

MONASTERY OF ST. HATRE AT [ASWAN](#)

It is situated on the west bank of the [Nile](#) facing the Island of Elephantine. The monastery is named after its patron, St. Hatre, who was the **Bishop** of [Aswan](#) in the late fourth century. Later it was given the name of St. [Simeon](#) by [archaeologists](#) and travelers. It is not known when the monastery was established. However, the earliest wall paintings in the grotto representing **saints** are from the sixth or seventh century. The remaining church was built in the first half of the 11th century. Its construction provides the most significant example of the domed oblong church in Egypt.

The church's paintings were executed probably in the 11th or the 12th century. The eastern semidome of the sanctuary is decorated with a scene of [Christ](#) in the *mandorla* (an oval enclosing a scene or painting) that is held by two angels. There are the remains of a scene of the 24 **priests** (elders) on the sanctuary's north wall. The monastery's upper terrace serves as a keep or a tower that consists of three stories and comprises the monks' cells, the refectory, the kitchen, and other facilities. It is the largest keeplike lodging complex in Egypt.

There is a room containing a reservoir that is a part of a water supply system including bathrooms, latrines, and laundering facilities. About 200 tombstones were discovered in the monastery's cemetery, which provide important material for the study of [Christian](#) tombstones in Egypt and **Nubia**. The monastery ceased to be occupied by monks around the end of the 13th century.

See also MONASTICISM, EGYPTIAN.

GAWDAT GABRA

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