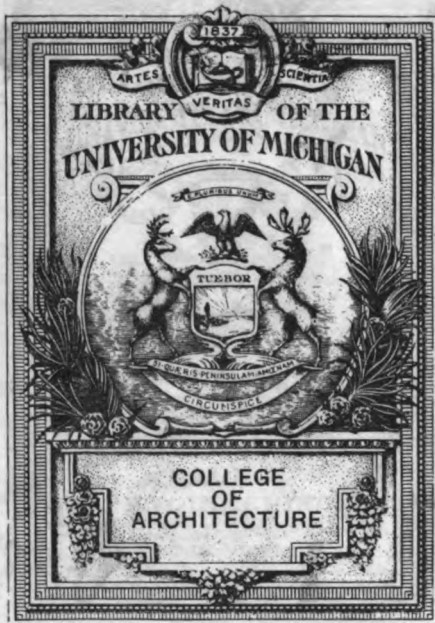


*The ancient Coptic churches of Egypt*

Alfred Joshua Butler







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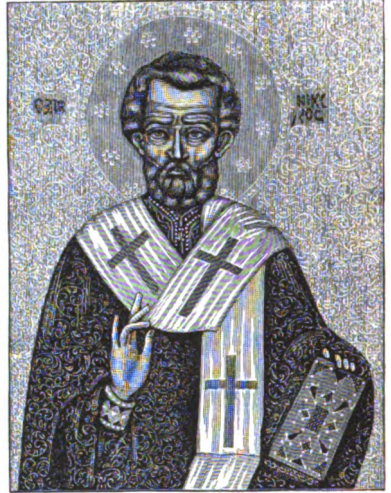
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THE  
Ancient Coptic Churches  
of Egypt

BY  
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# CONTENTS

## OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS . . . . .	PAGE xi
---------------------------------	------------

### CHAPTER I.

THE COPTIC ALTAR.—PORTABLE ALTAR.—FITTINGS OF THE ALTAR.—COVERINGS OF THE ALTAR . . . . .	I
--	---

### CHAPTER II.

EUCCHARISTIC VESSELS AND ALTAR FURNITURE. — CHALICE. —PATEN.—DOME OR ASTER.—SPOON.—ARK OR ALTAR CASKET. — VEILS.—FAN.—EWER AND BASIN.—PYX.— CREWET. — CHRISMATORY. — ALTAR-CANDLESTICKS. — TEXTUS.—GOSPEL-STAND.—THURIBLE.—BRIDAL CROWN	37
---	----

### CHAPTER III.

THE FURNITURE AND ORNAMENTS OF THE SACRED BUILD- ING.—AMBONS.—LECTERNS.—RELIQUARIES.—LAMPS AND LIGHTS.—CORONAE.—OSTRICH EGGS.—BELLS.—MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS.—MURAL PAINTINGS.—PICTURES . . .	64
--	----

## CHAPTER IV.

	PAGE
THE ECCLESIASTICAL VESTMENTS OF THE COPTIC CLERGY.— PREVIOUS AUTHORITIES.—DALMATIC.—AMICE.—GIRDLE. —STOLE.—PALL.—ARMLETS . . . . .	97

## CHAPTER V.

ECCLESIASTICAL VESTMENTS (CONTINUED).—PHELONION.— CROWN OR MITRE.—CROZIER OR STAFF OF AUTHORITY. —PECTORAL CROSS.—PROCESSIONAL CROSS.—SANDALS. BENEDICTIONAL CROSS.—EPIGONATION.—ROSARY . . . . .	173
--	-----

## CHAPTER VI.

BOOKS, LANGUAGE, AND LITERATURE . . . . .	239
---	-----

## CHAPTER VII.

THE SEVEN SACRAMENTS.—BAPTISM AND CONFIRMATION.— EUCCHARIST.—PENANCE . . . . .	262
---	-----

## CHAPTER VIII.

THE SEVEN SACRAMENTS (CONTINUED).—ORDERS.—MATRI- MONY.—ANOINTING OF THE SICK . . . . .	301
---	-----

## CHAPTER IX.

VARIOUS RITES AND CEREMONIES OF THE CHURCH.—THE HOLY OILS.—CONSECRATION OF A CHURCH AND ALTAR. —CONSECRATION OF A BAPTISTERY.—FESTIVAL OF EPI- PHANY.—PALM SUNDAY AND HOLY WEEK.—SEASONS OF FASTING . . . . .	330
---	-----

CHAPTER X.

	PAGE
LEGENDS OF THE SAINTS.—LEGEND OF ABU-'S-SIFAIN.— ANBA SHANÛDAH.—MÂRI MÎNA.—MÂRI TADRUS.—MÂRI GIRGIS.—ABU KÏR WA YUHANNA.—YAKÛB AL MUḤATT'A. —THE FIVE AND THEIR MOTHER.—ABU NAFR.—ANBA BARSÛM AL 'ARIÂN.—THE VIRGIN'S ASCENSION.—SIMÂN AL ḤABIS AL 'AMÛDI.—MARÎNA.—TAKLA.—ABU SIKHÎ- RÛN.—ST. SOPHIA.—ST. HELENA.—THE FINDING OF THE CROSS.—GIRGIS OF ALEXANDRIA.—ANBA MAḤARÛAH.— ST. MICHAEL.—ANBA ZACHARIAS.—PETER THE PATRI- ARCH.—ANBA MARḤUS . . . . .	357
INDEX TO VOL. II. . . . .	405





## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS TO VOL. II.

	PAGE
A Coptic Painting . . . . .	<i>frontispiece</i>
Coptic Altar . . . . .	4
Marble Altar-slab . . . . .	8
Altar-top showing marble slab inlet . . . . .	8
Marble Altar-slab pierced with drain . . . . .	9
Consecration Crosses . . . . .	21
Silk Curtain with massive silver embroidery, before the Haikal door at Al Mu'allakah . . . . .	31
Various pieces of Church Furniture . . . . .	41
The Ḥaşirah or Eucharistic Mat . . . . .	45
Flabellum in repoussé silver . . . . .	47
Processional Flabellum of silver-gilt used by the Melkite Church of Alexandria . . . . .	49
Textus Case of silver-gilt . . . . .	58
Gospel-stands with Prickets for Candles . . . . .	59
Bridal Crown . . . . .	62
Ivory-inlaid Lectern at the Cathedral in Cairo . . . . .	66
Ivory-inlaid Lectern (back view) . . . . .	67
Ancient Iron Candelabrum at Abu-'s-Sifain . . . . .	70
Glass Lamp at Sitt Mariam . . . . .	72
Bronze Lamp at Dair Tadrus . . . . .	73
Seven-wicked Lamp of Iron for the Anointing of the Sick . . . . .	76
Specimens of Altar Candlesticks . . . . .	76
Embroidered Dalmatic . . . . .	110
Shamlah (back and front view) . . . . .	119

*List of Illustrations.*

	PAGE
Paṭrashil of crimson velvet embroidered with silver . . . . .	130
St. Stephen : from a painting at Abu Sargah . . . . .	137
Seal of the Coptic Patriarch . . . . .	151
Fresco at Al Mu'allakah . . . . .	156
St. Michael : from a painting at Abu Sargah . . . . .	159
Armlets at the Church of Abu Ķir . . . . .	167
The Crown of the Coptic Patriarch . . . . .	205
Priestly Cap . . . . .	211
Coptic Crozier . . . . .	220
Benedictional Cross and small Amulet Crosses . . . . .	232
Head of Processional Cross of silver . . . . .	234
Wafer or Eucharistic Bread . . . . .	278

THE  
ANCIENT COPTIC CHURCHES  
OF EGYPT.

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CHAPTER I.

*Of the Coptic Altar.*

*Altar.—Portable Altar.—Fittings of the Altar.—Coverings of the Altar.*

**E**TYMOLOGICALLY the Coptic term for altar seems to correspond very closely with the Greek. For *ἄλτάρῳ*, which is the ordinary word, means 'place of making sacrifice': nor is the significance of this etymology lessened by the fact that the remote root in ancient Egyptian, from which the Coptic *ἄλτάρῳ* is derived, has rather the meaning of 'placing' or 'leaving' than of sacrifice. In point of usage *ἄλτάρῳ* conveyed the idea of sacrifice to the Copts and no other. Accordingly we find the corresponding Arabic word used in the liturgies and in common speech is *مذبح* (*maḍbah*) derived from *ذبح* which means to slaughter, so that the idea is clearly that of a sacrificial structure like the *θυσιαστήριον* of the Greek Church. The same word *maḍbah* is used now by the Nestorians<sup>1</sup>. The Greeks often call the altar the holy

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<sup>1</sup> G. P. Badger, *The Nestorians and their Rituals*, vol. i. p. 228 (London, 1852).

table (*ἀγία τράπεζα*), and in Latin the term 'mensa' or 'sancta mensa' is sometimes used for 'altare.' Thus in a letter of Pope Nicholas I. 'mensa efficitur:' and Fortunatus<sup>1</sup> says the name is given 'quod est mensa Domini, in qua convivabatur cum discipulis.' But the Copts are not apparently conscious of any such symbolism, nor do they commonly if ever speak of the altar as a table; although they do regard it under two other symbolical aspects, as representing the tomb of Christ and the throne of God. The manner in which these types are figured in the ritual and decoration of the altar will appear in the sequel.

Every altar in a Coptic church is invariably detached, and stands clear in the middle of its chapel or sanctuary. Though the haikal and the side-chapels are usually raised one step above the choir, the altar is never raised further on other steps, but stands on the level of the floor; yet an exception to this rule is found in the desert churches, where the altar is elevated on a step or platform above the floor of the haikal. The custom of attaching the lesser altars to the wall in western churches is doubtless very ancient; but originally the high altar always stood clear, so that the celebrant might move around it. This is proved by the words of the Sarum Rite<sup>2</sup>, 'thurificando altare circueat,' and again 'principale altare circumquaque aspergat.' So too in the Egbert Pontifical<sup>3</sup> we read 'in circuitu ipsius altaris.' Gradually, however, the altar was moved up to the eastern wall, and became attached and fixed there, which, of course, was the usual though not

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<sup>1</sup> De Ecclesiae Officiis, tom. iii. p. 21.

<sup>2</sup> C. 25 and 28.

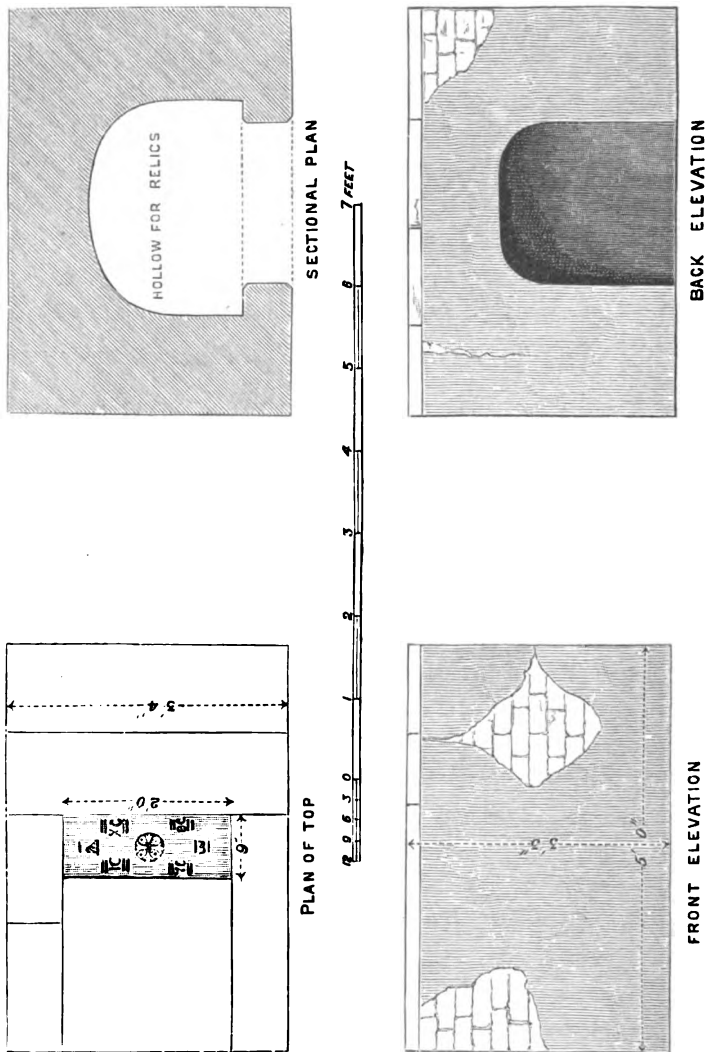
<sup>3</sup> P. 40.

invariable arrangement in our churches before the reformation. In the seventeenth century, after the destruction of the ancient altars, in many places a detached communion-table was placed in the chancel with benches against the wall all round it. This arrangement was distinctively Puritan in character: it still survives in one or two churches, such as the interesting little Saxon church of Deerhurst near Tewkesbury, and the chapel of Langley, Salop. The Puritans were probably not aware of their reversion to primitive practice: and their thoughts, of course, were very far removed from processions and incense.

The Coptic altar is a four-sided mass of brickwork or stonework, sometimes hollow, sometimes nearly solid throughout, and covered with plaster. It approaches more nearly to a cubical shape than the altars of the western churches. It is never built of wood<sup>1</sup> (though very curiously the high altar at Abu's-Sifain is cased in wood), nor upheld on pillars. As a rule the structure of the top does not differ from that of the side walls, but contains an oblong rectangular sinking about an inch deep, in which is loosely fitted the altar-board—a plain piece of wood carved with the device of a cross in a roundel in the centre, A above and Ω below this, and the sacred letters of Sanutius IH XP YC ΘC at the four corners. This arrangement, by which the chalice and paten stand at the mass upon a wooden base, while the fabric of

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<sup>1</sup> I have heard a traveller speak of a wooden altar at Girgah in the form of a table. In remote places such violations of right and custom may occur through indolence, ignorance, or indifference. But the evidence is not very weighty. Vide Arch. Journ. vol. xxix. p. 123 n.



**COPTIC ALTAR**

Fig. 1.

the altar is of stonework, presents a complete and singular reversal of the Latin practice : for the Roman rubric enjoins that, even where wood is the main material of the altar, a tablet of marble or stone must be placed for the sacred elements to rest upon at consecration.

On the eastward side in every altar, level with the ground, is a small open doorway showing an interior recess or cavity. Whether or not this doorway was originally closed by a moveable stone or board is uncertain : but there is in no case any sign of the opening ever having been blocked or closed, and no door-stone or the like exists in any church to-day. The cavity is of varying size ; but very often it is nearly co-extensive with the altar, which in that case consists merely of four walls and a top of masonry. Where the masonry is more solid, the recess is still large enough to denote a usage rather different from that of the corresponding recess in western altars, e.g. in the sixth-century altar at the church of Enserune and Joncels in Hérault. These have openings in the back or eastward face, but high up under the slab and of small dimensions. The nearest approach in structure to the Coptic altar occurs at Parenzo in the altar of St. Euphrasius ascribed to the sixth century<sup>1</sup>.

In the Latin Church the altar was generally a solid structure, and the top, at least in all historic times, was required to be of stone or marble as an essential condition of consecration. The top too had to be a single slab projecting on all sides and forming a shelf. The Greek Church to the present day retains its

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<sup>1</sup> La Messe, vol. i. pl. xxvii and xxxiv.

ancient, more ordinary custom of supporting the altar-top on four pillars. This top is of stone. Goar states that the Greek altar was invariably a table, open underneath and resting on four columns. But in the office of dedication as given by the same author<sup>1</sup>, it is expressly provided that the substructure may be solid, consisting either of a single block of stone, or of smaller stones in courses. But from the earliest times the table-like form seems to have been far more common. Thus Paul the Silentiary, in his description of St. Sophia, says the altar of Constantine was made of gold and silver and costly woods, and adorned with pearls and jewels. It was raised on steps, and stood on golden columns resting upon foundations of gold. The 'costly woods' were doubtless used for some kind of inlaying or outer embellishment, and cannot be taken to imply any sanction of an entirely wooden altar, which does not seem to have been canonical in any part of the Christian world after the fourth century. Up to that date wood was doubtless a common material in Africa. Thus a wooden table is mentioned by Athanasius and by Optatus bishop of Milevis c. 370 A.D.

Asseman states<sup>2</sup> that the altars of the Syrian Jacobites and Maronites in the East were sometimes of wood, sometimes of stone. So too in Gaul the earliest altars were wooden. Yet stone altars were used as early as the fourth century, and in more historical times stone was the sole material recognized. Thus among the Nestorians wooden altars are plainly prohibited by the canons: those of John, fifty-seventh patriarch, in the tenth century ordain that the altar must be fixed and made of stone in

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<sup>1</sup> Euchol. p. 832.

<sup>2</sup> Bibl. Orient. iii. 238.



settled abodes and times of peace<sup>1</sup>. So too one of the canonical judgments of Abu Isa is to the effect that, where men are dwelling in a city free from persecution and peril, there the altar may never be made of wood : but if they are in some place where a stone altar is impossible, then a wooden altar may be used by force of necessity. But a bishop may always destroy an altar, if he think well<sup>2</sup>. The wooden altars mentioned by Mr. Warren<sup>3</sup>, as used in the early Irish church of St. Bridget and elsewhere, were probably only an accident of the time when the whole fabric of the church building was merely of wood : and in the Anglo-Saxon ritual it was expressly forbidden to consecrate a wooden altar. Both in the Greek and Latin ordinances it was prescribed that the altar-top should project beyond the sides or pillars of the altar ; but there is only one instance of such a projection in the altars of the Copts. With them too the top is rarely formed of a single slab. Commonly it is a mere plastered surface, like the sides, with an altar-board<sup>4</sup> as described. Where a stone slab is used, it is hollowed to a depth of two inches, leaving a border or fillet all round, and usually inserted thus in the masonry so that the fillet is flush with the altar-top. These slabs, though common in the desert, are so rare in Cairo that I have only seen four in all the churches there, three

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<sup>1</sup> J. A. Asseman, *De Catholicis seu Patriarchis Chaldaeorum et Nestorianorum Commentarius*, p. 112. Rome, 1775.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* p. 118, n. 1.

<sup>3</sup> *Celtic Church*, p. 91.

<sup>4</sup> The Arabic term for this altar-board is merely اللوح, 'the slab.'

A similar slab is prescribed as necessary in the constitutions of the Church of Antioch by the patriarch Kyriakos ; see Renaudot, *Lit. Or.* tom. i. p. 165.

being at Al Mu'allakah, and one at Abu's-Sifain. Of the four, two are horseshoe shaped, one circular, and one is rectangular, pierced with a hole in the centre. They occupy the greater part of the top surface, but not the whole summit of the altar, with the possible exception of the rectangular slab, which I only saw dismantled after the altar had been dismantled. There are however three other small rectangular slabs, which ought perhaps to be added to the number, namely those on the floor of the re-

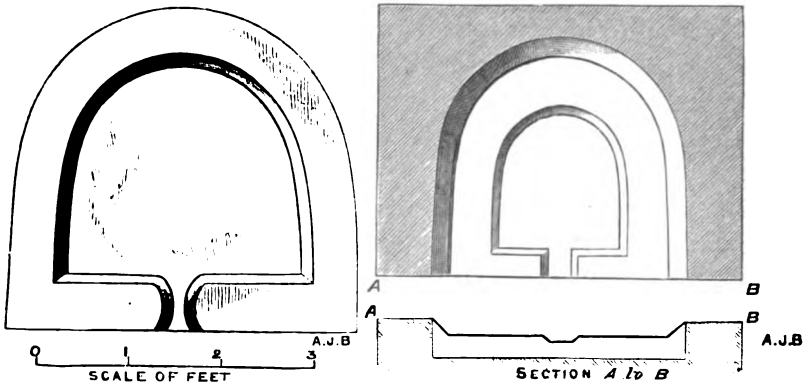


Fig. 2. (i) Marble Altar-slab.

(ii) Altar-top showing marble slab inlet.

cesses or arcosolia in the crypt of Abu Sargah. From the position of two of the recesses in the north and south walls instead of the east, it might be doubtful whether these slabs were designed for altars, or for some other purpose: but I think the analogy with Roman arcosolia, and a comparison of these stones with other stones described above, will tell in favour of the belief that all the slabs in the crypt denote altars. The design is at once so rare and so marked that, wherever it is found, it may fairly be assumed that the purpose is identical. In that case the num-

ber of Cairene altar-slabs of marble with raised fillet will amount to seven : a very small proportion.

On the other hand the monastic churches of the western desert abound in altars with slabs of this description,—which are, in fact, as normal there as they are exceptional in the churches of the two Cairos. It is not easy to understand this remarkable difference between the altars of the desert and the capital : nor can one see why the examples in Cairo are furnished by the three main altars at Al Mu'allakah, by

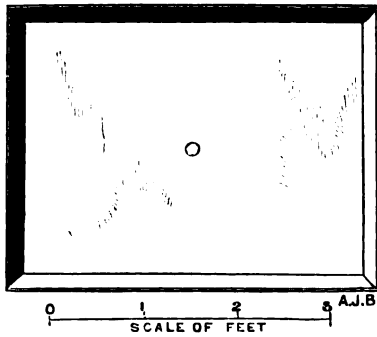


Fig. 8.—Marble Altar-slab pierced with drain.

the altars of the crypt at Abu Sargah, and by a single altar in a small exterior chapel at Abu's-Sifain. Of course where the altar-top is formed of a marble slab in this manner, the ordinary loose rectangular plank of wood graven with the sacred monogram—the altar-board as I have called it—does not occur. That the marble slab was designed with special reference to the ancient ceremony of washing the altar, cannot I think be doubted : for it is proved by the presence of the raised moulding,

by the break in the border generally found on the western side of the slab to let off the water, and in one example by a drain in the centre of the slab. The case is further strengthened by the hitherto unremarked but very striking coincidence of western usage. At the church of Sta. Pudentiana in Rome there is a rectangular slab, about 4 ft. 6 in. by 4 ft. 2 in., dating from the fourth century: it is surrounded by a raised moulding and pierced with two drains, one of which is in the centre<sup>1</sup>. Slabs unpierced and surrounded with unbroken mouldings are of very frequent occurrence from the earliest times in Europe. The fifth-century altar of St. Victor at Marseilles, and the sixth-century slab of the Auriol altar, may be cited among very early examples<sup>2</sup>. The Society of Antiquaries of the West of France possesses a very interesting slab of this kind, found in the church of Vouneuil-sous-Biard<sup>3</sup>, and ascribed to the sixth century: a seventh-century example is preserved in the museum at Valognes<sup>4</sup>: the altar of S. Angelo at Perugia, built in the tenth century, of Vaucluse in the eleventh, and at Toulouse in the twelfth, show how continuous in the West was the design of altar-slabs framed with a raised moulding.

Nor are we altogether without a western parallel for the curious horseshoe or semicircular slabs of the Coptic altar. In the museum at Vienna is a marble

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<sup>1</sup> La Messe, pl. xlv. On p. 112 M. de Fleury observes: 'Les trous qu'on remarque sur la surface doivent provenir d'un autre usage qui n'a rien de commun avec son origine, ou *servaient au lavage de l'autel*.' The italics are mine: I think the Coptic examples settle the point.

<sup>2</sup> La Messe, vol. i. pl. xlvi, xlvii.

<sup>3</sup> Id. ib. pl. xlv. p. 147.

<sup>4</sup> Id. ib. pl. xlv.

slab, said to be of Merovingian origin, dating from the sixth or seventh century: it is semicircular in form with three sinkings of different levels, the outermost being six-lobed, the other two semicircular; but all three have a broken angular line across the chord, singularly resembling the Coptic model<sup>1</sup>. Another semicircular altar-slab is to be seen in the museum of Clermont. I have no doubt that this particular form arose from the desire of imitating the table of the Last Supper, which in Coptic art is sometimes figured in the same shape. A glance at the Abu Sargah carving of the eighth century<sup>2</sup> almost decides the matter. There our Lord is sitting with his disciples at a table of almost exactly the same form as the Coptic horseshoe slabs, and the table has a border or moulding round it: moreover the intention is rendered quite unambiguous by the canopy above the table and the altar-curtains which are looped round the pillars. Western art furnished abundant examples of the same idea: thus the semicircular table is depicted in the catacombs of St. Calixtus, the mosaics of St. Apollinare at Ravenna, on the columns of the ciborium at St. Mark's, and in a miniature at Cambridge<sup>3</sup>.

As in the western so in the Coptic Church, there seem to have been no fixed dimensions for the altar. English altars varied from 8 ft. to 14 ft. 6 in. in length, but were usually 3 ft. 6 in. high. The Coptic altar is smaller: that for instance at St. Mark's chapel in Al Mu'allakah is 3 ft. 11 in. long by 3 ft. 3 in. broad: the principal altar at Abu Sargah

<sup>1</sup> La Messe, vol. i. pl. lii.

<sup>2</sup> See vol. i. p. 191.

<sup>3</sup> La Messe, vol. ii. p. 164.

is 4 ft. 5½ in. by 3 ft. 3 in. : at Abu-'s-Sifain the principal altar is 7 ft. 1 in. by 4 ft. 3 in. The height too varies considerably: thus the chief altar at Abu Sargah is only 2 ft. 10¼ in. high, and that at Abu-'s-Sifain is 3 ft. 4 in.

The cavity, which has been mentioned as opening eastward in the altar, has doubtless a symbolical reference to the martyr-souls seen under the altar in the apocalyptic vision<sup>1</sup>. In the early ages of the church, in reminiscence of this vision, it was customary to bury the bodies of saints or martyrs underneath the altar, either in a vault or crypt beneath the floor of the sanctuary, or else actually within the fabric of the altar. One of the most notable instances of this practice was at the ancient patriarchal church of Alexandria, where rested the body of St. Mark the Evangelist, before the church was plundered and the sacred remains carried over sea by the Venetians in the early middle ages. And to this day the high altar of St. Mark's at Venice encloses the body of the Evangelist, and bears the inscription 'Sepulcrum Marci.' In more tranquil times and places, when a new church was built, and no famous martyr's body was ready to hallow the sanctuary, the usage still prevailed of placing within the altar relics of some saint or anchorite. There is nothing to show that the cavity in the Coptic altar was meant to be sealed up, once the relics were deposited. On the contrary, the probability seems that they were merely enclosed in some kind of coffer, and then laid under the altar, so as to be easily removable in case they were required for healing the sick, carrying in procession,

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<sup>1</sup> Rev. vi. 9.

or other ritual purposes. At the present day every Coptic church possesses its relics, which are enclosed in a sort of bolster covered with silk brocade and kept in a locker beneath the picture of the patron saint. At Al Mu'allakah, it will be remembered, there is a special wooden reliquary containing four such cases besides a marble grill in the south aisle-chapel: and some of the desert churches have reliquaries enclosing entire bodies. But there can be little doubt that the practice of keeping relics in lockers or aumbries is of mediaeval origin, and that originally their right place was in the cavity under the altar. Two or three examples of Coptic subterranean altars have been cited in the foregoing chapters of this work: but probably the clearest instance of a confessional crypt is at Abu Sargah, though there is no direct evidence to show that it is regarded as the tomb of any martyr. Still, inasmuch as tradition marks this under-chapel as the resting-place of the Holy Family, and therefore consecrated in a special manner by a holy presence, the building of the high altar of Abu Sargah above it gives a close enough analogy to the western practice. Moreover the eastern niche in the crypt bears a very singular resemblance to the arcosolium in the tomb of St. Gaudiosus at Naples<sup>1</sup>, dating from about 460 A.D., and to other arcosolia of the fourth and fifth centuries at Rome, some of which undoubtedly served as altars: nor are the other recesses of the crypt very different. The whole plan is singularly like that of the crypt of St. Gervais at Rouen<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> See *La Messe*, vol. i. pp. 106-7, and pl. xxiv; also *Roma Sotteranea*, vol. iii. p. 44.

<sup>2</sup> *La Messe*, vol. ii. p. 118.

At present, as far as I can ascertain, the chief if not the sole use of the altar-cavity among the Copts is on Good Friday, when a picture of the cross is buried in rose leaves within it, to be uncovered on Easter morning.

In the Latin Church the use of relics for the consecration of an altar, and the association—confusion one might almost say—between the ideas of sacrifice and sepulture, reach back to the remotest antiquity. Thus Jerome remarks<sup>1</sup>, ‘Romanus Episcopus . . . super mortuorum hominum Petri et Pauli secundum nos ossa veneranda . . . offert Domino sacrificia et tumulos eorum Christi arbitratur altaria.’ The place where the relics were laid was called technically the sepulcrum, and in England the sepulchre was always *in front* or on the westward side of the altar: the idea being that the congregation in the nave, and not as in the Coptic arrangement the elders round the apse, should be thus reminded of the ‘souls under the altar.’ In the crypt under the south chancel aisle at Grantham Abbey the cavity is 3 ft. 2 in. long by 2 ft. 4 in. broad. The cavity was always closed by a sealed slab engraved with five crosses, such as may still be seen in the cathedrals of Norwich and St. David’s. A very early instance, dating probably from the fourth century, occurs in the church of San Giacomo Scossacavallo at Rome<sup>2</sup>, where the cavity is in the middle of the altar-top, which legend says was once upon the altar of presentation in the temple of Jerusalem. This same altar at S. Giacomo has a second sepulcrum or confessio below, with an arched doorway very like

<sup>1</sup> Tom. ii. adv. Vigilant. p. 153, quoted by Gibbon.

<sup>2</sup> La Messe, vol. i. pl. xxiv.



the Coptic arrangement. Other examples are furnished by an altar at the church of Esquelmes in Belgium, All Saints' chapel at Ratisbonne, and the altar in the north transept of Jervaulx Abbey, where the sealed slab was only  $6\frac{1}{2}$  in. by  $7\frac{1}{2}$  in. Though the confessio or crypt below the altar is quite distinct from the sepulcrum, yet the two terms are sometimes used interchangeably. Thus in the Egbert Pontifical<sup>1</sup> at the consecration of an altar the bishop is directed to make a cross with chrisin in the middle and at the four corners of the 'confessio,' where the slab of the 'sepulcrum' is clearly intended. So too in the Ordo Romanus exactly the same form is prescribed in the words 'ponat crisma in confessionem per angulos quattuor in crucem . . . tunc ponat tabulam super relliquias.' The true confessional or crypt seems to have been introduced into England by the Roman missionaries, and is in fact essentially Latin<sup>2</sup>. It does not occur in any Saxon churches, except such as were built under the influence of Italian models, and is quite unknown in Ireland. Eadmer, c. 1000 A.D., describes that at Canterbury as made expressly in imitation of the crypt under the original basilican church of St. Peter at Rome. In the high altar was buried the body of Wilfrid of York, and in the Jesus altar the head of St. Swithin: while in the confessional were the head of St. Furseus and the tomb of St. Dunstan. At Canterbury and elsewhere there was a flight of steps leading from the choir to the presbytery, the stone floor of which was thus raised four or five feet above the choir floor: underneath it was the subter-

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<sup>1</sup> P. 45.

<sup>2</sup> Hist. Eng. Ch. Arch. p. 47, &c.

ranean chapel with its own altar and shrine<sup>1</sup>. The name is clearly given in the *Ceremoniale Episcoporum*<sup>2</sup>: '*locum qui in plerisque ecclesiis sub altari majori esse solet ubi et martyrum corpora requiescunt qui martyrium seu confessio appellatur.*' The crypt too was sometimes called *confessorium*, and Du Cange quotes from the '*Laudes Papiæ apud Muratorem*' as follows: 'Fifteen churches are found having very large crypts with vaulted roofs upheld on marble columns: these are called confessoria, and in them bodies of saints rest within marble coffers.' Richard, prior of Hexham, says of St. Wilfrid's church there, about 1180 A.D., that there were many chapels below the several altars throughout the building. Mr. Scott gives instances of Saxon crypts at Brixworth, Wing, and Repton: and of later crypts at York, Old St. Paul's, Winchester, Gloucester and elsewhere. I may add that a very good instance of a confessional occurs in the church of St. Clement at Hastings. But essential as the presence of relics was considered in the early ages of the church, in later times, despite the miraculous power of multiplying possessed by martyrs' bones, there seems to have been a dearth of such remains, and altars were consecrated without them. In a MS. of the fifteenth century, now in the British Museum<sup>3</sup>, may be found a rubric providing that the practice of placing relics inside the altar '*raro fiat . . . propter relliquiarum paucitatem.*' This ordinance, hitherto unnoticed, was pointed out to me by Mr. Middleton.

Corresponding to the altar-cavity of the Coptic

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<sup>1</sup> See Rock, *Church of our Fathers*, vol. i. p. 219.

<sup>2</sup> Lib. i. c. 12.

<sup>3</sup> Lansdowne, 451, fol. 137 a.

Church and the sepulcrum of the Latin, there was always a place beneath the Greek altar (sub altari locum excavatum<sup>1</sup>), called the sea, *θάλασσα* or *θαλασσίδιον*. Here were thrown away the rinsings from the priests' hands and the water used for washing the sacred vessels; and here were laid the ashes of holy things, such as vestments or corporals, that were burnt by fire by reason of their decay. These uses give some colour to the derivation of the term propounded by Ligaridius, who says that the idea comes from the lustral service of the sea, because in the words of Euripides *θάλασσα πάντα κλύζει*. The thalassa no doubt was pierced with a drain to carry off the rinsings, and so far corresponded with the western piscina. Moreover, in early times the piscina in English churches was a drain at the foot of the altar on the westward side. This is proved for instance by the words of the Ecgbert Pontifical, according to which the holy water that is left over after sprinkling a church at dedication is poured 'at the base of the altar.' There is also a symbolical reason assignable; for as the altar figures the throne in heaven of St. John's vision, so this thalassa figures the sea by the throne. Besides the uses above given the thalassa had a further purpose as a receptacle for vestments on the eve of a festival, for which they were specially hallowed by being placed under the altar<sup>2</sup>. In the thalassa too, as in the sepulcrum, relics were sometimes though rarely placed: usually they were kept in separate chests or coffers, as became the later practice in the Latin and the Coptic churches alike. Evagrius for

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<sup>1</sup> Goar, Euchol. p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> Id. p. 518.

example<sup>1</sup> speaks of a 'finely wrought shrine of silver' used as a reliquary. Goar, after asserting that the altar was merely a table on four columns, states that the relics, which by the Greek canons were absolutely essential to the dedication of a church, were placed either inside the slab or else inside the pillars. But I have already shown part of this statement to be erroneous, inasmuch as the rubric for dedication allows the altar to be built up as a solid structure. When moreover we read of the thalassa being the place in which the relics sometimes though rarely were deposited; the right conclusion doubtless is, that where the rarer, i.e. the solid form of altar prevailed, there the thalassa, being walled all round like the Coptic cavity, served to give the relics a shelter and security which they would not receive under the open table-altar. The hollow form of the Greek altar is expressly mentioned in early times. Thus Ardon, Abbé of Aniane, who died in 821 A. D., writes: 'Altare illud forinsecus est solidum, ab intus autem cavum, retrorsum habens ostiolum, quo privatis diebus inclusae tenentur capsae cum diversis relliquiis Patrum<sup>2</sup>.' And of vestments we read: 'vespera praecedente, sanctum habitum suscepturi vestimenta ad sanctum altare asportantur et in sanctae mensae gremio seu mari (ἐν τῷ θαλασσιδίῳ τῆς ἀγίας τραπέζης) reponuntur<sup>3</sup>.' Conversely, altars supported on columns are sometimes found in Latin churches. An altar on four pillars is depicted in the mosaics of the baptistery at S. Apollinare in Classe, Ravenna; similar is the altar of St. Rusticus at Minerve in

<sup>1</sup> Hist. lib. ii. c. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Thiers, *Les Principaux Autels des Eglises*, p. 20. Paris, 1688.

<sup>3</sup> Id. ib. p. 33.

