

PHARAN (Faran)

An oasis in the south of the Sinai Peninsula, a little to the north of the town of al-Tur (RAITHOU) and to the west of the Greek monastery of Saint Catherine.

Netra or Nitira, a hermit in Sinai, became bishop of Pharan at the end of the fourth century or the beginning of the fifth.

According to Ammonius (Tillemont, 1732, Vol. 7, pp. 579-80), Moses, a native of Pharan, was among the solitaries of Raithou, and converted the Arabs of the country; this Moses is celebrated by the SYNAXARION of Constantinople at 27 November (Delehaye, 1902, p. 259).

The region of Pharan also is mentioned in the Life of Saint Pidjimi, which indicates that there were monastic establishments there at the beginning of the fifth century ([Maspero](#) and Wiet, p. 133).

Macarius is mentioned as bishop of Pharan in a letter of Emperor Marcian (d. 457).

Theonas, [priest](#) and chancellor of the [church](#) of Pharan and the laura of Raithou, subscribed to the acts of the [Council of CONSTANTINOPLE](#) in 536.

The valley of Pharan is certainly designated in the text of Euty chius, who cites the letter of the monks "scattered in the valleys of Sinai, near to the bush from which God spoke to Moses," in a letter addressed to Justinian (527-565) to ask him to construct a monastery where they would be protected from the raids of the Blemmyes and the bedouin of the desert.

We know from the narrative of John Moschus that at Easter 551 or 552 the bishop of Pharan was Photius. All the monks of Sinai were subject to his see, and he himself was dependent on the patriarch of Jerusalem.

About 570 the anonymous of Placentia, when he passed through Pharan, was saluted in Egyptian, and he noted that troops kept watch over the security of the monasteries, which received their supplies from Egypt. This indicates both the origin of the anchorites and the close ties between Pharan and the valley of the Nile.

We also know of Theodorus Monothelite bishop of Pharan, condemned by the Lateran Council in 649 and by the Sixth [Council of Constantinople](#) in 691-692.

The bishopric of Pharan appears to have disappeared in the seventh century, to the advantage of the monastery of Saint [Catherine](#) on Mount Sinai.

In 1512 Jean Thenaud noted the ruins of more than 2,000 cells on the mountain of Pharan, as well as caves and a [church](#) in their midst.

It is evident that Pharan was the center of anchorite life of the Egyptian type.

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