospel in England, where, till the coming of St. Augustine, the Egyptian monastic rule prevailed. But more important is the belief that Irish Christianity, the great civilizing agent of the early Middle Ages among the northern nations, was the child of the Egyptian Church».³³ The extreme asceticism of Irish monasticism was inspired by the example of their Egyptian brethren. St. Columban (7th century) who retired into solitude was connected with his monastery merely by a 'minister' ... The Irish double-monasteries had their

29. Attia, Rami, «The Pope in Australia», *Coptologia*, 11, 1990, 15-17. Ishak, Fayek M., «My Interview with H.H. Pope Shenûdah III», *Coptologia*, 8, 1987, 11.

30. Meinardus, O., «The Translation of the Relics of St. Maurice from Tholey to Cairo», *Coptologia*, 11, 1990, 43-55.

31. Meinardus, O., «Zur Rückkehr einer Thebäerin nach Kairo», *Internationale Kirchliche Zeitschrift*, 379, 3, 1987, 163-171.

32. Meinardus, O., «About the Translation of the Theban Martyrs Sts. Cassius and Florentius from Bonn to Cairo», *Coptic Church Review*, 13, 2, 1992, 49-51.

33. Lane-Poole, Stanley, *Cairo. Sketches of its History, Monuments and Social Life*. London 1898, 203.

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origin in Egyptian monasticism. Pachomius, the founder of the first coenobium, was also the first abbot of a double monastery.³⁴

One of the first Coptic Overseas Churches in Europe was the Coptic Church of St. Mark in London.³⁵ Today, there are eight Coptic churches in Great Britain and Ireland. In London there are the Coptic Church of St. Mark at Kensington with Abûnâ Antûnîûs Thabit and the Church of SS. Mary and Shenûdah with Abûnâ Bishoî Bûshra. The Coptic Church of SS. Mary and Menas in Manchester is served by Abûnâ Arsanîûs Anbâ Bûlâ, the Church of SS. Mary and Mercuriûs (Abû 's-Saifain) in Cardiff by Abûnâ Zakharia Butros, the Church of SS. Mary and Dimiana in Dublin by... The Coptic Church of SS. Mary and Mark in Birmingham is served by Abûnâ Yûhanna Yannî. The Coptic Church in Newcastle-on-Tyne is served by Abûnâ Aksios Anbâ Bishoî. Anbâ Misail, Coptic Bishop for Great Britain and Ireland resides in Birmingham and is in charge of the Coptic Centre in Birmingham, which was inaugurated in August 1989 by Pope Shenûdah III. For the Copts in and around Greater London the Pope consecrated a second bishop for Great Britain, Anbâ Kîrillus.³⁶ Coptic services are also offered in Glasgow, Liverpool, Southampton, Canterbury, Craydon and Sheffield.

For the francophone Copts in Europe Pope Shenûdah III consecrated on June 2, 1974 Anbâ Murqus, Bishop of Marseilles, Toulon and of All France and Anbâ Athanâsiûs, suffragan bishop for Paris. Anbâ Murqus, a Dutchman, is responsible also for the two congregations in The Netherlands, the Coptic Church of St. Athanasius (Abûnâ Abraham al-Barâmusi) and the church in The Hague as well as for the Coptic Church of St. Mary in Brussels, Belgium. Anbâ Murqus resides in the Ermitage Saint Marc, Revest-les-Eaux, Toulon. On June 27, 1981 the Church of St. Mary of Zeitûn in Revest-les Eaux was consecrated.³⁷

The first services for the resident Copts in Germany were periodically celebrated in Wiesbaden (1964) and in Mainz (1969). The establishment of a Coptic Church in Germany is intimately related to the pastoral work of Qummus Salîb Suriâl who served for many years as parish priest in Frank-

34. Delus, W., «Die Einführung des Christentums in Irland», *Theologische Studien und Kritiken*, 106, 1934-35, 356-375.

35. Perhaps the first Coptic Liturgy celebrated in modern times in Great Britain took place in London on Friday, August 10, 1954. The celebrant was Abûnâ Makârî as-Suriânî (later Bishop Samwîl).

36. Megaly, Fuad, «The Coptic Church in Britain», *Coptologia* 11, 1990, 73-75.

37. About the apparition of the Holy Virgin at Zeitûn, cf. Meinardus, O., «Von der Mariophanie zum Gnadenbild. Zur ikonographischen Entwicklung der Gnadenbilder von Zeitûn und 'Ard Babadeblu», *Ostkirchliche Studien*, 39, 4, 1990, 289-299.

furt. Today, there are seven Coptic churches in Germany. *Frankfurt*: St. Mark (1975) Bigul Bassilî; *Stuttgart*: St. George (1975) and *Munich* (1976); *Daniân an bâ Bishoî Düsseldorf*: St. Mary (1975) Bûlûs Shehâta; *Berlin*: St. Antony and St. Shenûdah (1976), 'Abulîdis as-Sûiânî; *Hamburg*: St. Peter the Last Martyr (1976) Ghobrîal al-Baramûsî and *Hannover*: St. Athanasius (1977), Abulîdis as-Suriânî.

In March 1988 Anbâ Bishoî and Anbâ Baniâmîn were present at the laying of the foundation-stone for the Coptic Church of St. Antony, the Monastery of St. Antony, in 35647 Waldsolms/Kröffelbach, Taunus. The church was consecrated on November 18, 1990 by Pope Shenûdah III.³⁸ Qummus Mikhâil al-Barâmûsî is responsible for the Monastery of St. Antony and for the ecumenical and academic programs which are periodically offered by the monastery and the Copts of the Church of St. Mark in Frankfurt. A new monastery is being planned in the vicinity of Kassel.

The five Coptic congregations in Austria, in Vienna, Graz, Klagenfurth, Linz, Bischofshofen and Innsbruck are served by Qummus Yuhanna al-Barâmûsî and Abûnâ Rufail al-Barâmûsî. Both priests reside in Vienna.³⁹ A Coptic Cultural Center (Centro Culturale Copte Ortodosse) was ceremoniously inaugurated in Venice on September 16, 1980.⁴⁰ In Italy, Coptic services are conducted in Rome, Milano and Turin. For the Copts in Switzerland, Coptic services are offered in Geneva, Zürich, Solothurn and Wetzikon.

III. The Coptic African Mission

The history of the relationship of the See of Alexandria to Africa can be traced to the 4th century. According to Rufinus Tyrannius (340-410)⁴¹, Meropius, a Syrian merchant, set out in a ship for India intending to open up business connections with the Indians. While sailing through the Red Sea, he was forced to land at some point upon the coast of Ethiopia. Accompanying him were his two sons, Frumentius and Aedesius. The ship was attacked by the natives and Meropius and his crew were put to the sword. The boys, however, were spared and sent to the king 'Ella-'Alada, whose capital was in Aksûm. Greatly impressed by the two boys, the king

38. For a complete report on the visit of H.H. Pope Shenûdah III in Germany, cf. *St. Markus*, Kröffelbach, March 1990.

39. Foerster, Frank, «Die koptische Kirche unter Papst Schenute III» *St. Markus*, Dezember 1987, 27.

40. Address: Casella Postale 190, 30100 Venezia.

41. Rufinus, *Hist. Eccl.*, I.9. Socrates, *Hist. Eccl.*, I, 15.

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freed them from slavery and made Frumentius his chancellor and Aedeisus his cupbearer.

Following the death of the king, the queen entreated the brothers to remain with her until her son was grown up. While Frumentius held the reigns of government in his hands, he obtained for such Christians as came to the country permission to build conventicles to which they could resort for prayer. When the prince ascended the throne, the two brothers returned to their home. Frumentius went to Alexandria where he approached the newly elected Patriarch Athanasius (328-373) to look for some worthy man to be sent to Ethiopia as bishop. Thereupon, St. Athanasius consecrated Frumentius as bishop of Aksûm. Following his return to Ethiopia, St. Frumentius is said to have converted the two kings 'Abreha and 'Abseha, the sons of Sênfa-Ar'ed.⁴²

The consecration of St. Frumentius by St. Athanasius was an important event for the future development of Egyptian-Ethiopian ecclesiastical relations. By this act, a precedent was set upon which, among other things, the Patriarchate of Alexandria based its claims of superiority over the Ethiopian church. The Copts based their right to nominate and to consecrate the head of the Ethiopian Church, the Abûnâ, upon the Eighty Disciplinary Canons of Nicaea. The 42nd canon according to the version of Abraham Ecchelensis, the 36th canon according to the Antiochene redaction, and the 47th canon according to the Arabic redaction states that the Abûnâ of Ethiopia should always be a Copt. However, there is no doubt that these canons are entirely apocryphal, and that they may belong to the 7th century! In this connection it is interesting to note that while St. Frumentius is commemorated by the Ethiopian Church on the 26th of Hamlé, by the Greek Orthodox Church on November 30th and by the Roman Catholic Church on October 27th, the Coptic Synaxarium makes no mention of his name.⁴³

At the time of the christological controversies pertaining to the natures of Jesus Christ, the Ethiopian Church, having received its Christian Faith from the Alexandrians, and being under the special suzerainty of the See of St. Mark, supported in 451 the anti-Chalcedonian party. St. Dioscorus, the 25th Patriarch of Alexandria, is commemorated by the Ethiopian

42. Budge, E.A.W., *History of Ethiopia*. London, 1928, I, 148. This tradition follows a very common tendency of popular history to attach famous events to famous names. True, 'Abreha and 'Asbeha were renowned champions of the Christian faith, however, they lived two centuries later. Jones, *A History of Ethiopia*. Oxford, 1935, 30.

43. Meinardus, O., «A Brief History of the Abunate of Ethiopia», *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*, LVIII, 1962, 39-65.

