Coptic monasticism and the Egyptian monasteries
Agenda

• Coptic Monasticism - Definition
• Coptic Monasticism - History
• Egyptian monasteries
In Christian life, the effect of monasticism in relation to the church is like the role of the heart in relation to the body. It preserves life.
Coptic Monasticism - Definition

Monasticism is a way of life to rid the inner self of materialism.

Monasticism is based on deprivation of everything, live humbly and in contemplation in its highest level.
Coptic Monasticism - Definition

To execute the word of the Holy Bible:

“Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. For everything in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever.” (1John 2:15-17)
Coptic Monasticism - History

St. Antony
The father of the monks
a wealthy man of Alexandria,
left for the nearby desert in
about 270 AD established the
Hermetic System of
Monasticism and became the
father of all the monks all over
the world
Coptic Monasticism - History

Saint Anthony had left for the desert after hearing the Gospel in Church which was, “If you want to be perfect, go, and sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me” (Matthew 19:21).
Coptic Monasticism - History

the Greek word monachos, according to its earliest attestations, described the ascetic who was a "solitary" life
Coptic Monasticism - History

St. Pachom (320 A.D.)
The father of the Koinonia established the life of Cenobitic Monasticism in upper Egypt, which many orders of monasticism still follow, he started the buildings of monastries for women.
Coptic Monasticism - History

St. Macarius the great (330 A.D.)
The father of the Scetis

Established the monastic rule called ‘Laura’, which had all the advantages of the two previous rules
Coptic Monasticism - History

Monks lived individually but near one another and assembled together every Saturday evening, until Sunday, for spiritual talks; they also celebrated the liturgy, which was followed by an ‘agape’ meal which they shared before returning to their cells.
Coptic Monasticism - History

The spreading of Monasticism throughout the whole world

Monasticism spread throughout the Eastern and Western deserts of Egypt; from the Northern coast to Nubia. Before the Arab conquest of Egypt (641 A.D.), there were around five thousand monasteries and nunneries.
Coptic Monasticism - History

The spreading of Monasticism throughout the whole world

Monasticism spread from Egypt to the world through the Coptic monks and through the visits done by external visitors to the monasteries (Like John Cassian, Hilary of Gaza, etc..) and through the pilgrimage ceremonies to the holy places in palestine, it spread to the West through the Coptic monks who were preaching in Ireland, and from there to Scotland and the rest of Europe.
Coptic Monasteries

The monastery

Monasteries in the early days were cells built distant from each other with a church in the middle to celebrate the holy liturgy each Sunday and the monks gathered from Saturday night to pray together. After the liturgy they ate together and left afterwards each one to his own cell.
Coptic Monastries

The monastery - the walls and gate
The to protect the cells from thieves living in the desert, a defensive wall was built with a small gate for entrance
Coptic Monasteries

The Monks cells
In Pakhomian life
Useful References

The monastery of St. Anthony Eastern Desert of Egypt
A high view of the monastery
The external gate of the monastery
The Monastery Belfries
THE BELL
The main gate of the monastery
The passage leading to the cells
The 2 Belfries
The church of St. Mark El-Anthony
The church of St. Paula and St. Anthony
The retreat house
The monks while praising
The ancient fort
The ancient fort
The external fence of the monastery
The old cells
The ancient cells area
The old dining room where the monks sat around a large stone table.
The holy well
The passage of the church of the Apostles
Icon of Christ appears in the niche of the early church
Wall painting for Four the monks are shown here on the western wall; St. Pachomius (292-346 A.D.) St. Barsum (from Syria), St. Arsenius and St. Sisoes.
The stairs leading to St. Anthony’s cave
The narrow passage leading to St. Anthony’s cave
The external view of St. Anthony’s cave
The Cemetery
The guest house