

NIKIOU

A Greek name of a city in the Egyptian Delta in the area of Minuf. Traditionally, the city was named after the governor who founded it. Nikiou was known in Coptic as psati (Pshati) and in Arabic literature, it was called Niqyus or Ibshadi.

The location of Nikiou is a matter of some debate. There is today a town called Ibshadi in the province of Minufiyyah, located about 5 miles (8 km) northwest of Sirsina and about 12.5 miles (20 km) northwest of Minuf. E. Amélineau considered this town to be Nikiou (1893, p. 283), but the ruins of Zawyat Razin, situated about 5.5 miles (9 km) southwest of Minuf, match the ancient testimony about the city much more closely (Butcher, 1897, Vol. 1, p. 390, n. 1). Thus it appears that Nikiou was situated on the east side of the [Nile](#) arm opposite Terenouthis.

The history of Christianity in Nikiou is very old. Tradition holds that the family of Jesus stayed in the city for seven days during its FLIGHT INTO EGYPT. While there Jesus healed a man who was possessed (Mingana, 1929, pp. 405, 444). According to some accounts, the parents of MENAS THE MIRACLE MAKER were from Nikiou, and the city was said to have had a church in their day.

Nikiou is mentioned often in Coptic martyrological literature. Among the city's martyrs were several bishops, including Macrobius and Sarapamon, who died during the persecutions of DIOCLETIAN. The SYNAXARION records that Sarapamon, who had been ordained [bishop](#) of Nikiou by the patriarch PETER I (300-311), was interred in a church in the city after his death and that Macrobius, a [contemporary](#) of Julius of Aqfahs (see MARTYRS, COPTIC) whom he healed of an illness, served as bishop for thirty- nine years.

Our knowledge of other bishops of Nikiou comes piecemeal from a number of various sources. ATHANASIUS I reported that in 325 a

Melitian [bishop](#) named Heracleides was in residence in Nikiou (*Apologia Secunda* 71.16). In a letter of Athanasius we read that Triadelphus succeeded Sarapamon as [bishop](#) of Prosopites, the district of which Nikiou was the chief city. That this Triadelphus was a staunch supporter of orthodoxy is evidenced by the fact that he was a member of the delegation led by Bishop SERAPION OF TMUIS that went to Constantinople in support of Athanasius (Munier, 1943, p. 7). Patriarch THEOPHILUS (385-412) announced in his paschal letter of 404 that he had ordained Theopemptus as the successor of Theodosius in the bishopric of Nikiou (cited in Munier, 1943, p. 12). In 454, Bishop Piusammon of Nikiou appealed to Pope Leo in Rome concerning his removal from office by Patriarch DIOSCORUS I and in 459 this Plusammon joined in the condemnation of Eutyches (Munier, 1943, pp. 22-23). The name of Bishop Macarius of Nikiou comes up in the account of Saint Theopista. Macarius had blessed Theopista and introduced her into monasticism, but after she had spent a year alone in a room, he forgot about her. Then after seeing Theopista in a vision, he went to her room and found her dead. The historian JOHN OF NIKIOU mentions a man named John as bishop of the city at the beginning of the seventh century. In 645 or 646, not long after the ARAB CONQUEST OF EGYPT, Bishop Basil of Nikiou, a man described as great and learned, was present at the dedication of a memorial in the Monastery of Macarius (Coquin, 1975, pp. 128-29). The successor of Basil appears to have been the chronicler John of Nikiou. The HISTORY OF THE PATRIARCHS reports that John was present at the death of Patriarch JOHN III in 686. Patriarch SIMON I (689-701) made John supervisor of monasteries and then when John punished an errant monk so severely that he died ten days later, Simon removed John from office and ordained Menas as bishop of Nikiou. The history of Nikiou's bishops ends sometime around 960 when the population of the city had decreased to the point that Nikiou had to be joined with surrounding towns and villages to form a single bishopric.

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