Church on the 7th of Maskaram. According to the annals of the Coptic Church, the Popes of Alexandria continued the practice throughout the centuries to consecrate the Abûnâ for the Ethiopian Church. Whereas most of the candidates for this office were monks from the Dair Anbâ Antûnîûs at the Wâdî 'Arabah (Red Sea Desert), there were also monks from the Dair al-Barâmûs, the Dair as-Surîân and the Dair Abû Mâqar in the Wâdî 'n-Natrûn who ascended the throne of the Ethiopian Abunate. In 1268 a treaty was signed by the last Zagué King Na'akueto La'ab which stipulated that one third of the kingdom should be ceded absolutely to the Abûnâ for the maintenance of his state and dignity as well as for the support of the churches and clergy, the monasteries and monks. Furthermore, no native Ethiopian was to be chosen as Abûnâ, even though he may have been selected by the Pope of Alexandria.⁴⁴ Thus, the definite rule that the Abûnâ must be a Coptic monk was confirmed by the agreement between Na'akueto La'ab and Yekûno Amlak, a prince of Shoa, who belonged to the Solomonic line.

During the 16th century the relations between the Ethiopian Abunate and the Alexandrian See were temporarily cut off. The first Portuguese expedition to reach Ethiopia was that of Fr. J. Battista da Imola, ofm. in 1483, who was accompanied by twelve other Franciscans. In 1513, Queen Helena, mother of the King Lebné-Denghel (1508-1540) sent Matthew, an Armenian, to Pope Leo X and King Emmanuel of Portugal to request from them assistance in their struggle against the invading Muslims. Rodrigo da Lima arrived in Ethiopia in 1520, and soon after his arrival, the Portuguese began with the conversion of the Ethiopian population to the Roman Catholic Faith. John Bermudez advised Lebné-Denghel to convert to Roman Catholicism and to sever relations with the Alexandrian Church. One year later, Murqus, the Coptic Abûnâ, expressed his desire to be united with the Roman Catholic Church. Seventeen years later, Murqus abdicated, and John Bermudez was appointed as Abûnâ at the express desire of the King. Bermudez went to Rome and Pope Paul III (1524-1549) not only consecrated him as the Abûnâ of Ethiopia, but also as Patriarch of Alexandria, an act of schism which was accepted neither in Alexandria nor in Constantinople. In return for the ecclesiastical submission to Rome, a force of 450 Portuguese soldiers under the command of Christoph da Gama was sent to Ethiopia, where, in 1543 they defeated and killed Grân, the Emir of Harar, and his Muslim troops.

During the reign of Claudius (Galâwdêwôs) (1540-1559), Ethiopia returned to the Alexandrian Faith. The king refused to acknowledge the reli-

44. Bruce, *Travels to discover the Source of the Nile (1768-1773)*. Edinburgh, 1813, II, 173.

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gious supremacy of the Pope of Rome and dispatched a mission to Anbâ Ghabriâl VII (1526-1570) with the request to send an Abûnâ. The king published his *confessio fidei*, a theological statement of his belief in the doctrines of the Church of Alexandria. Bermudez, realizing his defeat, returned to Portugal.⁴⁵ The Kings of Ethiopia who succeeded Claudius were even more adverse to the Latin missions and forbade under severe penalties any form of proselytism. Minâs (1559-1563) persecuted the Catholics and banished them from Ethiopia, and his son, Sârsâ Denghel (1563-1597) adopted the same policy to the Roman Catholic Church.

Though the original Catholic mission to Ethiopia had failed, Ethiopia was not abandoned so far as the Church of Rome was concerned. In 1603, Fr. Petro Paez, sj., arrived in Fremona. Soon after his arrival Fr. Paez preached in the presence of Zè-Denghel (1597-1607) who declared himself ready to adopt the Roman Catholic Faith. The people revolted and the Abûnâ excommunicated the King. In a battle the King was killed and after a brief interregnum the crown descended upon Socinious (Susneyos) (1607-1632), a cousin of Zè-Denghel. Socinious was well disposed to the Roman Catholic missionaries and embraced the Catholic Faith, whereupon, like his predecessor, he was excommunicated by Simon, the Abûnâ. In 1622, Fr. Paez died and Alphonso Mendez was consecrated Roman Catholic Patriarch of Ethiopia. During the reign of Socinious, the Jesuits reached their greatest and most profound influence in Ethiopia. But revolution and civil war eventually led to the abdication of Socinious in favour of his son Fasilides (1632-1667). Fasilides announced the reestablishment of the Alexandrian Faith, and dispatched a mission to Cairo with the request for a new Abûnâ. For the following centuries the succession of the Ethiopian Abunate remained more or less uninterrupted.

After the Italian occupation of Ethiopia in 1935 the Italian Government attempted to detach the Church of Ethiopia from the See of Alexandria. The actions of the Italians, however, met with little success. The discussions for gaining ecclesiastical independence from the See of Alexandria coincided with the independence of Ethiopia in 1942. Already in 1942 Ethiopian priests were consecrated by the Ethiopian echegé. Thus, for all practical purposes the function of the Coptic Abûnâ became obsolete. When Anbâ Makâriûs III (1942-1945) ascended the pontifical throne of the Coptic Church, the Church of Ethiopia abstained from mentioning the name of the new Coptic Pope in the intercessory prayers in the Divine Li-

45. Kamil, Murad, «Letters to Ethiopia», *Bulletin de la Société d'Archéologie Copte*, VIII, 1942, 92. Also, Budge, *op. cit.*, II, 324. King, A., *The Rites of Eastern Christendom*. Rome, I, 514.

turgy. In 1944, Anbâ Makârîûs III sent a mission to Ethiopia to enter into negotiations with the Ethiopians. They restated their claims for an Ethiopian Abûnâ and demanded the creation of an Ethiopian Synod which was to be responsible for the election of Ethiopian bishops. They also felt that the Synod of the Coptic Church should have representatives of the Ethiopian Church to participate in the election of the Coptic Pope. They demanded further that the Ethiopian Church be given a permanent seat in the Synod of the Coptic Church which absolutely refused to recognize an Ethiopian Abûnâ with the right to consecrate bishops.

In June 1947, Haile Selassie made known his wish to settle the ecclesiastical conflict with the Coptic Church once and for all. The Pope formed a committee which was approved by the Coptic Synod. The following propositions were offered. To grant the Ethiopians the right to have an Ethiopian Abûnâ with the power to consecrate Ethiopian bishops, on condition, however, that every decision of the Ethiopian Synod with regard to the consecration of bishops be presented to the Pope of Alexandria with a list of the possible candidates. This, then, would enable the Coptic Pope to delegate to the Ethiopian Abûnâ, by special order, the power of consecration.

On October 22, 1950, Kîrillus, the last Coptic Abûnâ of Ethiopia died. On January 13, 1951, Anbâ Basîlîûs, Ethiopian Bishop of Shoa, was consecrated by Anbâ Yûsâb II (1946-1956) as the Abûnâ of Ethiopia. On September 2, 1951, five Ethiopian bishops were consecrated by Anbâ Basîlîûs in accordance with the Coptic stipulations.⁴⁶

Following the enthronement of Anbâ Kîrillus VI as 116th Successor to the See of St. Mark in 1959, the Ethiopian question was the first item on his agenda of actions. A joint statement was issued on June 29, 1959 which stipulated that the Pope of Alexandria is the supreme head of the Church of Ethiopia... that representatives of the Ethiopian Church shall participate in the election of the successor of St. Mark,... that the archbishop of the Ethiopian Church, the successor of St. Takla Haymanot, has been advanced to the dignity of Patriarch-Catholicus or Chief of the Church of Ethiopia,... that after his election and confirmation he shall be consecrated by the Pope of Alexandria,... that the Patriarch-Catholicus is authorized to consecrate metropolitans and bishops, ... that every time the Pope of Alexandria convenes a General Holy Synod to consider matters of Faith and Morals the Ethiopians be invited, ... that the rank of the Patriarch-

46. Kamil, Murad, «La Dernière Phase des Relations Historiques entre l'Eglise Copte d'Égypte et celle d'Éthiopie jusqu'en 1952», *Bulletin de la Société d'Archéologie Copte*, XIV, 2-22.

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Catholicus of Ethiopia shall be second, immediately after the Pope of Alexandria. After his death, the rank of the Patriarch-Catholicus shall be second after the *locum tenens* of the Coptic Church,... that exchanges between professors and students of religious institutions shall take place between the Egyptian and Ethiopian Churches with the view to reinforce their spiritual bonds.⁴⁷

On June 20th, 1959, Anbâ Basiliûs, the Abûnâ, arrived in Egypt. On June 28th, 1959 in the presence of H.I.M. the Emperor of Ethiopia and Dr. Mahmoud Fawzi, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Republic, Anbâ Kirillus VI, Pope of Alexandria, enthroned Anbâ Basiliûs as the first Patriarch-Catholicus of the Church of Ethiopia.⁴⁸

The jurisdictional dependency of the Ethiopian Church upon the Coptic Church was largely based upon the Fetha Negast, the Law of the Kings, which can be traced to the Arabic collection of canons by as-Safi Abû 'l-Fada ibn al-'Assal, the *al-Magmu'as-safawi*, *al-Quawanîn as-Safawiya*. In the beginning of the 14th century this document was translated into Ge'ez. The 4th chapter of section 50 mentions explicitly that the Ethiopians are not entitled to elect a patriarch and that the head of the Ethiopian Church is to be chosen by the Coptic See of Alexandria.

On March 25, 1971, the Holy Synod of the Ethiopian Church established a model for the election of the new patriarch. Interestingly enough, however, the Fetha Negast was not deferred! From September 25-30 1973, Pope Shenûdah III visited Ethiopia with the aim of normalizing relations. Problems arose in 1976 on the occasion of the dismissal of Abûnâ Theophilus through the Communist Government and the subsequent election of his successor Abûnâ Takla Haymanot in July 1976. The Coptic Church did not recognize the patriarchal election. Moreover, according to the Fetha Negast two consecrated patriarchs at the same time in Ethiopia are not canonically acceptable and the election of the new patriarch would have required the consent of the Coptic Church. The Coptic Church anathematized the procedure and the persons involved. Abûnâ Takla Haymanût died on May 28, 1988.