Hérault, dated 457 A.D.<sup>1</sup> The slab in the Vienna museum rested on three supports: as did a slab in the church of SS. Vincent and Anastasius at Rome. A single central pillar is found in the case of an altar of the seventh century at Cavaillon, and another at Six-Fours<sup>2</sup>.

There seems to have been nothing in the structure of Greek churches corresponding to the confessionary. Neither in the description of St. Sophia nor in any other record, as far as I know, is any indication of it: and this fact, taken in connexion with the many analogies existing between Greek and Coptic usage, so far bears out the idea that the arrangement of the crypt at Abu Sargah is accidental, and is not a martyr's shrine placed intentionally beneath the high altar. It will be remembered too that the only other example of a subterranean chapel in a Cairo church, the chapel of Barsûm al 'Ariân at Abu-'s-Sifain, is not merely not under the high altar but is outside the main church altogether: while in regard to the examples in Upper Egypt information is wanting. The church of Anba Bishôï in the Natrun valley has a curious cavity showing under the patriarchal throne in the tribune, which may possibly have been designed for relics.

One further point remains. In western Christendom the altar was nearly always marked with five crosses incised on the slab, one in the centre, and one at each of the four corners. These are called consecration crosses, and are sculptured in the places where the bishop at dedication signed the sign of the cross with chrism, and burnt over each spot a

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<sup>1</sup> La Messe, vol. i. pl. xliii.

<sup>2</sup> Id. ib. pl. lvi and lxxv.

little heap of incense and two crossed tapers. In England most of the original altar-slabs were thrown down at the reformation or in Puritan times, and used as paving-stones or tombstones. Some few remain in situ, such as on the high altar at Peterchurch in Hereford; in the parish church at Forthampton, Gloucester; the collegiate choir at Arundel; the chapels of St. Mary Magdalene and of *Maison Dieu* at Ripon. A very good example was the splendid slab on the high altar at Tewkesbury Abbey (re-discovered and replaced by Mr. Middleton), but unfortunately the crosses have been almost obliterated by a process of repolishing. A slab used as a tombstone may be seen in the north aisle of St. Mary's, West Ham, Pevensey, and examples are not uncommon elsewhere.

The Greek rite does not differ materially from the English, except that the cross is marked in three places instead of five on the slab—and of the three crosses one is in the centre, one at each side. The crosses, however, are rather larger; for the chrism is poured out in the form of a cross, as at baptism. Though the corners of the slab are not marked, yet each of the four pillars upholding it is signed by the pontiff with three crosses of chrism; and it is probable that on all the places thus anointed the figure of a cross was afterwards incised in the stone. On the whole altar, therefore, there would be fifteen consecration crosses.

The Coptic altar bears no incised crosses other than those which are cut upon the slab of wood; and where this slab is wanting, the marble top does not generally show the symbol of consecration, though there is a single large cross sculptured on

two of the three slabs in the crypt at Abu Sargah. But the Egyptian custom is said to tally with the Greek, three crosses of chrisms being anointed on the altar at its dedication in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost respectively<sup>1</sup>. The use of chrisms for the consecration of the altar is particularly mentioned by Renaudot, who, speaking of the church of St. Macarius in the Natrun valley, says, 'ecclesiae consecratio facta est episcoporum et

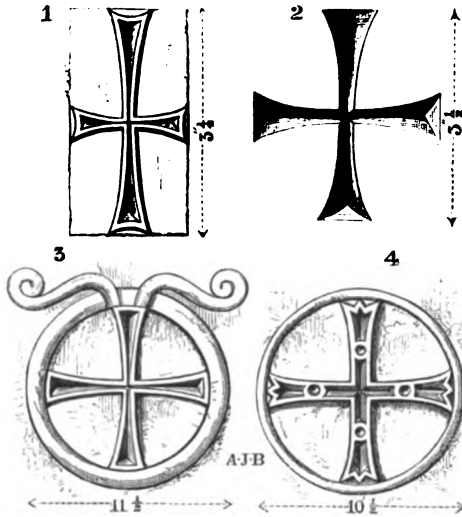


Fig. 4.—Consecration Crosses.

1. On the columns of Al 'Aḍra, Hārat-az-Zuailah. 2. On the columns at Abu Sargah.  
3 and 4. On the slabs in the recesses of the crypt at Abu Sargah.

ipsius patriarchae ministerio, chrisms tam ad altare quam ad parietes consignationibus factis<sup>2</sup>. This was in the time of Benjamin, thirty-eighth patriarch, or about 620 A.D. Even though Renaudot is some-

<sup>1</sup> See Vansleb, *Histoire de l'Eglise d'Alexandrie*, p. 220 (Paris, 1677).

<sup>2</sup> *Historia Patriarcharum Alexandrinorum*, p. 166

what fond of assuming the existence of Coptic rites on the analogy of the Latin, there is on this point every reason for believing his testimony. For, apart from more direct evidence, since it is unquestionable that consecration crosses were made on the walls and columns, just as in the Greek and western rituals; it is scarcely possible that the chrism should have been used to anoint the fabric of the building, and not used to anoint its most sacred part, the altar. The rubric for the re-consecration of a defiled altar in Gabriel's Pontifical<sup>1</sup> speaks of *five* crosses; apparently one on the top and one on each of the sides. But where exactly the crosses were made is uncertain. There is, as was mentioned, a central cross carved on the altar-board, which fits into an oblong depression on all such altars as have not a marble top. Probably one cross of chrism at least was marked by the bishop upon the wooden slab, though this would be against the western practice, which disallows the use of chrism upon wood. Indeed that the Copts did not scruple to use chrism on a wooden surface seems proved by another passage in Gabriel's Pontifical, headed in Renaudot 'Consecratio tabulae ut altare fiat.' Subsequently the words 'benedic huic tabulae lignae, ut fiat altare sanctum et mensa sancta pro altari excelso et lapide exstructo,' seem to point to the tabula decisively as a portable altar, although possibly the word may denote the wooden slab, which is the common appurtenance of the stone altar. In any case the rubric runs: 'tunc accipiet chrisma sanctum et ex eo signabit tabulam in modum crucis in quattuor

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<sup>1</sup> Lit. Or. tom. i. p. 56. 'Quinquies mensam et ejus quattuor latera cruce signabit.'



ipsius lateribus;' though here again the points anointed with the holy oil are not clearly defined.

Nevertheless, even though the slab be used on occasion as a portable altar, the very fact that it is detached from the stone structure and easily removeable makes it unlikely that the symbols of dedication should have been confined to that part. We must imagine then that the chrism was anointed on the top or walls of the altar itself, in places of which no sculptured record is preserved.

It has been already mentioned that a Coptic church always possesses three altars in contradistinction to the single altar of the Greek ritual. The side altars are, however, used only on the occasion of the great festivals, namely, Easter, Christmas, Palm Sunday, and the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross<sup>1</sup>. On these days more than a single celebration is required; and the result is obtained without violating the Coptic canons, which forbid a second celebration on the same altar within the day. The altar, like the communicant, must be 'fasting,' as the Copts phrase it; and the same expression is applied to vestments and vessels which are used in the ceremonial of the mass.

So many points of resemblance may be noted between Coptic and Armenian practice, that it is not surprising to find the Armenian Church uphold- ing the same canon, and consequently requiring three as the normal number of altars<sup>2</sup>; there is, however, this difference, that the side-altars in the sacred buildings of the Armenians stand *before* the

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<sup>1</sup> Abu Dakn omits Easter, but seems wrong. See his *History*, tr. by Sir E. Sadleir (London, 1693), p. 13.

<sup>2</sup> Fortescue's *Armenian Church*, p. 177.

sanctuary or in some other place, and not in a line with the high altar and behind one continuous screen, as usual in the Coptic arrangement. Yet the Armenian church at Urfa is described as having 'three aisles,' i.e., nave and two aisles, 'and an altar at the end of each aisle'<sup>1</sup>; the bishop's throne is in the north-east corner of the choir, and faces east.

Several altars seem to be allowed in the ritual of the Syrian Jacobites, of the Nestorians, and of the Maronites. Thus at Urfa a Syrian church of modern date has a long narrow platform at the east end with 'several altars,' and before each a step for the celebrant. The Nestorian church at Kochanes has 'three tables or altars in the nave,' two of which are called the 'altar of prayers' and 'altar of the gospel' respectively, besides a small stone altar at the east end. It is open to question, however, whether any but the last-named are really eucharistic altars. At Aleppo the Maronite church is described as having five altars<sup>2</sup>, and a throne against the east wall facing west, according to the proper arrangement.

Quite enough then has been here written to show the fallacy of Neale's generalization to the effect that 'throughout the whole East one church contains but one altar<sup>3</sup>.' Neale is very positive about the matter, and adds 'nor is this peculiar to the church of Constantinople: the rule is also observed in Ethiopia, Egypt, Syria, Malabar, by Nestorians and Jacobites, in short over the whole East:' though with curious

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<sup>1</sup> Christians under the Crescent in Asia, by Rev. E. L. Cutts; London S. P. C. K. (n. d.), p. 83.

<sup>2</sup> Id. ib. pp. 84, 217, 48. The author is not very clear in his evidence on the subject.

<sup>3</sup> History of the Holy Eastern Church, Gen. Introd. vol. i. p. 182.

inconsistency he admits, almost in the next sentence, that examples of churches with several altars are not wanting from the earliest times. However the question is one of rule, to be settled by rule. And, so regarding it, one need only remark that the law of three altars is not merely universal in Egypt at the present time, but there is not a single religious building of the Copts, however ancient its foundation, which does not bear the clearest structural proofs of having been designed with a view to precisely the same ritual arrangement. And though there is no express evidence for Abyssinia, yet considering the historical and actual dependence of the Church of Ethiopia on that of Alexandria, one can scarcely question that the same rule holds good there also. The practice in Armenia is clear in upholding the same custom: and if the practice in the Syrian and Nestorian Churches is not quite clearly established as identical with that of the Egyptian, Ethiopian and Armenian, yet obviously the truth lies rather in the complete reversal of Neale's canon, and must rather be expressed by saying that nowhere in the whole East does a single church contain only a single altar, with the exception of buildings belonging to the see of Constantinople. The Greek Church recognises one altar: all other Churches recognise a plurality of altars.

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#### PORTABLE ALTARS<sup>1</sup>.

The Coptic clergy rarely make use of portable altars, not from any canonical objection to them, but

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<sup>1</sup> Renaudot is quite wrong in his remarks about the Coptic altar. He says (*Lit. Or.* tom. i. p. 164): 'consuetudo a multis seculis

merely because the necessity for their employment seldom arises. Both in the capital and in most other towns of Egypt churches are thickly scattered, and the Christians have a way of clinging round them. Being thus always within easy reach of a church, those who are hale can resort to the celebration, while the sick receive a portion of the *korbân* which is carried from the church by a priest. The rule of to-day is that the *korbân* must always be consecrated within the sacred building; although in places where there happens to be no church, in case of emergency the priest is allowed to consecrate as he judges necessary. I have found but one notice of such an altar in Coptic history. When Zacharias, king of Nubia, about 850 A.D. sent his son and heir George to Egypt to settle a question of tribute money, the royal envoy paid a visit to the patriarch

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invaluit ut *tabulas solas sive mensas haberent*, quibus internebatur mappa benedictionibus episcopalibus consecrata, aut tabula ad ipsius altaris longitudinem, *aut tandem altaria ut apud nostros vocantur portabilia*: laminae scilicet aut segmenta ex marmore quae facile afferri et removeri possint . . . Ita non modo Graecorum sed etiam Latinorum disciplinae de sacris altaribus convenire deprehenditur Orientalis disciplina.' It is this perpetual assumption by analogy which vitiates so much of Renaudot's information. 'Graecae Ecclesiae, cui aliae in Oriente similes sunt' (p. 166) is his maxim in all cases of doubt. So he says that for the most part there is but a single altar in one church, a conclusion reached as follows: 'Cum autem insignes olim ecclesiae multae in Aegypto essent, jam omnino paucae supersunt, in quibus primaevae antiquitatis obscura vestigia agnosci possint . . . nihil ex antiquis Christianis aedificiis residuum est unde conjectura de ecclesiarum aut altarium forma capi queat; nihilque vero propius quam ut illorum forma ex Graecarum (sic) lineamentis intelligatur; *eadem enim erat utrarumque dispositio*.' The dangers of such a method are obvious.

Joseph, then in the chair of St. Mark, to whom he carried letters. Thence he proceeded to do homage to the khalf at Bagdad; and on his return to Cairo was granted as a very great privilege by the patriarch a portable altar of wood to carry to his father. Tradition says that such a thing was never known before; and the concession was only justified by the peculiar circumstances of the Nubians, who were restless nomads and dwellers in tents, and whose life was all fighting and foray<sup>1</sup>. It is quite likely that this altar was a board from one of the churches: indeed the Copts of to-day allege that the portable altar used in cases of extreme necessity is nothing else than the wooden slab, which must therefore be consecrated with chrism. Moreover the entire disappearance of the altar-board from some of the minor chapels in Cairo may well point to the fact that the board was carried outside the building, and used as an altar. It is curious to remark that the Nestorian canons, while not apparently sanctioning the use of portable altars, yet in cases of urgent need allow the eucharist to be consecrated over the hands of a deacon, provided express permission be first obtained from a bishop<sup>2</sup>. The Syrians use consecrated slabs of wood, like the Coptic: or where neither an altar nor a consecrated slab is at hand, they allow the eucharist to be celebrated on a leaf of the gospel<sup>3</sup>.

About the practice of the Greek Church there is no such ambiguity. The consecration of portable altars or antimensia, as they are called, was a regular

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<sup>1</sup> Renaudot, *Hist. Pat. Alex.* p. 282.

<sup>2</sup> J. A. Asseman, *De Cathol. seu Pat. Chald. et Nestor. Com.* p. 120.

<sup>3</sup> Renaudot, *Lit. Or.* vol. ii. p. 46.

part of the ritual for the dedication of a new altar. The antimensia were laid on the altar; and after *οιδάνθη* or scented wine had been poured upon them, and three crosses had been made upon each with chrism, relics mixed with ceromastic to prevent the loss of any of the holy fragments were brought forth, anointed with chrism, and enclosed in a pocket behind each tablet. The celebration of the eucharist completed the form of consecration for the antimensia, which then were ready for use. Their employment was as common in the Greek as it was rare in the Coptic Church.

Many examples might be quoted to prove the custom of using portable altars in western Christendom. In England the practice prevailed from the earliest times, every large church possessing one or more tablets of wood or metal, which the priests could carry when they wished to minister to sick people, or to celebrate in remote places where there was no consecrated building. Perhaps the most ancient extant specimen of the kind is the portable altar used by St. Cuthbert, which is now preserved, though in a mutilated condition, in the cathedral library at Durham. It is a small wooden tablet covered with a leaden casing which seems to be of later date and bears some indecipherable Greek characters.

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#### THE FITTINGS OF THE ALTAR.

Over every high altar in the churches of Egypt, and sometimes also over the side altars, rises or rose a lofty canopy or baldacchino resting on four

columns. The canopy, which is always of wood though sometimes upheld by stone pillars, is generally painted in rich colours within and without, and adorned with a picture of our Lord in the centre of the dome and with flying angels and emblematic figures. A full description of such a canopy has been given in the chapter on the church of Abu's-Sifain and need not here be repeated<sup>1</sup>: only it may be added that the domed canopy symbolises the highest heaven, where Christ sits throned in glory surrounded by angels, and the four pillars on which it is upheld typify either the four quarters of the globe, according to Germanus, or else the four evangelists, whose symbols are also sometimes painted within the canopy. The Coptic baldakyn is invariably in the form of a cupola, never having a pointed roof with gables, as in the church of St. Anastasius at Rome; nor a flat roof, as in two examples at St. Mark's, Venice; nor a pyramidal roof, as in a third example at St. Mark's, also in the church of Sta. Potenziana near Narni, and that of Spirito Santo at Ravenna<sup>2</sup>. Yet it is curious that in all cases where a canopy is now standing, the columns which support it have, if I remember rightly, Saracenic capitals. This is natural enough at Abu's-Sifain, which was built in Arab times, but more surprising at Abu Sargah, where the columns of the nave are Greek or Roman. In some cases

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<sup>1</sup> The description (vol. i. p. 114) may be compared with that of the ciborium over the altar of St. Gregory built by Gebehard, bishop of Constance. M. de Fleury, in giving a cut of the ceiling which shows the figures of the four evangelists, *conjecturally* inserts their symbols. La Messe, vol. ii. p. 26.

<sup>2</sup> La Messe, vol. ii. pl. ciii, civ, cix, xcvi.

the columns have disappeared altogether, and the canopy rests on cross-beams driven into the walls. No doubt the true explanation is, that in the ancient churches the altar with its canopy received a more rich and sumptuous adornment than any other part of the church, and therefore specially attracted the malice of Muslim fanatics engaged in plunder or destruction of the Christian edifices. It seems however very possible that in some cases, where a full dome roofed the sanctuary and overshadowed the altar, a separate baldakyn on pillars was dispensed with, in later times at any rate, after the disuse of hangings. Certainly it would be quite wrong to infer that the altar-canopy was a mediaeval innovation among the Copts: for it is one of the earliest traditions of primitive church decoration.

Between the four columns of the canopy run four slender rods or beams, which should be painted with texts in Coptic as at Abu Sargah. These beams were meant originally to hang the altar-curtains upon. For in ancient times the altar was veiled with hangings: and though there is no instance of such curtains remaining in an Egyptian church, yet both the beams themselves, and the rings with which they are sometimes (as at Abu-'s-Sifain) still fitted, prove that even in the middle ages the practice of surrounding the altar with hangings was not disused; while the seventh or eighth century panel at Abu Sargah, in which they are figured, furnishes a good example of earlier usage. At Abu Sargah two of the columns stand at a distance of 2 ft. 9 in., two at 3 ft. 3½ in., from the nearest corner of the altar; so that there remained quite room enough for the celebrant to move round the altar inside the curtains. At Abu-'s-Sifain the



shortest distance is 2 ft., which leaves rather a narrow space for movement. No doubt the altar-curtains were richly embroidered with texts and figures in



Fig. 5.—Silk curtain, with massive silver embroidery, before the haikal door at Al Mu'allakah.

needlework, or in tissue of gold and silver. To this day a curtain always hangs before the door of the haikal embroidered either with a red cross or with figures.

In his description of the great church of St. Sophia, Paul the Silentiary relates that over the high altar on four columns of silver gilt, which were spanned by arches, rose a lofty 'tower' or canopy, the lower part of which was octagonal, while above it tapered off in a cone. On the top of the cone was set a golden orb and on the orb stood a cross of gold encrusted with jewels. Between the silver pillars costly hangings were spread; and on the curtain before the altar there was wrought in glorious embroidery of gold the figure of Christ in the attitude of benediction and holding a book of the gospels in his left hand. This description is sufficient to prove the early practice of the Greek Church: but Goar also mentions<sup>1</sup> the altar-canopy as symbolical of heaven, and in the same place speaks of a curtain before the altar embroidered with a figure of our Lord. These hangings too are found depicted in early monuments: thus in the splendid mosaics that adorn the dome of St. George's church at Salonica (now used as a mosque) may be seen a fine representation of an altar shrouded in curtains and covered with a canopy. The work dates from about 500 A. D. A silver canopy, too, dating from the early fifth century, stood over the altar at the neighbouring church of St. Demetrius. At the present day such curtains are not used in the Greek any more than in the Coptic ritual. Their chief purpose, besides giving an air of mystic sanctity to the precincts of the altar, was to veil the celebrant at the moment of consecration. Accordingly they were always drawn close during the recitation of the canon. Their disuse is probably due to the fact that the iconostasis formed an effectual screen in itself;

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<sup>1</sup> Euchologion, p. 15.

and if there were no express testimony to the contrary, it would be natural to conclude that the iconostasis is a more mediaeval arrangement, the adoption of which did away with the necessity for altar-curtains. At St. Sophia, however, Paul the Silentiary tells us there was before the sanctuary a screen with three doors, and on it were blazoned figures of angels and prophets, while over the central door was wrought the cypher of Justinian and Theodora. There was in fact even at that early date, coexisting with the magnificent curtains, a true iconostasis. Neither the Armenian nor the Nestorian churches have any screen before the high altar other than a curtain, which is drawn across the whole chancel, and seems to serve not merely as a screen but also as the Lenten veil.

In the western Church, wherever the basilican type of building prevailed, the altar was overshadowed by a domed canopy and veiled with curtains, as for instance in the old basilica of St. Peter and that of St. Paul without the Walls at Rome. The baldakyn at St. Peter's, presented by Gregory the Great, was of silver; so too was that given by Honorius I. to the church of St. Pancratius. Rock<sup>1</sup> makes mention of curtains hung at the north and south sides of the altar to keep the wind off the candles: but this was only a remnant of the earlier arrangement, which was designed above all to screen the celebrant at the moment of office. Indeed the essential part of the baldacchino was the curtains, as the very name proves, being derived from Baldacco the Italian for Bagdad, as damask from Damascus, fustian from Fustât, the ancient Arab name of Old Cairo. Baldac-

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<sup>1</sup> Church of our Fathers, vol. i. p. 230.

chino, then, means properly a costly tissue woven in the looms of Bagdad: in its anglicised form 'baldakyn' it is not uncommon in our ancient church records: but the name passed by an easy transition from the hangings to the canopy above the altar. The baldacchino was a common feature in our early Anglo-Saxon churches. A very clear and fine representation of an altar-curtain may be seen, for example, in the South Kensington Museum on an ivory tablet of Anglo-Saxon workmanship. The subject is the Adoration of the Magi: the figures are grouped under an arch, above which and in the spandrels the structure of the temple is portrayed: all round the arch runs a rod, on which hang curtains looped and falling in folds. This tablet has some curious points of resemblance with the carved panel at Abu Sargah. A similar arrangement is shown in an engraving figured in Rock<sup>1</sup>, and taken from an illumination in Godemann's *Benedictional*. Moreover the Egbert Pontifical orders the curtain to be drawn across between clergy and people at the consecration of an altar<sup>2</sup>. There was no elevation of the host before the congregation in the Saxon ritual, a fact which Mr. G. Gilbert Scott connects, no doubt rightly, with the use of altar-curtains. One may push the argument a step farther, and suppose that the disuse of altar-curtains in the eastern as well as the western churches was hastened, as the practice of elevating the host won its way into predominance. This practice was unknown in the West before the end of the eleventh century, and was not received in England till the thirteenth century<sup>3</sup>, though it very

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<sup>1</sup> Vol. i. p. 194.

<sup>2</sup> P. 45.

<sup>3</sup> Rock, vol. iv. p. 155.

probably originated in the East much earlier. Yet it was about the end of the eleventh century, namely in the time of St. Osmund, who was bishop of Sarum and Chancellor of England 1078 A.D., that the use of the canopy was discontinued in this country. In many cases however the two eastward columns and the beam joining them were left standing<sup>1</sup>, and on this beam was set a crucifix together with a vessel of holy water, a box with singing-breads, wine, and the like. The curtains which were hung north and south of mediaeval altars have been mentioned: they were suspended on rods driven into the wall and called 'riddles.' Another trace of the old usage was preserved in the Lenten veil, which shrouded the altar from the eve of the first Sunday in Lent till Maundy Thursday during the mass, and was withdrawn only at the reading of the gospel. In some churches, where the chancel-arch was narrow, the Lenten veil hung across the entire width: in cathedrals it hung between the choir and the presbytery. It was made of white linen, or sometimes of silk, and was marked with a red cross.

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#### COVERINGS OF THE ALTAR.

The ordinary covering of a Coptic altar (*ṣitr*) is a tightly-fitting case of silk or cotton, sometimes dyed a dim colour or brocaded with small patterns of flowers in needlework or silver. This reaches to the ground, entirely concealing the fabric of the altar. More splendid stuffs are used for great

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<sup>1</sup> Rock, vol. iv. p. 208.

festivals, and even in common use an outer covering is sometimes put over the first<sup>1</sup>. The only other form of altar-vestment that I have seen is a sort of frontal, about 18 in. square, hanging on the western side; this is of costly material, and richly embroidered with a cross in the centre and figures in the corners. But even the most intelligent of the Copts seem to have no information concerning its usage.

In our early English churches there were three principal coverings:—the cerecloth, fitting tightly like the Coptic vestment and removed but once a year, on Maundy Thursday, for the washing of the altar; then a white linen cloth the size of the slab, not falling over the sides, but having a super-frontal attached; and thirdly, a cloth of fine linen covering the top and hanging over the north and south sides; upon this were embroidered five crosses.

The Greek vestments were also principally three, called the *πρὸς σάρκα* or cerecloth, the *ἐπέन्दυσις* or overall, and the *εἰλητὸν* or corporal (?): but underneath all, at each corner of the altar, was hung a narrow strip of embroidery worked with the figure of an evangelist, and hence called *εὐαγγελιστήριον*<sup>2</sup>. The term evangelisterium is sometimes wrongly used for the textus or book of the gospels.

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<sup>1</sup> There is no distinction of name between the coverings, which are simply called غطيان المذبح.

<sup>2</sup> Thiers, *Les Principaux Autels des Eglises*, ch. xxi. p. 154.

## CHAPTER II.

### *Eucharistic Vessels and Altar Furniture.*

*Chalice.—Paten.—Dome.—Spoon.—Ark.—Veils.—Fan.—Ewer and Basin.—Pyx.—Crewet.—Chrismatory.—Altar-candlesticks.—Textus.—Gospel-stand.—Thurible.—Bridal Crown.*

**I**N the celebration of the eucharist the Copts use five instruments—*chalice*<sup>1</sup>, *paten*, *dome*, *spoon*, and *ark*. None of the extant chalices that I have seen are very ancient or interesting. They are usually of silver, though the church of Al Amr Tadrus had one of plain white Venetian glass gilded. As a rule the bowl is small and nearly straight-sided; the stem long and ending downwards in a round knop, below which the base slopes away rather abruptly, but the foot is relieved with plain mouldings and is always circular. The shape thus differs from that of the English chalice in two chief particulars: the bowl, in being more conical and less hemispherical, more nearly resembles that of the Elizabethan communion-cup; and the knop is below the stem instead of dividing it in the middle, and is less prominent. Moreover, in England the base of the chalice was changed from circular to hexagonal after the fourteenth century,

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<sup>1</sup> Arabic الكاس, Coptic ΠΙ ΠΟΤΗΡΙΟΝ.

owing to a rubric which ordered the chalice to be laid on its side to drain after the celebration: and the hexagonal base obviated the danger of rolling. But a chalice with an angular foot is never found in the churches of Egypt. The Nestorians sometimes use for a chalice a plain bowl of silver.

Glass chalices only came into use when the more precious vessels had been plundered or destroyed by the Muslims. Thus it is recorded that about the year 700 A.D. so great a spoliation of the churches took place, that glass chalices and wooden patens were substituted for the lost vessels of silver and gold<sup>1</sup>. As regards western practice, Durandus says that Zephyrinus in the early third century enjoined the use of glass chalices, but pope Urban prescribed metal. About the same time, 226 A.D., the Council of Rheims forbade the use of glass. In England horn and wood were forbidden materials on account of their absorbent qualities. The canons of Aelfric mention gold, silver, glass, and tin as permissible: and glass chalices were used in the very early Irish Church, though afterwards disallowed<sup>2</sup>. In the thirteenth century tin was forbidden by the Constitutions of Archbishop Wethershed<sup>3</sup>. But in eastern and western ritual alike gold or silver seems to have been the normal metal for the chalice. Renaudot relates that about the year 1210 the khalf Malik Al 'Adal, hearing that there were great treasures buried in a well at Dair Macarius in the Natrun desert, sent and discovered, among other things, a silver chalice and paten, which were

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<sup>1</sup> Renaudot, *Hist. Pat. Alex.* p. 193.

<sup>2</sup> Warren's *Lit. and Rit. of the Celtic Church*, p. 143.

<sup>3</sup> *Archaeological Journal*, vol. iii. p. 133.



carried off, besides a silk embroidered curtain for the haikal-door valued at 3000 gold pieces. The story adds that when the Copts pleaded, and proved from the inscriptions and the Book of Benefactions, that the vessels and the hanging were special offerings made to the church, the khalif generously restored them, and they were carried in chests on camels to Old Cairo surrounded by companies of men singing and bearing lighted tapers. Forty years later, when Al Mu'allakah was spoiled, a fine chalice of ancient workmanship was found buried under one of the altars, i. e. doubtless hidden away in the sepulcrum. I have not seen any cross or engraving of the crucifixion upon the foot of a Coptic chalice, such as was usual in western mediaeval chalices, though not in those of a more primitive epoch. The donative inscription is generally round the base.

*Patens*<sup>1</sup> are, as a rule, plain, flat, circular dishes, with a vertical raised border round. They have not any depression in the middle, nor any engraved figure of the Veronica, like our fourteenth and fifteenth-century patens; nor have they any stem or foot like those of the Elizabethan and later periods. In fact both chalice and paten correspond in their simplicity of design, if not altogether in shape, more closely with the earliest extant specimens of the like vessels in western Christendom.

The *dome*<sup>2</sup>, or *ḳubbah* as it is called in Arabic, consists of two half-hoops of silver crossed at right angles and rivetted together. At the celebration of mass the dome is set over the consecrated bread

<sup>1</sup> Arabic المنية, Coptic †ΔΙΚΚΟC.

<sup>2</sup> القبة.

in the midst of the paten, and the corporal which covers the dome is thus held clear above the house. The Greek Church makes use of a corresponding instrument termed the 'star,' ἀστερίσκος or ἀστήρ, said to have been introduced by St. Chrysostom. The name 'star' is given from the shape of the instrument perhaps; but when it is placed over the host, the priest recites the words, 'And there came a star and stood over where the young child was<sup>1</sup>.'

The *spoon*<sup>2</sup> is employed for administering the Coptic communion; for the custom is to put the wafer into the wine, and to administer both kinds together. The bowl of the spoon is hemispherical, the handle consists of a straight even strip of metal, on which is usually graven a dedicatory inscription. In the Armenian ritual a spoon is used sometimes, though very rarely<sup>3</sup>. The Greek custom as regards the administration is precisely similar to the Coptic. A spoon (λαβίς) is used to take out of the wine the crumbs of bread, or 'pearls' as they are called, which are given to laymen. Ecclesiastics, however, and the czar at his coronation, receive the two kinds separately. In England the mention of sacred spoons is common in church inventories; thus among the ornaments of Richard II.'s chapel at Windsor in 1384 are mentioned a golden chalice, paten, and spoon. But these spoons were used rather for mixing water with the wine,

<sup>1</sup> Renaudot in his *Liturgiarum Orientalium Collectio* (vol. ii. p. 60, 2nd ed., Frankfort, 1847) says that the Orientals, including the Syrians and Egyptians, do not use the Aster. As regards the Egyptians, of course, he is wrong.

<sup>2</sup> Arabic المعلقة, Coptic †ΚΟΚΛΙΑΡΙΟΝ, †ΛΕΥΣΤΗΡ, †ΛΕΥΣΘΗΡΙ.

<sup>3</sup> Fortescue's *Armenian Church*, pp. 177, 180.

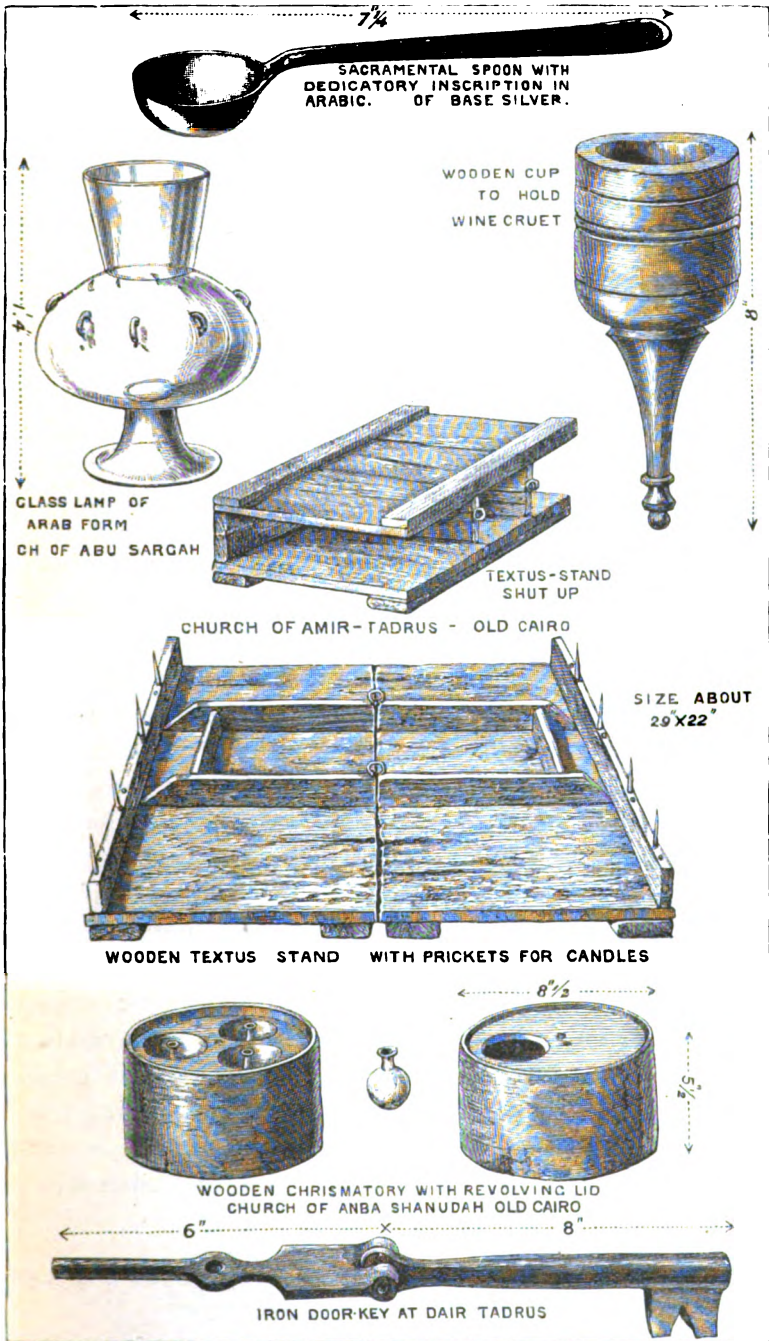


Fig. 6.--Various pieces of Church Furniture.

or as strainers to remove flies and the like from the chalice; while the analogue of the eastern spoon in the early Latin Church was the tube or pipe, such as is recorded in an inventory of vessels given to Exeter church c. 1046. The use of the tube, which lingered on at St. Denis, Cluny, and other monasteries, now survives only with the pope<sup>1</sup>.

Besides the above vessels every Coptic altar is furnished with a wooden ark or tabernacle<sup>2</sup>, differing both in structure and in purpose from those of the Latin Church. With us the tabernacle was used to guard the housel, which was commonly enclosed in a pyx within it. The tabernacle was very often made in the form of a tower, and wrought of precious metals adorned with jewels. But in Egypt the practice of reserving the host, which once prevailed, has long been discontinued, owing chiefly, no doubt, to the compactness of the Coptic communities, which made it easy to find a priest at hand to consecrate in case of sickness. There is, however, a lurid legend which accounts for the discontinuance of the practice by relating that the housel was once found to have been devoured by a serpent in the night. The Coptic tabernacle is a regular instrument in the service of the mass, and at other times lies idle upon the altar. It consists of a cubical box, eight or nine inches high; the top side of which is pierced with a circular opening just large enough to admit the chalice. At the consecration the chalice is placed within the tabernacle,

<sup>1</sup> Vide *Journal of Archæology*, vol. iii. p. 132.

<sup>2</sup> Called in Arabic كُرْسِي الكاس or simply الكُرْسِي, i. e. 'the chalice-stand' or 'the stand:' in Coptic ΠΥΤΟΤΕ.

and the rim when it is thus enclosed is about flush with the top, so that the paten rests as much on the tabernacle as on the chalice. The four walls of the tabernacle are covered with sacred paintings,—our Lord and St. John being the most frequent figures. Most of the tabernacles now in use are modern and artistically worthless, but one beautiful ancient specimen I discovered at Abu-'s-Sifain, and of this a full description is given in another place<sup>1</sup>.

