

## ***JOHN THE LITTLE (339-409)***

**A Saint** and monk. He is a renowned figure among the **Desert Fathers**. He is known from the ***Apophthegmata partum***, which preserves nine sayings under his name, and a Coptic “Life” attributed to Zacharias, the eighth-century **Bishop** of Sakha. He is also commemorated in the Arabic **Synaxarion** of the Copts. John was born in the village of Tesi in the region of Oxyrhynchus. In 357, when he was 18 years old, he came to **Scetis** and became a **disciple** of **Abbot** Ammoes. About 380-385, St. John established his own community. In the early fifth century, he became “Father of Scetis.” The virtues that were most highly valued by him are obedience, humility, and compassion.

Three fears were with him all the time: the fear of the time of the separation from the body, the fear of meeting God, and the fear of Judgment Day. Following the invasion of the nomads in 407, St. John had to leave Scetis for the **Clysm** area near Suez, where he seems to have died. His monastic settlement was one of four settlements that developed into the oldest four monasteries of **Wadi al-Natrun**. The Monastery of John the Little was empty of its monks in 1493. Some of its buildings, including a church, were discovered in 1995. Excavations resumed a few years ago after nearly 10 years of interruption.

**GAWDAT GABRA**

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