From 1988-1991 the Ethiopian head of the Church was Abûnâ Merkurios who had very close relations to the Marxist Government of Mengistu Haile Mariam. Following his dismissal, the same problems arose as in 1976 in the case of Abûnâ Theophilus, namely the co-existence of two consecrated patriarchs! However, it was argued that Abûnâ Merkurios was

47. «Accord sur l'autonomie de l'Eglise éthiopienne et intronisation du patriarche Basile» *Proche-Orient Chrétien*, July-Sept., 1959, 260-263.

48. Cf. *Watani*, June 28th, 1959, also *al-Ahram*, same date.

actually deposed and had become a layman. The Holy Synod called an electorate of approximately 360 persons, and Abûnâ Paulos Ghabre Yuhannes was elected fifth patriarch. On July 12, 1992 he was enthroned in the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity in Addis Ababa.⁴⁹

Following the change of government in May 1991 through the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front, many leading Ethiopian clergymen were replaced. Thus the Liqa Seltanat Habte Mariam Worqineh was dismissed and his place was taken by Abûnâ Garima, who is director of the Theological Academy in Kolfe, Addis Ababa.

While the relations of the Coptic Church to the Ethiopian sister-church are saddened and tarnished on account of the complicated Dair as-Sultân situation in Jerusalem and the recent patriarchal developments in Addis Ababa, the Coptic Church has succeeded in penetrating with its ecclesiastical mission into regions in the South, the East and the West of the African continent.

In 1962, the Institute of Coptic Studies in Abbasiyah established a department of African Studies for the training of Copts to serve as missionaries of the Coptic Church. Ever since the 7th century, this constitutes the first attempt to think in terms of missions. In a press release of July 20, 1962, H.H. Pope Cyril VI declared that «final measures are now being taken to comply with the desire of the Christian inhabitants of Uganda, Kenya and Tanganyika to join the Coptic Church. The Africa project of the Coptic Church is given priority over any other projects, because the Coptic Church carries the banner of Orthodox Christian doctrine, and wherever Orthodox Christianity exists, full liberty and permanent peace prevail. For the Coptic Church throughout its long history has not given a chance to imperialism to dominate through religious teachings»⁵⁰. In a statement of January 5, 1964, H.H. Pope Cyril VI expressed his keen interest in a plan aimed at consolidating the mission-work of Qummus Ishâq

49. Abûnâ Paulos was born on November 3, 1935 in Tigray, where he received his education in the Monastery of Abba Garima. In 1957 he attended Holy Trinity Theological College in Addis Ababa. He continued his studies at Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, N.J. Following his return to Ethiopia Abûnâ Theophilos consecrated him Bishop. He served as director of the Commission on Interchurch Aid. From 1976-1981 he was imprisoned. Following his release Abûnâ Takla Haimanot called him to be dean of the Theological College at Kolfe, Addis Ababa. He returned to Princeton where he was awarded the doctor's degree. At the patriarchal elections of October 12, 1992 he received 169, Abûnâ Samuel 52, Abûnâ Salama 37, Abûnâ Basilios 87 and Abûnâ Elisa 15 votes. Cf. Verena Böll (Bonn), «Die Äthiopische Kirche in ihrer Eigenart stärken», *Der Christliche Osten*, XLVIII, 1993, 2, 94-98.

50. Middle East News Agency (MENA), July 20, 1962.

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al-Bishoî in Johannesburg, South Africa, after having learned that there were several African Christian communities that wished to cut relations with Western churches and establish independent African churches.⁵¹ According to a statement by H.H. Pope Cyril VI, four hundred families had joined the Coptic Orthodox Church in South Africa since 1950.⁵² In the meantime, preparations for the establishment of Coptic religious study-centres in Africa were made «with a view to combat imperialist preaching in these countries». On February 19, 1964 the Pope announced that the larger part of the funds of the Coptic *auqaf* would be devoted to the building of churches, schools and hospitals in Africa «so that we may fulfil our mission of liberating the African people from imperialist doctrines, which were introduced in Africa under the guise of religion».⁵³ In the beginning of 1965, a significant addition to the official ecclesiastical title of Cyril VI was adopted. In the local and international press he is being referred to as «His Holiness Patriarch Cyril VI, Pope of Alexandria and of All Africa».⁵⁴

In September 1965, the Christian Peace Conference sponsored by the Christian churches of Eastern Europe convened the first African Christian Peace Conference in Freetown, Sierra Leone. Abûnâ Yûssef Abdû Yûssef of the African desk of the Coptic Patriarchate represented Cyril VI. A few weeks later, Abûnâ Yûssef participated in the Dar as-Salam Conference on African Studies. According to the Egyptian press, the resolutions of the Conference considered the Coptic Church as the Church of Africa with a glorious history in the annals of Christianity.⁵⁵

The actual missionary engagement of the Coptic Church began with the consecration of Abûnâ Antûnîûs al-Barâmûsî in June 1976 as Bishop for African Missions. Already a year later the Coptic Church was officially recognized and registered in Kenya. A number of heretical and schismatic congregations were dissolved. Today, the Coptic Church is well represented among the Kikuyu, Akamba, Lou and Abaluya tribes. More than, 8,000 persons were baptized in the past 14 years. In October 1979 Pope Shenûdah III visited Nairobi and laid the foundation stone for the Coptic Monastery of St. Antony, which is situated next to the Coptic Church of St. Antony. There are three large Coptic congregations in Ukambani, in Kinuyui (St. Mark), in Katheka (St. Dimiana) and in Misslenni (St. George). In Kisumu, Province of Nyanza, the Copts assemble since 1982 in the

51. MENA, Jan. 6, 1964.

52. MENA, Jan. 6, 1964.

53. MENA, Feb. 19, 1964.

54. The Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Alexandria has used this title for a long time.

55. MENA, Nov. 30, 1965.

Church of St. Mary. This church also serves the smaller congregations in Kibos, Ahero and Nyalenda. In the Western Province of Maseno the Copts established in 1983 the Coptic Monastery of St. Menas, which is being served by four monks. Numerically strong congregations are in Gombe (St. Luke), Obekholo (St. Mark), Alego (St. Moses the Black) and Samembe (St. Paul).

The Coptic Church in Zambia was officially registered in 1984.

The Coptic Church in Lusaka, the capital of Zambia, is under construction. The Coptic Church in Zimbabwe is situated in the capital city of Harare. Theological and structural discussions with the representatives of the Kimbanguist Church of Zaire have eventually led to the establishment of a Coptic Monastery of St. Antony in the Province of Shaba, in the capital Lubumbashi near the border of Zambia.⁵⁶ Moreover, Coptic theologians teach in the Theological Academy of the National Church in Lutendele, Kinshasa. In October 1979 Pope Shenûdah III visited many of the new Coptic congregations in Zaire and in Kenya.⁵⁷ In addition to these new mission centers, there are Coptic churches in Tripoli and Benghazi as well as in Algeria⁵⁸ and Nigeria. The two Sudanese dioceses of Khartum and Ummdurman are well established. From February 16-17, 1978 Pope Shemûdah III accompanied by nine metropolitans and bishops visited the Sudan where he consecrated the Church of St. Mary in Khartum. This was the first visit of a Coptic pope since the visit of Anbâ Kîrillus V in 1909.

IV. The Copts in the Holy Land and the Question of the Holy Places.

Whoever visits Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Jericho or Nazareth in these days (1993) cannot help but notice among the clerics of the various Christian communities the Coptic desert fathers. They are easily distinguished on account of their originally Antiochene headdress. It is a tight fitting cap covering the head and neck, embroidered with thirteen yellow or white crosses representing Christ and the Apostles, the «qolunsua». Around the neck and in front of the breast they wear a large black and white Coptic leather cross. They are the representatives of the Coptic Orthodox Church and of His Holiness Anbâ Shenûdah III, the 117th successor of the Evangelist St. Mark. His full title is «Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria

56. The Greek Orthodox Church is represented in Lubumbashi by a metropolitan.

57. Meinardus, O., «The Coptic Church and African Missions» *Oriens Christianus* 51, 1967, 97-100. Antonius Markos, «History of the Coptic Church in Africa», *Coptologia*, 10, 1989, 89-93.

58. The Coptic Church in Algiers was closed in the beginning of 1981.

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and of All Egypt, of God's City of Jerusalem, of Nubia, the Pentapolis and all the Regions of the Preaching of St. Mark.»⁵⁹

Especially since the enthronement of Anbâ Abra'am I as 20th Coptic *mutrân* (metropolitan) of Jerusalem and the Middle East in November 1991, the Coptic presence in Israel in general and in Jerusalem in particular has acquired a new quality. In addition to some of the major restorations of old buildings, e.g. the Church of St. Antony, the Church of St. Helena and the passage to the large subterranean cistern, new social and educational projects, like the new College of St. Antony at Bet Hanina, are a tangible evidence of the Coptic renaissance which has overflowed to the Holy Land. At the same time, the age-old question pertaining to the jurisdiction of some of the holy places, namely the Dair as-Sultân on the roof of the Armenian Church of St. Helena and the Chapel of the Bodiless Living Creatures and the Chapel of the Archangel Michel is presently being discussed again. In view of these recent developments some of the principal historical notes about the presence of the Copts in the Holy City should be restated.