There can, I think, be no doubt that this tabernacle or altar-casket of the Copts is the mysterious 'arca' which has puzzled liturgical writers from Renaudot to Cheetham<sup>2</sup>. Renaudot quotes a prayer preceding the Ethiopic canon entitled 'Super arcam sive discum majorem,' and thinks that the ark was a sort of antimensium. But the title is at once explained if we remember the Coptic practice of placing the chalice inside and the paten on the box,—a practice from which the Ethiopic was doubtless derived. The very words of the prayer, taken in connexion with the Coptic custom, really set the vexed question at rest. They follow the dedication of chalice, paten, and spoon; and are, as rendered by Neale<sup>3</sup>: 'O Lord our God, who didst command Moses thy servant and prophet, saying, *Make me precious vessels and put them in the tabernacle* on Mount Sinai, now, O Lord God Almighty, stretch forth thy hand upon this ark, and fill it with the virtue, power, and grace of thy Holy Ghost, *that in it may be consecrated* the Body and Blood of Thine

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<sup>1</sup> Vol. i. pp. 109, 110.

<sup>2</sup> Dict. Christ. Ant. s. v.

<sup>3</sup> Eastern Church, Gen. Introd. vol. i. p. 186.

only begotten Son our Lord.' Neale himself comes to the conclusion that this ark is 'simply used for the reservation of the blessed sacrament;' but the words of the prayer which I have just cited,—(the italics are mine.)—leave no doubt whatever that the ark at its dedication is intended not for the reservation but for the consecration of the host; and even if this deduction were doubtful, it is rendered absolutely certain by the analogy of Coptic usage, of which both Renaudot and Neale are quite ignorant. It may be true, as Neale alleges, that in the Ethiopian Church the host actually is sometimes reserved in the ark; but that is an accident, and a perversion of the original intention.

The Copts have no instrument corresponding to the holy lance of Greek ritual for the fraction or division of the wafer.

A special appurtenance of the Coptic liturgical worship is the little *mat* or 'plate'<sup>1</sup> as they call it, numbers of which are used in the celebration of the *korban*. They are circular in form, five or six inches in diameter, and made of silk, strengthened at the back with some coarser material. Each mat has a cross embroidered or woven upon it: and sometimes, as in the woodcut, smaller crosses are set between the branches. The mat here given is of cloth of gold with designs embroidered in thread of silver gilt,—an ancient example from the church of Abu Kîr wa Yuḥanna at Old Cairo. Red, pink and green are equally common hues, there being no regulation as to colour. The manner in which these

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<sup>1</sup> الحصيرة or الطبق; in Coptic ΠΙΘΟΡΡ: it seems to correspond with the 'minus velum' mentioned by Renaudot, Lit. Or. tom. i. p. 304.

mats are used at the mass will be explained in another chapter.

Before the commencement of the mass the sacred elements are covered with a *veil* or *corporal* called *اللغافه* in Arabic, and *πυ προεφραση*<sup>1</sup> in Coptic. The veil is of white or coloured silk, generally about 18 in. square; the middle is embroidered with a cross;



Fig. 7.—The Hasirah or Eucharistic Mat.

and tiny bells are sometimes attached to the centre and the corners. This *lafâfah* seems to answer to the

<sup>1</sup> Renaudot (l. c.) remarks that this, the 'velum majus,' is called *anaphora*—'praecipue in Syriacis Ritualibus.' *Nauphir* is no doubt the term used by the Syrians, but the Coptic name is that given in the text.

δισκοκάλυμμα of Greek ritual, while the ḥaştrah or tabak corresponds in some measure to the Greek chalice veil. But the Copts employ only these two eucharistic veils, and have nothing analogous to the Greek ἀήρ or νεφέλη.

The use of the *fan*<sup>1</sup> or flabellum no doubt originated in the sultry East, where being almost a necessity of daily life, it passed very early into the service of the Church. Its employment in Coptic worship dates from a great antiquity.

In the Liturgy of St. Clement, translated from the Apostolical Constitutions, a rubric runs thus: 'Two deacons on each side of the altar hold a fan made of thin vellum, fine linen, or peacocks' feathers, to drive away flies or gnats, lest they fall into the chalice.' Costly fans are mentioned in the year A. D. 624<sup>2</sup>. These doubtless, as was usual later, were made of metal, either gold or silver. A common type is that given in the illustration, a disk of silver fitted with a silver socket, into which is fastened a short wooden handle. The disk is surrounded and divided across by dotted bands, and upon it are worked two rude figures of the seraphim. The whole of the design is repoussé. At the church of Al Amir Tadrus there were four of these flabella: but their purpose is so far forgotten, that they are only used as ornaments upon the occasion of the silver textus-case being set in the choir. The textus-case then is placed upright upon a sort of stand, which has at each corner a short pricket to receive the wooden

<sup>1</sup> المروحة.

<sup>2</sup> Gregory the Great's Liber Sacramentorum, ed. H. Menardus, Paris, 1642, p. 319, where several authorities are cited.





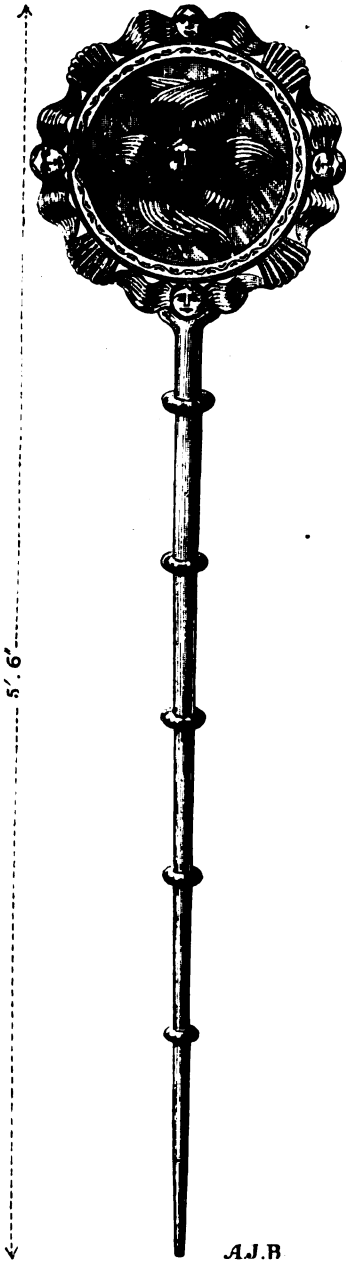
Fig. 8.—Flabellum in repoussé silver.

handle of the flabellum<sup>1</sup>. A taper is further stuck or crushed upon the upper part of the disk and lighted; so that the fan seems to serve only as an elaborate candlestick. It may well be, however, that this usage betrays a consciousness of some such mystic symbolism as undoubtedly is attached to the fan in the Greek ritual. At Abu Sargah, where the ritual, or at least the worship, has suffered less decay than at the deserted Tadrus, similar silver fans exist, and are, I believe, used at solemn festivals, if not in the regular celebration of the mass. Upon the altar at Anba Shanûdah I found a rude axe-shaped fan of woven rushes, such as the Arabs wave to cool their faces; and the fact that this fan is still employed, either regularly or in the hot season, for the service of the altar, proves that the right use of the flabellum is not entirely forgotten.

In the office for the ordination of the patriarch of Alexandria, the rubric speaks of a procession through the church with crosses, gospels, tapers, and fans or figures of the cherubim. Flabella were waved by the deacons in the Syrian Jacobite, and probably also in the Coptic rite for the ordination of a priest at the laying on of hands. In the ritual of the Melkite Egyptians to-day a metal flabellum is sometimes used: thus at the ancient church of St. George on the tower at Old Cairo two fans stand upon the altar. More often, however, they use a fine linen cloth or corporal, such as is employed also for the same purpose in the service of the altar at the Coptic monasteries in the desert, and is called *al lafâfah*. Yet, even where a veil or corporal is used to fan the sacred elements, the original metal flabellum survives still as

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<sup>1</sup> See illustration, page 41 supra.



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Fig. 9.—Processional Flabellum of silver-gilt used by the Melkite Church of Alexandria.

a processional ornament among the Melkites, as will be seen from the illustration.

We constantly read of fans carried in procession in the Coptic ritual, as well as in the Armenian. In both cases there was probably a special form of the instrument for processions corresponding to the Melkite flabellum: but this form has long since disappeared among the Copts.

In the Greek Church the fan, or *ρίπίδιον*, seems to have departed altogether from its original purpose, and to have a ceremonial rather than a practical value. The one given in Goar's illustration is made of wood, and consists of a small carved image of the seraphim mounted on a short handle,—an instrument which could be of little service in driving away gnats and flies. It is just after the pax and hymn of victory, and again just before the diptychs in the Greek rite, that the fan is employed; and on

both occasions the deacon solemnly fans the elements, signifying a wafting of divine influence upon them. Moreover, on Good Friday, at the consecration of the chrism, when the box with the holy oil is carried in procession, seven deacons move on each side of it, every one holding a fan above it. In the absence of a proper flabellum, the Greek rubric sanctions the use of a napkin or corporal to fan the oflete.

That the same usage existed among the Copts is clear from a MS. in the Vatican<sup>1</sup>, which describes the procession for the consecration of the chrism as consisting of twelve subdeacons carrying lamps, twelve deacons carrying fans, twelve priests carrying thuribles, and the bishop with the vessel of oil covered by a white pall which is borne by deacons; and round the bishop a throng of clergy moves, all carrying in their hands 'cherubim,' i.e. fans, and crosses. The word employed in the Coptic rubric seems to be ϣⲓⲛⲥⲧⲏⲣⲓⲟⲩ, a mere transliteration of a form still found in the Greek.

The Maronite and the Armenian Churches both employ a metal flabellum—silver or brass—having a circular disk surrounded with a number of little bells. These bells are no doubt meant to call attention to the special part of the office which is being performed: and I may repeat that they are occasionally fastened in the same manner on a Coptic corporal, stole, or dalmatic.

A full and interesting account of the Armenian use of the flabellum is given in the Rev. S. C. Malan's introduction to his translation of the Divine Liturgy

<sup>1</sup> Ordo consecrationis chrismatis et olei catechumenorum, ex cod. Vat. 44, ed. Tukio, quoted by Denzinger, *Ritus Orientalium*, tom. i. p. 251.

of St. Gregory the Illuminator. We read there that 'the bishop before celebrating goes round the church preceded and accompanied by clergy having fans and banners, holding in his hand the cross, with which he blesses at the end of every prayer said aloud up to the Song of the Cherubim.' Another passage speaks of the waving of the fans at the trisagion as symbolical of the quivering wings of the seraphim: and a Russian eyewitness of the ceremony mentions 'the noise of silver fans' as being strange to him, but not disagreeable. The noise of course arises from the bells; for the flabellum without bells is a familiar instrument in Greek worship.

In Georgia the flabellum was used in early times, as is proved by an ancient fresco at Nekrésí, in which two angels are shown beside the altar, each holding a long-handled flabellum, the disk of which is ornamented with a figure of the seraphim, but has no bells.

The flabellum found its way at an early date into the western churches<sup>1</sup>. Cardinal Bona quotes an instance of its use in the sixth century. Two figures which seem to be flabella are incised on an eighth-century altar, which stood in the church of St. Peter at Ferentillo<sup>2</sup>. In an inventory at St. Riquier near Abbeville, 831 A.D., occurs a 'silver fan for chasing flies from the sacrifice.' In 1250, at Amiens, is mentioned a 'fan made of silk and gold': in 1253 the Sainte Chapelle at Paris possessed 'duo flabella, vulgo nuncupata muscalia, ornata perlis': and 'esmou-

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<sup>1</sup> See paper in *Archæological Journal* by the late Albert Way, vol. v.

<sup>2</sup> *La Messe*, vol. i. pl. lviii, and p. 171.

choires' are given in an inventory of 1376. In the Library at Rouen is an illuminated thirteenth-century missal with two illustrations of a deacon waving a flabellum over the celebrant at the altar.

Coming to our own country, a Salisbury inventory of 1214 mentions two fans of vellum and some other stuff, perhaps silk. In 1298 the chapel of St. Faith in the Crypt of St. Paul's had a 'muscatorium,' or fly-whip of peacocks' feathers. About the year 1400 one John Newton gave to York minster a silver-gilt handle for a flabellum: and even in remote parishes the use of peacocks' feathers was not uncommon. Thus in the churchwardens' accounts at Walkerwick, in Suffolk, there is an entry of 'iv<sup>d</sup>. for a bessume of pekok's fethers.'

From the connection of the Irish Church with the East, it is not surprising to find evidence for the use of the fan as early as the sixth century in the sister island. The Book of Kells has an illumination representing angels holding flabella, which closely resemble those of the Maronites: in the Gospels of Trèves<sup>1</sup> the curious figure of the conjoined evangelistic symbols holds a flabellum in one hand and a eucharistic knife or lance in the other. This figure belongs to the eighth century: and in another Hiberno-Saxon MS. of the eighth century St. Matthew is figured holding in his hand a flabellum<sup>2</sup>.

In the western Church, according to Rock<sup>3</sup>, the flabellum was used *after* the consecration and before

<sup>1</sup> Westwood, *Miniatures and Ornaments of Anglo-Saxon and Irish MSS.*, pl. xx.

<sup>2</sup> Warren's *Lit. and Rit. of the Celtic Church*, p. 144.

<sup>3</sup> Vol. iii. pt. 2. p. 194.

the pax. The consciousness of its symbolical value was rare and late in growth; and the idea, where existent, differs from the Greek idea of wafting divine influence, being rather that of driving away light and wandering imaginations. By the sixteenth century the fan seems to have fallen into disuse entirely; for in the 'Missae Episcopales,' drawn up for general guidance by order of the Council of Trent, and published at Venice in 1567, no mention is made of any such instrument. At the present day the sole reminiscence in the West of the liturgical flabellum is furnished by the large fans of peacocks' feathers sometimes carried in procession before the pope<sup>1</sup>. But in the Greek Church the fan is still delivered to the deacon at ordination as the symbol of his office.

The ewer and basin for the washing of hands at the mass are part of the complete furniture of a Coptic altar, and in ancient times were doubtless made of precious metals. At the present time however a common pitcher of clay and tin bowl serve the purpose in most cases. At Abu-'s-Sifain there is a bronze basin of Arab work with some medallions or bosses upon it of fine enamel. The ewer of the same kind belonging to the basin seems to have disappeared within the last five or six years. The basin generally rests upon a low wooden stand at the north side of the altar. At the cathedral in Cairo there is a ewer of silver, which I have seen used in a curious manner. After the celebration of the *ḳorbân* an acolyte pours water from the ewer over the hands of the priest, who sprinkles first the *haikal*, then other priests or attendants, then mounts

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<sup>1</sup> Dict. Christ. Antiq. s. v. Flabellum.

a bench outside and scatters drops of water over the congregation, who crowd round with upturned faces eager to catch the spray. This is a near approach to the use of holy water. In the Latin church the basin was called *aquamanile*, and was delivered as an emblem of office to the deacon at ordination, just as the ewer or *urceolus* was delivered to the acolyte. Thus in St. Osmund's Consuetudinary<sup>1</sup> an acolyte after the entrance of the mass is ordered to bring 'pelves cum manutergio.' Rock, however, says that the deacon at ordination received ewer, basin, and towel<sup>2</sup>, remarking that the vessels were of precious metal. The Greek vessel corresponding to the *aquamanile* is called *χέρυβον*.

Receptacles for the reserved host in the Coptic churches must have been common when the practice of reservation prevailed; but as on the whole the canons discountenanced reservation, so naturally the evidence for the use of vessels like the pyx is very scanty. Renaudot in relating a legend about Philotheus, LXIII patriarch of Alexandria, mentions incidentally an 'arcus seu ciborium quod altari imminebat.' The same writer alleges, however, that although reservation was permitted in case of great necessity, the host was ordered to remain on the altar with lamps burning near it, and a priest watching<sup>3</sup>. Still this arrangement would not preclude the use of a separate vessel. Later, about the year 1000 A.D., a complaint was lodged against certain priests, that they broke the canon in keeping the oflete a whole week, lest they should weary themselves with

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<sup>1</sup> C. 93.

<sup>2</sup> Vol. iii. pt. 2. p. 34 n.

<sup>3</sup> Lit. Or. vol. i. p. 116.



daily consecrations. Now the host is never reserved, and no Coptic church I believe contains any sort of pyx, unless it be possible that what I have called the tabernacle or altar-casket may anciently have held the reserved host, as among the Abyssinians. At Abu Sargah, however, there is a very interesting painting of St. Stephen, to be figured hereafter, in which that saint is represented holding in his left hand upon a corporal a beautifully jewelled vessel in the form of a circular crown-like casket surmounted by a cross. This may possibly represent a pyx, but is more probably a box for incense. The painting is by no means recent, and I have seen no other like it, though it may be a copy of some traditional design. It was not customary, as far as I can discover, to suspend the reserved host over the altar at any time, unless Renaudot's remark can be taken to imply the custom; nor had the Copts anything corresponding to the eucharistic dove, which hung over the altars of western Christendom.

Crewets of gold or silver were probably among the appurtenances of an altar in olden times; but now nothing but the most commonplace vessels of glass is to be found. But there is one singular usage of the Copts, which has been already noticed. In several of the churches,—Mâri Mina, for example,—though not in all, a small glass crewet filled with unconsecrated wine may be seen resting in a cuplike wooden crewet-holder, which is nailed on to the haikal-screen *outside*, and usually towards the north. There is no such arrangement in the Cairo cathedral, nor does the position of the crewet connect at all with any point of the present ceremonial. One can only surmise that it is the relic of some forgotten

ritual practice. At Sitt Mariam Dair Abu's-Sifain there are two such crewet-holders on the screen.

The use of crewets in the West—*amae*, *amulae*, *ampullae*—dates from an early period. Two silver crewets, 7 in. high, belonging to the fifth or sixth century, are preserved in the Museo Cristiano at the Vatican. John III., c. 560 A.D., is related to have ordered crewets among other vessels for the shrines of the martyrs in Rome. They are mentioned in the *Ordo Romanus*: and Gregory the Great speaks of crewets made of onyx, or perhaps glass resembling onyx.

The word *ampulla* was used also to signify the vessel used by the Latins for the holy chrism. No such specific vessel remains among the Copts of to-day; who, while retaining the use of the chrism, seem to have forgotten its former sanctity, and its distinction from the other sacred oils. Yet the chrism may be found here and there, lying about in a small glass phial stuffed with a rag and thrust into a dusty corner. Moreover the church of Anba Shanûdah contains an ancient chrismatory, a curious round wooden box with a revolving lid. The box is solid throughout, but has three holes scooped out inside, in each of which is deposited a small phial of oil. But even the priest does not now know that the original purpose of the box was to hold the three distinct kinds of oil used in the church ceremonial<sup>1</sup>.

In regard to altar-lights the most ancient custom seems to have been to place a pair of candles close against the altar, but not upon it. Evidence of this still remains in the monastic churches of the desert, in some of which the pair of stone candelabra, which

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<sup>1</sup> See illustration on p. 41 *supra*.

held the lights, still stand almost touching the altar on the north and south side. But the prevailing custom of the Copts at present is in harmony with that of the western churches. Two candles and no more are allowed *upon* the altar, though any number of lamps or candles may be lighted round about it. The candlesticks are often, especially in the side-chapels, of wood with iron sockets somewhat resembling the ancient candlesticks in the hall of St. Cross near Winchester; and various designs in bronze are common. Silver was once the usual material, and silver candlesticks are still used at the cathedral. It is curious to note that while only the two lights are suffered to stand upon the altar, acolytes with tapers in their hands move round it at the mass, and sometimes hold their tapers over the altar. This practice also had its counterpart in the Latin Church, as recorded by Isidore of Seville<sup>1</sup> in the seventh century. Of the various lamps found in the churches of Egypt an account is given elsewhere.

The crucifix is unknown to the altars or churches of the Copts, though upon every altar is found lying down (not set upright) a small hand-cross for ceremonial use. This cross, anciently of precious metal and set with jewels, is now usually of base silver: it has a peculiar design, to be given in a woodcut hereafter. The only exception that I know to this form of altar-cross occurs in the south chapel at Anba Shanûdah, which has a tiny cross of wood inlaid with medallions of mother-of-pearl.

Among the altar-furniture of the Coptic churches may be counted the book of the gospel, whose usual resting-place is upon the altar at all times except at

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<sup>1</sup> Etym. vii. xii. 29.

the reading of the gospel. This book consists of a MS. enclosed in a wooden case, and covered all over with plates of metal nailed tightly down. Thus the writing is sealed against all opening. The outer case



Fig. 10. —Textus case of silver-gilt.

is generally of silver, though copper is found, and embossed with Coptic lettering and designs of cherubim, flowers, and crosses. Some are of extreme beauty, such as the fine large one belonging to Abu Kîr given in the engraving; but the average size is

much smaller, being about 7 in. by 4 in. The metal cases were of course devised originally for security, at a time when copies of Holy Writ were scarce, and they must have been meant to open: then as copies multiplied, the older and more precious MSS. were sealed up entirely, and retained as venerable relics. Yet as none of the existing cases date farther back than the fifteenth century, it is doubtful whether they still contain MSS. of any great antiquity or

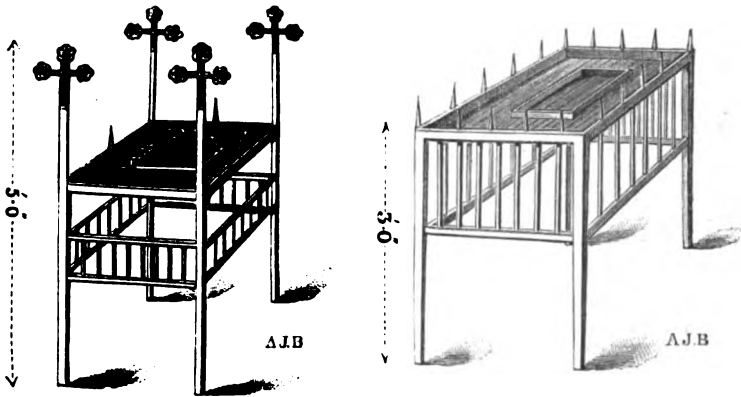


Fig. 11.—Gospel-stands with prickets for candles.

value. One or two which have been opened revealed nothing but a loose leaf or two of a gospel and some fragments of silk tissue. But the meaning of the cased textus is not forgotten; for at the present day, before the reading of the gospel at the mass, an acolyte brings the silver book from the altar and delivers it to the deacon, who places it reverently upon the lectern: and when the gospel is finished, the silver-book is carried back again to the altar. The same symbolical usage of the sealed textus is found at baptisms and other ceremonies in which the

curious gospel-stand is employed. The gospel-stand is sometimes a mere board, square or octagonal, sometimes a four-legged table, but fitted always with a socket to receive the silver book which stands on end in the centre. All round the gospel-stand iron prickets are fastened, upon which burn lighted tapers: and sometimes crosses of metal or wood are set at the corners or even, as at Al Amr Tadrus, silver fans. The silver-cased gospel is also frequently used for the kiss of peace like the Latin *pax*; and it is carried in all solemn processions, with censers, tapers and crosses—a custom to which allusion is made in the time of Ephraim, c. 980 A.D., and again at the institution of Macarius, about 1100 A.D.

The Armenian practice in this regard may be noted among the many coincidences between Armenian and Coptic usage. For in the churches of the Armenians the gospel is bound in silver and often encrusted with jewels: it has also a silver case in which it is kept, and it rests upon the altar. The Nestorians also use a cover of some kind for the gospel, though I cannot ascertain its exact nature: it seems however more nearly akin to the Irish *cumhdach* than to the sealed case of Coptic usage. Allusion to it may be found in the rubric for the ordination of a bishop, which directs the archdeacon to open out the cover of the gospel above the back and head of the bishop, and to lay the gospel on the cover in such a way that the book may face him who is to read out of it<sup>1</sup>.

That the sealed textus is exclusively Coptic seems proved by the fact that it is not found among the

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<sup>1</sup> Denzinger, *Ritus Orientalium*, tom. ii. p. 271.

Melkite Egyptians belonging to the orthodox church of Alexandria. For example, in the treasury of the church of St. Nicholas in Cairo, while there is nothing corresponding to the Coptic gospel-cover, there are many books in the most sumptuous binding, gospels and psalters and liturgies, bound in solid plates of gold and silver, studded with gems, and closed by jewelled clasps.

Though in our own Church the gospel was not hermetically sealed, yet we read of a copy 'bound up between thick sheets of solid gold and studded with gems<sup>1</sup>.' Another, as quoted from Eddius in the life of St. Wilfred, was likewise enclosed in plates of chased gold and adorned with jewels. At Salisbury in 1222, the cathedral had a textus bound in solid gold with sixty-two precious stones: while Canterbury cathedral possessed, in 1315, no less than seven similar gold-cased books and many in silver. Many too were at St. Paul's, St. Peter's in York, Lincoln, and other places<sup>2</sup>. But the resemblance of the Coptic to the ancient Irish practice seems closer and more curious. As early as the sixth century in Ireland, 'metal cases of embossed bronze or silver (*cumhdachs*) for enclosing copies of the gospels or other MSS.' were in common use<sup>3</sup>. Fine examples are the Book of Armagh, the Psalter of St. Columba, now in the Royal Irish Academy, the Book of Dimma Mac Nathi, and the Miosach now at the college of St. Columba, Rathfarnham<sup>4</sup>. The Stowe missal has a metal case of eleventh-century workmanship: so

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<sup>1</sup> Rock, vol. i. p. 272.

<sup>2</sup> Id. ib. p. 297.

<sup>3</sup> Warren's Lit. and Rit. of the Celtic Church, p. 21.

<sup>4</sup> Westwood's Miniatures, &c., pp. 80, 82, 83, 84.



Fig. 12.  
Bridal Crown.

that the practice lasted for several centuries. It may be taken as another point of correspondence between the Irish Church and the East, in addition to those adduced by Mr. Warren.

A silver box for incense is a common belonging of the altar, though none now seem left of any great artistic interest. At K. Burbárah there is a small wooden incense-box with high-relief carving of great merit. Thuribles also or censers of bronze or silver abound in all the churches. Silver is the more common metal, and some of the silver censers are of very beautiful workmanship, resembling those used in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in the West. Some indeed are of plain bronze with a moulded base, and a donative inscription round the rim: but gold was a common material in ancient times, and now in most of the churches the thuribles are of silver, decorated with open-work or repoussé devices, and swung by chains with or without little bells attached. An example may be seen figured in the illustration of St. Stephen in a later chapter.

Lastly may be mentioned as



a proper appurtenance of the altar the *marriage-diadem*. This is a coronet of silver or gold, adorned with texts, crosses, or other suitable ornamentation : it is bound upon the brow of bride and bridegroom alike at the wedding ceremonial in the church. The example here figured is of silver-gilt with designs in repoussé : a cross in the centre : an Arabic text signifying 'Glory to God in the highest' arranged on either side : the whole between two double bands of pellets. The ground is covered with fine tooling, and a brief donative inscription is engraved at either end by the rings.

The use of the crown, which at the outset was regarded as a heathen ornament, dates notwithstanding from so early an epoch, that it was sanctioned and enjoined by the Church in the fourth century. In Greek ritual, as in the Coptic, bride and bridegroom are both crowned : the same custom holds with the Armenians, who however use a wreath of flowers in lieu of a metal diadem. In our own country there is not much evidence for the crown as part of the altar furniture. Rock mentions a wreath of jewels called a 'paste' for brides to wear at the altar, and quotes from some churchwardens' accounts 'paid for a serclett to marry maidens in iii/.' in the year 1540. A decree of the council of Exeter in 1287 ordered that every church should possess a marriage-veil<sup>1</sup>.

Some Danish marriage-crowns are preserved in the South Kensington Museum.

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<sup>1</sup> Church of our Fathers, vol. iii. pt. 2. p. 174.

## CHAPTER III.

### *The Furniture and Ornaments of the Sacred Building.*

*Ambons.—Lecterns.—Reliquaries.—Lamps and Lights.—Coronae.—  
Ostrich Eggs.—Bells.—Musical Instruments.—Mural Paintings.—  
Pictures.*

**P**OLYGONAL pulpits closely resembling western models are neither of modern date nor of rare occurrence in the Egyptian churches: but the Coptic ambon has a distinct character of its own. It differs from the western pulpit in having a straight-sided balcony attached to the circular preaching place. The balcony always runs east and west: both balcony and pulpit are usually of white marble, carved with flowers or enriched with exquisite marqueterie or mosaic of coloured stones. Sometimes a flight of steps leads up to the ambon, yet often a moveable ladder is the only means of mounting. It is doubtful whether any remaining ambon dates further back than the tenth century, though presumably those at Al Mu'allakah and Abu's-Sifain, of which illustrations have been given, may claim as great antiquity. It must always be remembered that the Arabs in Egypt borrowed most of their arts from the Copts: and that the arts, once developed, had a mechanical persistence, which renders any argument from resemblance of style to parity of date uncertain and

perilous. One cannot therefore safely determine the date of Coptic work by comparison with like Arab work of which the date is ascertained. But there is an octagonal wooden pulpit in one of the churches of the Natrun valley, which must be as old as the eighth century.

In England pulpits were not used before the thirteenth century, previous to which the sermon was delivered from the roodloft: but in neither our own Church nor the Coptic does the ambon seem to have been known precisely in the form which was common in early Greek buildings, and in early Latin basilicas,—which occurred for instance at St. Sophia in Constantinople, and may still be seen at S. Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna, S. Clemente in Rome, and at Torcello near Venice,—namely the form with two low flights of steps, a double entrance, and two short balconies without the circular area. This form is the usual one in pourtrayals of the ambon in tenth and eleventh century Italian miniatures. Whereas, too, the Latin ambon generally stood in the middle of the nave, the Coptic pulpit, like that of our own churches, is placed on the north side of the nave near the choir.

The lectern in use among the Copts is a moveable wooden desk about 15 in. square and about 4 ft. high, furnished with a sloping book-rest. The lower part is made as a cupboard to contain the books of service: the upper half is sometimes open, showing only the corner-posts. The lectern is adorned with geometrical designs, and sometimes inlaid with ivory carvings of the richest and most intricate workmanship. The finest example is that now at the cathedral in Cairo, but once belonging to Al Mu'allakah: it may date



Fig. 12.—Ivory-inlaid Lectern at the Cathedral in Cairo (front view).

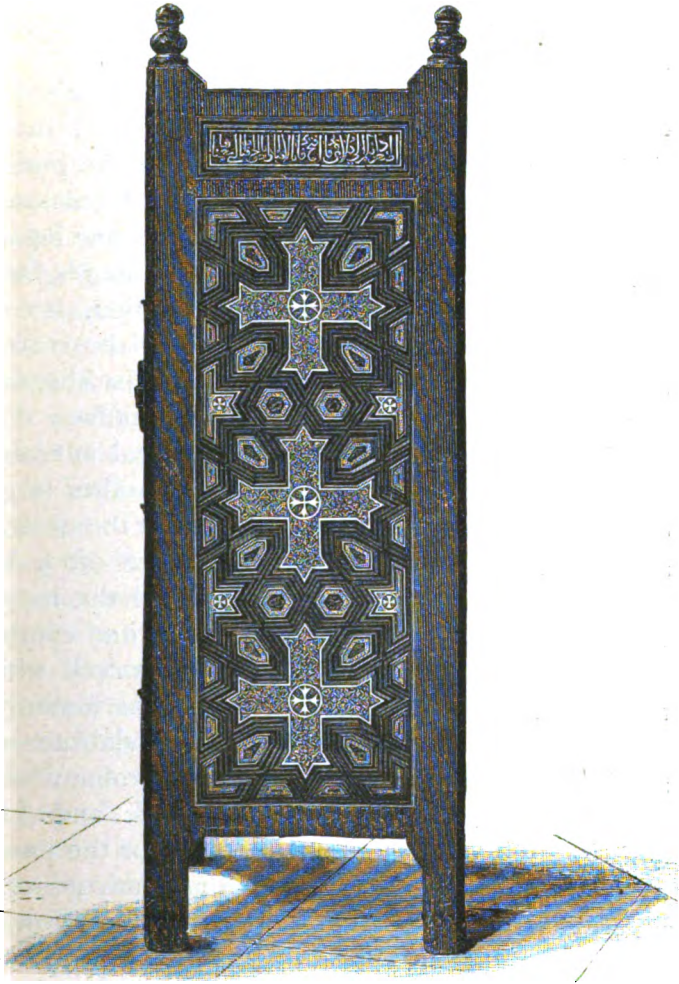


Fig. 14.—Ivory-inlaid Lectern (back view).

perhaps from the tenth or eleventh century, and is a really beautiful work of art, the ivory enrichments being wrought with the utmost conceivable delicacy of finish. The crosses and tablets chased with Arabic inscriptions are solid blocks of ivory with the designs in relief. The illustrations are from photographs. The lectern always stands in the choir before the haikal door, which was the position occupied by the ambon at St. Sophia. Occasionally two lecterns are found, but in such cases one belongs of right to a side-chapel. The reader stands facing the East with his back to the congregation.

Coverings of silk or some rich material are sometimes used for the lectern. That at Anba Shanûdah covers the sloping desk, and reaches halfway down the front or western side; and the frontal is embroidered with a cross. An illuminated psalter is generally left upon the lectern; and under the desk, on an open shelf or in the cupboard, are often kept alms-trays of rushwork or of metal, and the musical instruments used in divine service, i.e. cymbals, triangles, and small tongueless bells struck with a metal rod. Close beside the lectern there stands a tall and highly ornamented bronze candelabrum with a pricket, clearly recalling the graceful column which stood beside the ambon in the Greek and Latin churches, and served as a candlestick for the paschal candle<sup>1</sup>. The censer in common use may generally be seen hanging from the circular plate below the pricket of the lectern candlestick.

Although the worship of relics is forbidden by the Coptic Church, yet the faithful have a firm belief in

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<sup>1</sup> See the illustrations of this in *La Messe*, vol. iii. pl. cxciv-cci. The examples figured are mainly Italian.

their sovereign virtue. Hence every church has its relics,—generally those of its patron saint. But instead of being made a gazing-stock, they are carefully shrouded from view and sewn up in bolster-like cases which are covered with silk or some rich tissue, embroidered or shot with gold. What these cases contain—teeth, bones, hair, or shreds of raiment—can only be conjectured, as they are never opened. They are kept in lockers or aumbries underneath the picture of the saint or martyr to whom they belonged, or rarely, as at Al Mu'allakah, in separate moveable reliquaries. In the churches of the Hârat-ar-Rûm, women may often be seen sitting on the floor and nursing a case of relics, which is passed from one to another as they chat unconcernedly about their worldly matters; for they have recourse to the healing powers of the relics for the slightest ailments. In the same way I have seen a priest laying his hands and making passes on the head of a boy who was troubled with headaches. If ever the Coptic churches had relic-cases of metal or costly work, like the sumptuous enamelled and jewelled shrines of western mediaeval art, they have long ago perished, and their memorial with them. But while the Copts retain the common early faith in the efficacy of relics, they do not and never did pay to them the same idolatrous honour that was often bestowed in the church of Rome: and so doubtless they did not lavish the same skill and wealth in making shrines to contain them.

