

## **DAYR NAHYA (Giza)**

A monastery that enjoyed an [extraordinary](#) renown even among the Muslims. It was situated near the village of the same name (Nahya), to the northwest of [Giza](#) at the foot of the Jabal Abu Ruwash.

According to *The [Churches and Monasteries of Egypt](#)*, it was founded by a [merchant](#) who came from the west before DIOCLETIAN.

In the seventh century some monks from Scetis, fleeing from the persecution of the Melchite patriarch Cyrus (631-644), took refuge at Nahya (Evelyn-White, 1932, pp. 255-56; Cauwenbergh, 1914, p.132) and in the tenth century one could still see the cells in which they lived (p. 185, n. 3). The HISTORY OF THE PATRIARCHS, under the Patriarch KHA'IL (744-767), mentions the monastery as the residence of Moses, bishop of Wasim. The Caliph al-Mu'izz (972-975) is said to have camped with his troops before the walls of the monastery. The monastery is described by al-Shabushti (end of the tenth or beginning of the eleventh century; 1939, pp. 17 and 26). The Caliph al-Hakim (996-1021) set fire to the monastery and afterward reconstructed it.

The imam al-Amir bi-Ahkam Allah (1101-1130) visited the monastery and gave 1000 dirhams to the monks; he also gave about thirty *feddans* (acres) for cultivation, which remained the property of the monks until the arrival of the Ghuzz and the Kurds. Another biographer (1100-1130) in the *History of the Patriarchs* had as informants John, abbot of the monastery of Nahya, as well as his brother.

In 1330 the patriarch [BENJAMIN](#) II, returning from the monastery of Saint Macarius, where he had gone for the consecration of the CHRISM, stopped on the way at the monastery of Nahya (Evelyn-White, 1932, p. 396).

The historian al-MAQRIZI (d. 1441) contented himself with copying al-

Shabushti, and laconically added that the monastery was destroyed in 1354-1355 at the same time as that of other churches in Cairo.

This monastery must have been very rich and possessed a good library. Biblical manuscripts from this library are today preserved in the Freer Collection, Washington (Sanders, 1909, pp. 130-41).

The site was excavated at the beginning of the twentieth century by the Institut français d'Archéologie orientale (Palanque, 1902, pp.163-70; see also Crum, 1890-1909, p. 15; Daressy, 1917, pp. 274-76). According to some authors, the name "monastery of the vine-dresser" (Dayr al-Karram) is another name for the monastery of Nahya (Daressy, 1917, pp. 203-204).

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