Within the New Testament context the relationship of the Egyptians to Jerusalem can be traced to the first Pentecost when Jews «from Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene» were speaking in their own tongues the mighty works of God (Acts 2:10, 11). Upon their return from Jerusalem, these Judaeo-Christians would have formed the nucleus of the first Christian community in Egypt. With the Discovery of the Holy Cross by St. Helena in May 328 A.D. and the subsequent construction of the Church of the Resurrection (*Anastasis*) over the Tomb of Jesus Christ, Jerusalem became the principal destination of Christian pilgrimages. One of the better known Egyptian women-saints was St. Mary the Egyptian, once an actress and courtisan. She had joined a group of faithful pilgrims to the Holy Land. Before entering the Church of the Resurrection she experienced a vision of the Holy Virgin who demanded from her to surrender herself completely to God and to resign from her previous ways. Realizing the incomprehensible mercy of God, she cast herself on the ground

59. The inclusion of the Holy City of Jerusalem in the pontifical title dates from the Middle Ages. The Ms 253 Coptic Museum, dated 1080 A.M. or 1364 A.D., of the Rite of Consecration of the Patriarch of Alexandria refers to the senior bishop, who places his hand upon the elected servant of God, while the archdeacon exclaims: 'The divine grace advanceth him to Archbishop of the great city of Alexandria and of all the land of Egypt and its nomes...» The text of the witnessing of the episcopacy is more elaborate and speaks of the «Archbishop of the great city of Alexandria and of Babylon and of the Ethiopians and of the Five Cities in the West (Berenice, Ptolemais, Barca, Cyrene and Apollonia). Cf. Burmester, O.H.E., *The Rite of Consecration of the Patriarch of Alexandria*. Cairo, 1960.

and after kissing the pavement, she went to the icon of the Holy Virgin, where falling on her knees, she begged for her intercession. Then she heard a voice saying: «If thou goest beyond the Jordan, thou shalt find there rest and comfort». Before crossing the Jordan, she stopped at the Monastery of St. John the Baptist. Forty-seven years she spent in penance beyond the Jordan and received the Last Sacrament from St. Zosimus before she died in 431.⁶⁰

The «Letter of Paula and Eustachium to Marcella» (386 A.D.) mentions among the monks of the various nations who visited Jerusalem also those coming from Egypt,⁶¹ and the Spanish abbess, the 4th century pilgrim of Etheria, refers very clearly to the monks of Egypt or the Thebaid who used to come to the Holy City.⁶² The Copts are also mentioned as pilgrims to Jerusalem in the so-called «Letter of Guarantee» attributed to the Caliph 'Umar and dated in the 15th year of the Hira (637 A.D.). According to tradition, this covenant is said to have been made between the Caliph and the Greek Patriarch Sophronius.⁶³ «And in order that the Georgian and Abyssinians depending on the Greek Nation be well established, let all other nations that go there on pilgrimage, Latins, Copts, Syrians, Armenians, Nestorians, Jacobites, and Maronites submit to the Patriarch Sophronius of Jerusalem.»⁶⁴

There are not many references to Coptic monks in or Coptic pilgrims to Jerusalem prior to the Crusades in the 11th century. A Christian Arabic papyrus of the 9th century refers to a Coptic lady-traveller who had returned to Egypt from Jerusalem, where presumably she had gone on a pilgrimage,⁶⁵ and John (Yuhanna) ibn Sa'id al-Qulzûmî mentions that sometimes between 1047 and 1092 he went to Jerusalem and elsewhere, namely the Holy Sepulchre and Calvary.⁶⁶

60. Coptic Synaxar, *Patr. Orient.*, XVI, 286-290; Eth. Synaxar, 6 Mîyazyâ, *Budge*, III, 784-6.

61. Aubrey, «Letter of Paula and Eustachium to Marcella», *Palestine Pilgrims' Texts Society*, I, 1 (*PPTS*).

62. Bernard, «The Pilgrimage of S. Silvia of Aquitania to the Holy Places», *PPTS*, I, 76.

63. The listing and the order of the Christian communities represented in Jerusalem according to this document would suggest for its composition a date during the Mameluke period. Already Augustin Scholz, writing in 1820, questioned the authenticity of the Omarite Covenant. Cf. Scholz, A., *Reise in die Gegend zwischen Alexandrien und Parâtonium*, etc., Leipzig, 1822, 293.

64. Themelis, Timotheus, *Les Grecs aux Lieux Saints*. Jerusalem, 1921, 7.

65. Anawati et Jomier, «Un Papyrus Chrétien en Arabe», *Mélanges Islamiques*, II, 1954, 98.

66. The visit of John ibn Sa'id should be placed during the time of the patriarchates of Christodoulos and Cyril II. *History of the Patriarchs of the Egyptian Church* (ed. Aziz S. Atiya, Yassa 'Abd al-Masîh, O.H.E. Khs-Burmester) Cairo, 1959, II, iii, 358.

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During the patriarchate of Anbâ Kîrillus II (1078-1092) the Ghuzz or Turkomans captured Jerusalem and extended their conquests to the Egyptian frontier. The Turkoman sovereign, Sultan Galâl ad-Dîn, also known by the name of King Shah, appointed a Copt, a certain Mansûr at-Tilbânî, to become assistant to the Governor. Mansûr at-Tilbânî as well as his wife Mu'inah were of great help to the Christians who came to Jerusalem from Egypt and from other parts of the Middle East. At this time, the Coptic churches and monasteries in Jerusalem were confided to the Syrian Jacobites, who held the same belief as the Copts.⁶⁷ In order to avoid any misunderstanding, however, which might arise with regard to the Coptic ownership of the Church of the Jacobite Christians, Anbâ Kîrillus II responded to the request of Mansûr at-Tilbânî in delegating an Egyptian bishop to consecrate the church, which was reconstructed by Mansûr at-Tilbânî. The consecration took place in the month of Barmahat 808 A.M. (1092 A.D.).

From the beginning of the 12th century, the church and the monastery of St. Mary Magdalene served as the spiritual center for the Jacobites, both for the Syrians and the Egyptians. The church was situated in the vicinity of the Gate of Herod, north of the Franciscan Via Dolorosa. An interesting account of the existence of the Church of St. Mary Magdalene is furnished by two Syriac Codices, that of Lyons (February 10, 1138) and that of Paris (August 25, 1138). These documents refer to certain arguments between the Jacobite community in Jerusalem and a certain Frank, called Godfrey of Asha.⁶⁸ Apparently, the Jacobite community had escaped to Egypt where it had found refuge during the Latin Kingdom. After their return to the Holy City they noticed that some of their sites which they had held prior to the conquest by the Crusaders were occupied by the Franks. It was only after the intervention of Athanasius VII, patriarch of Antioch, that

67. Originally, the term 'Jacobites' from the Syrian monk Jacob Bardaeus, who died in 578 as Bishop of Edessa, was applied to the Syrian Monophysites. However, in the Middle Ages the Copts are also referred to as 'Jacobites' and the Canons of Cyril III ibn Laglaq (1235) speak of the Coptic Jacobite Church (*Bull. de la Société d'Arch. Copte*, XIV, 141). Thietmar (1217) mentions the Jacobites who come from Egypt and who claim to be the heirs of the Pharaohs (*Saint-Génois, Les Voyages fait en Terre Sainte par Thietmar en 1217, etc. «Mémoires de l'Académie Royale des Sciences, Lettres et des Beaux Arts de Belgique, XXVI, Bruxelles, 1851, 56.* Jacques de Vitry (1227) and Marino Sanuto (1306) state that the Jacobites had a teacher who is said to be a certain James, a disciple of the Alexandrian Patriarch. Bongars, *Gesta Dei per Francos sive Orientalium expeditionum, etc.*, Hanoviae, 1611, I, 1091-92.

68. Martin, «Les premiers princes croisés et les Syriens Jacobites de Jérusalem», *JA*, Nov., Dec., 1188, 471-470; Jan. 1889, 33-79. Nau, «Le croisé lorrain Godefroy de Asha, d'après deux documents syriaques du XIIIe siècle.», *JA*, Nov., Dec. 1899, 421-31.

Baldwin I, King of Jerusalem, returned to the Jacobites their original holdings. This transfer must have occurred after 1100 the year when Athanasius VII became patriarch and before 1118, the year when Baldwin I died. It is very likely that the church and the monastery of St. Mary Magdalene were temporarily in the hands of the Crusaders. In 1124, Ignatius, Patriarch of Antioch, repaired the Monastery of St. Mary Magdalene so that it became available again for use by the Jacobite monks. In 1137 Godfrey of Asha, after having been released by the Saracens, claimed again those sites which he had occupied. To settle the dispute, a compromise was reached and in February 1138 the Jacobites paid the sum of 300 dinars to Godfrey of Asha.⁶⁹ In 1140, an anonymous pilgrim visited Jerusalem. He had seen the Monastery of the Jacobites, wherein was the head of St. James and the arm of St. Stephen. He referred to the Church of St. Mary Magdalene where they show some of the hair of the Patron-Saint.⁷⁰ Some of the hair of St. Mary Magdalene is claimed by the Coptic monks of the Monastery of the Syrians (Dair as-Suriân) in the Wâdî'n-Natrûn.

There is good reason to assume that the Jacobite Monastery of St. Mary Magdalene served both non-Chalcedonian communities, the Syrians and the Copts. An interesting colophon of the Syrian Codex 27 of the Syrian Orthodox Monastery of St. Mark in Jerusalem substantiates this assumption. We are informed that the codex was completed in 1149 A.D. in the Monastery of St. Mary Magdalene at the time of Athanasius VIII, Patriarch of Antioch, and John V, Patriarch of Alexandria,⁷¹ and Ignatius III, Jacobite Bishop of Jerusalem.⁷² Johann of Würzburg, visiting the Holy Land in 1165, refers to the Jacobite monks who possess the Church of St. Mary Magdalene,⁷³ and in the *Chronicon Ecclesiasticum* of Bar Hebraeus we read, that in 1168, Michael I, Patriarch of Antioch, went for the Easter celebrations to Jerusalem to celebrate the Divine Liturgy and to consecrate the Holy Chrism in the Monastery of St. Mary Magdalene.⁷⁴

Following the victory of the troops of Salâh ad-Dîn over the Crusader forces in the battle of the Horns of Hattin, July 4th, 1187, the number of pilgrims from the various Christian communities of the East increased as

69. Meinardus, O., «The Syrian Jacobites in the Holy City», *Orientalia Suecana*, XII, 1963, 63, 64.

70. «Anonymous Pilgrims», *PPTS*, VI, 12.