The lamps and lights of the Egyptian churches are of such variety and beauty as to deserve a full notice. First of all—to be mentioned only with sorrow and regret—come the ancient lamps of glass

enamelled with splendid designs and bands of Arabic writing in the most lovely colours. These, the work of thirteenth-century artists, were once hung before the haikal in many Coptic churches, but have now entirely disappeared: one or two specimens however may be seen at the British Museum and at South

Kensington. Each lamp had three handles by which it was suspended, and formed really only a case for an inner vessel of oil. The effect of the light shining through and throwing out all the enamelled colours was superb. The same form of lamp in plain glass still lingers in one or two churches, as at Abu Sargah, where it is hidden away and only used once a year, on Good Friday<sup>1</sup>: there is another at Sitt Mariam by Abu-'s-Sifain. The churches in the monasteries of the desert, and many of the ancient mosques of Cairo,

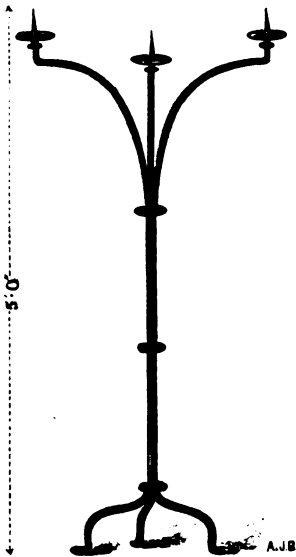


Fig. 15.—Ancient Iron Candelabrum at Abu-'s-Sifain.

were quite lately adorned with these magnificent lamps: but shortly before the war all that remained were taken down by order of the then prime minister, Riaz Pasha, and stowed away in packing cases in the public library. It is a relief to hear that now they have been placed to the number of eighty in the museum of Arab art in the mosque of Al Hâkim,

<sup>1</sup> See the illustration on p. 41 supra.



from whence four have been sent on loan to the South Kensington Museum. These latter date from the fourteenth century, and are extremely beautiful. Three of them belonged originally to the mosque of Sultân Hassan, and are inscribed with the titles of that sovereign, who reigned about 1350 A. D.; and the fourth bears the name of Al Malik az-Zâhir Barkûk, about 1390, the first of the Circassian Mameluke sultans. The three former lamps have a text from the korân, enamelled round the neck, and running as follows: 'God is the light of the heavens and the earth: his light is as a niche in which is a lamp: the lamp is in a glass: the glass is as it were a glittering star.' Cobalt and a dark red are the predominant colours in these enamels: white and olive green are also used in slighter touches.

There can be no question that most of the extant specimens of enamelled lamps are of Arab manufacture, and that there were large glassworks in the middle ages at or near Damascus, and possibly also at Cairo. But whether these lamps are really Arab or Venetian in *origin*, whether the art of enamelling on glass passed from Venice to Cairo and Damascus, or arose first in the East, is a moot point which I shall not attempt to settle. There are however some waifs and strays of evidence, which seem to indicate that the flow of the current was eastward rather than westward. Another form of pensile lamp with a globed body, short neck, broad lip, and stem built of rings successively tapering downward and ending below in a fluted drop, seems to me of distinctly Venetian origin. The body too is decked with medallions, each enclosing a lion's head in high relief—a form of ornamentation in glass almost

exclusively Venetian. I have only found two of these lamps in all the churches—one, figured in the illustration, in an aumbry at Sitt Mariam by Abu-'s-Sifain, and one hanging before the altar screen at Al 'Aḍra, in the Kaṣr-ash-Shamm'ah. They are not unlike some of the *gabathæ* used in the western churches.



Fig. 16.—Glass Lamp at Sitt Mariam.

Almost identical with these in form, and not less Venetian in character, are the graceful silver lamps of which examples may be seen in the Ḥârat-ar-Rûm and in many other churches. Dair Tadrus is particularly rich in them. They vary from 4 in. to 8 in. or

10 in. in height, and the beauty of their shape is enhanced by pierced designs which give them an air of great lightness and elegance. Many of the specimens are quite modern and of base silver; for though the art of working in glass is lost, metal-working still

flourishes in Cairo, and these copies in metal of the old glass shapes have been handed down to the present day.

Yet another kind of metal hanging lamp differs from the last in having a broader and fuller body and no stem below: moreover instead of being hung by chains, it is upheld by three short metal rods which are loosely attached to the three handles on the body and are joined by a cross piece above: they are also ornamented with loose spherical bosses. A lamp of this description is very rare, but I have seen two or three in Dair Tadrus.

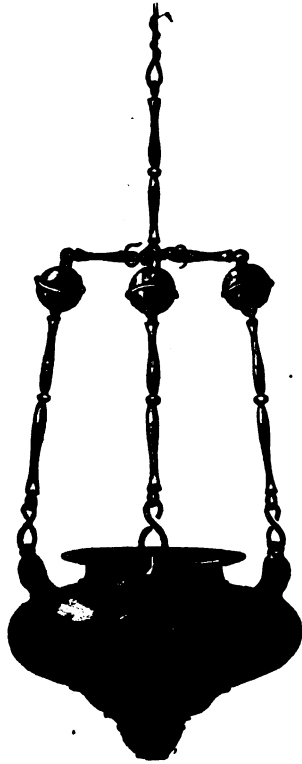


Fig. 17.—Bronze Lamp at Dair Tadrus.

Bell-shaped cups and rimmed bowls of plain white glass suspended by chains are common in all the Coptic churches, and are hung before paintings, before the altar-screen, or in the niche of the eastern wall.

In the middle ages there was in use a very beautiful form of lamp, of which I have never seen a perfect

specimen surviving. It was modelled roughly after the common pattern of classical earthenware lamps, but differed in having a spheroid body, from which arose a short broad-lipped funnel, joined to the body by a handle: the spout was long, narrow, and open. Though made of earthenware, the lamp was covered with a very rich and lovely glaze or rather enamel, generally of a most exquisite turquoise blue colour, though sapphire blue and many very beautiful shades of green are also found. Fragments of these lamps are pretty plentiful among the rubbish-mounds of Old Cairo; and I discovered one specimen very little mutilated, and not long disused, in an outhouse belonging to the Dair-al-Banât by Abu-'s-Sifain.

Of a *pharos*, or tower for lights, I have seen but few specimens. One example, a wooden structure, tapering upwards in four polygonal tiers or stages, is at Abu-'s-Sifain lying overthrown in the dust behind the wall pictures on the south side of the nave. The light-tower was common in the West, and is often mentioned in the *Liber Pontificalis* of Anastasius among the gifts to churches. Something of the same kind is the silver tower described by Paul the Silentiary as belonging to St. Sophia. There was a golden phare at the cathedral at Aix-la-Chapelle. Pope Sylvester also had one made of pure gold<sup>1</sup>, and Adrian I. a cross-shaped phare to hold 1370 tapers. A tenth-century painting showed two Byzantine-looking light-towers as belonging to Canterbury cathedral. Splendid works of the same kind were also at Cluny and St. Remy. The term *pharos* is

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<sup>1</sup> Lenoir's *Architecture Monastique*, ii. 137, quoted by Texier and Pullan.

of course derived from the great lighthouse of Alexandria, and it lingers, little changed, in the modern Arabic 'fanûs.'

Coronae or crown-like chandeliers, once existed in the churches of Cairo in great profusion, and were doubtless made of precious metals. The few that remain are of pierced bronze or copper, and are flung away disused into dark corners. Two belong to Mâri Mîna, one to Abu-'s-Sifain, and one to Dair Tadrus. Regarding the English use of the corona, one cannot do better than quote the words of Rock<sup>1</sup>, who, after saying that the pyx hung under the altar-canopy in the form of a dove or a covered cup, adds: 'Round it in most if not in all churches there shone a ring of ever burning lights fastened upon a hoop of silver or bright metal, hanging also by a chain from the inner roof of the canopy.' Bede speaks of a large bronze hoop studded with lamps surrounding a silver cross; and in the eighth century in Ireland 'crowns of gold and silver' hung over the shrine of St. Bridget in her church at Kildare. But I think that in the churches of the Copts the corona never hung from the canopy over the altar: its place was either before the haikal-screen, or possibly within the haikal eastward of the altar.

Of the curious seven-wicked lamp of iron at Abu-'s-Sifain, the cresset-stone at Anba Shanûdah, the standard candlesticks and gospel-stands in various churches, the various altar-candlesticks, and the beautiful dragon-candlestick at Mâri Mîna, descriptions will be found in their several places elsewhere. I will only add a rough parallel to the last mentioned

<sup>1</sup> Vol. i. p. 200.

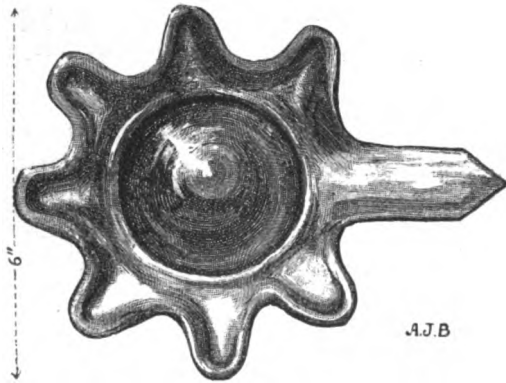


Fig. 18.—Seven-wicked Lamp of Iron for the Anointing of the Sick.

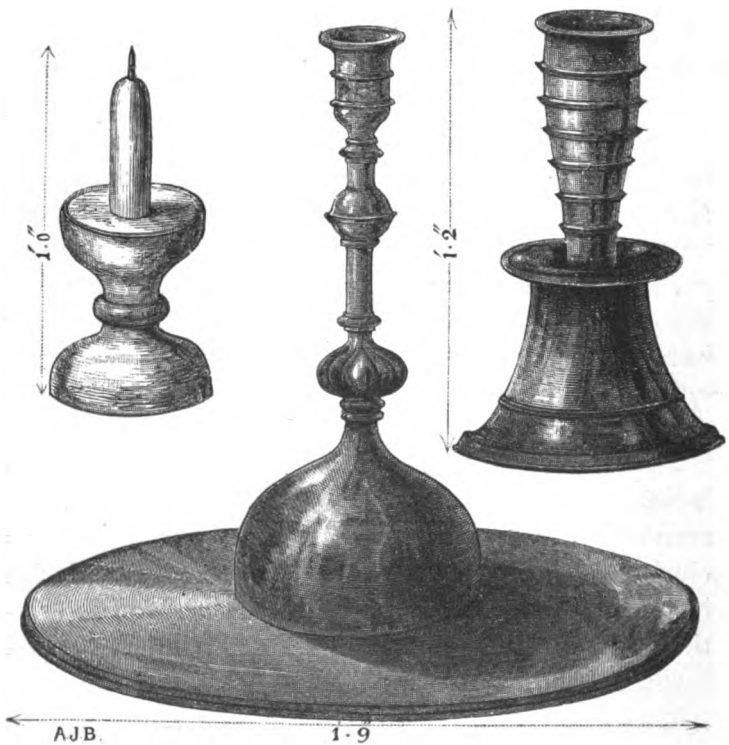


Fig. 19.—Specimens of Altar-candlesticks.

from an Anglo-Saxon ritual<sup>1</sup>. The fire which was kindled at the church door on each of the three last days of passion week, was caught by a candle set in a dragon-candlestick, and from it all the other tapers were lighted. This candlestick however was merely a serpent so mounted on a staff that its mouth formed the single socket: and it further differed from the many-lighted dragons of Mâri Mîna in being portable instead of fixed. But the symbolism is doubtless the same in both cases. Rock<sup>2</sup> gives a woodcut of a candle set in a dragon's head from the Salisbury Processional of 1528 A. D.

The ostrich-egg is a curious but common ornament in the religious buildings of the Copts, the Greeks, and the Muslims alike. It may be seen in the ancient church of the Greek convent in Kaşr-ash-Shamm'ah, and in most of the mosques of Cairo, mounted in a metal frame and hung by a single wire from the roof. In the churches it usually hangs before the altar-screen: but at Abu-'s-Sifain an ostrich-egg hangs also from the point of the arches of the baldakyn. Here and there it hangs above a lamp, threaded by the suspending cord, as in the church of the Nativity at Bethlehem: and sometimes it hangs from a wooden arm, fastened on to the pillars of the nave, as in the Nestorian church of At-Tâhara at Mosul<sup>3</sup>. Sometimes instead of the egg of the ostrich, artificial eggs of beautiful Damascus porcelain, coloured with designs in blue or purple, were employed. These have almost entirely disappeared: in the churches of the

<sup>1</sup> See Warren's Lit. and Rit. of the Celtic Church, p. 53.

<sup>2</sup> Vol. iii. pt. 2. p. 244.

<sup>3</sup> See the illustration in Dr. Badger's work, *The Nestorians and their Rituals* (London, 1852), vol. ii. facing p. 20.

two Cairos there is I believe not one left: but a few still remain in the churches of Upper Egypt, and in the mosques. The tomb-mosque of Kait Bey without the walls of Cairo contains some fine specimens. These porcelain eggs are considerably smaller than an ostrich-egg, but larger than a hen's egg. In the British Museum there is a porcelain egg from Abyssinia with cherubim rudely painted under the glaze. It clearly belonged once to a Christian place of worship.

The 'griffin's egg' was a common ornament in our own mediaeval churches. In an inventory of 1383 A.D. no less than nine are mentioned as belonging to Durham cathedral<sup>1</sup>, and Pennant speaks of two as still remaining in 1780<sup>2</sup>. These griffins' eggs were hung up with other curiosities such as the 'horn of a unicorn' before the altar or round St. Cuthbert's shrine. They were merely rarities brought by soldiers or pilgrims from foreign lands, and presented as offerings of devotion to the church: and in some chancels special aumbries with locked gratings were provided for them. Many of the richer churches had quite large collections of curiosities, and served as a sort of museum. But in our own country the ostrich-egg does not seem to have had any symbolical import or to have been regarded as a distinctly ecclesiastical ornament. From the fact that marble eggs are said to have been discovered in some early martyrs' tombs at Rome, and that in all Christian lands eggs are associated with Easter-time, some think that the egg was regarded as emblematic of the resurrection. An entirely different explanation

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<sup>1</sup> Raine's *Tomb of St. Cuthbert*, pp. 123-127.

<sup>2</sup> *Tour in Wales*, vol. ii. p. 228.



of the symbol, one current among the Copts themselves, was given to me by the priest of Abu's-Sifain. In contradiction to common belief, he said that the ostrich is remarkable for the ceaseless care with which she guards her eggs; and the people have a legend that if the mother-bird once removes her eyes from the nest, the eggs become spoiled and worthless that instant. So the vigilance of the ostrich has passed into a proverb, and the egg is a type reminding the believer that his thoughts should be fixed irremovably on spiritual things. This explanation seems rational; for the devotion of the ostrich to its brood is, I believe, in accordance with the facts of natural history, and the use of the egg may well have arisen in Africa where the habits of the bird are better known. At any rate it is the best solution of a vexed question.

Bells, though for the most part long since abolished, were once in common use in the Coptic churches. Apollinarius, the emissary of Justinian, 'rang the bells' on the first day of the week in Alexandria to call the people together to hear the king's letter<sup>1</sup>. The present patriarch told me that when the churches of Alexandria were destroyed, many of the bells were rescued and carried off to the Natrun monasteries where they still remain. One in particular he described as having the figures of the four Evangelists engraved upon it and an inscription round the border. A church bell hung in a niche in the western wall is still used at Dair Mikhaïl towards Tîra; but the church stands in open country, where the ringing of the bell can wound no Muslim prejudice. The same remark applies to the bell at

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<sup>1</sup> Al Makrizi, Malan's trans. p. 65.

kind attributed to St. Patrick is still preserved at Dublin. For a fuller account of the matter, the reader is referred to Mr. Warren's *Celtic Ritual*<sup>1</sup>. It does not however appear that these bells were used at the elevation of the host; nor is there any evidence to show that the practice of elevation was introduced into the western churches before the eleventh century, though it had existed for many centuries previously in the East. In English records the mention of handbells is late and scanty. By the constitutions of Ægidius de Bridport, bishop of Sarum<sup>2</sup> in 1265, they were ordered to be carried in procession in the visitation of the sick: the same usage prevailed also in funeral processions. The use of the handbell, or sacring bell as it was called, at low mass, and the ringing of the sanctus bell at high mass, date no doubt from the thirteenth century, when the custom of elevating the host first began to be adopted in our own country. The Coptic handbell is always tongueless, and is sounded by being struck with a short rod of iron.

The wild and somewhat barbaric clash of cymbals, which accompanies the chanting in every ancient church of Egypt, is probably a relic of pagan rather than of Jewish tradition. The very sound seems to bridge over the gulf of ages, and to carry the imagination back to the days of Bacchic dances and frenzied rites of Cybele, in much the same manner as the sound of church bells at home seems to place one back in the England of five centuries ago. But beyond this romantic interest the cymbal seems to have little history: eastern in origin and orgiastic in character, it seems never to have been widely adopted

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<sup>1</sup> Pp. 92-94.

<sup>2</sup> Rock, ii. 462, n. 31.

narthex or atrium : for bell-towers to hold a chime of bells were quite unknown in the East before the middle ages; and even the Coptic churches had never more than a pair of bells, each about eight or ten inches in diameter. The familiar peal of our English churches is scarcely older than the buildings from which it resounds, and it carries to the ear no clear echo of early Christian times.

Yet even in England the wooden gong was used instead of bells<sup>1</sup> on the last three days of passion week, the 'still days' as they were called for that reason.

Handbells are still rung, or rather beaten, as part of the regular musical accompaniment of the chants in the Coptic service. Renaudot<sup>2</sup> relates that the bishops who accompanied George, the son of the king of Nubia, on his mission to Egypt, used to ring bells at the elevation of the host, adding that the practice was in conformity with the early usage of the Church. This was about 850 A. D. But the custom, if ever it was in vogue among the Copts, has now died away completely: there are no handbells belonging to the altar.

In the records of the early British and Irish churches handbells are mentioned as early as the sixth century: and there seems some reason for the opinion that even larger church bells were in use at the same period in Ireland, and that the round towers in some cases served as belfries. The handbell was part of the regular insignia of an Irish bishop delivered to him at his consecration; and a bell of this

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Udalric, l.b. i. Consuet. Clun. c. 12, quoted by Ducange, and Amalarius de Eccl. O.f. lib. iv. c. 22, quoted by Rock.

<sup>2</sup> Hist. Pat. Alex. p. 282.

There is not the smallest evidence that the Copts at any period sanctioned the use of statues or sculptured images for the adornment of their religious buildings, and there is decided evidence to the contrary. Three centuries later, we read<sup>1</sup> that one Usâma ben Zaïd pulled down churches, 'broke the crosses, rubbed off the pictures, broke up all the images:' but as it is clear that 'pictures' here can only mean wall-paintings, so I believe that by 'images' the writer intended what we call pictures; for the Arabic in such cases is usually ambiguous, the same term applying to both statues and pictures. Again, about 860 A. D. Theophilus 'ordered all pictures to be effaced from the churches, so that not a picture remained in any one church'<sup>2</sup>— words which again seem clearly to convey the idea of wall-painting. Even as late as the eleventh century the art had not entirely perished: for Renaudot relates that in the Field of the Abyssinians<sup>3</sup> near Old Cairo was a church dedicated to Mâri Buḳtor, which in the days of Abu Ṣalah<sup>4</sup> the Armenian had a Coptic inscription, stating that the wall-paintings were done in the year of the martyrs 759 or 1043 A. D. Not a stone, not a trace, not a rumour of Mâri Buḳtor now remains: and we have no means of comparing any eleventh-century wall-paintings, which were perhaps the last effort of the art before its final extinction in Egypt, with those earlier works which still adorn many of the churches. For no one of the numerous

<sup>1</sup> Al Makrîzi, p. 77.

<sup>2</sup> Id. p. 84.

<sup>3</sup> This name has quite vanished; and the most diligent enquiries among the Copts of to-day failed to produce anything but a confession of blank ignorance.

<sup>4</sup> The spelling ابو صالح is given in MS. 307. Bib. Nat. Paris.

paintings that survive has a date clearly fixed by an inscription or other evidence: yet several of them cannot be later than the eighth century, and some original frescoes remain from the days of Constantine. All these paintings are done upon dry plaster or marble, and not on fresh plaster; and the colours are mixed with some viscous medium: they are, in fact, distemper paintings, and should not in strict accuracy be called frescoes. But I have already claimed for convenience sake to use the term fresco in the wider sense conferred upon it by popular usage.

The parts of a church most commonly beautified with these paintings are the pillars of the nave, and the curved wall and the conch of the apse. I have no doubt that where we now find the apse-wall encrusted with marble and set with fine mosaics, the same space was originally occupied by frescoes, which were replaced when decayed by the later style of decoration. Thus at Abu Sargah the principal apse is covered with this marble work, while the dim and disused western chapel still retains in its apse some of its original eighth-century paintings. Moreover on the eleven pillars in the nave which are unaltered, the colour and outline of the figures once blazoned upon them are still dimly discernible. All the figures in this church are five or six feet high, and are specially interesting as showing the resemblance of the early Coptic vestments to those of the western Churches. In style there is little difference to be detected between the various specimens surviving. All are Byzantine in character, with set faces, conventional drapery, and stiff outlines. But there are signs of more life and freedom sometimes to be found in the

rare examples of grouped figures, which exist for instance in the satellite church of Al Mu'allakah and in the triforium of K. Burbarah. In Al Mu'allakah itself there remains only one single incomplete figure on a pillar. Anba Shanudah has also one figure on a pillar, and some very rude uncoloured frescoes in the chapel of Mâri Girgis above it. Traces of a monochrome design of the Baptism of our Lord may be seen also on the eastern wall of the chapel of Sitt Mariam over the mandarah of Abu's-Sifain. Besides the foregoing examples, most of the niches in the sanctuaries and other chapels contain a fresco figure of Christ in glory, his right hand raised in the attitude of benediction. This figure, found in the tombs of Urgub in Cappadocia and common all over the East, may be seen also in some Roman and Lombard churches, but not elsewhere in the West<sup>1</sup>. The Latin Church preferred to depict Christ crucified. All over Egypt the same practice of decorating the church walls with figures of saints and angels seems to have prevailed. Not merely in the churches dotted along the banks of the Nile, to the very farthest boundary of Egypt in the south, may ancient frescoes still be traced upon the walls; but wherever the monks penetrated the remotest desert, there they carried with them the art of mural painting. In the western desert the monasteries of the Natrun valley have many examples still remaining, as for instance the refectory at Dair-as-Suriâni, and the nave of the church dedicated to Anba Bishoi: while in the eastern desert by the Red Sea the ancient church of Mâri Antonios has its walls nearly covered with dim and venerable frescoes.

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<sup>1</sup> Texier and Pullan, p. 42.

## PICTURES.

The ordinary paintings on panel or canvas have been described so very fully elsewhere that a few general remarks here will be sufficient. Panel-pictures are older and generally more interesting than those on canvas—a material which has only been used during the last two hundred years: and the painters on canvas were so childishly wanting in all power of design and colouring, that their works may be dismissed in one sentence as worthless. The paintings on panel are rather difficult to classify, either by date or style, owing to the persistence of Byzantine methods and traditions. Yet there are a small number of pictures clearly dated, and these serve as marks by which a certain order of progress, or rather decadence, can be noted.

There are no remaining pictures, I believe, older than the thirteenth century, and only one that can be assigned beyond question to that period—the beautiful tabernacle or altar-casket at Abu-'s-Sifain. This forms a class by itself, being distinguished by a luminous softness of chiaroscuro and a depth of idealised expression, both very surprising in an oriental picture. The date, 1280 A. D., is determined by a clear inscription in Coptic. So much has been said already about the picture, that I will only add that this solitary work of art is enough by its sole evidence (if no other picture can be assigned to the same epoch) to establish the existence in Egypt of a school of painters far superior to contemporary artists in Italy. Possibly the large painting of the Life of our Lord in the same church may belong to the same period: or even if somewhat later, it is

little inferior in execution. Both pictures, and in fact all the older pictures in Coptic churches, are painted on panel prepared in a peculiar manner. The wood is sometimes (but not generally) overlaid with canvas to prevent it splitting; on the canvas is spread a thin coating of gesso; and the gesso is then covered with gold. The golden background, therefore, common in these early paintings, is not put in separately, but is merely that part of the prepared surface which is not covered in with colours. This point is proved by many examples—by two pictures for instance in the writer's possession—in which flakes of colour have fallen off revealing a surface of gold below. The gold seems to have been burnished to a high degree of brilliancy, gleaming like pure metal, as in our best manuscript illuminations. In some cases the principal outlines of the design were engraved on the gold with a steel pointel, being doubtless transferred in this manner from paper sketches: and sometimes ornamentation of scrollwork or dotwork—especially upon the nimbus of saints—is stamped into the gesso. The picture from which the frontispiece is taken bears in Arabic the signature of 'the pilgrim Nastf,' and dates from the fifteenth or sixteenth century. It is remarkable for a most beautiful effect which shows upon the cover of the gospel, on the tunic of St. Mercurius, and in other places,—a lustre of the most brilliant and pelucid ruby-colour, as pure and as metallic as the lustre of the finest Gubbio ware. This effect is produced by overlaying a fine clear pigment on a ground of burnished gold. The use of canvas as the material for receiving the colours, which did not begin till the eighteenth century, marks the last stage in the decline



of Coptic painting. No pictures of the last or present century have any value, except as preserving in a sort of mummy-like embalment the lifeless traditions of the past.

There is reason to believe that the art of painting on panel existed from a very early period in Egypt : and if one remembers how for ages the Copts and their churches were harried by fire and sword, and how their Muslim persecutors hated not only the religion of Christ, but all delineation of divine or human figure ; the wonder is not so much that all more ancient pictures have perished, as that any paintings dating from so remote a period as the thirteenth century should have survived the devastations of six hundred years. It is however quite certain that such a work of art as the tabernacle at Abu's-Sifain never arose in full perfection as a sudden growth of chance. The power it betokens was not developed within the limits of a single lifetime, but followed upon long antecedents of trained skill and practised imagination. How early the painting of panels began we do not know : but the story told by Vansleb proves at least that the Copts claimed a tradition of art ascending to the very time of the apostles. He relates<sup>1</sup> that in the church of St. Mark at Alexandria there was two centuries ago a picture of St. Michael, said to have been painted by the hand of St. Luke the Evangelist. The legend is that the Venetians seized it, and put out to sea meaning to carry it away : but five times they were driven back to harbour by tempests, until at last they relinquished the picture. Next some Beduins, hearing the story of its value, broke into the church,

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<sup>1</sup> Voyage fait en Egypte, p. 183.

thinking to steal the icon and sell it to the Venetians. But, once in the building, they found their feet holden by some miraculous power, as often as they tried to go out with their booty. So they too failed in their unholy enterprise. Whatever be the worth of this legend, extant remains of mural painting prove that in the fourth century at least Coptic artists possessed such skill in design and colour as might by a natural process of development, if unchecked and unarrested, achieve very great results. It is true no doubt that Coptic art generally has a certain large leaven of Byzantine elements, and true that Byzantine art in Europe preserved a crystalline fixity of style and merit for centuries together: yet the Coptic paintings that remain, instead of indicating a single type immutably permanent, show a steady continuous order of change; and although this change is a change of disintegration and decay, it proves nevertheless that the art contained organic vitality and vigour. So we may reason backwards, and from the splendour which we can witness slowly waning through six centuries, we may infer a dawn far beyond our ken, and watch the light growing larger, in stages at least as slow as those by which we have seen it diminish.

Of pictures with fixed dates there are two sets belonging to the fifteenth century, both at Sitt Mariam in Dair Abu-'s-Sifain. One of these, on the south wall of the choir, contains three pictures—the Baptism of our Lord, Abu Nafr, and Anba Shanûdah: these are dated 1179 of the Coptic era or 1462 A. D. Close beside them on the haikal-screen of the south aisle-chapel is a very interesting set of five paintings with a date corresponding to 1477 A. D. In com-

parison with the art of the thirteenth century, the faces in these pictures have lost somewhat in lifelike expressiveness: the features have become more set, and the folds of the drapery more conventional: there is not the same masterly softness of outline, the same delicate gradation of light and shadow. Yet the technical manipulation of colour is still admirable: only it seems as if the spiritual qualities had in a great measure gone out of the painting.

Works of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are tolerably common; but there is a marked superiority in the former, in which the stiffness of decay is far less conspicuous. Good examples may be seen in Abu Sargah, Al Mu'allakah, Al Amr Tadrus, and other churches. From the sixteenth century onwards the decline in power and originality becomes more and more decided: till the last stage is reached, after the lifeless daubs of the last century, in the dead cessation of painting at the present time.

To sum up: Coptic art seems never to have been tied and bound by rigid laws of tradition in the same manner as the art of the Greek Church. There is no analogy in Cairo to the experience of Didron, who fifty years ago saw the monks of Mount Athos reproducing by rule of thumb the designs and colours of the fourth or fifth century, and who found a school of painters 'painting by instinct, as the swallows build their nest or bees their honeycomb.' Nor are there to-day in Egypt, as in Russia, artists who still paint in the manner of the thirteenth century. Further, it is not merely in style that the Coptic painters indicate their independence and individuality. The variety of subjects is no less striking than the variety of treatment of the same subject. The arch-

angel Gabriel is painted sometimes with a sword, sometimes with a cross, sometimes with a trumpet : sometimes in a single flowing robe, sometimes in full pontificals. The Annunciation and the Nativity are seldom rendered twice with the same details : and while, generally speaking, the subjects correspond in frequency and variety with those early Christian paintings in the West, yet there are some curious exceptions and differences. While, for example, in the catacombs at Rome the commonest subject of all is Christ as the good shepherd<sup>1</sup>, I do not remember a single instance of the same figure depicted on any Coptic wall or panel. Not less remarkable is the absence of many of the most familiar symbols of western Christendom. Birds eating grapes, and stags, occur in one or two wood-carvings ; there is one solitary instance of a dolphin carved in marble : the ship and the fish are found neither in carving nor painting, although Clement of Alexandria is the first to bear witness to the use of ΙΧΘΥΣ as a Christian symbol. On the other hand the churches abound in paintings of scenes and persons distinctively Coptic,—martyrs like the Five and their Mother, saints like Mâri Mîna, patriarchs like Anba Shanûdah, and hermits or ascetics like Antony, Abu Nafr, or Barsûm al 'Ariân. Some of these, and only some, left a renown that travelled beyond the borders of Egypt ; but all received more honour in their own country, where their heroic deeds and sufferings are still told in legend, and their forms are still blazoned upon the panels of the sanctuary.

There is yet another remarkable difference be-

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<sup>1</sup> Roma Sotteranea, transl. by Northcote and Brownlow, Lond. 1879, vol. ii. p. 45.

tween Greek and Coptic painting, and it is a point which should not be passed in silence; for it distinguishes Coptic art not only from Greek but also from all art of western Christendom. The Copts seem to be the only Christians who do not delight to paint the tortures of saints on earth or sinners in hell. Our ancient English churches abound in frescoes of skulls and bones and hideous devils. It was a common thing to depict the Last Judgment over the chancel-arch; and nothing could be too revolting to embellish the scene. The church at Lutterworth, for instance, has this fresco still in good condition; round the Lady chapel at Winchester cathedral malignant imps, enacting dreadful scenes of torture, may still be traced upon the faded surface of the walls; and over the western door of Amiens cathedral the Resurrection and Judgment, sculptured in stone, display the same horrors as the illuminations of the Utrecht Psalter, the frescoes of Andrea Orcagna in the Campo Santo at Pisa, and the mosaics of the Duomo at Torcello. So too in the monasteries of Mount Athos every church has its Last Judgment painted in the porch, with details of horror which Curzon has described with keen humour<sup>1</sup>. Elsewhere the same author remarks, 'These Greek monks have a singular love for the devil and for everything horrible and hideous; I never saw a well-looking Greek saint anywhere<sup>2</sup>.'

In the Coptic Church these horrors have no counterpart. In no part of the world do they belong to the early ages of the Church, but are the outcome of a diseased taste in the middle ages.

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<sup>1</sup> Monasteries of the Levant, pp. 301-302.

<sup>2</sup> Id. p. 258.

Mr. Ruskin indeed thinks that the mosaics at Torcello may be as old as the seventh century<sup>1</sup>; but if so, there is a wide gulf of time between them and the like delineations elsewhere. The frescoes at Mount Athos are in some cases quite modern; but the subject, if not the work, carries back for some centuries. Texier and Pullan<sup>2</sup> record other examples of the Last Judgment, but none of great antiquity. The more refined and tender feeling of the early Church, while delighting to paint our Lord in glory surrounded by triumphant saints, yet left the doom of the wicked to the silence of imagination. This wise reserve, this refusal to pourtray in colours the torments of hell, or to countenance a religion of terror, has been and is now the continuous characteristic of Coptic art as opposed to all other Christian art whatsoever. If then Texier and Pullan are right in thinking these horror-paintings exclusively Byzantine in character, and in deriving their origin from the soul-weighing and other legends of the ancient Egyptian mythology; it is at least very curious that for the first six centuries of our era—the time when the worship of Isis and Osiris was still practised—there should be no trace and no mention of such paintings, and that Egypt itself should be the one country distinguished from all others by the absence of such paintings at all epochs of Christian history. Rather, if the time and place nearest the supposed connexion prove to be the only time and place conspicuously wanting in all sign of it, common sense and common logic demand some other explanation. It would surely

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<sup>1</sup> *Stones of Venice*, vol. ii. App.

<sup>2</sup> *Byzantine Architecture*, p. 41.

be just as reasonable to dwell upon the extraordinary resemblance between the mediaeval paintings of hell throughout Europe and the place of torment depicted in the Buddhist paintings of India<sup>1</sup>, and to frame from this resemblance a theory of the connexion of Byzantine art with Buddhist. But there is no need, I think, of any recondite searching. Similar phases of belief and of artistic utterance may have quite independent origins and developments. One has only to remember how as time went on the primitive idea of Christian life and thought hardened down to an intolerant dogmatism in theology, while its spirituality was sapped by a vulgar craving for artistic realism; and it is then easy to understand how, from the slender material furnished by Holy Writ, a depraved taste and a diseased imagination, working in an age of superstition, devised and painted in colours horrors worse than those of any heathen Tartarus.

Passing now from subject to form, one may note that the Copts do not share the Byzantine or Greek practice of overlaying their panel pictures with plates of silver, or setting them in metal frames. In most of the Greek churches to-day such pictures may be seen or rather conjectured; for the whole panel is covered except the faces of the figures, which peer through holes in the silver, while the drapery and other details of the scene are rudely engraved in outline upon the surface. It is uncertain when this custom began, but it seems of some antiquity. Curzon mentions, among other pictures treated in this manner, two portraits of the empress Theodora,

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<sup>1</sup> See Lord Lindsay's *Sketches of the History of Christian Art*, vol. i. p. xxxiii.

and two other paintings brought from Constantinople in the middle of the fifteenth century. These are at the monastery of Vatopedi, Mount Athos<sup>1</sup>. Of course the silver casing is designed as a safeguard against the damage which would arise from the custom of kissing pictures. From time to time there seem to have been outbreaks of iconoclastic violence against the pictures in the churches of Egypt. Thus as late as 1851 the patriarch Cyrillus, the tasteless builder of the present hideous cathedral in Cairo, considering that too much reverence was shown to pictures, and being determined to put down the superstition, ordered paintings to be brought from all quarters, and made a grand bonfire of them. No doubt many of the oldest and best thus perished, though in many other cases the order was fortunately disregarded.

The Copts have a certain number of religious pictures in their houses, mostly of small merit. They pray *before* them, and burn tapers *before* them, as offerings in fulfilment of a vow; and although the Church forbids prayer to saints, the practice is not uncommon among the women, who are of course more ignorant and superstitious than the men. The saints so worshipped are chiefly St. Michael, the Virgin Mary, St. George, and St. Mercurius<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Monasteries of the Levant, p. 326.

<sup>2</sup> It may be useful to give in Arabic the three different eras by which the date of Coptic pictures is marked. They are—

عصر الشهداء (1) قبطى للشهداء, the Coptic era of the Martyrs, which commences in 284 A. D.

(2) ميلاديه or مسيحيه, the era of the Messiah or of the Nativity, = A. D.

(3) هجره, the Mohammedan era of the Flight.



