

MONASTERIES IN THE GHARBIYYAH PROVINCE

Testimonies are relatively numerous concerning the [monasteries](#) of this province, which occupies the north of the Delta between the two branches of the Nile, that of Damietta (Dumyat) and that of Rosetta (Rashid). Mentioned are the sites of Diolkos and hermitages at Naqizah and Sinjar. To the north near the salt marshes are found a group of four monasteries: DAYR AL-'ASKAR, DAYR AL- MAYMAH, DAYR SITT DIMYANAH, and DAYR AL- MAGHTIS; to the southwest are the hermitage of AZARI and Dayr Mar Mina at Ibyar. In addition, brief accounts refer to other monasteries or hermitages.

In the west of this province at Fuwwah the presence of monks is attested by a letter from CYRIL I of Alexandria, in which the patriarch addresses them about being on guard against Origenist doctrines (Honigmann, 1953, pp. 52-53). It is, however, possible that *fou£* (phoua) is a copyist's error for *faoà* (phaou), that is, Pbow, the motherhouse of the Pachomians, some of whose monks appear to have been attracted by ORIGEN's ideas (Lefort, 1943, pp. 352-56).

Ibn Duqmaq mentions a Dayr [Shubra](#) Kalsa in the center of the Gharbiyyah, which was in the present district of Kafr al-Shaykh. It is also mentioned under the name of Diyarb Shubra Kalsa by the fourteenth-century writer 'Abd al-Latif.

Abu al-Makarim notes a walled monastery named Saint Michael at Misir southeast of Kafr al-Shaykh.

Abu al-Makarim also mentions two [monasteries](#) to the north of this town at [Damru](#) al-Khammarah (formerly called Damru al- Kana'is), which recalls the importance of this small town in the history of the Coptic patriarchate in the eleventh century in the district of al-Mahallah al-Kubra. One, for monks, adjoins the church of Saint THECLA. The other was for nuns, whose superior (A.D. 1177), called Qumriyyah, was

celebrated for her asceticism, her holiness, and her learning. Abu al-Makarim dates the destruction of the numerous churches (he does not speak of monasteries) to 1177-1178 in the period of Salah al-Din, and attributes it to the Frankish king of Jerusalem, Baldwin (al-Barzani).

Abu al-Makarim also speaks of a Dayr Abu Hurmus situated near Abusir, in the district of al-Mahallah al-Kubra. 'Abd al-Latif knows of a Hurin Buhurmus, sometimes called simply Buhurmus, which could be the same place. Ramzi (Vol. 1, p. 472) locates it northwest of al-Mahallah al-Kubra. Abu al-Makarim indicates that Sa, son of Misraim, the grandson of Ham, who was the son of Noah and said to be the founder of the town of SA (Sais), was buried there.

To the east of the province in the district of Talkha there is still a village called Dayrayn (lit. "two monasteries"). This locality is already pointed out by Ibn Duqmaq, but Abu al-Makarim does not mention any monastery there.

In the district of Tanta, a monastery in the name of some martyrs is mentioned by Abu al-Makarim at the place called Buriij. There, he says, lived a monk named [Macarius](#) the Painter, who later became patriarch under the name of MACARIUS II (1102-1128). The Lewata, a Berber tribe, destroyed the monastery and maltreated Macarius. This occupation of the Delta by these Lewatis is related in the HISTORY OF THE PATRIARCHS OF THE EGYPTIAN CHURCH. They were repulsed in A.D. 1074 by Badr al-Jamali. According to Abu al-Makarim, the village called Ikhaway al- Zallaqah was built on the ruins.

To the north of Zifta, and near the [Damietta](#) branch of the Nile, at Sunbat, Abu al-Makarim calls attention to a monastery for men and another for women near the Church of Saint George. They are said to have been founded by [Marqus](#) ibn Qanbar (d. 1208). ABU SALIH THE ARMENIAN in his excursus on this personage, in fact, indicates that he had asked that a church should be attributed to him at Sunbat in 1186.

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