71. *I.e.* 1147-1166.

72. Taylor, W.R., «A new Syriac fragment dealing with incidents in the Second Crusade», *Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, IX, 1931, 120 f.

73. Tobler, Titus, *Descriptiones Terrae Sanctae ex saeculo VIII, IX, XII et XV*. Leipzig, 1874, 132, 164.

74. Bar Hebraeus, *op. cit.*, II, 546 f.

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time went on, and many of the churches felt the need to establish themselves on a permanent basis in the Holy City. In 1187, Sultan Salâh ad-Dîn granted exemption from taxes to the Greeks, Georgians, Copts and Ethiopians who came to Jerusalem on pilgrimage. By the ordinance the Sultan also confirmed the privilege of the Copts to own certain sites in the Church of the Resurrection.⁷⁵ The possibility that some Christians were evicted by the ordinances of Salâh ad-Dîn is mentioned by the 16th century Dutch traveller Ioannes Cotovicus (Iohann van Kootwyck) who visited Cyprus in 1598 and stated: There are also Maronites, Nestorians, Jacobites and Copts, fugitives from Palestine, who were driven from the realm of Saladin after the conquest of Jerusalem, and settled here, each sect still observing its own rites.⁷⁶ At the same time it should be mentioned that the earliest reference to the presence of Copts in Cyprus occurs in an address delivered by John XIII (Yu'annis al-Misri), when he ascended the patriarchal throne on the 15th of Amshîr 1199 A.M. (1483 A.D.). Among the bishops mentioned in this address there is Anbâ Mîkhaîl of Cyprus (al-kubrusi), metropolitan of Cyprus and afterwards of Rhodes).⁷⁷

In the middle of the 13th century tensions and misunderstandings emerged between the two non-Chalcedonian communities, the Syrians and the Copts. Thus, when it was discovered that the Syrians had added some properties of the Copts to their own, and had wasted others, Anbâ Kîrillus III (1235-1243) appointed in 1238 an Egyptian Archbishop of Jerusalem. He succeeded after much trouble in regaining the Coptic Chapel in the Church of the Resurrection and the Church which was reconstructed by Mansûr at-Tilbânî.⁷⁸ The first Coptic Archbishop of Jerusalem was Anbâ Basiliûs I (1238-1260). The Syrian Patriarch of Antioch was much distressed at this appointment and retaliated by excommunicating the newly appointed Coptic Archbishop.⁷⁹ Furthermore, the Antiochene Patriarch consecrated an Ethiopian monk as Archbishop of Abyssinia, thus assuming a privilege which had been exclusively held by the Coptic Patriarch of Alexandria.⁸⁰

75. Themelis, *op. cit.*, 68.

76. Cobham, Laude D., *Excerpta Cypria. Materials for a History of Cyprus*. Cambridge, 1908, 197.

77. Burmester, O.H.E., «The Copts in Cyprus», *Bull. de la Société d'Arch. Copte*, VII, 1941, 9.

78. Filutaus 'Awad, *Dair as-Sultan milk al-Qibt la al-Habash*. Cairo, 1924, 17.

79. Renaudotius, Eusebius, *Historia Patriarcharum Alexandrinorum Jacobitarum ab Marco usque ad finem saeculi XIII*. Paris, 1713, 579 f.

80. Kawerau, Peter, *Die Jakobitische Kirche im Zeitalter der Syrischen Renaissance*. Berlin, 1955, 67.

By the middle of the 13th century the Coptic Archbishopric of Jerusalem was well established. The Ethiopian Synaxar mentions Anbâ Ghobriâl III (1268-1271), the 78th Patriarch of Alexandria, who went to Jerusalem where he was blessed in the Holy Places. He was ordained to the priesthood in the Church of the Resurrection.⁸¹ During the latter part of the 13th century the Copts not only had a resident Archbishop, but also monks in the Holy City. C.R. Conder states, «that their (Coptic) bishop wore a crown like the Greek patriarchs, their monks wore white pointed cowls. They still preserved the ancient Kiss of Peace...»⁸² Around 1280 Burchard of Mount Sion referred to the Syrians, Ethiopians and Egyptians who were among the nations residing in Jerusalem.⁸³ In 1287 Abû Ishaq al-Mu'tamam ibn al-'Assal composed a homily addressed to the Egyptian Christians to join a pilgrimage to Jerusalem.⁸⁴

The Western pilgrims to the Holy Land like Guilièlm de Boldensele (1336), Niccolo di Poggibonsi (1346), Ludolf von Suchem (1348), the Pilgrim of Miltenberg (1350), Frescobaldi (1384) Philippe de Mézières (1384) and the latin codices mention eight or nine Christian communities in the Church of the Resurrection, namely, the Greeks, Latins, Armenians, Jacobites, Ethiopians, Georgians, Nestorians, Maronites and the Christians of the Girdle, who are the Copts.⁸⁵ The «Christians of the Girdle» (Cristiani della cintura) acquired this title already during the patriarchate of Cosmas II (851-859), when they were compelled to wear, as a mark of ignominy, girdles, while the women, to whom the girdle was a distinguishing mark of feminine modesty, were forbidden to wear them. During the reign of al-Hâkim (996-1021) the Copts were forced to wear a distinctive dress consisting also of a sash around their loins. During the 13th century, the reign of Qalâûn (1279-1290), the Christians were made to ride on donkeys with girdles round their wastes.⁸⁶

There is no doubt that in the 15th and 16th centuries the Copts were established in Jerusalem and also possessed «certain sites» in the Church of the Resurrection. The chapel «behind the Holy Sepulchre» is repeated-

81. Ethiopian Synaxar, 11 Hamlé, *Budge IV*, 1107.

82. Conder, C.R., *The Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem 1099-1291*. London, 1897, 221.

83. Burchard, «Description of the Holy Land», *PPTS*, XII, 104.

84. Abû Ishaq is the brother of As-Safi al-Assal. Cf. Graf, Georg, «Rede des Abû Ishaq al-Mu'tamam ibn al-'Assal», *Bull. de la Société d'Arch. Copte*, VII, 1941, 51-59.

85. Meinardus, O., *The Copts in Jerusalem*. Cairo, 1960, 19, 20.

86. Fowler, Montague, *Christian Egypt, Past, Present and Future*. London, 1902, 70. In 1612 William Lithgow referred to the Copts «as a sort of circumcised Christians», and still in 1666 Frantz Ferdinand of Troilo called them «Christen della Cinte, des Gürtels wegen». Meinardus, O., *op. cit.*, 31, 33.

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ly mentioned by the pilgrims as belonging to the Jacobites, e.g. Ignatius of Smolensk (1400) and the Anonymous of 1445. Generally speaking, the Copts were still known as Jacobites, Goffites (Koster Bernd, 1463) or Egyptians (Henry the Pious, 1498).⁸⁷

During the latter part of the 15th century the number of Copts in Jerusalem could not have been very large.⁸⁸ Francesco Suriano, writing towards the end of the 15th century, states, «that as the Copts had left Jerusalem, when I was there, and gone to Cairo, I had no opportunity of talking to them. The Copts are least in number, and as they are few, when the sons of their priests are born, they make them deacons and subdeacons».⁸⁹ Felix Fabri assigned to the «Jacobite Copts» the Stone of Unction and both Peter Fassbender⁹⁰ and Arnold von Harff refer to a chapel belonging to the Jacobites which is situated behind the Holy Sepulchre.⁹¹ At the same time there is no doubt that since the middle of the 13th century there has been a regular succession of Coptic metropolitans in Jerusalem.⁹²

In 1537, the Copts possessed a small chapel behind the Holy Sepulchre of Christ,⁹³ the altar which they still possess. It is difficult to know when they acquired this site. An interesting transaction must have taken place before the 16th century, for by that time the Franciscan friars in Egypt had the right of saying mass in the crypt of the Coptic Church of SS. Sergius and Bacchus in Old Cairo. R. Fedden maintains that it was a *quid pro quo* for permission granted to the Coptic Church to maintain a small room or a chapel «unita ad una parte esteriore del SSmo Sepolcro».⁹⁴ One of the first pilgrims to refer to the Coptic Chapel and Altar in the Church of the Resurrection was an anonymous Spanish Franciscan who visited the Holy Land in 1553.⁹⁵ By 1559 the Copts must have achieved some relative pro-

87. Meinardus, O. *op. cit.*, 23, 24.

88. Luke, H.C., *The Handbook of Palestine*. London, 1922, 45.

89. Francesco Suriano, *Treatise on the Holy Land*. Jerusalem, 1949, 92.

90. For Fassbender (1492), Röhricht, Reinhold und H. Meisner, *Deutsche Pilgerreisen nach dem Heiligen Lande*. Berlin 1880, 258.

91. For Von Harff (1497), Letts, Malcolm, *The Pilgrimage of Arnold von Harff Knight*. London, 1946, 203.

92. Luke, H.C., *op. cit.*, 45.

93. As early as 1112 the Latins used to have there a parochial altar. Vincent, H. and F.M. Abel, *Jérusalem. Recherches de Topographie d'Archéologie et d'Histoire*. Paris, 1914, II, 294.

94. Fedden, R., «Two Notes on Christian Cairo in the Turkish Period», *Bull. de la Soc. d'Arch. Copte*, X, 33 f. The traveller Symon Semeonis (1322-24) states that the Sultan Muhammad ibn Qala'ûn an-Nâsir (1310-41) gave the rights for the crypt of the Church of SS. Sergius and Bacchus to the Friars Minor. Cf. Coquin, Charalambia, *Les Edifices Chrétien du Vieux Caire*. Cairo, 1974, I, 100.