## CHAPTER IV.

### *The Ecclesiastical Vestments of the Coptic Clergy.*

*Previous Authorities.—Dalmatic.—Amice.—Girdle.—Stole.—Pall.—  
Armlets.*

**V**ARIOUS writers who have ventured to treat of Coptic ecclesiastical vestments have admitted the difficulty of reaching any conclusions at once lucid and final, and have for the most part, unconsciously as well as consciously, exemplified and intensified the obscurity with which the subject is beclouded. The method I propose to follow now is, first, briefly to review and compare together all the chief written evidence upon the matter, and by the light of my own information to decide, if possible, what really are the canonical vestments: then to take these one by one, describe them, and compare them with corresponding vestments in other Churches eastern and western: and, finally, to make mention of one or two forms of vestments unrecorded by previous writers, forms for which the evidence is rather pictorial than written.

The first list to be given here is quoted from the

Arab historian Abu Ḍakn<sup>1</sup>, as rendered in English by Sir E. Sadleir in 1693. I strongly suspect that this English translation is second-hand work, being taken direct from the Latin version of the same author, published at Oxford in 1675. It is not surprising that mistakes arise in such a process of translation and retranslation, even if the liturgical terms in the original authority are technically accurate and clearly distinguished, which is seldom if ever the case. A further source of error, no less frequent than vexatious, is the ignorance of lexicographers, who seem to have not the smallest understanding of liturgical language<sup>2</sup>. But to proceed: Abu Ḍakn gives as the priestly vestments the following:—

1. A woollen 'ephod' about the head. This is clearly the *amice*, though Abu Ḍakn remarks that it is worn not only by priests but by all who enter the church,—a statement not easily intelligible unless it refers also to the turban; but another explanation will be suggested presently.

2. *Dalmatic*. A long linen garment reaching to the feet and set with jewels in the form of a cross upon the back, breast, borders, and cuffs of the sleeves, or, if the church be poor, with silk embroidery instead of jewels. This is one of many testimonies to the great splendour of the ancient Coptic ritual.

3. *Girdle*.

4. *Maniple* carried by the priest only in the left hand and not allowed to deacons or inferior orders. This statement is extremely doubtful.

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<sup>1</sup> History of the Jacobites, tr. by Sir E. Sadleir, London, 1693.

<sup>2</sup> It is a matter of great regret that even the best and most recent Arabic lexicons, such as Lane's and Dr. Badger's, are so remarkably deficient in this respect.

5. *Cope*. The Latin rendering is 'pallium cum cucullo,' and the vestment is stated to be used at solemn times by priest, deacon, or subdeacon for the mass, when no bishop is celebrating. The hood goes over the amice. The cope was and is worn by the Coptic clergy, and may be rightly so called here.

6. *Stole*. About this vestment the Latin version remarks 'nulli ferunt nisi pontifices,' which becomes in the English translation 'none wear the stole except bishops!' an absurdity which needs no refutation.

Let us now turn to the list given by Vansleb<sup>1</sup>, who lived in Cairo in the years 1672-1673, and was for the most part a careful observer. He gives seven as the number of priestly vestments, viz.—

1. *Alb*, called in Arabic tunfah.
2. *Amice*. A long band of white linen which priests and deacons wear twisted round the head. Arabic 'teleisan'; Coptic πιλῶσιον.
3. *Girdle* of silk.
- 4 and 5. *Sleeves* or armlets.
6. *Stole*.
7. *Cope*(chappe) which must have a hood (chaperon) for bishops but not for priests. The vestment seems clearly marked by the hood as that mentioned by Abu Daḡn, but the two authorities are at hopeless variance as regards usage: for whereas Abu Daḡn assigns the cope with hood to priests and deacons, to the exclusion of bishops, Vansleb makes the hooded cope as opposed to the hoodless distinctive of bishops as opposed to priests. Vansleb gives 'al burnus' as the Arabic equivalent.

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<sup>1</sup> Histoire de l'Église d'Alexandrie, p. 60.

Renaudot<sup>1</sup> in his wonderfully learned work on the Oriental Liturgies cites two authorities for the Coptic vestments, Gabriel and Abu Sabâ. Gabriel, the LXXXVIII patriarch of Alexandria, in his book on ritual, published in 1411 A.D., enumerates the vestments as follows:—

1. *Alb* or *dalmatic* of silk.
2. *Epomis* or *amice* of white silk.
3. *Stole*.
4. *Girdle*.
- 5 and 6. *Sleeves*.
7. *Cope* (pallium seu cappa) of white silk.

Similarly Abu Sabâ gives seven:—

1. *Alb* or *dalmatic* (vestis longa sive tunica).
2. *Epomis* or *amice*, like the ephod of Aaron.
3. *Girdle*.
- 4 and 5. *Sleeves*.
6. *Stole* or ἐπιτραχήλιον, which the priest hangs from his neck.
7. *Chasuble* or *cope* (?): 'Camisia sive alba,' which for bishops has an orfrey of gold or precious embroidery round the neck, but not for priests. If we compare this statement with Vansleb's, it seems quite possible that the vestment, called of course 'camisia sive alba' quite erroneously, is rather a cope than a chasuble; and that the hood having disappeared is merely indicated by embroidery, in strict analogy with a common western practice.

Renaudot, after remarking that it is extremely difficult to give a clear account of these several vestments, owing to the fact that the terms are so ill understood even by lexicographers, proceeds to

<sup>1</sup> Liturgiarum Orientalium Collectio, second edition, Frankfurt, 1847, 4to., vol. i. pp. 161-163.

discuss them in order—a process which it will be convenient to follow with a rough translation.

1. *'This is a long robe reaching to the ancles. Abu Sabá<sup>1</sup> calls it djabat, the patriarch Gabriel tunía. It is the Greek χιτώνιον or rather στιχάριον, and is worn by all orders down to subdeacon: it is tight-fitting and of white colour.'*

There can be no doubt that Renaudot's account is quite accurate, and the vestment is what we call a dalmatic.

2. *'This is called in Arabic Tilsan, the Coptic equivalent being επωλεϊς, corruptly τ & πολεϊς, or in some glossaries πιλοτιον. Here it must be understood of a vestment or ornament worn on the shoulders, and so nearer a superhumeral than rational. But it seems capable of being aptly explained as the φαινώλιον or chasuble of the Latins.'*

This last remark of Renaudot's, though apparently agreeing with Du Cange, is unfortunate. Neale has adopted the blunder from Renaudot without acknowledgment, thus stamping it with his own authority. He states flatly that the chasuble is named tilsan by the Copts<sup>2</sup>. Abu Dakn and Vansleb are both quite clear that the amice is a Coptic vestment, and the latter identifies the word under discussion by giving the Arabic and Coptic names, 'teleisan' and πιλοτιον. There can be, therefore, no shadow of reason for confounding amice with chasuble, or for allowing any uncertainty as to the meaning of the 'tilsan': it is established beyond question by Renaudot's own

<sup>1</sup> This writer is constantly called Abu Sebah by Renaudot and others, but the spelling in the text seems correct: it is taken from an Arabic MS. which gives *أبو صبا*.

<sup>2</sup> Eastern Church, Gen. Introd. vol. i. p. 309.

authorities, as well as by the independent authorities which I have cited. A point that does demand some notice is the confusion between amice and rational, a point which Renaudot passes over without explanation. The truth is that from the earliest times there was the closest association between ephod and breastplate, or superhumeral and rational. Thus St. Jerome in his letter on the sacerdotal vestments<sup>1</sup> remarks, 'the ephod or superhumeral is so coupled to the rational that it may not be loose nor unattached, but that both may be closely joined and be a mutual help, each to other:' and again<sup>2</sup> he describes the rational as 'woven in gold and fine colours, the same as the ephod.' In another place<sup>3</sup> St. Jerome notices that the corresponding word in the Septuagint is *ἐπωμῖς*. Now there is some evidence that the breastplate or rational was used as a regular Christian vestment in the East. Marriott gives an engraving of a leathern breastplate, found in a coffin in the church of the Passion at Moscow<sup>4</sup>, which cannot, he says, be older than the tenth century, and is a 'wholly exceptional instance of a direct imitation of the Jewish "rational."' He quotes however a statement from King<sup>5</sup>, that Russian metropolitans wear two jewelled ornaments upon the breast, which are imagined to be taken from the Urim and Thummim on Aaron's breastplate. But the strongest evidence is offered by another eastern Church, the Armenian, where to this day amice and rational are not only found, but found attached together, as St. Jerome

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<sup>1</sup> Marriott's *Vestiarium Christianum*, p. 23.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* p. 17.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* p. 14.

<sup>4</sup> *Vest. Christ.* pl. lvii. and p. 245.

<sup>5</sup> *Greek Church*, p. 39.

describes the ephod and breastplate. The varkass is defined as a small amice having a stiff collar, and sometimes a breastplate of silver or gold attached<sup>1</sup>. It seems then very probable that at some rather early period in the Coptic Church both the amice and rational may have existed: and if, like the corresponding Armenian vestments, they were actually fastened together, it is easy to understand how the two names επωμειο and πιλοτιον may have been used almost interchangeably, and finally, when the rational disappeared from use entirely, have given rise to an apparent confusion. Or this confusion may be explained in a different manner. In the western Church, at any rate, the amice was originally of square or oblong shape, and was worn with two of its corners overlapping each other across the upper part of the breast; and the strings after being carried round the body were fastened in front. The amice thus worn actually formed a kind of breastplate or rational; and, if the practice of the Egyptian Church was analogous, it is quite natural that the terms επωμειο and πιλοτιον should sometimes have been used as synonyms.

3. *The Girdle needs no explanation: it has the authority of all antiquity, and a special meaning among the Christians of the East since the Moham-medan conquest, having been prescribed by several of the khalifs as a secular distinction between Christian and Muslim. Al Hâkim and Şalâh ad-Dîn were very rigorous in the imposition of this mark of ignominy; for such it was regarded by the laity, while ecclesiastics vied with each other in praise of so*

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<sup>1</sup> Fortescue's *Armenian Church*, p. 133.

*honourable a vestment. From the fact that the Christians of Egypt were distinguished by this zone, they were often called "Christians of the Girdle,"—a name which has given rise to many foolish interpretations.'*

There is little need to alter or qualify the foregoing remarks. The girdle was used not merely as a priestly vestment, but it had its place in the ceremonial both of baptism and of marriage. The title 'Christians of the Girdle' seems to have been given first by the Venetians. The secular ordinance enjoining upon the Christians the wearing of a girdle, to distinguish them from the Muslims, was first issued not by Al Ḥâkim, but a century and a half before that time by the khalif Mutawakkil.

4 and 5. *'The two Sleeves are probably the same as the ἐπιμανίκια which the Greeks, as Goar remarks, wear loose with a silk string to tighten them on the arms. The ἐπιμανίκια correspond under another form to the maniples of the Latin rite. But the Coptic sleeves, judging by native descriptions, may be of a different shape, though on this point we can give no certain information.'*

The identification of maniple and epimanikia is, I think, a mistake. The 'certain information,' which Renaudot desired concerning the form of the Coptic sleeves, will be found elsewhere in this volume.

6. *'The Stole is hung from the neck. Abu Sabā's ignorance of Greek has led him to offer an extraordinary etymology: he says that Bitarchil means 'a thousand rocks.' The glossaries give κροπαλιον as an equivalent to this Arabic word, but that is a term unknown in ritual.'*

The etymology is absurd enough, but Renaudot,



by misquoting the Arabic, makes it appear still more ridiculous. I am inclined to think that Abu Şabá knew a little Greek: the word he starts with is not *bitarchil* but *patrashîl*, or *petrashîl*, which he derives doubtless from *πέτρα* and *χάλιος*. He adds that the stole is thus symbolical of the 'thousand rocks' which beset the course of the Church, and demand ceaseless vigilance on the part of the priests who pilot her! His real ignorance lies in this, that he failed to see that *patrashîl* is a mere corruption of the Greek term *ἐπιτραχήλιον*. It will be noticed that Renaudot says nothing of the form of the stole, of which more anon.

7. *'Last comes Al Burnus, or Καμάσιον, as the Copts understand it, — a term which often answers to the Camisia, or alb of the Latins, but here denotes rather a vestment corresponding to the ancient chasuble, coming on the top of the other vestments and encircling the whole body. The upper part has a border of gold or rich embroidery (called †ΚΟΚΛΙΑ in Coptic, kaslet in Arabic) like the Greek vestments carefully described by Goar. The Burnus is usually of silk: but Abu'l Birkat relates that many monks and priests of Cairo wear a plain chasuble of white wool without any border, such as the Carthusians use at the altar. The monks of St. Macarius did not use the chasuble in the service of the altar, but only at public prayers.*

*'All these vestments have symbolical meanings very like the Greek. Authorities are confused, owing to the reckless interchange of Arabic terms and the want of a definite nomenclature, Coptic or Greek, corresponding to the Arabic: they will not repay study, as they are not clear about the ancient form of the vestments, and the present form, perhaps a little changed,*

must be settled by observation, and not by written evidence.

'But it is clear that all the Coptic vestments answer very closely to the Greek. The *Burnus* answers to the *φαινόλιον* or *φελόνιον* as figured by *Goar*, and to the *casula* or *planeta* of the Latins. The first on the list answers to the western *alb*, and the *στιχάριον*: the Christian Arabs have kept the latter term which *Echmimensis* explains as *kamis* or *camisia*. The *Sleeves* or *ἐπιμανίκια* are tightened by silken strings, whence it is obvious that they are made in the Greek fashion. The *Tilsan* or *Epomis* is the *Amice*, as before remarked, and has a hood attached, according to *Echmimensis*. The *Stole* is placed about the neck, and descends crosswise over the shoulders, as in *Goar's* illustration. Mention is made also by *Echmimensis* of a priest's cap (*cidaris*) ornamented with small crosses.

'These vestments were once, and are still, as rich and costly as the several churches can provide. They are jealously guarded, and may not be removed from the church or the sacristy, as ordained in the most ancient canons and confirmed over and over again. They are consecrated, like every appurtenance of the sacred service, by the bishop's benediction. If used by heretics or persons of a different communion, they are considered as profaned, and must be purified by set prayers or else consumed by fire. Thus in the life of *Chail*, the fifty-sixth patriarch, we read that the *Jacobites* got leave from the sultan to burn the sacerdotal vestments of six *Melkite* bishops. There is scarcely any difference of actual form between a bishop's and a priest's vestments for the celebration: they are distinguished, as among the Greeks, by embroidered circles, orfreys, and crosses.'

The question of the seventh vestment Renaudot thus decides in favour of the chasuble almost without discussion: and he is doubtless right. The cope in the Coptic ceremonial, as in the West, was rather an ornament for great festivals and solemn processions, than a regular vestment to be worn in the service of the altar. Renaudot points out the confusion between alb and chasuble caused by the identification of the Burnus with the Greek *καμάσιον* or *καμίσιον*, a confusion which is the less easy to understand as the alb is called in Arabic *ḵamtṣ*. But Renaudot himself seems as inconsistent as the authorities he discusses. After stating that the Greek *ἐπιμανίκια* were furnished with silken strings, but that he had no certain information about the Coptic sleeves, on the next page he coolly remarks that the Coptic sleeves have silken strings and therefore are like the Greek! Again, in the passages quoted above he mentions several times over without question the amice (*amiculum*) as one of the seven vestments: yet in another place<sup>1</sup> he sweepingly alleges that the amice (*amictus*) is unknown in the eastern Church. The statement, quoted from Echmimensis, that the amice had a hood attached, either points to a time when the original form had so far been altered that it consisted virtually of two distinct parts, or else is a mere misapprehension arising from the manner in which the amice was worn over the head, and which is rightly described by Vansleb.

Between Renaudot and Denzinger, who published his 'Ritus Orientalium' in 1863, there is so long a lapse of time, that one might fairly expect the

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<sup>1</sup> Vol. ii. p. 55.

interval to have added something to our knowledge of the subject. But such is not the case. Denzinger merely reproduces the very words of Renaudot and the earlier authorities in a slavish manner, mildly correcting Renaudot's mistake about the amice, wrongly doubting his interesting testimony about the Coptic priest's cap<sup>1</sup>, but adding otherwise not a word of original criticism, and leaving, if possible, the old confusion worse confounded than ever. Denzinger's work is, of course, in many ways extremely valuable: it contains masses of citation and translation from those oriental and other writers, who must remain the principal sources of our knowledge for the ancient eastern ritual: but on the subject of the Coptic vestments he has produced a very quagmire of inconsistent evidence. He neither attempts to reconcile the conflicting statements of previous writers, nor does he add on any single point the testimony of one single fresh observer.

Having thus passed in review the several authorities who have written about the sacred vestments of the Church of Egypt, and having balanced one authority against another, in order as far as possible to reconcile their contradictions, we may conclude this much for certain that there were at least seven canonical vestments which may be fitly rendered by the English equivalents dalmatic, amice, girdle, two sleeves, stole, and chasuble. This list tallies almost exactly with the number and name of the vestments in usage at the present moment, although the modern practice has become somewhat lax, and the full tale

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<sup>1</sup> 'Cidaris . . de quo tamen varia nobis dubia occurrunt, videturque nihil aliud esse nisi pilogion' (!) i. e. the amice. *Ritus Orientalium*, ed. H. Denzinger, Wirceburgi, 1863: tom. i. p. 130.

of vestments is not worn for ordinary celebrations, but only on great festival occasions. Such discrepancies as exist between past and present custom will be noticed in due order.

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THE DALMATIC.

(Coptic πι ποτῆριον, πι ψεκτω, †εεαρπη or †εεαπη<sup>1</sup>, Arabic التونيدية.)

In most of the eastern Churches the vestments of the celebrant were required to be of white colour in accordance with primitive custom<sup>2</sup>. Thus Ibn al 'Assâl quotes a canon of Basil that 'vestments for the celebration must be of white and white only,' and the Imperial Canons similarly enjoin that 'the priestly vestments must reach down to the ankles and be white, not coloured.' In both the passages the principal reference is doubtless to the dalmatic, which then as now was the most essential vestment for the holy office, though in the West at any rate the name 'alb,' connoting the prescribed colour, seems more ancient than 'dalmatic.' The generic name of course is tunic—alb being merely *tunica alba* and dalmatic *tunica dalmatica*: and it is this generic name which has survived in the term by which the vestment is now denoted among the Copts—*tuniah*. The name dalmatic is here retained

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<sup>1</sup> The Coptic name of the vestments is generally that given to me by Abûna Philotheus, Kummus of the cathedral in Cairo, and the most learned of the Copts in such matters. Where two or more distinct names are given, all but the last are derived from MS. authority. ΠΟΤῆΡΙΟΝ is obviously from the Greek ποδήρης.

<sup>2</sup> See Marriott, *Vestiarium Christianum*, Introd. chap. iv.

as being perhaps the nearer of the two; but it is important to remember that the Coptic form of the vestment does not accurately correspond to the Latin form, but rather to the earlier *colobion*. The dalmatic was a tunic with long full sleeves; the colobion had short close-fitting sleeves<sup>1</sup>: and the colobion is said to have been abolished in favour of the dalmatic by Sylvester, bishop of Rome, in the time of Constantine<sup>2</sup>. It is therefore interesting to

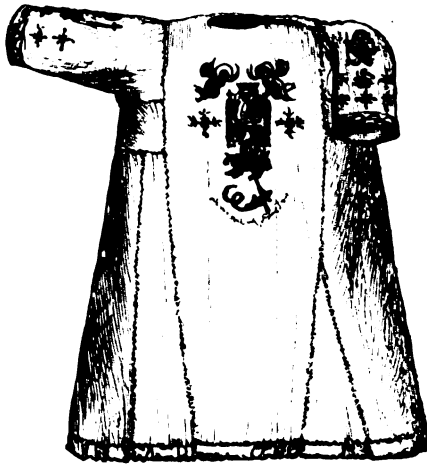


Fig. 20.—Embroidered Dalmatic.

find that Egypt, which never fell under the sway of a Roman pontiff, retains to this day in the ministration of the altar the form of tunic disused by the Latins fifteen centuries ago. It will be seen that the dalmatic figured in the illustration has rather a full body but short close sleeves. It opens by a slit along the left shoulder which is fastened by a loop and button. The seams have no ritual meaning, but

<sup>1</sup> So Marriott, p. lv: yet the same author, p. 111. n. 220, calls the colobion 'a tunic without sleeves.'

<sup>2</sup> Vest. Christ. p. lvii.

probably denote that the vestment has been pieced, where soiled or decayed, from some other dalmatic in like condition but less valuable.

The embroidery upon this vestment corresponds very closely in arrangement with the description given by Abu Ḍaḡn. On the breast is a figure of the Virgin Mary holding the infant Saviour on her left arm: below this is a rude figure of Mâri Girgis slaying the dragon, and a dedicatory inscription in Arabic. On each sleeve is the figure of an angel with outspread wings: a border enclosing some beautiful crosses runs round the edge of the sleeves, and a fine cross is also worked upon the back of the vestment. Various soft colours are blended together in this needlework, which is wrought in fine stitches with silk, harmonising well with the white or rather cream-yellow ground on which it is embroidered. The ground is of linen, and the yellow tinge is merely an accident of age.

The white short-sleeved dalmatic embroidered in the manner set forth above is the principal vestment worn at the celebration of the *ḡorbân* by the Coptic clergy of to-day; and the distinction between the dalmatic as worn by the priest and the deacon respectively is a distinction not of form but of ornamentation. The priestly dalmatic has the figure of the Virgin on the breast and of an angel on each sleeve, embroidered in gold or silver or fine needlework: while instead of Virgin and angels the deacon's dalmatic has merely small coloured crosses.

At the time when the ordinary dalmatic was decked with borders and crosses of costly jewels, as recorded by Abu Ḍaḡn, the ground was often of rich white silk as well as linen: and silk is

the material most commonly mentioned in ancient writings. I have been unable to find any evidence, pictorial or written, for the use in olden times by the Copts of the dalmatic with stripes, or clavi, such as are figured in the early mosaics of the West—for instance at the church of S. Vitale at Ravenna—and in early frescoes of the Greek Church. These stripes descended one from each shoulder before and behind: they were originally black, but in later times, in the seventh century, were often purple: and it was perhaps about the same period that the sleeves began to be adorned with small stripes, which were soon conventionalised into such a border as survives now in the Coptic form of the vestment.

White then seems to have been the universal colour for the dalmatic in the early ages of the Church both eastern and western. White is the only colour mentioned in the early Irish canons<sup>1</sup>, and in this the British and Gallican practice probably agreed with the Celtic. Yet towards the end of the seventh century we find that St. Cuthbert was buried in a purple dalmatic, although this may have been in special attribution of kingly honour to that saint, and does not necessarily imply the recognised use of purple as an ecclesiastical colour: and in the eighth century in Ireland albs are represented, as on the shrine of St. Maedoc<sup>2</sup>, with embroidered borders or apparels. But in mediaeval times the use of various colours in the vestments of the Latin Church became systematic—special colours being set apart for special seasons or festivals. In England it was only after the Norman conquest that embroidered

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<sup>1</sup> Warren's *Lit. and Rit. of the Celtic Church*, p. 124.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* p. 114.



and coloured dalmatics came into use<sup>1</sup>. For the latter, I think, there is no clear authority in Coptic liturgical history. That the Copts adorned their dalmatics with the most gorgeous jewels and embroidery, has been already shown: but I have not seen in actual usage any such vestment made of red, purple, or other coloured material. Coloured dalmatics, however, abound in the paintings which adorn the churches. Thus St. Michael in a picture at Abu Sargah is robed in a crimson dalmatic tricked with gold: the figures round the apse at Abu-'s-Sifain wear alb and dalmatic both coloured: and the same is true of the apostles on the iconostasis, and the figures on the screen of the south chapel, at Al 'Aḍra Damshirfah. Red and green are the favourite colours. In some of the embroidered dalmatics the work is spread all over the ground in so lavish a manner as almost to give the idea of a coloured vestment. An example of a dalmatic, cream-coloured and covered with small embroidered flowers, may be seen at the church of St. Stephen in Cairo: another is figured in the woodcut which represents St. Stephen, and is taken from a painting at Abu Sargah done in the fifteenth or sixteenth century. Here the vestment has a white ground, but is almost entirely covered with beautifully embroidered roses, each with a tiny branch and foliage attached. It should be noticed, moreover, that the dalmatic opens by a slit in the front on the chest, and that the neck and the opening are adorned with a rich orfrey, while another border of jewelled work runs round the lower hem: the cuffs also have their special embroidery. The sleeves of this dalmatic are, as usual, close-fitting; but it is

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<sup>1</sup> Rock, vol. ii. p. 100.

worth remarking that instead of being cut short they cover the entire arm. It is very possible that the custom was for deacons to wear the long-sleeved dalmatic, while priests wore shorter sleeves by reason of the fact that the epimanikia covered their fore-arm. This distinction however does not seem to have been observed in the ancient pillar-painting at Al Mu'al-lakah, which is not later than the eighth century. There the archbishop or patriarch who is figured wears a fine dalmatic embroidered all over with small circles, but the sleeves of the dalmatic reach to the wrist; unless indeed, as is possible from the drawing, the sleeves do not belong to the dalmatic, but are detached epimanikia, only made of the same material as that vestment, and adorned with the like embroidery.

One other example of the Coptic dalmatic deserves special mention. At the church of Abu-'s-Sifain, on the north side of the nave near the ambon, are two paintings representing Constantine and Helena respectively. Each of these figures is vested alike, and they have both the alb and the dalmatic. Here the alb is long and rather loose, while the dalmatic is not merely extremely short—reaching only a little distance below the waist—but is further remarkable for having two broad indentations in the lower hem, making thus a sort of zigzag instead of an even line. These indentations may perhaps remind one of the side-slits usually figured in western dalmatics. There can be no doubt of the ecclesiastical character of the vestments: whether their portrayal is accurate, is another question, to which unfortunately no answer can be given. This much only is certain, that the authorities make no mention of the two vestments as

distinguishable and capable of being worn together : nor does present practice in any way confirm such a distinction.

The tuntah of the Copts corresponds, as Renaudot rightly remarks, to the sticharion (στιχάριον or στοιχάριον) of the Greek Church, and indeed the very word seems to be found in the full form *στοιχάριον* and in the mutilated *στρχαρι* in Coptic rubrics<sup>1</sup>.

The vestment is described by the Greek patriarch Germanus, perhaps the first of that name, early in the eighth century, as follows<sup>2</sup> :—‘The sticharion being white signifieth the splendour of Godhead, and the bright purity of life which becometh Christian priests. The stripes of the sticharion upon the wristband of the sleeve are significant of the bands wherewith Christ was bound . . . the stripes across the robe itself signify the blood which flowed from Christ’s side upon the cross.’ The stripes here referred to are probably the two shoulder-stripes common also to the Roman dalmatic. Marriott quotes<sup>3</sup> a good example of these stripes in an eastern vestment from the very ancient fresco at the rock-cut church of Urgub, as mentioned by Texier and Pullan : another good instance is the fresco at Nekrésí in Georgia, figured by Rohault de Fleury : and examples abound in the East and West alike. There is, however, a slightly different form of sticharion worn by bishops, in which there are not two but several vertical stripes<sup>4</sup>. For this form, as for the ordinary striped sticharion, no strict counterpart exists in Coptic usage, although the Greeks have a

<sup>1</sup> Denzinger, Rit. Or. tom. ii. pp. 40, 49.

<sup>2</sup> Marriott, Vest. Christ. p. 85.

<sup>3</sup> Id. xxxvii. note.

<sup>4</sup> See the figure of St. Germanus in Marriott, pl. lviii.

kind of sticharion without stripes, long-sleeved, and sometimes covered with rich embroidery, which answers to the Coptic dalmatic as worn by deacons. Among the treasures of the orthodox Alexandrian church of St. Nicholas at Cairo is a splendid ancient sticharion of pale blue silk, almost smothered with embroidered flowers and medallions blent in a bold and beautiful design. The flowers and the medallions, which enclose figures of saints, are all marked out with tiny pearls strung close together, which follow the lines of the pattern. The dalmatic worn by the patriarch at great festivals to-day is woven of gold tissue. It agrees with the much older vestment just described in being quite open at the sides almost up to the arm, and in having little bells attached.

Like the Copts and the Greeks, the Syrians also used the white tunic—whether alb or dalmatic—as a priestly vestment. Their term for it is *kutîna*, derived, as Renaudot remarks<sup>1</sup>, from the Greek *χιτώριον*. But Renaudot is perhaps wrong in stating that the Arabic *tunîah* is a mere corruption of this, instead of connecting it with the independent Arabic *tun*, *تون*, or the Latin *tunica*. The Syrians retained the orthodox colour, white, though Renaudot speaks also of dalmatics of other colours represented in some rude miniatures of a Florentine MS.

Lastly, we find the same vestment, an alb of white silk, in use at the present day among the Armenian Christians, who call it the *shapich*<sup>2</sup>. Thus all parts of the Christian world unite in supporting the ancient tradition that the ministers of the altar should be

<sup>1</sup> Lit. Or. vol. ii. p. 54.

<sup>2</sup> Fortescue's Armenian Church, p. 133.

robed in a white tunic. But beyond the embroideries already noticed, there seems no analogue in the eastern Churches for the square apparels which formed a regular part of the adornment of the alb in our western ritual.

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THE AMICE.

(Coptic  $\pi\iota\ \pi\alpha\lambda\iota\pi$ ,  $\pi\iota\ \beta\alpha\lambda\lambda\iota\pi$ ,  $\pi\iota\ \lambda\omicron\tau\iota\omicron\pi$ <sup>1</sup>,  $\pi\iota\ \epsilon\phi\omicron\tau\tau$ <sup>2</sup> : Arabic الطيلسان, الشماعة, البليين<sup>3</sup>.)

We have found Abu Daḩn speaking of the amice as a woollen, or more probably linen, ephod worn about the head by priests and 'all who enter the church.' I cannot help thinking that 'church' here is a mistranslation for the Arabic 'haikal,' which, literally signifying 'temple,' may have been rendered 'church' by a translator ignorant of its technical limitation to the 'holy of holies,' or sanctuary about the altar. If the amice were worn merely as part of an ordinary laic's church-going dress, Abu Daḩn would hardly have enumerated it in a list of distinctively sacerdotal vestments. Vansleb more explicitly describes the amice as a long band of white linen, worn twisted round the head by priests *and deacons*. I emphasise the latter point, because it seems to bear out the idea of a mistranslation of

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<sup>1</sup> Notice that  $\lambda\omicron\tau\iota\omicron\pi$  or  $\lambda\delta\gamma\omega\sigma$  is the word used by St. Jerome and subsequent writers to denote the 'rational' or breastplate of the Levitical priesthood. (Marriott, *Vest. Christ.* p. 17.)

<sup>2</sup> The name  $\epsilon\phi\omicron\tau\tau$  is given in Peyron's *Lexicon*.

<sup>3</sup> This orthography, which, of course, is correct, gives the right English spelling *ṭailasân*, and not 'tilsan' or 'teleisan,' as Renaudot and Vansleb have it.

Abu Ḍaḡn, as suggested above. Deacons, of course, do enter the haikal at certain parts of the celebration: so that if we take Abu Ḍaḡn's statement to be that the amice is worn by 'priests and all who enter the haikal,' it will then tally almost exactly with Vansleb. Lastly, the patriarch Gabriel mentions white silk as the right material for the amice, and Abu Ṣabâ simply records the vestment without adding to our knowledge about it.

By putting together these small pieces of information, we shall arrive at the fact that the amice is a long band or scarf of white silk or linen, worn twisted round the head by priests and deacons. This definition answers almost word for word with the amice as worn by the Coptic clergy to-day: the authorities, however, seem mistaken in allowing the use of the amice to *deacons*, the truth being that it is distinctly a sacerdotal vestment. In Arabic the amice is called either *shamlah* and *ballîn* indifferently: but although the terms are in common speech quite synonymous, yet strictly speaking the two vestments are distinct—distinct in colour and mode of usage, though similar in point of shape. For the *shamlah* is a long band of white linen embroidered with two large crosses, and worn by priest and arch-priest or *kummuṣ*: while the *ballîn* is made of grey or other coloured silk, embroidered with texts and many crosses, and is worn by patriarch and bishops. Again, the *shamlah* is twisted like a turban round the head, and while one end hangs down the back of the priest, the other is passed once round his face under the chin, and then is fastened on the top of his head: but the *ballîn* is put on in quite a different manner as follows. First, it is doubled and then

hung over the bishop's head from the middle, so that the ends hang evenly in front; each end is then passed across the breast under the opposite arm, and thence across the back over the opposite shoulder and straight down under the girdle. It thus forms a hood for the head as the shamlah does: but



Fig. 21.—Shamlah, back and front view.

whereas the ballin is arranged crosswise both upon the breast and back, the whole length of the shamlah is used up in the hood or head-dress, leaving only one end free which hangs down the middle of the back. Upon this straight piece there shows an embroidered figure of a cross, and a similar one is visible over the crown of the head upon the hood.

The shamlah is usually of white linen or white

silk, and the crosses upon it are often embroidered in gold. As a rule its length is about 8 ft. and breadth 1 ft. : but a specimen in the writer's possession measures no less than 16 ft. 8 in. in length and 1 ft. 4 in. in width; the embroidered crosses, which are 3 ft. 4 in. and 2 ft. 6 in. respectively distant from the nearest end, are worked in red and yellow silk, and have the Coptic sacred letters in the angles. There is no fringe to the vestment, but each end is marked off by a single red line of needlework.

The *tailasân*, where distinct from the shamlah, is merely a conventionalised form of the same ornament, and consists of a broad strip of linen or silk, which hangs down the back and ends upwards in a hood, instead of being twisted round the neck and over the head, as the shamlah. It is only upon special occasions, such as Good Friday, that the patriarch wears the ballin, never during the celebration of the mass. Metropolitans and bishops however wear it during the mass, whenever they do not wear the crown or mitre: outside their own dioceses too, and at such times within their dioceses as the patriarch happens to be present, they wear the ballin: the use of the mitre being on such occasions prohibited. It scarcely needs remarking that the cope is seldom worn with the ballin.

The amice in ordinary use now is not adorned with any magnificent orfrey, or apparel embroidered with jewels and gold, such as was common in the richer churches of the West. Yet in this as in every particular there is reason to believe that the Coptic ritual rivalled or even outrivalled the splendour of our western services. In ancient Coptic pictures however, and in modern alike, one searches vainly



for a single clear portrayal of the amice. Such an example as that in the painting of Anba Shanûdah at the church of that name in old Cairo is perhaps not to the purpose; for the head-dress there is rather a hood. Yet the vestment may be meant for the *tailasân*; and the amice is found represented as a hood, though rarely, even in English monuments, as on the effigy of a priest in the church of Towyn in Merionethshire, and on an effigy in Beverley Minster<sup>1</sup>. The more frequent form of the amice on western tombs and brasses is a rich collar standing about the neck: and for this there is a possible parallel in Coptic usage. For what may be an amice in the form of a richly embroidered collar is represented on the neck of the patriarch in the very interesting seal of the patriarchate of Alexandria, which will be given in a woodcut below. And even if evidence were wanting, we might be sure that at a time when as a matter of course the dalmatic was adorned with a wealth of precious stones, the amice did not fall short of it in richness, whether its adornment was in the form of orfrees or of jewelled crosses.

To what antiquity the use of the amice in the Coptic Church ascends, is a question which I fear cannot be answered. In the West the first mention of it seems to be made early in the ninth century by Rabanus Maurus. Originally it was a square or oblong piece of linen fastened across the shoulders and breast, and, like the Coptic vestment, it had usually a large cross embroidered upon it<sup>2</sup>. It is

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<sup>1</sup> Bloxam's *Ecclesiastical Vestments*, p. 47 (eleventh edition).

<sup>2</sup> See Chambers' *Divine Worship in England*, p. 34, and the illustration there given of an amice once belonging to St. Thomas of Canterbury.

not till the twelfth century that we hear of the amice being worn over the head, and it was then regarded as an emblem of the helmet of salvation, according to Durandus. When so worn veiling the head, the amice was nevertheless lowered on to the chasuble at the moment of consecration. A sort of amice, though sometimes called a fanon, was worn over the head by the pope when celebrating mass, and the same ornament was used instead of the mitre on Holy Thursday, when the pope performed the ceremony of feet-washing.

