

## **DAYR ABU AL-SAYFAYN (Mar Buqtur) Qus**

The only surviving monastery to the southeast of the town of QUS, from which it is about 7 miles (12 km) distant. It is surrounded by an enclosure wall and contains a Christian cemetery. It is situated some way out of the village of Hijazah. This village, and hence the monastery, is at the starting point of the ancient southern track from Qus to 'Aidhab on the Red Sea. Starting from Qus, there were two tracks that joined at Laqitah, round about a well and some palm trees.

One will find the line of this track in Garcin, *Un Centre musulman de la Haute-Egypte médiévale, Qus* (1976, pp. 6, 208). In the Middle Ages the trade in spices coming to the West passed by this route. Murray's study points out some "Coptic ruins" (p. 146), which is the site described in *Mémoires sur l'Égypte* (Vol. 3, pp. 232, 273). A little after Laqitah is listed a place "dayr Hamamah." Perhaps this is an ancient monastery.

We have no written evidence on this Dayr Abu al-Sayfayn. In addition to a central church dedicated to Saint Mercurius (Abu al-Sayfayn, the "Father of the Two Swords," designates Saint Mercurius), it contains three other churches, one of which is consecrated to Saint Victor, whence the name Dayr Mar [Buqtur](#) often given to the monastery.

The principal church contains an [altar](#) dedicated to Saint PACHOMIUS, and ABU SALIH at the beginning of the thirteenth century (1895, p. 230) mentions a monastery of Saint Pachomius in the region of Qus. 'Abd al-Masih Salib noted it under the name Dayr Mar [Buqtur](#) and remarks that worship was conducted by the clergy of Qus (1932, p. 179).

Its present state is described by Meinardus (1965, pp. 306-307; 2nd ed., 1977, p. 420).

## **[BIBLIOGRAPHY](#)**

- ‘Abd al-Masih Salib al-Mas‘udi al Baramusi. *Kitab Tuhfat al-Sa‘ilin fi Dhikr Adyirat Ruhban al-Misriyyin*. Cairo, 1932.
- Garcin, J. C. *Un centre musulman de la Haute [Egypte](#) médiévale, Qus*. Textes arabes et études islamiques 6. Cairo, 1976.
- Meinardus, O. F. A. *Christian Egypt, Ancient and Modern*. Cairo, 1st ed. 1965; 2nd ed. 1977.
- *Mémoires sur l’[Egypte](#) publiés pendant les campagnes du général Bonaparte*, 4 vols. Paris, 1800-1803.
- Murray, G. W. “The Roman Roads and Stations in the Eastern Desert.” *[Journal of Egyptian Archeology](#)* 2 (1925).

**RENÉ-GEORGES COQUIN**

**MAURICE MARTIN, S.J**

Tags: [Places](#)