95. Luke, H.C., *A Spanish Franciscan's Narrative of a Journey to the Holy Land*. London, 1927, 28.

sperity, for in that year Germanos, the Greek Orthodox Patriarch, wrote to Tsar Ivan the Terrible (1553-1584). He complained of his state of poverty and mentioned that the Armenians and the Copts celebrated the Divine Liturgy in the Church of the Resurrection wearing mitres, he, the Orthodox Patriarch, lacks even a mitre.⁹⁶ Leonhart Rauwolff (1573) also mentions the Copts, who have their chapel behind the Holy Sepulchre of Christ, and the Abyssinians, who live in the Temple of Mount Calvaria, just by the church door towards the left, and have through their lodging a peculiar way, so that, without hindrance, according to their pleasure, they may go in and out.⁹⁷ The Codex of the Iberians (1585-86) states clearly that the Copts,⁹⁸ who profess the doctrine of Dioscorus, are behind the Holy Sepulchre.⁹⁹

During the 17th century, the various Christian communities in the Church of the Resurrection suffered somewhat severely from the heavy taxes which they had to pay to their Muslim rulers. Francesco Verniore (1631) records that both the Abyssinians and the Copts have a monastery in the vicinity of the Church of the Resurrection, and that every month they had to pay some moneys to the Turks, and that every Easter, they had to apply for permission to make wine. Poverty and political pressures were conducive to ecclesiastical irregularities, and a firman, attributed to Sultan Murâd IV (1634) explicitly refers to violations of the Abyssinian properties by the Armenians.¹⁰⁰ In 1647 Eugène Roger observed the Coptic monks in Jerusalem and states that all monks and priests, when they perform their prayers cover their shoulders and their arms with a veil in the form of a black shawl,¹⁰¹ and the Chevalier d'Arvieux (1660) saw the Copts participating in the Ceremony of the Holy Fire.¹⁰² It is difficult to determine to what an extent the Copts participated in the Easter Celebrations of the Ἁγίον Φῶς in the 17th century. In fact, it is questionable whether Bernard Surius (1644) was correctly informed, for according to his account «six Patriarchs participated in the Ceremony of the Holy Fire, and they were the Greek, the Coptic, the Ethiopian, the Georgian, the Nestorian

96. Callinikou, Constantine, *Ἡ Χριστιανικὴ Ναὸς καὶ τὰ τελοῦμενα ἐν αὐτῇ*. Alexandria, 1922, 621.

97. Rauwolff, L., «Travels in the Eastern Countries...» in Ray, *A Collection of Curious Travels and Voyages*. London, 1693, 352.

98. Themelis, *op. cit.*, 46.

99. Golubovich, G., *Biblioteca Bio-Bibliografica della Terra Santa, N.S. I, vi*, 55.

100. Manuscript: Nolde, «Consultation concerning the Rights of the Abyssinians», 2.

101. Roger, Eugene, *La Terre Sainte ou Description topographique très particulière des Saints Lieux, etc.* Paris, 1664, 417.

102. Labat, Jean-Baptiste, *Mémoires du Chevalier d'Arvieux*. Paris, 1735, II, 13, 146.

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and the Armenian, who locked themselves into the Chapel of the Holy Sepulchre. After the appearance of the Holy Fire, they distributed the fire to the people.¹⁰³

The second part of the 17th century proved to be one of the most difficult periods for some of the Christian communities in Jerusalem. In 1664, the Georgians were evicted from their sites in the Church of the Resurrection, owing to being too poor to pay the necessary dues, and the same fate befell the Abyssinians in 1668.¹⁰⁴ There is no doubt that the general penury among the Copts in Jerusalem in the 17th century was a reflection of the terrible socio-economic situation in Egypt. In 1694, the Nile did not rise and the consequent dearth found the country wholly unprepared to meet it. For some months the famine grew worse and worse, the starving mob surrounded the citadel, howling for bread, and as no notice was taken on them, they began to throw stones. Pestilence succeeded famine and the people died about the street in heaps. Though the Copts were able to maintain their holdings, Frantz Ferdinand von Troilo (1666) informs us that they were very poor.¹⁰⁵ In 1668, according to Michael Nau, the Copts had only one priest in the Church of the Resurrection, «who prays alone and lights the lamps».¹⁰⁶ The fact that Nau observed only one priest in the Church of the Resurrection does not necessarily mean that he was the only resident Copt in Jerusalem. He also states, that «the nearest door of the Chapel of Calvary of the Holy Virgin leads into a church of the Copts, where they celebrate the Divine Liturgy every day».

Two years later in 1670 Jacques Goujon confirms the impression of Nau. «There is only one Copt, whose dwelling place is quite near the door».¹⁰⁷ Yet, in spite of their poverty, the Copts retained their holy places, for Goujon speaks of the apartment of the Copts just outside the Church of the Resurrection, and O. Dapper (1688) observed the Copts as being one of the nations who participated in the Ceremony of the Holy

103. Surlus, B. *Den God Turuchtigen Pilgrim*. Anversa, 1705, I, 582. Of course it is physically impossible for six hierarchs to lock themselves into the Chapel of the Holy Sepulchre. It is more likely that they participated in the distribution of the Holy Fire to their respective communities.

104. Harvey, William, *The Church of the Holy Sepulchre*. London, 1935. In 1671, the Ethiopians were forced to retreat to the roof of the Armenian Church of St. Helena, where they remain to the present day. Cf. Luke, H.C., «The Christian Communities in the Holy Sepulchre», in Ashbee, C.R., *Jerusalem 1920-1922*. London, 1924, 43.

105. Troilo, Frantz Ferdinand von, *Orientalische Reisebeschreibung, etc.*, Dresden & Leipzig, 1734, 186.

106. Nau, Michael, *Voyage nouveau de la Terre Sainte*. Paris, 1679, 145, 176.

107. Goujon, Jacques, *Histoire et Voyage de la Terre-Sainte*. Lyon, 1672, 169, 175.

Fire,¹⁰⁸ and Henrich Maundrell (1697) states that only the Latins, Greeks, Armenians and Cophites keep their footing well, yet the Copts have only one monk representing their nation,¹⁰⁹ a fact, which is substantiated by Felix Beaugrand (1699),¹¹⁰ who observed the Copts holding services in the small chapel behind the Holy Sepulchre.

Throughout the 18th century the small chapel of the Copts behind the Holy Sepulchre is mentioned by the pilgrims and travellers.¹¹¹ In 1808, the Church of the Resurrection, except the eastern part, was almost entirely destroyed by fire, the dome fell in crushing the Tomb of Christ, altars and icons were consumed in the general conflagration, and the mass of ruin extended from the Chapel of St. Helena to the rock-hewn tomb of Joseph of Arimathea. In the intrigues which followed at Jerusalem and Constantinople in connection with the rebuilding of the church, the Greeks secured for themselves the greater portion of the building. The Copts, however, retained their sites.

An interesting survey of the foreign constituency of Jerusalem in 1817 is provided by T.R. Joliffe, who speaks of 800 Latins, 2,000 Greeks, 400 Armenians and 50 Copts, who lived in the Holy City.¹¹² During the Easter celebrations these numbers increased, so that Augustin Scholz estimated at the time of his visit on Easter 1820, 1400 Armenians, 1200 Greeks, 30 Georgians, 300 Moscovites, 60 Copts, 16 Syrians, one Abyssinian, 20 Oriental Catholics of the Greek and Armenian rite, 4 Maronites, and 15 Franks.¹¹³ Madden visiting Jerusalem in 1826 counted 15 Latins, 15 Greeks, 12 Armenians, 6 Copts and 4 Syrians in the Church of the Resurrection.¹¹⁴ In June 1837, the cholera epidemic broke out in Jerusalem during which seven Copts died, while of the twenty-four Ethiopians only one survived.¹¹⁵

108. Dapper, O., *Asia, oder eine genaue und gründliche Beschreibung des gantzen Syrien und Palestins*. Nürnberg, 1688, 328.

109. Maundrell, M. Henrich, *Reisebeschreibung nach dem Geloben Lande; Darinnen die jetzige Beschaffenheit und der allerneueste Zustand des Heiligen Landes*. Hamburg, 1737, 95.

110. Beaugrand, Felix, *Relation Nouvelle et très fidèle du Voyage de la Terre Sainte*. Paris, 1700, I, 76.

111. Meinardus, O., *op. cit.*, 38, 39.

112. Joliffe, T.R., *Lettres sur la Palestine, la Syrie et l'Egypte*. Paris, 1820, 101.

113. Scholz, Augustin, *Reise in die Gegend zwischen Alexandrien und Paraetonium, die libische wüste... Palestina und Syrien in den Jahren 1820 und 1821*. Leipzig, 1822, 230.

