

DANIEL OF SCETIS, SAINT

A HEGUMENOS who lived in the sixth century. The text of his life has come down in Coptic and Ethiopic. It is made up of fourteen episodes, which were originally separate. Eleven are, in fact, found scattered in Greek in collections of *Apophthegmata* (sayings of the Fathers) and *Gerontika* (anecdotes of the old monks), and correspondingly in [Syriac](#) and Arabic. The Coptic text is found in Bohairic and in only one codex.

Internal examination of the texts leads one to deduce that various anecdotes, some of them concerning other monks of the same name, were collected around the historical figure of one Daniel of Scetis, who lived in the first half of the sixth century. Even the anecdotes concerning the “real” Daniel appear to be untrue. Examples include the stories of the noblewoman [Anastasia](#) who, in order to escape from court life, seeks refuge at Scetis in men’s clothing; the monk Marcus who as a penance pretends to be mad and is recognized by Daniel; the visit to a convent of nuns in the south, where Daniel discovers the injustice and ill-treatment being inflicted on one nun; and Daniel’s refusal to support Tomus of Lyons when Justinian orders him to do so.

The historical information to be drawn from these episodes is exclusively of a chronological and confessional nature, enabling us to date his life to the first half of the sixth century and to conclude that he was one of the prominent figures in anti-Chalcedonian Egyptian monasticism. Nothing can be assumed about the actual events of his life.

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