The rational, though not the amice, is mentioned among the ancient ornaments of the Celtic bishops<sup>1</sup>: but it is quite possible that the amice too may have existed at an earlier date than is generally assigned to it, though from its natural association with the rational no separate early mention of it is clearly recorded. Yet no such vestment as the amice seems known in the practice of the Greek Church, although there the rational survives in a breastplate of gold or silver, worn over the chasuble by patriarchs and metropolitans, and called the *περιστήθιον*<sup>2</sup>. On the other hand, the amice or varkass is still worn by the Armenian clergy, amongst whom it is small with a stiff collar, as described above, and sometimes has attached to it a breastplate of precious metal. The amice without a rational is also a familiar vestment in the Syrian Jacobite and in the Maronite Churches, where it is one of the ornaments with which a bishop is attired at ordination, as may be seen in the rubrics<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Warren's Lit. and Rit. of Celtic Ch. p. 113.    <sup>2</sup> Id. p. 114.

<sup>3</sup> Denzinger, Rit. Or. tom. ii. pp. 93, 157.

Seeing then that not merely the Coptic but also the Maronite, Syrian, and Armenian Churches still recognise the amice as a priestly vestment, and that it has in all cases at least a respectable antiquity, even if it does not ascend to the first few centuries of our era, we may feel some surprise that ecclesiologists from Renaudot to Marriott should deny its existence as an eastern vestment. Renaudot has already been refuted above out of his own lips: Marriott rightly says 'there is no corresponding vestment in the Greek Church,' but quotes with approval the far more sweeping statement of M. Victor Gay<sup>1</sup>: 'Les Orientaux plus stricts observateurs des traditions du costume primitive ne l'ont jamais adopté.' Even Neale, while admitting the existence of the Armenian amice, remarks that it 'is unknown in any other part of the eastern Church, and seems to be adopted from the Latin amice<sup>2</sup>;' thus sealing afresh the error.

It is precisely because the orientals are so conservative in their practice, and because the Copts are perhaps more conservative than all other orientals, that the Coptic use of the amice constitutes a strong argument for the high antiquity of that vestment. In default of direct evidence, the date of its adoption in the church of Egypt can only be matter of conjecture: but I think it far more likely that it originated there, where the heat of the climate would soon make the necessity felt of such a protection for the neck. Again, it is not less but more natural that the close association of the amice with the Levitical ephod or breastplate should have arisen in the

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<sup>1</sup> Vest. Christ. p. 212 n.

<sup>2</sup> Eastern Church, Gen. Introd. vol. i. p. 306.

East, an association stamped on the very name of the Coptic vestment.

On the whole, then, not only is the statement quite untenable that the amice is unknown in the eastern Churches, but a balance of probabilities seems to show rather that it first arose in the East and passed over to the West, than that it came as a fresh gift from the ritual of Rome to the ritual of Alexandria.

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#### THE GIRDLE.

(Coptic  $\pi\iota\ \xi\omicron\upsilon\pi\alpha\rho\iota\omicron\upsilon\pi$ ,  $\pi\iota\ \omicron\upsilon\pi\alpha\rho\iota\omicron\upsilon\pi$  : Arabic  
(المنطقة، الزنار).)

Though the penal use of the girdle as a secular distinction of dress between Christian and Muslim in Egypt has long since passed away, yet to this day Christian and Muslim alike wear it for the sake of convenience, and afford a living illustration of the manner in which it was worn in the most ancient times, before it was adopted as a sacred vestment of the Church. For, as in the ministration of the Church the girdle is worn over the alb or dalmatic, so in daily life at Cairo now it is worn by prosperous merchants or venerable sheikhs to confine a robe which only differs from the dalmatic in being open down the front. The analogy between the two sets of vestments is so striking to view, and so well founded in fact, that one cannot understand how it should have received so little recognition from

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<sup>1</sup> This word, 'zinnâr,' and the two Coptic terms are obviously alike derived from the Greek  $\xi\omega\nu\acute{\alpha}\rho\iota\omicron\upsilon\pi$ .

ecclesiologists. Much labour and ingenuity have been spent in deriving the various forms of ecclesiastical vestments from styles of *classical* costume recorded in literary or sculptured monuments : while oriental costume has been quite neglected, although the early Christians, like the Jews, were mostly orientals; and eastern dress is much the same to-day as it was two thousand years ago. A well-dressed Arab from the bazaars of Cairo is a better illustration of the origin of Christian vestments than all the sculptures of Athens and Rome.

As the *burnus* or chasuble of the Copts is the *burnus* or overall cloak of the Egyptian Arab ; and as the dalmatic or *camisia* is the long robe worn underneath by the Arabs and called *ķamiř* ; so the sacred girdle is the native *manķakah* or *hazam*, i. e. belt or sash ; and the amice has its analogue in the well-known *kafflah*. Like most of the priestly vestments, however, the girdle is only worn to-day on great ceremonial occasions, and not as part of the ordinary ministering dress for the altar. The dalmatic is *always* worn for the celebration of the *ķorbân*, and generally amice and stole are worn also : but the rest of the canonical vestments, though retained by the Church and used for high festivals, are not now considered essential for the holy office. An ancient and very beautiful example of a girdle of crimson velvet with clasps of niello silver exists, and has already been described in the account of the church of Abu *ķ*ir wa Yuħanna at Old Cairo : it probably dates from the sixteenth century. That worn by the present patriarch is of yellow silk, and is fastened by large pear-shaped clasps of filigree silver-work set with precious stones.

The use of the girdle as a sacred vestment is not distinguishable from the use of the other vestments in point of antiquity. There is no reason whatever for considering it a later addition, or anything but the natural companion of the dalmatic. It is clearly figured in the pillar-painting at Al Mu'allakah already mentioned; which, whether it belong to the eighth century or to an earlier epoch, certainly represents an ecclesiastical costume of a fixed and developed not of a rudimentary character. In this painting the girdle is not a mere loose sash, but a belt with embroidered edges and with a clasp, thus closely resembling the girdle at Abu Kir wa Yuhanna. It seems then reasonable to infer that at the time when this fresco was painted, the girdle was already a thoroughly familiar and thoroughly conventionalised vestment, and consequently that the use of the girdle in the Coptic Church is more ancient than in the Churches of western Christendom.

This idea is further borne out by the fact that the first clear mention of the girdle as a sacerdotal ornament is made in the eighth century by St. Germanus of Constantinople,—an eastern and not a western writer. Nearly a century later it is found in the western catalogue of vestments given by Rabanus Maurus: and from that time forward allusions to it are frequent. The girdle was often of great magnificence, being made of the most costly gold embroidery, and studded with precious jewels. In the Latin Church to-day it is still used by bishops, but is sometimes a mere cord with dangling tassels. Goar mentions it as among the vestments of the Greek patriarch, but not as belonging to other orders. In the Armenian Church it is a part of

the regular ministering dress of priests, and is worn over the stole. The Armenian name for it is *kodi*. The Syrian priesthood also wear a girdle, resembling the Coptic in form, and fastened by clasps: and in the Maronite Church the priest at ordination is girt with a girdle, which thenceforth becomes one of his regular vestments for the celebration. Among the Nestorians also the girdle still lingers, and is called by the same name as among the Syrians, *zunnâra*<sup>1</sup>, obviously a reminiscence of the Greek *ζωνάριον*. We may say, therefore, that the girdle is universally recognised in the eastern Churches as part of the liturgical costume.

#### THE STOLE.

(Coptic πῖ ὤραριον, πῖ σχορδιον: Arabic

اليطرشيل.)

All the authorities which are cited above for the Coptic vestments go wrong together in failing to distinguish the ordinary stole from the patriarchal pallium or pall, and in failing even to notice the existence of the latter. Yet neither its existence, nor its difference from the stole, nor its antiquity, can be called in question for a moment, as will be shown in the sequel. Here I have merely raised the point in order to reserve it, because it is one that should be remembered from the outset, although we are chiefly concerned at present with the sacred dress of the priesthood.

<sup>1</sup> G. P. Badger, *The Nestorians and their Rituals*, vol. i. p. 225.

But, leaving aside the pall, the authorities entirely omit the fact that the priestly stole has two forms quite unlike each other; and, worse still, granting that the Copts do wear a stole, by a strange conspiracy of silence they leave the reader to shape it out of his imagination. Abu Ḍaḡn is made by his translators to remark that it is worn only by 'pontifices,' i. e. 'bishops.' Doubtless 'pontifices' should be rendered 'celebrants;' but it is hard to see how any credit given for mistranslation can redeem the original statement from mere error. Vansleb and Gabriel say nothing at all; while Abu Ṣabâ notes that the stole or *ἐπιτραχήλιον* is 'worn from the neck by the priest,'—an observation which is true as far as it goes, but not a brilliantly clear account of the whole matter. Renaudot makes no effort to illumine the darkness. This is a good sample of the amount of information to be derived from previous writers on Coptic subjects, and of the ignorance which prevails even now amongst more recent ecclesiologists.

I have said that there are two forms of the stole. Both these forms, as well as the patriarchal pall, are called by the generic name 'paṭrashīl,' an Arabic corruption for the Greek *ἐπιτραχήλιον*: and both seem called in Coptic by the same name *ωπαριου*. While, however, the pall has also its own distinctive term, the two kinds of stole do not seem to be distinguished in name; and this fact has doubtless given rise to a confusion and perplexity which partly accounts for the silence of the authorities. Of the two forms, one corresponds to the Greek *ἐπιτραχήλιον*, or *περιτραχήλιον* as it was also called; the other approaches nearer to the Greek *ώραριον* and to the



stole of western usage. For the sake of clearness, in the following pages I shall use the name epitachelion, or the kindred 'paṭraṣhīl,' to denote the former shape exclusively, and reserve the familiar 'stole' for the latter.

1. *The epitachelion proper* consists of a single band or scarf about 9 in. broad and 6 ft. in length; the upper end is divided by an opening through which the head passes, so that the vestment hangs down the middle of the dalmatic in front. From the neck downwards the epitachelion is embroidered either with gorgeous crosses, or with the figures of the twelve apostles in six pairs, one pair above another; and the dedicatory inscription is often woven above this adornment. Some idea of the splendour of this vestment in bygone times may be formed from the illustration, which represents a paṭraṣhīl of crimson velvet woven with silver embroidery, which belongs to the church of Abu Kīr wa Yuḥanna. Even now the paṭraṣhīl is often of great magnificence; sometimes it is nearly 18 in. wide. Blue silk, ornamented with richly coloured crosses, scrolls or figures, is a common material. But it is worth remarking that the paṭraṣhīl without figures is called by a separate name—ṣudr. A glance will show the origin of the present form of the vestment. It is quite clear that originally the epitachelion passed, like the western sacerdotal stole, once round the back of the neck and hung in front over both shoulders. The two pendants were subsequently brought together, and fastened close from the collar downwards by loops and buttons; and finally, as this usage was established, the epitachelion was made of a single broad piece

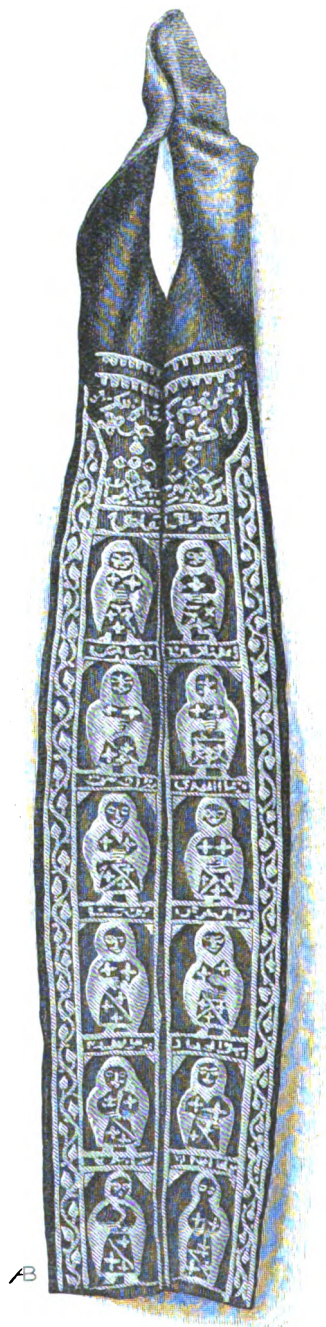


Fig. 22.—Patrashil of Crimson Velvet embroidered with Silver.

with an opening for the head. And the consciousness of this origin is still sometimes betrayed by the arrangement of the embroidery: for the lines down the centre of the vestment in the woodcut preserve the idea of two bands joined together, though in reality there is no seam in the material. On the other hand the epitachelion as worn by Constantine in the painting at Abu-'s-Sifain shows under the short chasuble no indication of a vertical division; it is rather narrow, and has three crosses embroidered and divided off by horizontal lines; it has also a fringe which is not often found on the epitachelion. After the foregoing explanation of the origin of the *patrashli*, it scarcely needs remarking that the vestment in this form belongs solely to priests and bishops, who of course wore the unconnected stole over both shoulders, in contradistinction to deacons, who wore it only over the left shoulder. Precisely the same vestment with the same name, the same shape and origin, and the same limits of usage, is found in the Greek Church. An example is given by Mariott in an illustration<sup>1</sup>; but that author does not give any clear account of the matter, nor state whether the epitachelion figured is made of a single straight piece, or is joined by a seam or by fastenings down the middle. In another plate<sup>2</sup> St. Sampson and St. Methodius are represented as wearing the single united epitachelion: yet Mariott remarks that 'the ends of the *peritrachelion* . . . are seen pendant,' implying that there are two ends capable of separation; and in the same plate the

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<sup>1</sup> Vest. Christ. pl. lvi.

<sup>2</sup> Id. pl. lvii.

vestment, as worn by St. Germanus, is parted and stands asunder the whole way down without any sign of union. It might seem probable, therefore, that the Greeks only attach the two edges of the stole together loosely to form the epitachelion, and that they have not gone a step further with the Copts and abolished the central joining.

Yet the learned writer in the *Dictionary of Christian Antiquities*<sup>1</sup> speaks confidently of the Greek form as having 'a hole for the head to pass through' and 'a seam down the middle;' so that it would only differ from the Coptic shape in actually retaining the seam, instead of merely indicating it by an embroidered ornament. Moreover, Neale's account of the epitachelion is exactly similar<sup>2</sup>. The orthodox Alexandrian church of St. Nicholas at Cairo possesses several ancient and extremely beautiful specimens of the epitachelion richly worked with gold embroidery. I saw one with a blue ground, two with yellow, one crimson, and one crimson and green. All are of silk; all have the figures of apostles or saints inwrought, except one, which is covered with a design of crosses; and most, though not all, have a fringe at the bottom. From these examples it is obvious that the closure in front is a matter of indifference with the Melkites; for in some cases the closure is so complete that the vestment has merely a seam down the middle; even this seam has quite vanished in some modern specimens, which are made of a single piece of stuff

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<sup>1</sup> Dict. Christ. Ant. s. v. Stole.

<sup>2</sup> Eastern Church: Gen. Introd. vol. i. p. 308: see also the illustration there given.

covered with a large branching design; while in other cases the central division is left entirely open. I may add that some of these epitachelia are adorned with tiny bells.

The close correspondence in the shape and usage of the Greek and Coptic form of the vestment warrants, I think, the inference that the epitachelion had been adopted and settled as part of the sacerdotal dress before the rupture between the Jacobite and Melkite factions in the Church. At that time the vestments of the Constantinopolitan Greeks and of the Alexandrians would be one and the same; but it is in the last degree unlikely either that the Greeks should have subsequently borrowed the *patrashil* from the Jacobites,—a supposition refuted by the very name,—or on the other hand that the Jacobites should have been beholden to the despised and detested Melkites.

This theory will, of course, give the epitachelion a much higher antiquity than can be claimed for the corresponding vestment, the stole of the western Churches; and being such, it only falls in with and strengthens my general contention, that the forms of the ecclesiastical vestments were fixed, and definitely consecrated to the service of the Church, at a much earlier period in the East than in the West, and possibly earliest of all in the Church of Alexandria. At the same time it is not of course denied that the epitachelion, however ancient, is only a secondary developed form of the original stole or oration.

Before quitting this part of the subject, it may be mentioned that the form of the epitachelion is expressly defined in the rubric for the ordination of

a bishop<sup>1</sup> as given by Renaudot. It is there laid down that the vestment must be of silk, and must be embroidered with the figure of the Saviour and of the disciples. Yet there is nothing to show that this special form of adornment belonged to bishops only, or that the epitachelion decked with crosses was given specially to priests. Other communities which use this form of ornament, besides the Greeks, are the Malabar<sup>2</sup> Christians; the Armenians<sup>3</sup>, among whom it is called *pour-ourar*—obviously a reminiscence of orarion—and is described as a costly brocade of silk studded with jewels; and possibly the Maronites.

2. *The orarion* or *common stole* seems only distinguishable from the epitachelion by a convention; for in the rubrics orarion is found even for the stole as worn by the patriarch<sup>4</sup>, which is undoubtedly the *patrashlil*. The word *στολή* is of frequent occurrence in Graeco-Coptic pontificals, but never in the sense of 'stole;' it always means 'dress' or 'vestments,' a sense which did not give place to the technical 'stole' until the ninth century even in western Christendom; where it is first clearly identified with the orarion by Rabanus Maurus about 820 A. D. Into the hopeless controversy concerning the etymology of the word orarion I do not propose to enter: I shall, however, for the present decline to believe that either

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<sup>1</sup> Denzinger, *Rit. Or.* tom. ii, p. 28.

<sup>2</sup> Howard, *Christians of St. Thomas*, p. 133.

<sup>3</sup> Fortescue, *Armenian Church*, p. 133.

<sup>4</sup> Denzinger, *Rit. Or.* tom. ii, p. 49. Marriott is therefore wrong in saying that the orarion is only used of the deacon's stole, not of the corresponding vestment as worn by priests. See *Vest. Christ.* p. 84, note 144.

the vestment or its name was originally Latin. The adoption of a Roman vestment by the eastern Churches would be a process against all analogy; and the name orarion is found in the East just two hundred years before it is mentioned in the West. The canons of the Council of Laodicea, about 363 A. D., forbade the orarion to orders below the diaconate; whereas in western history it is not till the second Council of Braga in Spain that the orarion is mentioned, and deacons are commanded to wear it plainly showing on the left shoulder, and not under the dalmatic. This council was held in the year 563 A. D.

The orarion is, of course, older in point of usage than the epitachelion; but there seems some reason to think that, even after the priestly manner of wearing the orarion over both shoulders had given rise to the epitachelion as a distinct vestment, the orarion still continued to be used by the Coptic priesthood side by side with the epitachelion. The latter was required to be an ornament of some splendour; and in the poorer churches it would of course be much more easy to provide a plain band or scarf of linen, embroidered with crosses, to be worn over both shoulders. It is then very possible that the co-existence of the two methods of wearing the stole permissible to priests may have caused the names to be used almost interchangeably. For as the *paṛashīl* was styled orarion in the rubric quoted above, so undoubtedly the orarion as worn by priests is called *paṛashīl* at the present day.

The prohibition of the Council of Laodicea seems never to have affected the Church of Alexandria;

for in the Tukian<sup>1</sup> Pontifical there is a rubric directing the investiture of the *subdeacon* with the orarion at ordination. Similarly the subdeacon<sup>2</sup> among the Syrians, and even the reader<sup>3</sup> among the Maronitès, at ordination receives the orarion. In most of these cases the stole is worn over the left shoulder only, in the manner prescribed for deacons; but in the Maronite Church the practice is somewhat different. There the reader at ordination has a folded orarion laid across his extended arms, the subdeacon has it placed about his neck—presumably with the ends hanging behind<sup>4</sup>,—while the deacon has it taken from the neck and put upon the left shoulder. There can be no doubt that originally the orarion was worn by deacons hanging free before and behind; so that the Coptic practice agreed with that of the Greek and Latin Churches. In the West this arrangement was found inconvenient, and one end of the stole was fastened at the right hip for greater security. The same difficulty gave rise to various ways of wearing the orarion in Egypt, some no doubt formal and legal, others fanciful or haphazard, setting all customs and canons at defiance, like the lax and slovenly usage of the present century. In the figure of St. Stephen already referred to, the intention of the stole hanging over the left shoulder in front is conspicuous; but instead of hanging loose behind, the stole passes close under the left arm, downwards across the breast to the right hip, round the back, and from the left hip upwards to the right shoulder, over which the end hangs behind. From the care

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<sup>1</sup> Denzinger, Rit. Or. tom. ii. p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Id. ib. p. 82.

<sup>3</sup> Id. ib. p. 118.

<sup>4</sup> Id. ib. pp. 229 and 233: but the rubric is obscure.



bestowed on this picture, the splendour of the vestments, and the universal recognition of St. Stephen as a typical deacon, it is probable that this way of wearing the orarion was habitual and lawful. It will, of course, be noticed that the stole is really crossed upon the breast, and that this fashion of wearing the vestment requires it to be of much greater length than the Latin stole. Very possibly it represents a special arrangement of the stole previous to



Fig. 23.—St. Stephen : from a painting at Abu Sargah.

communicating, such as Goar<sup>1</sup> tells us was usual in the Greek Church ; for a Greek deacon, when about to receive, so altered the orarion that it formed a cross on both breast and back, and a sort of girle round the waist. This custom of changing the orarion may perhaps also account for the fashion of the Coptic stole as worn by subdeacons—a fashion which will be described presently. Yet

<sup>1</sup> Euchologion, p. 146 : see also illustrations, p. 147.

sometimes the deacon's stole is represented as worn in the ordinary way, merely placed upon the left shoulder: St. Stephen himself, for instance, is depicted so wearing it in a painting on the choir walls of the church of Abu's-Sifain. Yet a third fashion is shown in a third picture of the same saint at the church called after him adjoining the cathedral in Cairo. Here one end is seen hanging behind the right shoulder, over which the stole passes; hence it falls in front straight down the right side to the hip; there it loops, and passes diagonally across the chest, under the left arm, and out over the left shoulder. The end which thus hangs from the left shoulder in front is carried in the left hand as a maniple. Curious as these three fashions seem, the last is distinctly recognised at the present day as the right way of wearing the orarion for *archdeacons*. A somewhat similar practice obtains in the orthodox Alexandrian Church of Egypt, where the deacon carries in his left hand one end of the stole, which hangs over the left shoulder before and behind; while the archdeacon wears it crossing the breast from the left shoulder to the right side. The choristers and subdeacons of the Coptic Church at the present day wear the orarion in a peculiar manner. The centre part of the stole is placed on the waist in front forming a sort of girdle; the ends are then drawn behind, crossed over the back, and brought one over each shoulder to the front, where they fall straight down and pass under the portion which girds the waist<sup>1</sup>. The orarion thus worn forms a sort of H in front and

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<sup>1</sup> It appears that the name الزنار, which applies properly to the girdle, is sometimes used to denote the deacon's stole as thus worn.

X at the back, and recalls, half in resemblance and half in contrast, the stole as worn, not by deacons but by priests, in our own Church before the reformation.

The priestly stole in the West passed from the back of the neck over both shoulders, was crossed upon the breast, and confined at the waist by the girdle. Owing to the fact that in most monuments the chasuble hides this particular arrangement, so that nothing more is seen of the stole but the ends depending, clear illustrations are somewhat uncommon. There is, however, a good brass in Horsham Church, Sussex<sup>1</sup>, in which the crossed stole is visible; it may be seen also in a window painting representing the marriage of Henry VI. with Margaret of Anjou, now in the east window of the Bodleian Library at Oxford. Viollet-le-Duc gives a good illustration of the crossed stole from a twelfth century MS. in the Bibliothèque Nationale<sup>2</sup>; and the same arrangement is figured in Rock's Church of our Fathers<sup>3</sup>. Perhaps the first clear ordinance on the subject is that issued by the third Council of Braga, enjoining that every priest at the altar should wear the stole of even length over each shoulder, and should pass it crosswise over the breast.

The Coptic practice then of wearing the orarion as both girdle and stole is not very different from this western custom, though obviously it demands a scarf of greater length. But I may repeat that neither priests, nor even deacons, among the Copts

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<sup>1</sup> Figured in Waller's Monumental Brasses.

<sup>2</sup> Mobilier, vol. iii. p. 375.

<sup>3</sup> Vol. ii. p. 89. See also vol. i. p. 421.

now wear the stole in this manner, but only subdeacons and inferior orders; while the priests in ordinary celebrations at the present day are distinguished by the arrangement of the amice described above, without either epitrachelion or orarion. The stoles of the subdeacons are narrow in shape, and usually made of silk or other rich materials; they are of various hues,—purple, yellow, red, and green,—usually having three or four colours side by side in longitudinal bands; and they are adorned not only with crosses but also with flowers finely embroidered. In ancient times the deacon's orarion too, like the epitrachelion, was made of silk or cloth of gold, and set with jewels, just as in the West the original white linen gave place to more showy and costly materials; for by the ninth century stoles of various colours, and decked with gold, were familiar in the churches of Spain, Gaul, and Italy<sup>1</sup>.

Many magnificent examples of mediaeval stoles are still extant, some of the best being in the South Kensington Museum. One of Sicilian work, dating from the thirteenth century, is described as being 'of gold tissue profusely decorated with birds, beasts, and Roman letters and floriated ornaments:' while another of Italian make, fifteenth century, is of 'deep purple silk brocaded in gold and crimson with flowers<sup>2</sup>.' Old inventories too abound with such descriptions.

The Syrians use the stole, which they call *uroro*, a corrupted form of orarion, which adds its evidence

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<sup>1</sup> Marriott, *Vest. Christ.* pp. 215-6.

<sup>2</sup> Chambers' *Divine Worship in England*, p. 51.

in favour of the eastern origin of the word. Apparently the same ornament is used both for priests and deacons, though the rubrics given by Morinus are not very lucid. In ordaining a deacon the bishop 'accipit orarium et circumfert circum caput,' and then subsequently lays the stole upon the left shoulder<sup>1</sup>. In the case of a priest the bishop 'accipit orarium quod super ipsum positum est et traducit illud super humerum eius dexterum a parte anteriori<sup>2</sup>.' It is clear that the deacon wears the stole upon the left and the priest upon the right shoulder: and the second rubric seems to imply that the priest wears it upon both shoulders. The action of the bishop is doubtless as follows: the candidate for the priesthood being vested as deacon, with the orarion hanging loose over the left shoulder before and behind, the bishop takes the end which hangs at the back, and brings it round (traducit) over the right shoulder. When the action is complete, the stole would show both ends in front, one hanging over each shoulder. So far the process tallies with that described in all the English pontificals. But upon the question whether the bishop crosses the stole upon the breast of the priest after bringing it round the neck, the Syrian rubric is silent. It seems fairer to conclude that the stole was not crossed; and this conclusion seems borne out by Asseman, who describes it as 'hanging from the neck before the breast on either side<sup>3</sup>.' The Syrian stoles in the miniatures of the Florentine MS. cited by Renaudot<sup>4</sup> are either divided by bands of embroidery, or else adorned with small

<sup>1</sup> Denzinger, Rit. Or. tom. ii. p. 70.

<sup>2</sup> Id. ib. p. 73.

<sup>3</sup> Bibl. Orient. tom. iii. pt. ii. p. 819.

<sup>4</sup> Lit. Or. tom. ii. p. 54 seq.

coloured crosses ; but the bishop's stole is always of the latter kind. Renaudot says nothing about the epitachelion, for the use of which by the Syrians there seems to be no evidence : and Neale is therefore wrong in identifying the *uroro* with the epitachelion on Renaudot's authority<sup>1</sup>.

The deacon's stole in the Armenian Church is worn in the orthodox manner, and is called *ossorah*—possibly another corruption of orarion. We have already noticed the survival of the term in *pourourar*, the Armenian designation of the epitachelion : but there is no law or limit to the forms which a classical word may take in passing into an oriental language. The Armenian stole is generally plain, unlike the Greek, which is embroidered with the trisagion or the word ΑΓΙΟΣ thrice repeated.

The Nestorian clergy, both priests and deacons, recognise precisely the same usage of the orarion as the Syrians. There is however this difference as regards subdeacons, that in the Syrian Church the subdeacon wears the orarion hanging from the left shoulder as well as round the neck : whereas in the Nestorian ordination service for a deacon, the distinction of the two orders is made by the removal of the stole from around the neck of the subdeacon, and the placing of it upon the left shoulder. But it is far from clear in what manner in either case the subdeacon wore the orarion 'about the neck,' whether it was twisted round and round, as seems most probable, or whether it hung behind<sup>2</sup>. The

<sup>1</sup> Eastern Church : Gen. Introd. vol. i. p. 308.

<sup>2</sup> The rubric for the Syrian ordination of subdeacon, as given by Renaudot, is as follows : 'Episcopus . . . circumdat orarium collo ejus demittitque super humerum ejus sinistrum.' In the corresponding

Nestorian name for the stole, *hurrâra*<sup>1</sup>, agrees with the Syrian name in its descent from the Greek term *ὠράριον*.

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THE PALL.

(Coptic *παι ωμοφοριον, παι παλλιν* : Arabic

(البليين, البطرشيل.)

Renaudot in his account of the Coptic vestments ignores, as was remarked above, the very existence of any ornament corresponding to the archiepiscopal pall of western usage, or the Greek omophorion. Yet not only is the pall represented in the earliest Christian frescoes of Egypt and in many pictures, but Renaudot himself gives rubrics which mention it in the office for the ordination of the patriarch of Alexandria. Nevertheless it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to understand the various rubrics which relate to the investiture of the patriarch, or to reconcile the apparent repetitions and inconsistencies in a single version of the office. Much of this confusion is doubtless due to mistranslation, which might be removed by careful study of the originals; but these unfortunately are inaccessible. Abu 'l Birkat mentions only three vestments—dalmatic, omophorion, and chasuble (*couclo sive*

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Nestorian rite, as given by the younger Asseman, the rubric runs thus: 'Orarium accipit eoque collum ejus circumdat:' while in the case of deacons it is 'tum tollit orarium de collo eorum,' i. e. which they wore as subdeacons, 'et ponit illud super humerum sinistrum.'

<sup>1</sup> G. P. Badger, *Nestorians and their Rituals*, vol. i. p. 225.

casula); the list is correct as far as it goes but obviously deficient. According to the Tukian Pontifical<sup>1</sup>, when the patriarch elect first approaches the altar at the beginning of the ordination service, he is vested in dalmatic and amice only, or as they seem to be termed in the original  $\sigma\tau\iota\chi\alpha\rho\iota\sigma\iota$  and  $\lambda\epsilon\pi\tau\iota\sigma\iota$ . There follows a long ceremony, until the prayer of invocation is reached, which contains these words, 'Clothe him with the alb' ( $\rho\omicron\delta\epsilon\rho\epsilon$ ,  $\rho\omicron\tau\eta\rho\iota\sigma\iota$ ) 'of thine own holy glory: lay the mitre upon his head, and anoint him with the oil of gladness.' After the proclamation, the senior bishop arrays the patriarch elect in dalmatic, stole, and chasuble ( $\sigma\tau\omicron\iota\chi\alpha\rho\iota\sigma\iota$ ,  $\omega\rho\alpha\rho\iota\sigma\iota$ ,  $\phi\epsilon\lambda\omicron\sigma\iota\sigma\iota$ ). Then came the decree of the synod and several more prayers: after which '*princeps episcopus induit eum omophorio* ( $\omega\mu\mu\omicron\phi\omicron\rho\iota\sigma\iota$ ) *symboli*<sup>2</sup> ( $\sigma\tau\epsilon\mu\beta\omicron\lambda\omicron\sigma\iota$ )

<sup>1</sup> Ap. Denzinger, Rit. Or. tom. ii. p. 40 seq.

<sup>2</sup> Sic. I can only conjecture that 'symbolo' should be read, and that it refers to what follows, viz., *lintheum*. The rubric will then run *omophorio et symbolo*, etc., and the meaning as follows: 'Vests him with the pall; and with the sign of the apostolic gift which is the amice hanging from the head; and with the epicheri upon his shoulder.' The words of Greek origin in these rubrics are given as they occur; and though Denzinger prints them in Greek characters, I have thought it better to give the original Coptic. What the *epicheri* may be, is quite uncertain. Denzinger quotes an opinion that it seems to be a sort of veil hanging over the hand, i. e. presumably a maniple, an opinion obviously based on the supposed etymology of the word, but supported by no external evidence whatever. There is nothing corresponding to the maniple in Coptic ritual, nor even to the Greek  $\epsilon\gamma\chi\epsilon\iota\rho\iota\omicron\nu$ : moreover the rubric in both cases expressly states that the *epicheri* is worn *over the shoulder*, which is not a likely place for the maniple. Nor is the maniple likely to be distinctive of the patriarch.

I can offer no suggestion except the following. In the 'Systatical



*doni* (ζωρεα) *apostolici* (αποστολικον) *quod est linteum* (λεπτιον) *a capite eius dependens, et epicheri* (επιχερι) *super humerum eius.* The language of this rubric, marvellous as it seems, is surpassed by the next: 'Et cum indutus est (φορειν) omni habitu archisacerdotali (αρχιερατικον): morphotacio (μορφοτακιον) et phelonio (φελονιον) et phacialio (φακιαλιον) quod a capite eius dependet, omophorio (ωμοφοριον) i.e. morphorin (μορφοριον) habitus (στολη) et epicheri (επιχερι) super humerum eius,' &c. The absurdities of the various foregoing rubrics scarcely need pointing out. First, the patriarch is robed in dalmatic and amice: the mitre is mentioned in the prayer of invocation, but the rubrics contain no hint of such an ornament: next, the patriarch is invested with

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Letter' or decree of the synod, read by the deacon from the ambon or pulpit, setting forth, amongst other matters, the duties of the patriarch, it is expressly mentioned that he is to perform the office of feet-washing on Maundy Thursday. For this office a towel would be used, doubtless of fine embroidery; and I think it very possible that *epicheri* may mean a towel (cf. Lat. *mantile*, Germ. *handtuch*). Such a towel, gorgeously woven with silver or gold, may well have been laid upon the patriarch's shoulder at his ordination, in token of this special duty of feet-washing, to which it is clear the Church attached great importance. Such an explanation removes all difficulties, but cannot claim to be more than a conjecture. The *epicheri* then would not be a regular vestment, corresponding to the Latin maniple, and worn by all orders: nor would it even be part of the patriarch's pontifical apparel: but merely a special symbol worn but once on the occasion of his ordination. The natural place for such a towel would be the shoulder.

It will be noticed that Denzinger's translation, as far as it has any sense at all, makes the omophorion the same as the *lintheum*: but the rubric so running refutes itself, for the pall would in no wise be described as 'hanging down from the head.' Vide Rit. Or. tom. ii. pp. 56, 57.

dalmatic, stole and chasuble: thirdly, with pall, amice, and the mysterious *epicheri*. Then, after twice putting on the dalmatic, twice the amice, besides stole, chasuble, and pall, he comes out arrayed in the dress of an *archpriest*, to wit, chasuble, pall, 'morphotacion,' 'phacialion,' and 'epicheri'! Truly a wonderful metamorphosis: and it must be a strange kind of a figure which the patriarch presents, when at last he is apparelled in full pontificals.

Renaudot's account of the matter is simpler, but by no means free from perplexity. At the commencement of the service the new patriarch wears dalmatic and amice. Renaudot here translates λεπτιον by *mantle*, instead of by *lintheum* as Denzinger<sup>1</sup> renders it, and is rightly thinking of the amice; whereas Denzinger in another place<sup>2</sup> applies the term *lintheum* to the archiepiscopal pall — 'Est autem omophorium *lintheum* sive species quaedam stolae similis pallio.' The truth is that amice and pall are as inextricably confused in language as in usage.

As regards the second process in the investiture, Renaudot agrees with the Tukian Pontifical that the patriarch is robed in dalmatic, stole, and chasuble.