114. Madden, R.R., *Travels in Turkey, Egypt, Nubia and Palestine*. London, 1829, II, 131.

115. Neophytos of Cyprus, *Annals of Palestine 1821-1841*. Jerusalem, 12Ἐερθσαλεμ, 1848, 71. 125-128.

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When Konstantin von Tischendorf entered the Church of the Resurrection in 1844, he remarked about «the solitary Copts who wandered about ... with suffering expressed in their physiognomy, as if performing an incessant act of penitence.¹¹⁶ The financial situation of the Egyptians in Jerusalem must have been rather pitiful during the middle of the 19th century, for both Francesco Cassini (1846)¹¹⁷ and Karl Graul (1849)¹¹⁸ speak of the poor Copts in the Church of the Resurrection. Nevertheless, Louis Enault estimated the number of Copts in Jerusalem to be about one hundred.¹¹⁹ Some Copts were undoubtedly attached to the Monastery of St. George in Jerusalem, which the Copts had acquired in the middle of the 18th century. We know for certain that by 1720 the Dair Mari Girgis was situated in the same locality as to-day. Moreover, the monastery seems to have possessed the following relics, which to this day attract pilgrims and visitors, namely the right arm of St. George and part of the chain which was used to torture the Saint.¹²⁰

In 1806, Ulrich Seetzen visited the Holy Land and mentioned in his description the Copts who have an unattractive and poor monastery called «Mar Dshürdschüs», and furthermore, they possess in the Dair as-Sultân a courtyard next to the Church of the Resurrection, where several married priests live.¹²¹ In a legal document of December 10th, 1820, it is stated among other things, that St. George's Monastery belongs to the Copts.¹²² In 1782, the Copts had already enlarged their holdings in Jerusalem by buying some houses from al-Hagg 'Abd-Allah Effendi, but it was not until 1837, however, that the Copts obtained permission to build the large Coptic Khan or caravansery in the immediate vicinity of the Monastery of St. George. The site for these buildings was bought by the Copts for 8.000 piastres. The building of this Khan, which lasted for more than a year, amounted to 500,000 piastres, though most of the work was done by the Copts who gave their services free. Hanauer points out, that the Coptic

116. Tischendorf, L.F.C., *Travels in the East*. London, 1847, 180.

117. Cassini, Francesco, *La Terra Santa descritta da P. Francesco Cassini dell'Ordine dei Minori Riformati ... dedicata a Sua Sacra Reale Maesta Ferdinando II, Re del Regno delle due Sicilie...* Genova, 1855, II, 133.

118. Graul, Karl, *Reise nach Ostindien*, Leipzig, 1854, I, 196.

119. Enault, Louis, *La Terre Sainte: Voyage des Quarante Pèlerins de 1853*. Paris, 1854, 150-151.

120. Tobler, Titus, *Topographie von Jerusalem*. Berlin, 1853, I, 371.

121. Seetzen, Elrich J., *Reisen durch Syrien, Palästina, Phönizien, etc.* Berlin, 1854, II, 20, 21.

122. Timoteos, *Translation of Documents Bearing on the Rights over the Sultan's Monastery and other Places in Jerusalem*. Cairo, n.d., 13, 14.

Khan was built in 1838 inside the northern part of the great pool, Birkit Hammam al-Batrak (Pool of the Patriarch's Bath), traditionally known as the Pool of Hezekiah.¹²³

According to A. Goodrich-Freer in 1904 the Coptic archbishop in the Holy Land used to reside in Jaffa, possibly because the Copts possessed but scanty accommodations in Jerusalem.¹²⁴ The Coptic Chapel in the Church of the Resurrection, which is dedicated to the Holy Virgin, is considered by the Copts to be the holiest of all the sacred sites, for the Coptic altar is believed to be erected against the place where Christ's head rested at the time of His burial. The chapel was redecorated by Anbâ Timuthâûs in 1901 and the icons from north to south represent the Crucifixion, Christ's Entry into Jerusalem, the Resurrection, the Mystical Supper and Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane. Above the center icon of the Holy Virgin there is another icon of the Resurrection. Twenty-four lamps are suspended from the ceiling in the chapel. The cells of the Copts in the Church of the Resurrection are situated between columns 9, 10, and 11 of the Rotunda. The doors west of the Holy Sepulchre lead to the lodgings of the Coptic monks, occupying the first and the second floor. Generally four or five monks keep vigil in the Church of the Resurrection, though during the feasts, this number increases to ten or twelve monks.

Though the Copts do not have the right to celebrate the Divine Liturgy in the Holy Sepulchre itself (the Greeks, Latins and Armenians alone have this right), they own four sanctuary lamps which hang in the second row from the east. The other lamps in the Holy Sepulchre belong to the Greeks (13), the Latins (13) and the Armenians (13). In the Chapel of the Angel situated east of the Holy Sepulchre the Copts own one lamp, which hangs on the south side of the eastern row. Above the Stone of Uncion there are eight lamps. The third lamp from the left belongs to the Copts.

The Copts process four times a year around the Holy Sepulchre. On Palm Sunday, after the celebration of the Divine Liturgy, the Copts join the Greeks, Armenians and Syrians in a procession three times around the Holy Sepulchre. On Good Friday between 5 pm and 7 pm, only the Copts make a procession through the whole Church of the Resurrection, offering prayers at every altar (Greek, Latin, Armenian, Coptic and Syrian). That this is a relatively new departure is testified by Emily A. Beaufort, who in 1859 saw the Good Friday Procession and mentioned that the Greek bishops and clergy were followed by a number of Copts.¹²⁵ On the Eve of

123. Hanauer, J.E., *Walks in and around Jerusalem*. London, 1926, 50 f.

124. Goodrich-Freer, A., *Inner Jerusalem*. London, 1904, 123.

125. Beaufort, Emily, *Egyptian Sepulchres and Syrian Shrines*. London, 1862, II, 247.

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Easter, about 1,30 pm., the Greek Orthodox Patriarch accompanied by an Armenian Archimandrite enters the Holy Sepulchre for the Ceremony of the Holy Fire. From the Chapel of the Angel the Holy Fire is passed through the southern and northern openings to the pilgrims. The Copts receive the Holy Fire through the southern opening. Then the Holy Fire is taken to the Coptic Archbishop, who during the Ceremony has remained in the Coptic Chapel of the Holy Virgin west of the Holy Sepulchre. After having received the Holy Fire, the Coptic Archbishop gives the Holy Fire to the Coptic pilgrims. Then the Greeks, Armenians, Syrians and Copts make a procession three times around the Holy Sepulchre. This procession is repeated on Easter Sunday morning when at 4 am. the Greeks, Armenians, Copts and Syrians make a procession three times around the Holy Sepulchre.¹²⁶

Towards the north-east of the Holy Sepulchre the Copts own the Dair Mâr Antûnîûs, the Monastery of St. Antony. This monastery, which in previous centuries was considered to be part of the Dair as-Sultân, was repaired in 1875 with funds provided by wealthy Copts in Egypt.¹²⁷ In 1907 the monastery was rebuilt¹²⁸ and Baedeker (1912) states «that the Monastery of the Copts has been fitted up as an episcopal residence and contains cells for the accommodation of pilgrims. The church, the foundations of which are old, has been entirely restored.¹²⁹

The Monastery of St. Antony has three churches, on the ground level there is the Church of St. Helena. The narthex of this church leads to the large Cistern, which is normally filled with water. The main church is dedicated to St. Antony. This church is presently being redecorated. It was built by Anbâ Basiliûs II (1856-1899), and dedicated by Anbâ Timûthâûs (1899-1925) in 1903. This church is adorned by numerous wall-paintings showing Biblical scenes, e.g. the Mystical Supper, the Stilling of the Storm, the Nativity, the Baptism, the Annuciation, the Ascension, Christ's Entry into Jerusalem and the Via Dolorosa, etc. The third church is dedicated to the Holy Virgin in commemoration of her apparition to the students of the Coptic College on June 21, 1954. According to the students, the Holy Virgin with the Infant Christ, St. Joseph and two Angels appeared for seven consecutive Mondays at 11.30 am in the study of Dr. Shaker. Out of gratitude for this event Anbâ Yaqûbûs (1946-1956), Archbishop of Jerusalem,

126. Meinardus, O., *op. cit.*, 72 f.

127. Wilson, R.E., *Picturesque Palestine, Sinai and Egypt*. New York, 1881, I, 119.

128. Jeffery, George, *A Brief Description of the Holy Sepulchre*. Cambridge, 1919, 58.

129. Baedeker, Karl, *Palestine and Syria*. Leipzig, 1912, 48. The church which Baedeker mentions should be the Coptic Church of St. Helena!

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had this room converted into a church. In commemoration of this apparition, the Coptic monks celebrate the Divine Liturgy in this church every Monday morning.

Mention has been made of the Coptic Monastery of St. George on the north-side of the Pool of Hezekiah in Jerusalem. The Dair Mârî Girgis comprises the Church of St. George and the Primary and Secondary Girls' Schools of Sitt Dimianah.

Traditionally the Metropolitan of Jerusalem and the Coptic guardians of the holy places came from the Red Sea Monastery of St. Antony. The jurisdiction of the Metropolitan of Jerusalem included the Monastery of St. Dimiana (Dair Sitt Dimiânâh) near Bilqâs in the Nile Delta. This institution was once served by monks of the Monastery of St. Antony.¹³⁰ The new jurisdictional developments within the Coptic Church in general and Coptic monasticism in particular as inaugurated by H.H. Pope Shenûdah III have placed the Nunnery of Sitt Dimiânâh under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Damietta and Kafr ash-Shekh.¹³¹

In 1961 eleven Coptic monks under Anbâ Basiliûs IV (1959-1991) resided in Jerusalem.¹³² In 1993 the archdiocese of Jerusalem includes the Coptic churches of the Middle East. The Archbishop Abra'am I, formerly Qummus Sidrâq Anbâ Bishoi, was consecrated on November 17, 1991. In Jerusalem, there are the following Coptic monks: Angelos al-Rizqâti, Barnâbâ al-Barâmûsi, Makârîôs al-Barâmûsi, Bakhûm al-Bûli, Silvânûs al-Bûli, 'Abd al-Malk al-Antûni al-Qudsi, Bishoi al-Antûni al-Qudsi. The Coptic Church in Bethlehem is served by Abûnâ Athanâsiûs al-Antûni, the Church of St. Antony in Jericho by Abûnâ Nehmiyâ al-Antuni,¹³³ the traditional House of Zacchaeus on the northern banks of the Wâdi Qilt, Jericho, by Abûnâ Sidârûs as-Suriâni.¹³⁴ The Coptic Church in Nazareth, where there live approximately 1000 Copts, is served by Abûnâ Sidrâq al-Antûni.¹³⁵ The Coptic Church in Jaffa is served by Abûnâ Mikhâil al-Bûli,

130. Meinardus, O., *Monks and Monasteries of the Egyptian Deserts*. Cairo, 1961, 339.

131. Meinardus, O., «The Coptic Orthodox Hierarchy in 1986», *Internationale Kirchliche Zeitschrift*, 376, 1986, 4, 249-256.

