

## **SAYINGS OF THE FATHERS**

The fourth and fifth centuries witnessed the spread of **monasticism** in the Egyptian desert. Monks strove to live according to certain ideals of conduct that were expressed by many early monks. The majority of these stories, memorable sayings, or anecdotes were provided in **Macarius'** settlements at **Nitria** and **Scetis**. These "words" were initially preserved only orally but were then put into writing, very probably in Coptic. They are preserved in two forms, one is alphabetically, and the other according to subject matter.

The entire corpus is known as the [\*Apophthegmata patrum\*](#) or [\*Gerontica\*](#). It is a major source for the history of monastic spirituality, and it illustrates the cultural and social milieu of the monastic communities in Nitria, **Kellia**, and Scetis. By the sixth century, the Sayings of the Fathers were translated from [Greek](#) into Latin and soon thereafter into Syriac, Arabic, Georgian, and Armenian.

Therefore it is not surprising that they influenced monasticism in the East and the West. The Arabic ***Bustan al-Ruhban*** or the [\*Garden of the Monks\*](#) is apparently based on the Sayings of the Fathers. It is widely used by Egyptian monks and is highly appreciated by the Coptic laity.

**GAWDAT GABRA**

Tags: [Books](#)