The third process is far more intelligible in Renaudot. It is as follows: 'Then the chief bishop places on him over his head the omophorion which is the mark of his rank, and it shall hang in such a way as to fall over the breast.' And instead of all the barbarous jargon that ensues in the Tukian

<sup>1</sup> Tom. ii. p. 40.

<sup>2</sup> Tom. i. p. 130.

Pontifical, Renaudot has the words, 'Then he shall be arrayed in full archiepiscopal<sup>1</sup> vestments, namely mitre, omophorion, and orarion.' There is nothing here about *morphotacion*, *phacialion*, or *epicheri*: but cutting away what might seem to be mere repetition, we get as the vestments of the patriarch dalmatic, amice, stole, chasuble, pall, and mitre. There is however reason to think that during the ceremony of ordination some of the vestments are actually removed and replaced. Which of the vestments are so removed, cannot be determined: and it is natural that the fresh enumeration should look like a clumsy repetition. But in the corresponding service in the Maronite Church, after the new patriarch has been robed in alb, inferior orarion, sleeves, amice and chasuble, there elapses a considerable time spent in prayer and various rites; and then, according to the rubric, '*the bishops bring him before the altar and take off from him the chasuble and amice of the priesthood*:' subsequently he is vested in mitre, chasuble, and orarion,—the last being either the epitachelion as opposed to the inferior orarion above, or else the omophorion: and the chasuble here mentioned seems a richer vestment than that which was put on and removed in the first instance.

From this analogy we may, I think, conclude that there were five distinct stages in the investiture of the Coptic patriarch. First, he wears only dalmatic and amice: next, the priestly stole and chasuble are added: thirdly, amice and chasuble being removed, a more splendid chasuble and probably a finer amice

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<sup>1</sup> It is quite clear that Denzinger's *archisacerdotali* is a mere mistake. The original is **ΑΡΧΙΕΡΑΤΙΚΟΝ**, which elsewhere the same author repeatedly renders, and rightly, by *archiepiscopalis*.

are put on : then over the chasuble the patriarchal pall is lowered : and finally the mitre is placed upon the head. It is, however, very singular that neither girdle nor sleeves are mentioned in the ordination service : and I do not feel at all confident that the account I have given of the process of investiture is accurate, inasmuch as both girdle and sleeves are undoubtedly part of the patriarchal costume for celebration at the present day <sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Without attempting to settle decisively the meaning of *morphotacion*, *phacialion* and the like, which cannot be done without reference to the text, I may call attention to the criticism of Denzinger, who, with the text before him, is not merely helpless in himself and to his readers, but literally abounds in error. Speaking of the Coptic patriarchal vestments, he says (tom. i. p. 130) they are 'στικάριον (Arabs: tunica [sic]), ώράριον, φιλόριον hoc est φαινόλιον, quae sunt presbyterorum vestes: praeterea vero ex ordinationis textu Renaudotiano ώμοφόριον quod est super caput et pendet ita ut descendat super pectus ejus, ex textu autem Tukiano μορφοτάκιον, φελόνιον, hoc est penula sive casula, φακιάλιον quod a capite ejus dependet, scilicet de homophorio (sic), et Epicherion (έπίχερι) super humerum ejus. Phakialion absque dubio erit mitra, quae in orationibus memoratur ut insignium patriarchae peculiarium pars quaedam. Est autem Omophorium (sic) lintheum sive species quaedam stolae similis pallio, crucibus insignita, collo et humeris circumvoluta.'

Now Renaudot's text does *not* say that the omophorion 'est super caput,' which would be a description equally false and ridiculous of the manner in which the pall is worn : but the words are 'episcopus imponet ei homophorium (quod est insigne dignitatis) super caput ejus,' meaning of course that the pall is lowered over the head, not that it rests upon the head.

Denzinger makes no remark about the morphotacion, and indeed there seems nothing to give a clue to its meaning : but over the phacialion he blunders strangely. The rubric, it is true, describes this vestment as hanging from the head : and Denzinger, having just placed the omophorion on the head instead of round

But whatever else remains secret in the mysterious rubrics I have cited, this much at least is clear that they offer abundant evidence for the existence of the

the shoulders, now explains the position of the phacialion by saying that it hangs down from the omophorion! Had I not cited his words accurately, it would seem incredible that his next step is to identify the phacialion with the mitre in the most confident manner (*absque dubio*). So then the mitre hangs down from the head, where it is fastened to the omophorion or pall! The learned German has very singular notions of ecclesiastical costume. But a still more extraordinary statement remains. Two pages later (p. 132) Denzinger enumerates among the Nestorian vestments, 'Maaphra quod et dicitur Phakila et Kaphila, quod est pallium in modum pluvialis nostri quo totum corpus ambitur, estque Graecorum φακιλιον.' Now it is quite certain that φακιλιον and φακιλιον must be the same thing: and here we are told that the phacialion is no longer a mitre but a cope! But what authority is there for the existence of a Greek vestment called φακιλιον resembling the Latin cope? I know of none. The patriarch Germanus in his account of the Greek vestments uses the word φακιλιον or φακεωλιον to mean a bandage, remarking that the peritrachelion is typical of the bandage wherewith Christ was bound when led away from the High Priest: but there is not the smallest authority in this passage, nor, I believe, in any other, for speaking of the φακιλιον as a Greek vestment at all, much less for identifying it with a cope. The cope can hardly be said to exist in the Church of Constantinople: for the patriarch's *μανδύας*, which comes nearest to it, is part of his secular and not of his ecclesiastical apparel.

Du Cange in his *Glossarium ad Scriptores Mediae et Infimae Graecitatis* gives the several forms φακεωλιον, φακελιον, φακιλιον, and φακεωλις: and defines the word as 'fascia qua caput involvabant olim Saraceni atque adeo Graeci ipsi Byzantini ut hodie Turci,' i. e. a sort of turban. The primary meaning seems to be a long band or bandage, such as still is wound round the head to make a turban. Hung over the shoulder, it might resemble a stole; and accordingly there is some questionable evidence to show that the term phacialion may have been used as equivalent to orarion by one or two loose writers. Goar cites a definition from Coresius Chiensis, 'φακεωλις tiara est et militum pileus, pro-

omophorion as an essential vestment of the Coptic patriarch. It is a question whether metropolitans and bishops, as well as the patriarch, wear the omophorion. Analogy would seem to answer the question in the affirmative: and Marriott<sup>1</sup> says

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prie inquam capitis *καλύπτρα*, Turcicae persimilis, qua caput velut zona vel cingulo circumcingitur.' It is stated too that one of the several early patriarchs of Alexandria called Timotheus was surnamed *σαλαφακίολος* because he wore a white head-dress. It seems then probable, on the whole, that the phacialion, though not resembling in any way the Latin mitre, was some kind of eastern head-dress, more like a turban, with a lappet hanging over the back of the neck, by virtue of which it is described as 'hanging down from the head' in the difficult rubric of the Tukan Pontifical. Very possibly it is neither more nor less than what Vansleb calls the *bellin*, which he describes as a long band of white linen, a foot wide and four ells in length, which is worn above the turban, wound round the neck, and with ends falling over the shoulders (vide *Histoire de l'Eglise d'Alexandrie*, Paris, 1677, p. 9 seq.). The *bellin* he assigns to the patriarch only: but in the rubric for the ordination of a bishop in the Tukan Pontifical, one of the priestly vestments is called *πάλιν*, which Denzinger translates by *pallium*, an ambiguous word, possibly denoting the omophorion. I have no doubt that the *bellin* and the *πάλιν* are identical, and that they are simply the amice, as worn in the peculiar manner described in the text above (p. 118). I have there mentioned that the name *ballin* (which is the correct form of the word) survives to-day as the name of the turban-like amice worn by the Coptic priesthood at the altar, and of another vestment worn by bishops. Taking this fact along with Vansleb's description of the *tailasân* or *λοτιον* as 'a long band of white linen wound turban-wise around the head,' it can scarcely be doubtful, that the terms *ballin*, *πάλιν* and *λοτιον* are used for the same thing, though originally denoting two distinct vestments.

As regards the other word *morpholacion*, I can find no hint of its meaning or even of its existence in either Byzantine or Coptic lexicons. It may perhaps be connected with the Coptic root *μορ*, *to bind*, and signify a girdle.

<sup>1</sup> Vest. Christ. p. lxxiv.

decidedly that 'from the fifth century, if not from an earlier time, down to the present, it has been worn by patriarchs and metropolitans, and by almost all bishops in the East.' There is, however, as far as I am aware, no warrant for extending this generalisation *now* over the Church of Alexandria.

For the omophorion, unless the ballin be so regarded, is not clearly mentioned in any of the known Coptic pontificals as used in the investiture of either bishop or metropolitan: a singular omission, if the pall were really the ornament which distinguished all prelates from inferior



Fig. 24.—Seal of the Coptic Patriarch.

orders. Nor is there any pictorial evidence to associate the omophorion with any other rank than patriarchal. On the other hand, in the seal of the Alexandrian patriarchate, while the pontiff is shown wearing a pall, there is no sign whatever of such a vestment on any one of the twelve figures which surround him. The evidence then of this design tells rather in favour of the pall being considered *distinctive* of the patriarch, as in the Roman Church it is distinctive of an archbishop.

Yet it is not at all inconsistent with the foregoing remarks to suppose that *in ancient times* and originally the omophorion may have been worn by bishops in the Coptic as in the Greek Church. St. Isidore of Pelusium, himself an Egyptian, who lived in the early fifth century, speaks of the 'omophorion of the bishops' in language which

seems unmistakable: though the earliest mention of the vestment is in connexion with a patriarch some twenty years previously,—Theophilus of Alexandria. The words of St. Germanus in speaking of the Greek ecclesiastical vestments<sup>1</sup> seem to denote a different form of omophorion, though called by the one name, for patriarch and bishop: and this may have been the case also in the Church of Egypt. Yet there is scarcely justification enough in the Greek text for the arrangement of paragraphs in Marriott's translation; by which it is made to appear that the episcopal is distinguished from the archiepiscopal omophorion by having crosses embroidered upon it, though the distinction is neither clearly formulated by that writer, nor borne out by any other evidence literary or monumental.

Coming now to the form of the Coptic omophorion, we are met by a very curious coincidence; for it resembles far more closely the later shape of the Roman pallium than the common form of the Greek omophorion. There can be no question that originally this vestment consisted of a single long woollen band or scarf, which hung in a loop over the breast in front and over the shoulders behind, and showed one end hanging in front over the left shoulder, and one end hanging behind. This form remains with scarcely any change to-day in the Church of Constantinople, although the pendant now falls in front down the centre of the body, instead of falling from the left shoulder, and the loop is drawn up higher round the neck instead of hanging so loosely as to allow the right hand to rest upon it, as was the case

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<sup>1</sup> See Marriott, *Vest. Christ.* pp. 84–86.



in ancient times. Such variation from the primitive form as has taken place may be readily seen by comparing plates xli and lviii in Marriott's *Vestiarium Christianum*: and it will be noticed at once that the modern Greek form bears only a distant resemblance to the modern Roman pall, and this resemblance is merely accidental. Any suspicion of Roman influence in determining the form of the Egyptian omophorion is at once refuted by the fact that the vestment as illustrated on the patriarchal seal to-day is almost precisely the same as that figured in the earliest known representation of the omophorion, and that representation is oriental, not Roman. For the mosaics of the mosque of St. Sophia at Constantinople, dating from 537 A. D. and therefore sixty years anterior to the well-known Roman figure of St. Gregory, still preserve the forms of St. Basil and four other bishops who lived in the fourth century, and these are all arrayed in white sticharion, white phelonion, and white Y-shaped omophorion<sup>1</sup>. It is this Y-shaped vestment which the omophorion of the Coptic patriarch almost exactly resembles. These sixth-century mosaics prove of course already a fixed conventional formation of the omophorion, and consequently a considerable previous antiquity. Subsequent monuments, however, show that the form fluctuated from time to time, the original flowing scarf being never definitely abandoned. It is curious therefore to find the conventional form engraved on the seal of the Coptic patriarch identical with the conventional form depicted on the walls of St. Sophia.

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<sup>1</sup> Marriott, *Vest. Christ.* pl. lxxv.

In the West also the records of early art prove that the pall was originally a scarf worn precisely as in the East. A fresco of the eighth century recently discovered at Rome<sup>1</sup> shows St. Cornelius and St. Ciprianus both vested in a pall, which is the same as the Greek omophorion figured in the ninth-century Greek miniature belonging to a MS. in the Bibliothèque Nationale, and representing the second General Council of Constantinople. In this miniature, which is given by M. Rohault de Fleury, and in the similar one of the tenth or eleventh century given by Marriott, and representing the seventh General Council, all the bishops assembled wear the omophorion over the breast, and with one end hanging from the left shoulder. There is however a decided difference in the arrangement of the vestment in the two pictures. In the earlier, the omophorion droops over the breast much lower and looser than in the later delineation, where it is drawn up more closely round the neck, more like the present fashion. Further, it is curious to remark that in the ninth-century MS. the omophorion has apparently only two crosses, one on each side of the loop: there being no sign of the third cross, which is figured on the straight piece hanging from the shoulder in Marriott's illustration and generally in all Greek miniatures. But this Greek way of wearing the pallium soon gave way in Rome to what has been hitherto regarded as a distinctively Roman fashion. How easily the transition was effected may be gathered from a glance at the well-known

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<sup>1</sup> Marriott, *Vest. Christ.* pl. xxx, from De Rossi's *Roma Sotterranea*.

figure of Gregory the Great<sup>1</sup> dating from about 600 A.D. There the pall is already worn across the shoulders; and the ends, after passing through the loop before and behind, hang down the centre of the body. As the consciousness of the original was lost, the pendent pieces were merely tacked on to the circular band which was put over the shoulders, so as to form the T-shaped or Y-shaped pall common in miniatures of the West from the ninth century downwards<sup>2</sup>. It is true that for some time the Greek is found side by side with the Latin shape of the pall. Thus in a ninth-century mosaic at the Triclinium Lateranum the vestment of St. Peter is still an omophorion: and even as late as the twelfth century a very decided omophorion is figured as worn by St. Ambrose in a mosaic of the church called after him at Milan<sup>3</sup>. Possibly however the Byzantine character of the whole composition, indicating the work of a Byzantine artist, may detract from the value of this mosaic as evidence for contemporary Roman custom.

The frequent destruction or defacement of the Coptic churches after the Arab conquest has unfortunately swept away nearly all the pictorial monuments which recorded the earliest forms of ecclesiastical costume. It is, however, remarkable that the most ancient representation of the omophorion which I have found shows already a fixed and conventionalised form of the vestment, nearly

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<sup>1</sup> Marriott, *Vest. Christ.* pl. xxv.

<sup>2</sup> See for example, Marriott, pl. xxxix; Westwood, *Miniatures*, pl. 50.

<sup>3</sup> Rohault de Fleury, *La Messe*, vol. i. pl. xvii.

resembling the Latin pallium of later usage. The nameless pillar-painting on which this omophorion is figured has escaped by some accident the destruction which has overtaken the like paintings on the other nave-columns at Al Mu'allakah. There is no doubt that the nimbus, the mitre, and the pall denote some patriarch, whose name has been effaced or forgotten. The pall is T-shaped and consists of an unbroken band placed low across the shoulders,



Fig. 25.—Fresco at Al Mu'allakah.

with another band hanging from the centre and concealing the clasp of the girdle. Curiously enough there is no sign of any cross upon this pall: each side of it has a narrow embroidered border, and the space between is filled with a design of interlacing circles or ovals: but the large crosses, characteristic alike of the Greek omophorion and the Latin pallium from the earliest times to the most recent, are entirely absent. It has been mentioned that the same interlacing design adorns the mumbâr of a mosque built in the fourteenth century at Cairo: notwithstanding which I am inclined to refer the fresco to the eighth or ninth century. In any case it is the earliest piece of monumental evidence for the use of the omophorion. In panel pictures of a later date the vestment is sometimes though not very often portrayed. Occasionally the Coptic pall may be seen arranged in a manner nowise differing from the early Greek way of wearing the omophorion, i. e. with an angular loop

or fold upon the breast, and one end hanging from the left shoulder: upon it are three large crosses. This form of the vestment is illustrated, for instance, in the oft-mentioned picture of St. Nicholas<sup>1</sup>. In the north part of the choir at Abu-'s-Sifain, in the picture representing the Death of the Blessed Virgin, all the apostles thronging round the bier wear the omophorion precisely in the Greek fashion<sup>2</sup>. The adjoining church of Al 'Aḍra or Sitt Mariam contains a picture of St. Mercurius in which a bishop is represented wearing a Greek omophorion over the chasuble. But on the iconostasis of the same church the twelve apostles are all arrayed in alb, dalmatic, chasuble, and *Y-shaped* omophorion, and carry crosses and gospels. As I have already noticed, the omophorion on the patriarchal seal is also Y-shaped and rather Roman than Greek in character: it hangs close about the neck and reveals in front three nearly equal oblong divisions in each of which is a cross. Probably a similar arrangement is concealed rather than displayed in the very curious paintings round the apse wall at Abu-'s-Sifain, where each of the figures is vested in a cope which falls over and hides the loop of the omophorion; and yet it is impossible to confuse omophorion and epitachelion, because both vestments are represented, the latter showing over the alb and under the shorter dalmatic. Puzzling as this arrangement appears, it is not uncommon in Coptic pictures; though sometimes again, where alb and dalmatic are both given, the epitachelion is worn *over* the

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<sup>1</sup> See frontispiece.

<sup>2</sup> Vol. i. p. 108.

latter, as in the fifteenth-century paintings at Sitt Mariam.

The fact, then, that the Y-shaped pall was developed out of the early Greek form, seems proved by the testimony of mediaeval Coptic monuments, and the process is easy to understand; but the same monuments prove no less clearly that the ancient form continued in vogue side by side with the later omophorion. But this is not the whole account of the matter; for besides these two forms, both more or less familiar even in the West, the Coptic paintings give evidence of a peculiar and characteristic usage. For sometimes the Coptic pall appears much longer than in the ordinary arrangement, and shows besides the ordinary Y-shaped vestment a band of the same material and colour, marked with similar crosses, passing across the waist from the right side to the left: at the left side the end falls over the wrist or is held in the hand. Illustrations of this manner may be seen in the seventeenth-century picture of St. Mark attired as patriarch at the church of St. Stephen by the cathedral in Cairo, and in the figure of our Lord in the midst of the row of paintings on the choir screen at Abu's-Sifain. It seems from this arrangement that one end of the omophorion is imagined as passing from the left shoulder behind, across the back, to the right side, and thence in front of the wearer across the waist, whereas of course in the usual arrangement the end hung behind over the left shoulder. Yet another method of wearing the omophorion is one depicted, for instance, in the painting of the archangel Michael at the church of Abu Sargah. There also the scarf

is of great length, and it will be easier to follow its disposition by beginning with that end which hangs over the left wrist. From the left, as in the figure of St. Stephen, it passes across to the right side, thence behind the back, *under* the left arm, across the breast to the right shoulder, round the nape of the neck, over the left shoulder. From the left shoulder it passes half across the breast, where it is pinned under the other cross-piece, and thence the end or portion remaining hangs down the middle of the dalmatic in front. Thus it recalls in a way the Y-shaped vestment, but presents also a curious variation.



Fig. 20. — St. Michael: from a painting at Abu Sargah.

These peculiar arrangements of the Coptic omophorion are not very easy to account for. But perhaps the most noticeable thing about them is the length of scarf required; and I cannot help thinking that they represent the transition from the ancient omophorion to the modern ballin as worn by bishops. For the pictorial evidence of this peculiarly Coptic pall is comparatively late, dating no further back than the sixteenth century at the earliest; while the episcopal ballin is so recent as never to have been received into the domain of art, and its likeness will be sought in vain in any Coptic picture. This conjecture is perhaps made surer by the fact that neither the lengthened omophorion nor the episcopal ballin rests on the sanction of any rubric or other formal

authority. But if it be true that the modern ballin is the representative of the ancient omophorion, and was developed from it, doubtless the process of development was chiefly a process of confusion—confusion between the shamlah or priestly amice, the orarion, the epitachelion, and the omophorion, vestments whose points of difference were easily disregarded in the long darkness which has settled on the Coptic Church. It must be owned with reluctance that much of this confusion is likely to persist, and cannot be quite dispelled by any reasoning founded upon such evidence as remains. It should be remarked, however, that the Melkite or orthodox Church of Alexandria retains to the present day the ancient usage of the omophorion, and knows nothing of the ballin<sup>1</sup>.

Concerning the antiquity of the patriarchal pall there is little to add to the information already brought together. In the East we have seen the vestment first mentioned in connexion with a patri-

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<sup>1</sup> Β&λλιν is not a Coptic word by etymology, and is doubtless derived from the Latin pallium through the Greek form παλλιον, which occurs now and then in early Byzantine writers. Stephanus in his Thesaurus (s. v. στιχ&ριον) says that Gregory of Nazianzen in his will left to Evagrius the deacon κάμασον ἐν, στιχ&ριον ἐν, παλλία δύο: cf. also Epiph. II. 188 B. The form π&λλιν (or ? παλλιν) actually occurs in Porphyrius. In Byzantine Greek, however, the word merely means a cloak or mantle, and was never used to denote the omophorion. It is therefore by a mere accident that the παλλιον among the Copts, like the pallium among the Latins, was specialized to denote an ecclesiastical ornament. By a precisely analogous change of meaning the early Byzantine καμάσιον (or κάμασον), which meant some sort of undergarment, became in Coptic ritual Κ&ϩϩϩ&ϩΙΟΠ, which, as we shall see presently, means sleeve or armet. So wide is the departure of the Coptic from the Byzantine sense in each case, though the sound is scarcely altered.



arch of Alexandria, about 385 A.D. In the West, omitting the doubtful instance of the bestowal of the pall upon the bishop of Ostia by the bishop Marcus of Rome (c. 330 A.D.), we have no mention of it until about 500 A.D., when Symmachus granted it to Theodore, archbishop of Laureacus in Pannonia. A century later Gregory the Great, in writing to Vigilius, bishop of Arles, terms it a matter of ancient custom for a bishop to petition the see of Rome for the pallium and for the vicarial authority which it carried. While, however, there is not direct testimony enough to solve the question whether the use of the pall first arose in Rome or in Alexandria, yet the first undoubted mention of that ornament is from the pen of an Egyptian writer. We know that in the sixth century, at least, it was customary for a new patriarch to take the pall of St. Mark from the neck of his deceased predecessor before burial, as part of a solemn rite. Moreover the omophorion in both the Greek and the Egyptian Churches has existed and continued in use down to the present moment, without any record of Latin interference.

All this tells strongly against the claims of Rome to regard the pall as an exclusively Roman privilege to be granted as a mark of honour and received as a token of allegiance. There seems some reason— from a decree of the Council of Macon in 581 A.D., that no archbishop should celebrate without a pall—to think that this pretension was not fully acknowledged by the Gallican Church in the sixth century; but it is needless to trace its growth, and needless to repeat that neither Copt nor Greek in any way confesses the supremacy of the Roman pontiff.

All over the Christian world the pall is rightly made of wool and not of linen, to remind the wearer that he is the spiritual shepherd of his flock. Both the material and the symbolism are mentioned by St. Isidore; and to this day the benediction of the white lambs destined to furnish the wool takes place yearly on the day of St. Agnes, at the church called after her in the Via Nomentana at Rome. After the ceremony the lambs are kept in a convent till the time for shearing is come. The palls made of their wool are placed to rest all night upon St. Peter's tomb on the eve of the apostle's festival, and on the day following are consecrated upon the altar<sup>1</sup>.

An omophorion resembling the Greek in form, but wider, is worn by prelates among the Armenians; among the Maronites also and the Syrians it is recognised as part of the patriarchal investiture. It is, of course, only by reference to the original manner of wearing the omophorion, that our own ancient rubrical directions for fastening the pallium on the chasuble can be rightly understood. For we read that it was 'fastened with a pin before and behind and on the left shoulder<sup>2</sup>,' i. e. at the lowest point of the curve or loop both on the breast and on the back, and at the point where the ends crossed each other on the left shoulder. If we attempt to apply this direction to the T-shaped or Y-shaped pall, it becomes meaningless: it is an intelligible and necessary arrangement as applied to the omophorion or the pall as worn in the primitive fashion.

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<sup>1</sup> Catéchisme de Persévérance par l'Abbé I. Gaume, vol. vii. p. 234 (4th edition, Brussels, 1842).

<sup>2</sup> Bloxam's Ecclesiastical Vestments, 11th edition, p. 5.

## THE ARMLETS.

(Coptic πικασσιον : Arabic الكمان.)

In speaking of the next ornament of the Coptic priesthood, the *sleeves* or armlets, it is well at the outset to guard against any identification or confusion of them with the maniple. The latter is so familiar a vestment in the usage of the western Church, that one may well feel surprise if nothing exactly corresponding to it can be discovered in Greek or Coptic ritual. Even allowing that the Greek *ἐγχείριον* both in name and purpose offers a kind of parallel, there is no such ornament as this napkin mentioned in the pontificals among the Coptic vestments. The nearest approach that I can find to any such appurtenance in Coptic ceremonial—apart from the veil or sudarium belonging to the pastoral staff, of which more hereafter—is a kerchief of some kind mentioned in a rubric as presented with the cross to a bishop at ordination. The rubric runs ‘dabitque illi crucem et mantile’ in Renaudot’s translation; but while the word ‘mantile’ is obscure, the original text is inaccessible, and this is the one solitary allusion to the existence of such a kerchief, whatever its nature, in either the Coptic or the Syrian or the Nestorian pontificals. The cross delivered is, of course, the small hand-cross used for benediction and not a crozier, so that the ‘mantile’ in this case cannot possibly correspond to the veil or *pannicellus*. It has already been mentioned that in both the Jacobite and the Melkite

branches of the Church of Alexandria one end of the stole is carried in a way strongly suggestive of the western maniple. This custom would perhaps in itself rather tell against the existence of the maniple as a distinct vestment, though betraying a consciousness of it, and possibly explaining its origin. Yet it is only fair to recall here the fact that Abu Ḍaḑn (if his English translator can be trusted) does mention a maniple among the Coptic sacred vestments as carried in the left hand by *priests*, and not allowed to deacons or inferior orders. This statement, however, stands alone, entirely unsupported by external evidence: it is against all analogy, and it is discredited by Abu Ḍaḑn's inaccuracy in other matters. On the other hand, although the rubrics are silent on the question whether a napkin was ever used by the Copts, there is pictorial evidence, slight in amount but decisive in character, proving the existence of this appurtenance of worship. Thus in the painting of St. Stephen at Abu Sargah<sup>1</sup>, the sacred vessel carried in the saint's left hand, whether it be a pyx or merely a coffer for incense, rests upon a napkin which saves it from actual contact with the fingers. It was doubtless from precisely such a napkin in the West, designed for the more reverent handling of the eucharistic vessels, that the maniple arose. While, however, in the Latin Church it became an essential, among the Copts it remained an accident of the altar service. Hence in the one case the original intention of the maniple was forgotten, and it was exalted into an ornamental vestment: in the other case it re-

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<sup>1</sup> See illustration, p. 137 supra.

tained its original and more lowly purpose, being so little honoured or regarded that the very fact of its existence has required to be demonstrated. Granting, however, the existence of this napkin, we must still consider it as absolutely distinct from the sacerdotal sleeves both in origin and in purpose.

The Coptic armlets correspond so obviously in all respects with the Greek *ἐπιμανίκια*, that I shall not hesitate to use that term for them, wherever convenient. Marriott has an illustration<sup>1</sup> of the epimanikia worn by the Russian bishop Nikita in the twelfth century; but unfortunately no scale is given with the drawing, and the author says nothing to determine whether the ornaments are merely short 'cuffs,' as he terms them, or are real sleeves covering the forearm. Yet Goar<sup>2</sup> describes the epimanikia explicitly enough as reaching from the wrist to the elbow. Whatever may be the case in the Greek Church, the Coptic sleeves undoubtedly cover the whole forearm, being broadest at the elbow and tapering away towards the hand. They differ from the Russian epimanikia just mentioned in being for the most part entirely closed and having the seam concealed; whereas those figured by Marriott look as if they were intended to open, and were fastened on to the arm by strings or buttons. Goar distinctly alleges that the Greek priests use silken strings to tighten the epimanikia on their arms, and his statement seems to bear out the inference suggested by Marriott's illustration, that the cuff when unfastened would open out flat. I have already joined issue with Renaudot for first disclaiming all knowledge on

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<sup>1</sup> Vest. Christ. pl. lvi.

<sup>2</sup> Euchologion, p. 111.

the subject, and subsequently assuming the very point in question, namely the correspondence in shape between the Greek and Coptic epimanikia. Neale<sup>1</sup> describes the Syrian sleeves as differing entirely from the Greek epimanikia without further explanation: but he adds that the latter 'hang down in two peaked flaps on each side the arm, and are fastened under the wrist with a silken cord run along the border, by which they are drawn in and adjusted to the arm.' This account is not so lucid as could be desired, but seems to show that the epimanikion is merely a napkin or cloth fastened round the arm, and not a sleeve or cuff in the true sense of the word. Neale, however, remarks that in some mosaics on the walls at Nicaea, the vestment 'is represented under quite a different form and approximates to the sleeve of a well-made surplice.' Here again there is surely some confusion in the language. One cannot imagine the epimanikia as resembling in any way the loose flowing sleeve of a surplice, however 'well-made': surely the tight-fitting sleeve of an alb or dalmatic is meant. But whatever be the right reading, we are still left in the dark as regards the length of the sleeve, whether it covers the whole arm or merely the forearm. It is therefore difficult to speak positively about the Greek form of epimanikion; but as far as I can discover the Greek and Coptic forms are rather different. The Coptic sleeves are longer than the Greek: they are generally sewn up and closed altogether, pains being taken to hide the joining: and they are *not* fastened on, or tightened, by silken strings. A pair at the church

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<sup>1</sup> Eastern Church: Gen. Introd., vol. i. p. 307.

of Abu K̄ir wa Yuhanna are made of crimson velvet, richly embroidered with stars and crosses wrought in massive thread of silver. Round either end runs a double border enclosing designs, and while one sleeve is ornamented with a representation of the Virgin Mary and her Son, the other has a figure of an angel with outspread wings. Nothing can exceed the fineness of the needlework and the delicacy of the colours in which these figures are embroidered. The extreme richness of the work denotes that this



Fig. 27.—Armlets at the Church of Abu K̄ir.

pair of sleeves belonged to a bishop, doubtless the bishop of Babylon : indeed I believe that the mere presence of figures, as opposed to crosses, is distinctive of the sleeves as an episcopal ornament. The Greek epimanikia, as belonging to the two orders bishops and priests, are apparently not distinguished in the same manner. Like the dalmatic and other vestments of the Church of Alexandria, the Coptic armlets were in bygone times not merely made of the richest materials, and decked with the most costly embroideries, but they were also em-

bellished with jewels of much splendour. None of these, I fear, are now remaining; but in the painting of St. Nicholas, to which I have referred, the cuffs of the sleeves are shown as of gold or cloth of gold, studded with gems of great value.

The epimanikia now worn by the Melkite or orthodox Alexandrian clergy in Egypt are decidedly cuffs, not sleeves, and are made indifferently either close or open: in the latter case they are fastened with strings.

The Coptic sleeves, though still part of the canonical dress of priests, bishop, and patriarch, at the present day are seldom used except in the ceremony of investiture at ordination, and consequently can be seen with difficulty. The specimens figured in the illustration are still at the church of Abu K̄tr wa Yuḥanna in Old Cairo, and date probably from the sixteenth century. Modern examples likewise are often of crimson velvet, covered with gold or silver embroidery, in which designs of flowers and the six-winged seraphim are the most usual ornaments. Although generally they are entirely closed like gauntlets, yet some examples are open and fastened by loops and buttons, not by strings.

No satisfactory explanation has been given of the origin or purpose of the epimanikia. The patriarch Symeon describes them as symbolical of the divine strength, citing the words 'Thy right hand, O Lord, is glorified in strength,' and 'Thy hands made me and fashioned me': he adds also that they figure the consecration by our Lord of his mysteries, and the binding of his hands at the Passion. But such an assignment of mystical meanings, characteristic of a mediaeval writer, is no help whatever towards



solving the purely antiquarian question of the origin of a sacerdotal vestment. It is faintly possible that as the maniple in the Latin Church was conventionalised into a mere strip of brocade with a loop at one end to go over the wrist, so in the Coptic Church a corresponding napkin, laid in like manner on the arm, *may* have been conventionalised into a sleeve, and another added for the sake of symmetry. But this account, which sounds decidedly improbable, is rendered still more unlikely by the fact that both in the Greek and in the Armenian Church the napkin is always described as hanging not over the left wrist but at the girdle. The *ἐγχείριον* is so mentioned by the patriarch Germanus<sup>1</sup> as worn upon the girdle by deacons, and lasted in this form until the eleventh century, when it became the lozenge-shaped piece of stiff material called now *epigonation*, from its position as worn near the knee, but still hung by a cord from the girdle. It is questionable whether the use of the epigonation is entirely confined to bishops, as stated by Neale<sup>2</sup> and Marriott<sup>3</sup>, though no doubt it is principally an episcopal ornament, while the *ἐγχείριον* was worn by priests. But the inherent difference between the sleeves and the maniple or napkin is more convincingly illustrated in the Armenian practice: for the Armenian clergy still wear a napkin, for wiping the hands, attached to the zone, while at the same time sleeves also, called *pasbans*, form part of the ecclesiastical apparel. It

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<sup>1</sup> Marriott, *Vest. Christ.*, p. 87.

<sup>2</sup> *Eastern Church: Gen. Introd.*, vol. i. p. 311, where the epigonation is figured.

<sup>3</sup> *Vest. Christ.*, p. 171 n.

is true that the pasbans have now degenerated into mere slips of brocade<sup>1</sup> worn one upon each wrist: but the coexistence of maniple and sleeves in the same ritual tells strongly against the supposition that the sleeves are a mere development from the napkin, although Fortescue does not hesitate to call the pasbans maniples, just after enumerating the maniple as a separate vestment of the Church. It must be acknowledged, however; that there is scarcely a jot of positive historical evidence bearing upon the question, or tending even to guide conjecture.

The use of sleeves seems almost universal in the eastern Churches: for besides the Coptic, Greek, and Armenian custom already mentioned, armllets are found also among the Syrians and the Nestorians. The Syrian term for them is *zendo* or *zenda*, according to Renaudot<sup>2</sup>, who remarks that they correspond to the epimanikia or manicae, 'de quarum forma inter orientales Christianos nihil certi affirmare possumus.' He adds that in a miniature of the Florentine MS. a priest is represented as wearing a kind of epimanikia, which enclose the arms above the elbow: and these, he says, have nothing in common with the Greek form. Hence it would appear that he imagines the Greek epimanikia as short sleeves or cuffs: but there is nothing to cancel his direct confession of ignorance. Equally ignorant but less ingenuous is Denzinger<sup>3</sup>, who in treating of the Nestorian vestments merely mentions 'brachialia' as an ornament worn by both priests and bishops.

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<sup>1</sup> Fortescue, *Armenian Church*, p. 133.

<sup>2</sup> *Lit. Or.*, tom. ii. p. 55.

<sup>3</sup> *Rit. Or.*, tom. i. p. 132.