132. Ghobriâl Anbâ Bishoi, Isrâil al-Antûni, Filutâûs al-Antûni, Athanasius al-Antûni, Girgis al-Antûni al-Masri, Akladiûs al-Antûni, Mûsâ al-Antûni, Butrûs al-Barâmûsi, Bishaî as-Suriâni, 'Abd al-Mariâm as-Suriâni, Filibûs al-Makâri (Jericho).

133. For the Coptic Church of St. Antony at Jericho, cf. Meinardus, O., *The Copts in Jerusalem*, Cairo, 1960, 79, 80.

134. Meinardus, O., «The Byzantine Church of St. Andrew in Jericho», *Bull. de la Société d'Arch. Copte*, XVIII, 1966, 181-195.

135. In 1993 Anbâ Abrâam I ordained Abûnâ Sarabamûn al-Yerushalîmi and Abûnâ Karas al-Yerushalîmi to serve in Jerusalem. Abûnâ Butrus al-Yerushalîmi was ordained in 1990 by Anbâ Basiliûs IV.

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the Coptic Church of St. Mark in Beirut (1972) by Abûnâ Bûlus al-Muharraqî and the Coptic Church of SS. Mary and George in Amman (1973), Jordan, by Abûnâ Antûniûs Sobhî. In addition to the Coptic Church of St. George in Eastern al-Kantara with Abûnâ Tâdros al-Antûnî and the Church of St. George in al-'Arish with Abûnâ Makârî Anbâ Bishoî (the Church in Rafah was destroyed) the Archdiocese of Jerusalem includes seven Coptic Churches in the Gulf region. In Baghdad the Church of St. Mary and St. Paul of Thebes with Abûnâ Mishâq Anbâ Bishoî, in Bahrain the Church of St. Ruwais with Abûnâ Mercurius Anbâ Bishoî, in Kuwait the Church of St. Mark with Abûnâ 'Azra Anbâ Bishoî and Abûnâ Augustin Anbâ Bishoî, in Dubai the Church of St. Bishoî with Abûnâ Tûmâ Anbâ Bishoî, in al-'Ain the Church of St. Mary, in Abû Dâbî the Church of St. Bishoî with Abûnâ Bûtrus Anbâ Bishoî and in Musqat the Church of St. Menas with Abûnâ Barsûm Anbâ Bishoî.

A presentation of the Copts in the Holy Land and the Question of the Holy Places would be incomplete without a reference to the thorny problem of the jurisdiction over the Dair as-Sultân, the property on the roof of the Armenian Church of St. Helena and the two chapels leading to the parvis of the Church of the Resurrection. In view of the recent development pertaining to the conflict between the Ethiopian and the Coptic Churches about the possession of the Dair as-Sultân, it might be useful to refer very briefly to some of the recent events about this ecclesiastical bone of contention in the Holy City.

The precarious ecclesiastical situation pertaining to the Dair al-Sultân on the roof of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre has always reflected the delicate political climate between the Egyptians and the respective government responsible for Jerusalem. This was the case during the reigns of the various sultans and viziers of the Ottoman Empire. The discontinuance of diplomatic relations between the Arab Republic of Egypt and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in 1958 led to the expulsion of the Coptic Metropolitan and eleven Coptic priests and monks from Jerusalem in the same year. After diplomatic intervention, the Coptic members of the clergy were given visitors visa for three months with the possibility of renewal.¹³⁶ In February 1959 the tensions between the Copts and the Ethiopian residents of the site in question increased. Subsequently the Jordanian Government ordered the Dair as-Sultân to be handed over to the Ethiopians.¹³⁷ «When the Copts did not follow the dictates of the authorities, the Jordanians changed the locks and handed the new keys to the Ethiopians. But their

136. *Al-Ahram*, January 4, 1959.

137. In the Treaty of Berlin (1878) the site was given to the Copts!

joy over the recuperation of their ancient place of worship was to be short-lived only.¹³⁸ In my study «The Copts in Jerusalem» I have published a photo showing the Coptic deacon Riad Shehata with the key to the Church of the Four Bodiless Living Creatures.¹³⁹

On April 2, 1961, the Dair as-Sultân was returned to the original owners, the Copts¹⁴⁰ and on December 29, 1962 the Copts were again the legal owners of the site in question.¹⁴¹ In May 1965 constructional alterations of the Dair as-Sultân carried out by the Copts led to new deliberations between the Egyptians and the Jordanian Government.¹⁴²

During the Easter celebrations 1970 serious confrontations between the Coptic and Ethiopian monks on the roof of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre led to the unlawful and forceful acquisition of the keys to the churches of the Four Bodiless Living Creatures and the Archangel St. Michael by the Ethiopians. Again the seizure of the keys by the Ethiopians was possible, since Ethiopia had full diplomatic relations with Israel from 1956 to 1973 when Ethiopia followed the rest of the African nations in breaking the relations following the Yom Kippur war.

For the first time an Israeli judge entered into a conflict between two Christian communities. The Israeli High Court of Justice announced a verdict on March 16, 1971 which actually ordered the Ethiopians to hand over the keys to the Copts, unless the Israeli Government would prefer to set up a commission to look into the question of ownership in this particular Holy Place. The government of Mrs. Golda Meir decided to use this prerogative.¹⁴³ Coptic appeals in 1977 and 1980 have only made the Israeli High Court confirm its original decision of 1971, while an Israeli arbitration attempt led by retired High Court judge David Bacher in February 1982 produced no agreement.¹⁴⁴

From April 2 to 18, 1980, the Ethiopian Patriarch-Catholicus Abûnâ Takla Haymanot (1976-1988), whom the Copts never recognized as head

138. Stoffregen Pedersen, Kirsten (Sister Abraham), «Deir es-Sultan: The Ethiopian Monastery in Jerusalem», *Quaderni di Studi Etiopici*, Asmara, 1987-88, 45-47.

139. Meinardus, O., *The Copts in Jerusalem*. Cairo, 1960, 62, Pl. 47.

140. *Al-Ahram*, April 3, 1961.

141. *Watani*, January 6, 1963.

142. When in 1966 as-Sayyid Anwar al-Khatib, who had served the Ethiopians for 15 years as advocate, became governor of Jerusalem, he ordered that electric light and modern water supply were to be installed in the Dair as-Sultân. To this the Copts returned not only with a request from Pope Cyril VI to King Hussain of Jordan to stop the decision of the governor, but also with a rain of stones from the roofs of the neighbouring Coptic buildings upon the Ethiopian Easter Procession in Dair as-Sultân in 1967. Cf. Stoffregen Pedersen, *loc. cit.*

143. *Ibid.*

144. *Ibid.*

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of the Ethiopian Church, visited Jerusalem where he was greeted by the Armenian Patriarch. In the course of his visit he celebrated the Divine Liturgy in the Dair as-Sultân and alluded to the rights of the Ethiopians in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. In December 1981 Pope Shenûdah III reiterated his prohibition for Coptic pilgrimages to the Holy Land as long as the Israeli Government would not intervene for the rightful return of the Dair as-Sultân to the legitimate owners.¹⁴⁵

On April 3, 1981 the Israeli High Court declined again to intervene on behalf of the Copts for the return of the two chapels in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre which the Ethiopians had usurped in 1970. It was argued that for such disputes and controversies the Israeli Government would be the competent and responsible authority.¹⁴⁶ In December 1984, Anbâ Basîlîûs IV, the Coptic metropolitan in Jerusalem, demanded again the restoration of the Dair as-Sultân to the legitimate owner, the Copts.¹⁴⁷ In February 1986 additional Coptic monks were sent from Egypt to Jerusalem for the increased responsibilities.¹⁴⁸

On January 14, 1993, the Israeli Government finally decided to form a ministerial commission to study again the Coptic claims of the Dair as-Sultân. The Coptic Archbishop Anbâ Abrâ'am I stated that the relationships to the Ethiopians were excellent, while his rebuke was directed against the Israeli Government. Millions of Copts throughout Egypt - so the words of Anbâ Abrâ'am - awaited eagerly the very moment for the possibility to visit Jerusalem once the situation between the two communities would be solved. However, as long as the conflict remained the Coptic Patriarchate in Cairo would not recommend and support pilgrimages to the Holy Land.

The Israeli commission included representatives of the Ministry of Justice, the Foreign Ministry and the Ministry of Religious Affairs. This is the second time that the Israeli Government intervened in the dispute between the two non-Chalcedonian communities. Already in March 1971 under Premier Golda Meir's direction, the Israeli Government designated Justice Minister Yakov S. Shapiro, Foreign Minister Abba Eban, Police Minister Shlomo Hillel and Religious Affairs Minister Zerah Warhaftig to study the disputes and to make formal recommendations for a settlement. It was recommended that until a final settlement be reached, the members of the Coptic community should have free access to the contested sites.

145. *Watani*, December 14, 1981.

146. *Proche Orient Chrétien* 31, 1981, 218 f.

147. *Watani*, December 2, 1984.

148. *Watani*, February 9, 1986.

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It cannot be the purpose of this brief presentation to offer the documentary evidence or to provide a detailed description of the developments pertaining to the rights and claims of the Copts and the Ethiopians. For those interested I have described these developments from the 17th century until 1964 in my study on «The Copts in Jerusalem» and in my essays on «The Ethiopians in Jerusalem».¹⁴⁹

149. Meinardus, Otto F.A., «The Ethiopians in Jerusalem», *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* I, II 1965, 112-147, 217-232.