

BISURAH AL-HARIRI

A little-known [eighteenth-century](#) author. The manuscripts give him the title of *anba*, which is usually applied to bishops, and more rarely to monks in the seventeenth century.

His name is given in all the manuscripts in the form Bisurah, which at first glance suggests the [reading](#) Basurah. G. Graf (1934) corrects this to Bistawrah or Pistauros, whereas P. Sbath (1939) simply transcribes it as Bassourah. Actually, the form Pistauros and its modifications (which correspond to Salib when Arabized) are absent from the SYNAXARION, although the name Bistawrus is attested to in the modern period (nineteenth and twentieth centuries). However, Saint Bisurah is commemorated on 9 Tut in the Synaxarion (cf. Forget, vol. 47, pp. 15-16 [Arabic text]; vol. 78, p. 18 [Latin translation]), and his relics are kept in Shibin al-[Qanatir](#) in the province of Qalyub, and not in Nashil al- Qanatir, as Basset read (Amélineau, 1893, pp. 432-33). Al- Haziri is a misreading of Graf (Graf, 1951, p. 117, last line) and does not exist.

Bisurah's work is a collection of religious [poems](#) in very simple literary Arabic, sapient, and of moral content. The style recalls that of certain books of the Bible (Proverbs, Ecclesiasticus, etc.). The first poem or *maqalah* (treatise or discourse) suggests that the author was a monk. According to Graf, the collection contains 149 poems; Sbath says seventy. These interesting [poems](#) are not yet edited.

One manuscript from a public library containing this collection of poems (Coptic Patriarchate, Cairo, Theology 290; Graf, no. 533; Simaykah, no. 333) was copied in March 1709. It has 131 folios with eleven lines per folio (21 16 cm). The verses are written after the manner of prose.

There are five other privately owned manuscripts, all in Cairo. Two were bought in Cairo by Sbath before 1928. The first was given the code 1025 and is at present in the possession of his family; it was copied in 1735 on

commission from the 105th patriarch, JOHN XVII (1726-1745). The second was not assigned a code and is now lost.

The three other Cairo manuscripts mentioned in the *Fihris* (index or catalog) of Sbath belonged respectively to ‘Abd al-Masih Salib al-Baramusi al-Masudi, a well-known hieromonk; Murqus Jirjis, the bookseller who [edited](#) many ancient Arabic-Coptic texts; and Matta Tadrus, another Coptic bookseller in Cairo.

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