

MURQUS AL-ANTUNI

Saint mentioned as a hermit of the Monastery of Saint Antony during the reign of the Mamluk sultans (fourteenth century). We do not know the date of his birth, or who his parents were and what their attitude to the ruling power was, nor at what date he entered the Monastery of Saint Antony.

We know only that renunciations of the [Christian faith](#) were numerous down to the accession of the [Patriarch](#) MATTHEW I (in 1378). The greatest persecution the Coptic community had undergone raged from about 1351, greatly diminishing the number of Christians. Matthew's accession marked a spiritual and nationalist renewal of the Copts in the face of the alien Mamluk power.

Graf, in his *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur* (Vol. 2, p. 475), gives the date of his death as 1386. His [tomb](#) became a place of pilgrimage and quickly became known through the miracles that took place there. A chapel containing his relics was built at the Monastery of Saint Antony, a chapel mentioned by J. M. Vansleb in 1672.

C. [Sicard](#) also mentions it (Vol. 1, p. 25) in the journey he made to the monastery in 1716. After Sicard's visit, the chapel was reconstructed in 1766 (Fedden, 1937, p. 56). It was in this chapel that the Franciscans were authorized to celebrate the mass in the seventeenth century. They resided at the Monastery of Saint Antony to have their young [missionaries](#) taught Arabic.

At present this church serves the monks for the period of Lent, but pilgrimage appears to have fallen out of use, for Viaud does not mention it in his book on the Coptic pilgrimages.

Mark's feast day is 8 Abib.

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