

ISAAC THE DEACON

Seventh-century biographer of the fortieth patriarch of Alexandria, JOHN III. He was born in Samannud (Sebennytus), a city dating from [dynastic](#) times that still exists on the [left bank](#) of the [Damietta](#) branch of the Nile in Gharbiyyah Province. Isaac appears in the [HISTORY OF THE PATRIARCHS](#) by Sawirus ibn al-Muqaffa' as the secretary and close disciple of [Patriarch John](#) III, his spiritual father. Isaac is described as “a wise man, loving of his fellows, learned in the Scriptures, and virtuous.”

Toward the end of the biography, it is said that the dying patriarch sailed to Alexandria, “and the writer of this history [Isaac the Deacon] was with him, for he was his spiritual son.” The biography, which must have been written in Coptic, includes details concerning the Chalcedonians and anti-Chalcedonians in Egypt as well as the relations between the church and the Umayyad caliphs Yazid I, Mu'awiyah II, Marwan I, and 'Abd al-Malik.

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