Coming now to western Christendom, Rock<sup>1</sup> hazards a conjecture that sleeves or armlets were part of the sacerdotal dress in the early Church of Britain. This however he admits to be a mere inference from the analogy of early Gallican custom, and as a pure guess has no serious weight. In Gaul however 'metal bracelets, or cuffs of silk or other handsome texture<sup>2</sup>,' were undoubtedly worn among the ecclesiastical vestments in the sixth century<sup>3</sup>, according to the explicit evidence cited by Mr. Warren:—'manualia vero, id est manicas, sacerdotibus induere mos est instar armillarum quas regum vel sacerdotum brachia constringebantur.' This testimony is extremely interesting as preserving the record of a now forgotten ornament once adopted by the early Church of Gaul. Whether these armlets were subsequently disused from mere indifference, or were actively discountenanced by Roman missionaries, cannot now be determined. But no one, I imagine, will venture to maintain that the eastern armlet was derived from Gallic example in the far West. Unless, therefore, we take refuge in the theory of a quite independent origin for this peculiar priestly ornament in the eastern Churches and in the Church of Gaul, we are driven to the conclusion that the epimanikia were brought from the East—perhaps by some colony of Egyptian monks, such as we know came over to Gaul and to Ireland in the earliest Christian times—and were deliberately adopted by the Gallic clergy. If this idea of eastern influence be correct, it is not merely

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<sup>1</sup> Church of our Fathers, vol. i. p. 438.

<sup>2</sup> Warren, Lit. and Rit. of the Celtic Church, p. 117.

<sup>3</sup> Id. ib. note 3.

curious when taken in connexion with other tokens of the same influence in the early British and Irish Churches ; but it furnishes also an argument for the extreme antiquity of the Coptic sleeves as a sacred vestment. Moreover if the sleeves had passed from Egypt to Gaul, and there become an habitual ornament by the sixth century ; not only must they have been in use in the Church of Alexandria for some considerable time previously, but the proof of the original distinctness of the sleeves and the maniple or napkin, for which I have contended above, is rendered quite conclusive.

According to the testimony of Goar the use of sacred armllets still lingered on as late as the seventeenth century in some of the French churches, and was particularly maintained by the Dominican order of Preaching Friars, of which he himself was a brother. Such being the case, it is singular that so remarkable and ancient an appurtenance of church worship should be so entirely ignored by French and other liturgical writers.

## CHAPTER V.

### *Ecclesiastical Vestments (continued).*

*Phelonion.—Crown or Mitre.—Crozier or Staff of Authority.—Pectoral Cross.—Sandals.—Benedictional Cross.—Epigonation.—Rosary.*

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#### THE PHELONION OR SUPERVESTMENT.

(Coptic ΠΗΛΟΝΙΟΝ, ΠΙ ΚΟΥΚΛΙΟΝ, ΠΙ ΔΕΛΦΟΡΙΟΝ :  
Arabic البرنس.)

**W**HILE it is necessary at the outset to use a vague term like 'supervestment' to denote the outer garment of the Coptic priesthood, concerning which there is the most bewildering conflict of authorities, I shall endeavour to show that this conflict of evidence, pointing now to a chasuble, now to a cope, does not arise from any mere misunderstanding of terms, but indicates a real confusion of usage.

From a brief review of the writers cited above for the Coptic ministerial dress we may gather the following statements about the supervestment. Abu Daḡn, if rightly rendered, describes it as 'pallium cum cucullo,' worn not only by priest but even by deacon or subdeacon at the ḡorbân, when no bishop is celebrating. Vansleb, writing towards the end of the seventeenth century from personal observation, has no hesitation in calling the outer robe a cope, and adds that the vestment as worn by priests is plain, but that the episcopal cope is hooded. He

further identifies the vestment by giving the Arabic name, *al burnus*. The Ritual of the patriarch Gabriel, dating from the beginning of the fifteenth century, speaks of a 'pallium seu cappa e serico candido,' according to Renaudot's translation; but the same writer is responsible for rendering Abu Şabâ's term for the Coptic supervestment by the Latin 'camisia sive alba.' Finally, Renaudot himself alleges that by *al burnus* is meant a vestment corresponding to the Latin chasuble, called apparently **ⲕⲁⲗⲗⲁⲘⲒⲐⲐⲐⲚ**<sup>1</sup> in the Coptic pontificals. With characteristic indifference he quite ignores the fact that, by his own testimony, the same vestment is called a cope in Gabriel's Ritual.

So much for the direct literary evidence, which obviously is not very cogent. Now the weightiest authority here quoted is that of Gabriel. It is extremely disappointing that one must remain in ignorance of the actual word used by the patriarch, and rendered 'cope' by Renaudot. I have scarcely any doubt that in this instance the word should be translated not 'cope' but 'chasuble.' The mere fact that the material is white silk tells rather in favour of the chasuble; for all the ordinary priestly vestments were originally of white colour according to the canons, whereas the cope, being a festal robe worn in processions and great ceremonies, might be of any colour. Again, Abu Şabâ, who wrote about a century earlier, calls the supervestment by a

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<sup>1</sup> This of course seems inconsistent with the present use of **ⲕⲁⲗⲗⲁⲘⲒⲐⲐⲐⲚ** to denote the armlet, as stated above: though obviously it would a priori be the more natural application of the term. But the Copts are responsible for the inconsistency.

name which unquestionably is wrongly rendered 'alb' by Renaudot: yet the confusion may be pardoned if *καμτίς* is really the Coptic term for chasuble, as the word bears so close a resemblance to *قميص* (*qamīṣ*), the popular Arabic term for the alb or dalmatic. In any case I think it impossible to construe Abu Ṣabā's evidence as establishing decisively the use of the cope as a regular part of the ministering dress. It must be remembered that both Gabriel and Abu Ṣabā speak with some authority, if only their language were clearer,— Gabriel being the primate of the Coptic Church, and Abu Ṣabā a native writer deliberately composing a treatise on ecclesiastical matters. It may be taken for granted, therefore, that their testimony will agree exactly with that of the other Coptic pontificals, where it is intelligible, and is to be explained by them where it is doubtful. Unfortunately here again we are met by ambiguities, as the words 'pallium album,' 'cappa alba' are found used of the last vestment put on by the bishop at his ordination, in the Tukian Pontifical<sup>1</sup>. Yet both names apparently denote one and the same vestment, and that is apparently the chasuble. That the chasuble is meant, seems proved by the rubric at the end of this same office for the consecration of a bishop, which runs<sup>2</sup>, 'Quando danda est ultima benedictio ad dimittendum populum, patriarcha induet novum episcopum cappa nigra praeter candidam et invitabit eum ad benedicendum populum seorsim. Denique procedunt ad cellam patriarchalem.' Now if by 'cappa' a cope is meant

<sup>1</sup> Denzinger, Rit. Or., tom. ii. pp. 29, 31.

<sup>2</sup> Id. ib. p. 32.

in both cases, we have to imagine the new bishop weighted with two copes: but the mere task of arranging two copes in a becoming manner upon the same person would not be easy, apart from the intolerable burden of wearing them in a climate like that of Egypt. But if the last liturgical vestment with which the new bishop is invested—the ‘pallium album’ or ‘cappa alba’—be really a chasuble, then it is easy to understand how, after the completion of the ceremony of ordination, the bishop is finally arrayed in a dark-coloured cope (nigra) for the procession to the patriarch’s residence—a procession which we know from other sources was one of great magnificence. But even if we must put aside this doubtful evidence, there is happily no question whatever that the chasuble is definitely mentioned in the rubrics and elsewhere. For in his work called ‘*A Light in the Darkness*’ Abu ‘l Birkat, a Coptic priest of the fourteenth century, mentions the chasuble as part of the patriarchal vestments<sup>1</sup> under the term ‘*couclo sive casula*.’ This word may be another form of the ‘*κορλλα*’ which occurs in the pontificals, and seems to mean either a hood, or more probably a hooded chasuble such as existed in early times in the western Churches<sup>2</sup>. But more decisive still, in the Tukian Pontifical in the office for the ordination of a patriarch<sup>3</sup> the chasuble is mentioned along with stole and dalmatic, and is here called *φιλοντιον*, which is obviously the same word as the familiar *φελδόνιον* or chasuble of the Greek Church. Indeed in the curious rubric a few pages

<sup>1</sup> Renaudot, Lit. Or., tom. i. p. 396.

<sup>2</sup> Marriott, Vest. Christ., p. 227.

Denzinger, Rit. Or., tom. ii. p. 49.



later in the same service<sup>1</sup>, the Coptic term corresponds exactly with the Greek—*φελονιον*. We find, then, that, in the only cases where our authorities cite the original Coptic, the vestment is unmistakably determined as the chasuble.

This conclusion is borne out by pictorial evidence. Thus the figure of Constantine in the painting at Abu-'s-Sifain shows a chasuble with a short rounded front barely reaching to the waist: while the considerably earlier picture of St. Nicholas in my possession represents the outer robe as a very full flowing garment<sup>2</sup>. The arms raised—one in the attitude of benediction, the other holding the book of the gospel—show the folds of the chasuble very clearly, though unfortunately, as the figure is only half-length, one cannot see whether the lower edge in front was rounded or pointed. About the opening for the neck there runs a richly jewelled orfrey, which is doubtless the 'border wrought in gold or other fine embroidery,' mentioned by Renaudot as belonging to the chasuble, and called *†κροκλια* in Coptic, *kaslet* in Arabic. It will be remembered however that, according to Abu 'l Birkat, both monks and priests at Cairo in the fourteenth century, whether from poverty or simplicity, wore a woollen chasuble without any orfrey, instead of the proper silk vestment: and the monks of St. Macarius in the desert disused the chasuble entirely in the service of the altar, retaining it only for their times of public prayer.

At this day, within the *kaṣr* or keep of this very convent, there may still be seen upon the walls of

<sup>1</sup> Denzinger, *Rit. Or.*, tom. ii. p. 57.

<sup>2</sup> See the frontispiece to this volume.

the little church dedicated to St. Antonius some very ancient frescoes representing three nimbed and vested figures, one of which wears a yellow chasuble, another a white chasuble striped with red, the third a cope fastened by a fine morse. In the church of St. Michael in the tower of Dair Anba Bishôî the apostles on the iconostasis are all robed in copes. Returning to Cairo, one finds the cope depicted in two pictures of Anba Shanûdah in the church called after him, on the figures round the apse-wall at Abu's-Sifain, and in many other places : while true chasubles may be seen in the paintings of the twelve apostles on the central iconostasis, and in the fifteenth-century paintings on the south iconostasis, at Al 'Aḍra Damshirtah. In the same church on the north wall of the choir there is a picture of St. Mercurius, which shows a bishop wearing chasuble and Greek-like omophorion : and in the village church at Tris in the Delta there is a picture showing St. Macarius clad in a green chasuble. On the whole, however, the chasuble is of much rarer occurrence than the cope in such paintings as have survived from Muslim iconoclasts.

In many of the Coptic pictures a chasuble, exactly resembling that worn by priests or saints, is represented as the outer garment of the Virgin Mary or other holy women, the only difference being that in this case a hood is attached to the chasuble, and is so arranged in the painting as to make a graceful head-dress. Very often however the Virgin wears a beautifully embroidered cope, fastened with a golden morse, and having a rich orfrey on the hood which covers the head. This ecclesiastical style of female costume, it may be remarked, is characteristic of

Coptic painting, and differs altogether from the nameless flowing draperies in which the Italian painters for the most part array their madonnas.

But wherever the chasuble is depicted, it seems to differ widely from the Latin chasuble, and to approach much more nearly to the Greek model. No doubt originally it was a complete covering or overall, such as is seen in the figure of St. Sampson in the illustration given by Goar and adopted by Marriott. But between eastern and western usage a distinction arose, when the vestment came to be cut away over the arms for the sake of greater lightness and freedom of movement. For while in the West the chasuble became in course of time almost equally reduced both before and behind; the reduction in the East was less marked, and amounted only to a slight curtailment in front and over the arms, with scarcely any alteration at the back. Viewed from behind, therefore, it presented the form of a full flowing robe reaching nearly to the ground, while in front it resembled rather the corresponding Latin vestment. The change of course was gradual in both cases. We find the large flowing chasuble in the fresco of S. Clemente at the altar, and in the well-known miniature of St. Dunstan<sup>1</sup>, both dating from the eleventh century: while in a twelfth-century mosaic at St. Nicholas in Urbe at Rome, Silvester and Anastasius are represented in long full chasubles exactly like that worn by St. Nicholas in the Coptic picture figured above. But the changes undergone by the Latin chasuble only tended to differen-

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<sup>1</sup> Marriott, *Vest. Christ.*, pl. xliii and xliv.

tiate it more completely from any other vestment: whereas the Coptic chasuble, changing only in the front, approximated more and more closely to the form of the cope. And this, I think, is the secret of the confusion between the two vestments.

For it is impossible to reject the evidence of Vansleb concerning the existence of the cope as a ministerial vestment in his own time in Cairo, even if Abu Ḍakn's testimony has a doubtful ring. We find too that the cope is clearly depicted as worn by a patriarch in one of the earliest monuments surviving—the pillar-painting at Al Mu'allakah. Moreover at the present day the cope unquestionably is worn. I have mentioned a beautiful cope as existing at the church of Al 'Aḍra, Dair Abu's-Sifain: and there are some splendid specimens of coloured copes enriched with silver-embroidered hoods and fine needlework at the church of St. Stephen by the cathedral in Cairo. Moreover the vestment now denoted by the term *al burnus* among the Copts is decidedly a cope, and not a chasuble. I have never seen a chasuble in any of the Coptic churches, though I have heard of a dalmatic split up the sides and made into a sort of vestment probably intended to resemble a chasuble, as if the tradition of its use were still alive. This was in a remote church in Upper Egypt.

It is now possible to state the problem under discussion more succinctly and more clearly, if not to solve it. Setting aside all ambiguous testimony, we can now bring face to face two apparently contradictory conclusions each supported by unmistakable evidence. On the one hand, we find the ancient rubrics and independent observers alike bearing witness

to the chasuble as the supervestment of the Coptic priesthood: on the other hand, we find contemporary usage and observers as far back at least as the seventeenth century agreeing that the supervestment is a cope, and not a chasuble. And pictorial evidence may be adduced to favour either conclusion.

What seems the true solution of this problem has already been briefly indicated. It is impossible to doubt either that both chasuble and cope have been recognised as canonical vestments, or that the chasuble has now practically disappeared: and I have no doubt that the explanation of the whole matter is to be found in the gradual transformation suffered by the chasuble. From the first it retained its original flowing form at the back and sides; but the process of lightening in front went on, until the part of the chasuble across the breast was so far diminished, that both for appearance and for convenience' sake it was entirely severed by a vertical division down the front; and the vestment was absolutely assimilated to the cope. This explanation seems to remove all difficulties: moreover it is supported by the strongest analogies. For an exactly similar process of transformation may be traced in the history of the Greek chasuble or phenolion, although the process has been arrested just before the last modification seen in the Coptic vestment, and a slight portion of the material still stretches across the breast instead of being divided. But the change has gone so far, that it would be easy on a careless view to mistake the phenolion for a cope<sup>1</sup>. For the front has been

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<sup>1</sup> See G. Gilbert Scott, *Essay on the History of English Church Architecture*, pl. xxii, figs. 12 and 13, and text, p. 116, note n.

almost entirely cut away, while the back part is quite unaltered. As in the West, so in the East, it is chiefly the custom of elevating the host which has given rise to the mutilated form of the chasuble. On this point I cannot refrain from quoting the admirable remarks of Mr. G. Gilbert Scott, who says, 'In the early ages during the canon the priest was concealed from view by the altar-veils. The adoration of the people did not therefore take place at the moment of the sacrifice, as is now the custom of the western church, but at a later point in the service, when, the veils being withdrawn, the celebrant advanced, and while presenting the eucharist to the worship of the people, gave with it the solemn blessing. This, the primitive manner of the eucharistic adoration, has never been abandoned by the easterns, and as it does not require the celebrant to raise his arms above the level of the breast, the mutilation which the oriental phenomenon has undergone is confined to the front of the vestment.' Apart from the mistake, almost universal in writers on oriental ecclesiology, of generalising 'Greek' into 'eastern' custom, no better or briefer account of the change in the form of the chasuble could be given. This account however will not apply in letter, but only in spirit, to the Coptic chasuble as affected by Coptic ceremonial. For although the elevation of the host takes place now as in ancient times not at the moment of office, but at the end of the service, just before the thanksgiving; yet in the Egyptian rite the sacred elements are raised now not merely to the level of the priest's breast, but over his head. Such an action would have been awkward or impossible, so long as the

arms of the celebrant were cumbered with the heavy draperies of the ancient chasuble : and it is obvious that such a change in the ritual would necessitate a change in the vestment. If, therefore, the Greeks retain the ancient manner of elevating the host breast-high ; and if notwithstanding the phenolion has been so curtailed in front as almost to resemble a cope ; it is not surprising that the Copts, in raising the point of elevation, have so changed their chasuble, that it resembles a cope, not almost but altogether. How easily this transformation may have taken place, can be judged from a glance at even an ancient Coptic chasuble, such as that worn by St. Nicholas in the picture already mentioned. For the opening for the head is not circular merely as was the case in the Latin vestment, but is extended by a slit down the middle of the breast for eight or ten inches : and the only orfrey with which the chasuble is adorned runs round the neck and down both sides of this slit. Once imagine the vestment curtailed in front, and the slit or division carried a little downwards to reach the hem, and the result is a robe in no wise distinguishable from a cope, unless possibly the hood may have been a later addition. But even this is doubtful ; for the hooded chasuble is certainly not unknown and may have been common : and on the other hand, the hood is not invariably found on the Coptic cope, but is a distinguishing mark of the episcopal and patriarchal as opposed to the priestly form of the vestment. The cope worn at solemn festivals by the present patriarch is of crimson velvet decked with heavy gold embroidery : the hood of like material has a gold tassel hanging from the point, and is fitted inside with a sort of cap,

which may be worn instead of the mitre. It may here be mentioned that there is no parallel in any Coptic chasuble, for the elaborate orfroy which branched over the western chasuble, and is made familiar to English eyes in many ancient brasses and monuments.

If there is any shadow of doubt still resting on the history of the Coptic supervestment, as here given, it will, I think, be dispelled by a consideration of the exactly similar transformation which has befallen the Armenian phenolion. For the phenolion, though it existed in the early Church of the Armenians, as in every eastern Church, has now entirely vanished from their ceremonial, and, as in the Coptic rite, has been replaced by the cope. When one remembers that one of the questions put to an Armenian bishop at ordination is, 'Dost thou anathematise Eutyches and all his following?' one may feel surprised at the number of close analogies that exist between Armenian and Coptic practice,—analogies which will be multiplied, when we come to treat of rites and ceremonies. The native term for the cope is *sciursciar* according to Denzinger<sup>1</sup>, *shoochar* according to Fortescue<sup>2</sup>, while Neale alleges that they have retained the name *phenolion*<sup>3</sup>, after changing the vestment. Neale cites no authority for his statement, which is very interesting if true: but of course it is possible that the Greek name may linger on in the rubrics or in ecclesiastical treatises, though lost to the vernacular. He adds that the chasuble had been abandoned, at least as long ago as the time of the

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<sup>1</sup> Rit. Or., tom. i. p. 133.

<sup>2</sup> Armenian Church, p. 134.

<sup>3</sup> Eastern Church: Gen. Introd., vol. i. p. 309.



Katholikos Isaac, who comments severely on the fact in his work upon the errors of the Armenians. This would be in the twelfth century: but Neale seems to have mistaken the sense of the passage referred to, which censures the priesthood for not using the phenolion, but says nothing about any change in the form of the vestment.

The true nature of the eucharistic supervestment seems no less difficult to determine in the case of the other eastern Churches. Neale, indeed, is bold enough to state that 'the other branches of the eastern Church have retained the usual form' of the phenolion<sup>1</sup>: but once more he seems in error. To take the Syrian practice first. There can be no doubt that originally the chasuble existed among the Syrians, and was called by a name derived from the Greek phelonion. In ancient rubrics and the like, the Syrian word employed is *phelono* or *phaino*. Thus Severus Alexandrinus, in his work on the Ritual of the Syrians, notes that the priest in apparelling himself for the altar puts on dalmatic, stole, sleeves (the left before the right), and then the *phaino* or chasuble; though Boderianus absurdly renders the word by 'amictus' in his Latin translation<sup>2</sup>. The Syrian lexicographer, too, Isa-bar-Hali, gives the three forms *faino*, *filono*, and *phaino*; explains the term to mean the eucharistic vestment worn by priests, as opposed to the *kutino* or dalmatic worn by deacons; and renders it by 'al burnus' as the Arabic equivalent found in Copto-Arabic writings<sup>3</sup>. In the illuminated

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<sup>1</sup> L. c.

<sup>2</sup> Severus Alexandrinus, *De Ritibus apud Syros, etc.*; ed. Guido Fabricius Boderianus: Antwerp, 1572.

<sup>3</sup> Renaudot, *Lit. Or.*, tom. ii. p. 55.

Syrian pontifical at Florence, cited by Renaudot, the phaino is represented as a full flowing vestment, resembling the early Roman chasuble: it is generally of uniform colour—purple in three examples, and green in one; but there is also a miniature in which the phaino is depicted as covered with embroidery of flowers. Moreover in a still more ancient Syriac MS. dated 580 A.D., the figure of Eusebius is represented in a miniature as draped in a perfectly formed ecclesiastical chasuble of the early type, and the hole for the neck is already marked by a square orfrey<sup>1</sup>. So far the evidence in favour of the unchanged phenolion or chasuble seems explicit enough. But as we come down to more recent times, we find equally explicit evidence to the contrary. Thus Asseman writing in the early eighteenth century, remarks that the *phaino*, while corresponding in name to the Latin penula and the Greek phenolion, yet is open down the front, resembling the western cope and not the chasuble: and this information may be based on a Syrian pontifical in the autograph of the patriarch Michael<sup>2</sup>. The Syrian rubrics frequently use the word *phaino*, and sometimes define it as white: but of course do not explain the form of the vestment. It is only fair, however, to remember that Asseman seems clearly to be writing from his own observation; and even if such be not

<sup>1</sup> Bibliothecae Mediceae Catalogus, Cod. I, tab. iii: Florence, 1742. Marriott has adopted the illustration (*Vest. Christ.*, pl. xxvii) but not very faithfully.

<sup>2</sup> Denzinger, *Rit. Or.*, tom. i. p. 131, and tom. ii. p. 73 n. The note, however, is very difficult to follow as it speaks of a 'pallio seu casula,' used instead of the dalmatic, and distinguishes this from 'phaino, h. e. penula, quae est phenolium . . . ad instar pluvialis Latinorum.'

the case, there is much to confirm and nothing to discredit his evidence.

Whether among the Maronites the cope has been substituted for the chasuble, is a question on which I can find very little information. This much only is certain, that the same name for the vestment—phaino—obtained in their pontificals. Asseman<sup>1</sup> indeed alleges that this phaino is like the *maaphra* or *phakila* of the Nestorians, in other words is a cope and not a chasuble: but it is extremely probable that, even if the character of the vestment had been thus entirely changed by the seventeenth century, the original or at least the modified Roman form of the chasuble has been restored by subsequent Roman influence.

Regarding the Nestorian practice at the present day, it is impossible to speak precisely. Denzinger<sup>2</sup> indeed declares twice over that the phelonion, as worn by the Nestorians, resembles the western cope: but the whole paragraph which he devotes to the Nestorian vestments is a matchless puzzle, of which he retains the key<sup>3</sup>. Or perhaps the key is to be

<sup>1</sup> Bibliotheca Orientalis, tom. iii. pt. 2. p. 681: Rome, 1728.

<sup>2</sup> Rit. Or., tom. i. p. 132.

<sup>3</sup> In the passage just cited he says that the priest wears dalmatic, orarion over both shoulders, a '*pallium*' (whatever that means) called *gulta*, and over the orarion a phelonion or cope (*pluviali*) instead of a chasuble. The ornaments which bishops and priests wear in common are, (1) the *maaphra*, called also *phakila* and *kaphila*, which is a '*pallium*' like the western cope, enveloping the whole body and corresponding to the Greek φακιδιον (sic); (2) *biruna*, a cap or head-dress like the amice; (3) *sciusecfo*, or veil (velum).

I have elsewhere pointed out the absurdity of comparing with the imaginary Greek vestment φακιδιον our cope or any other western

found with Asseman, whom he has quoted without understanding. Asseman however uses decisive language, identifying with the cope a *patriarchal* vest-

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vestment. Asseman is really responsible for this blunder: but Denzinger ought not blindly to have adopted so obvious a fallacy. Now there is a prayer in the ordination service for bishops to be said at the moment of investiture with the *maaphra*, where Denzinger renders the original thus: 'Induat te Dominus *pallio (seu casula) lucis,*' &c. (tom. ii. p. 247). A rubric also in the ordination service for a patriarch is as follows: 'Tunc afferunt Kaphilam et princeps metropolitanarum illam super caput ejus demittit' (ib. p. 255). We have therefore first the word *maaphra* rendered as *chasuble*, and secondly the *kaphila* (which is identical with the *maaphra*) described as being lowered over the head—a description which obviously will not apply to a cope, and suggests irresistibly a chasuble. Yet another rubric (ib. p. 272), with the prayer of investiture that follows, may be taken to establish the identity of the *maaphra* with the chasuble: for there the vestment is described symbolically as 'the garment of celestial glory,' and the prayer continues—'The Lord arm thee with the mystical armour of the spirit, adorn thee with the works of righteousness, and enrich thee with the gift of chastity: that without spot or blemish thou mayest feed the sheep entrusted unto thee in the fear of God and in all holiness, now and alway.' This passage cannot fail to recall the corresponding words and symbolism used in western pontificals at the point of investiture with the chasuble. There is then ample ground for believing that at the time these rubrics were written, which is probably not later than the ninth century, the *phenolion* was still the recognised supervestment at the Nestorian celebration of the mass.

Reverting now to Denzinger's statement concerning the '*pallium*' or *gulta*, we may, I think, explain it by reference to Dr. Badger's mistake in the text above, which Denzinger has seized with his usual avidity for blunders. The truth is that the so-called '*pallium*' is nothing but the dalmatic; and because Dr. Badger, being ignorant of the right term, uses a wrong one, '*surplice*,' in English, Denzinger out of this manufactures an entirely new vestment for the Nestorians. This will be made quite clear by a comparison of tom. i. p. 132, 'Presbyter orarium habet collo impositum . . . supra tunicam albam, . . . et pallium quod dicitur gulta, et super

ment called *maaphra*, which he remarks 'apud Syros Nestorianos pro phenolio seu phelonio Graecorum et penula, casula, planeta Latinorum sumitur, quae tamen ante pectus aperta sit et pluvialis formam repraesentet<sup>1</sup>.' The question seems so far settled for that period: and there is a distinguished orientalist of our own times, Dr. Badger, whose evidence ought to be worth quoting. In describing the Nestorian vestments which he saw at Ashitha<sup>2</sup>, he mentions two which he calls 'surplice,' and 'chasuble,' respectively: but he defines the 'surplice' as a sort of shirt with short sleeves, by which it is clear that he means a dalmatic; and the 'chasuble' he explains as

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orarium induitur (sc. presbyter) phelonio sive pluviali,' with tom. ii. p. 266, where he remarks upon the 'pallium' or dalmatic which the bishop lays on the left shoulder of the priest at the very beginning of the ordination service, 'Anglice est *Surplice*. Posuimus vocem ab Assemano usurpatam. Est *gulta*, quae super orarium induitur.' Now in the first of these passages the position of the *gulta* as worn is left to the imagination, but it *seems* to come over the oration: in the second passage we are told plainly that it does come over the oration. But what the first passage states unambiguously is this, that it is the supervestment which comes directly over the oration. What then becomes of the *gulta* or surplice? Obviously it must disappear, and merge back into the tunica alba or dalmatic, from which it has been conjured up by a process of mere misunderstanding. Were this conclusion doubtful, it would be rendered certain by the rubric on the next page as follows: 'tunc episcopus pallium sumat de humeris eorum et eo induat eos, et sumat stolam de humero eorum sinistro et circum colla appendat.' This proves finally that the priest at ordination was invested with the '*pallium*' or *gulta* first, and that the oration was then placed over the '*pallium*;' in other words, that the '*pallium*' and dalmatic or *sticharion* are identical.

<sup>1</sup> Bibl. Or., l. c.

<sup>2</sup> The Nestorians and their Rituals, vol. i. pp. 225-6: London, 1852.

'a plain square cloth with a cross inscribed (? embroidered) in the centre, which is thrown over the head and shoulders, and the two parallel corners (sic) held between the thumb and forefinger of each hand.' Were this a chasuble, there could not be a cross in the centre, for there the hole for the head must come: moreover a chasuble could not rightly be described as 'thrown' over the head and shoulders, but as so placed or lowered: and there could be no reason for holding a chasuble by the 'corners,' whatever that term could denote. It is much to be regretted that so learned a scholar should be so ignorant of liturgical terms as to confuse a dalmatic with a surplice, and to call a 'plain square cloth' a chasuble: but the same ignorance is displayed in his magnificent work, the English-Arabic lexicon, and his authority as a ritualist is nothing. Dr. Badger adds that the vestment which he terms a surplice is called *peena* in Syriac,—a name which suggests the *phaino* or *phaina*, but may of course be a mistake in borrowing on the part of the Nestorians,—and that the 'chasuble' is called *estla* or *shoshippa*. The latter word might be akin to *shouchar*, which, as we have seen, is the Armenian term for a cope. But on the whole, Dr. Badger's testimony cannot be taken as of serious value: indeed, if it stood alone it would be so perplexing as to be worse than useless. But there is a later writer<sup>1</sup> than Dr. Badger, who very decidedly affirms the long disuse of the chasuble by the Nestorian clergy. He adds that the Nestorian deacons wear the alb or dalmatic, called *soudra*, 'with red and purple crosses sewn on the breast,' girdle, and a

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<sup>1</sup> See Christians under the Crescent in Asia, pp. 219, 220.

short stole over the right shoulder: while priests wear dalmatic, girdle, stole falling over both shoulders and crossed on the breast; moreover, at celebration the priest has also a *chadra* (i. e. tent), a large square of white linen with coloured crosses at the upper angles. This *chadra* is 'thrown over the shoulders and held in front by one hand: at certain places in the service it is raised so as to cover the head, at others stretched out so as to form a screen between priest and people.' The *chadra* is obviously identical with Dr. Badger's *shoshippa* or chasuble: but is neither cope nor chasuble, but a nameless vestment peculiar to the Nestorians. But Mr. Cutts states positively that the Nestorian clergy wear the cope instead of the chasuble: for although he strangely calls the vestment 'pallium,' he describes it clearly as resembling the cope, which the canons of 1603 require the celebrant to wear in our English cathedrals. Thus the evidence of Asseman seems established.

Yet one branch of the oriental Church still remains faithful to the tradition of the chasuble,—the ancient orthodox Church of Alexandria in Egypt. There the cope is still worn too, but only as a processional vestment. Thus on great festivals the patriarch, entering the church in solemn procession, wears a cope of richly coloured and embroidered silk, but lays it aside when he is vested for the mass. The chasuble worn by the patriarch differs in form from that of the priest; for the latter is a true chasuble, rather of the Russian form, very much curtailed in front, and barely reaching to the girdle: but the patriarchal phenolion or phelonion, as they by preference call it, reaches nearly to the ground both

before and behind, and so far recalls the ancient shape of the vestment. Yet it has been so far changed and conventionalised, that at the sides and under the arms it has formal openings, which are loosely fastened together with silken strings or ribbons. The front is not pointed, as in the English chasuble, but rather shield-shaped, the lower edge being horizontal and the corners turned in curves: and the vestment when laid out flat would be in the form of a cross, in which the upper and lower limb are much larger than the two side branches, and all the angles are rounded off. This cruciform chasuble is obviously the result of a long process of mutilation; and the difference between the patriarchal and priestly shape probably arises from the mere need of lightness in the former, owing to the greater weight of vestments which the patriarch has to carry. The treasury of the church of St. Nicholas in Cairo still possesses some chasubles of the fifteenth or sixteenth century, which are nearer in form to the old models, and which for sumptuous splendour of material and colour, for boldness of design and for delicate fineness of work, must rank among the most beautiful known embroideries.

Seeing, however, that the phelonion has fallen into more or less final disuse in the Nestorian, the Maronite, the Syrian, and the Coptic Church, though originally deemed essential by all, and still recognised by the canons; there seems not a single stay left to support Neale's assertion, that the usual form of the phelonion has been retained by the other branches of the eastern Church, excepting only the Russians, who have mutilated it, and the Armenians, who have abandoned it. On the contrary, the disuse of the chasuble



is one of the most marked and most universal departures from primitive custom among all the liturgical changes in the East. We have seen that it had a long canonical existence,—an existence indeed never formally terminated,—and its origin is lost in the mists that veil the dawn of Christian ceremonial.

Like most vestments, however, it seems to have arisen from some form of ancient oriental costume,—a statement which is scarcely weakened by the admission that some vestments may seem more directly copied from classical models: for classical costume was eminently oriental. In Greek the name for the chasuble appears as *φελόνιον*, *φενόλιον*, *φαιλόλιον*, *φαιλώλιον*, *φαινόλιον*, *φαινώλιον*, *φαινόλης*, &c. The word meant some sort of heavy overall made to envelop the whole body. It is, of course, impossible to discuss seriously the question raised by Cardinal Bona and others, whether the *φαιλόνης* left by St. Paul at Troas was a eucharistic chasuble. The idea is a mere anachronism; for both the ritual and the apparel of the eucharist were slow developments, as usage after usage, fostered by reverence, was received and consecrated by the Church. Thus the phenolion is not found recorded before the fourth century, and even then the evidence is not literary but pictorial. The mosaics in the church of St. George at Thessalonica<sup>1</sup>,—said to have been built by Constantine,—represent several figures clothed in sticharion and phelonion, which vestments seem decidedly of an ecclesiastical character, although there is little or nothing to distinguish the dress of bishop, presbyter, physician, or slave. Yet the fact that each one of

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<sup>1</sup> See Marriott, *Vest. Christ.*, pl. xviii-xxi, and notes pp. 236-7.

the figures is represented as standing before the altar in an attitude of intercession, renders it probable that all the martyrs after their death were fitly regarded as ministers in God's service, and so were alike represented as vested in sacerdotal costume, and performing a sacerdotal duty. 'Sacerdos vocari potest sive episcopus sit sive presbyter,' says Rabanus<sup>1</sup>; so too Pope Celestine, St. Gregory, and other early writers speak of 'sacerdotes' where they mean bishops; so that in the fourth century, when these mosaic pictures were made, the sacerdotal character of the saints depicted may have been considered the one thing essential to represent, as opposed to the accidental distinction of higher and lower orders. Marriott, indeed, alleges unwaveringly that these mosaics 'do not represent a dress of holy ministry<sup>2</sup>,' and most recent writers agree in this opinion. There is, however, one point which they seem to have overlooked. On examining the details in the background of the pictures, it becomes clear that the altars there figured are arranged and furnished in a manner which already betokens a fixed system of decoration, and a considerable elaboration of ritual. The steps in front of the altar; the four columns at the four corners, and the altar-canopy above; the curtains running on rods between the columns; the apses, the hanging lamps, and the screens,—all these denote a well-established ceremonial, and are indeed the very characteristics of altar decoration which lasted in the eastern churches for full a thousand years later, and may now be seen, little changed, in connexion with the Coptic altars

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<sup>1</sup> Marriott, *Vest. Christ.*, p. 46, note 71.

<sup>2</sup> *Id. ib.* p. lxxv.

of Egypt. If then the ritual was so far developed, when these mosaics were designed, is it not reasonable to conclude that the dress of the priesthood also was specialised, and distinguished from the dress of common life? It seems to me easier to believe even that the artist was inaccurate in certain details of the drapery, than that the priests who ministered at such altars as he has reproduced wore no vestments clearly distinctive of their office.

I have already mentioned the white phenolia depicted in the sixth-century mosaics of St. Sophia at Constantinople, and the phenolion in the Syriac miniature, dating about 580 A.D. But it is not till nearly a century and a half later that we find the vestment distinctly mentioned as such in any writing. Then the patriarch Germanus speaks of the phenolion as emblematic of the scarlet or purple robe in which our Lord was arrayed before the crucifixion. From this time onward notices of the supervestment are numerous. Thus Goar<sup>1</sup> mentions that Nicephorus, patriarch of Constantinople about 800 A.D., sent to the Roman pontiff a chestnut-coloured phenolion, as well as a seamless white sticharion,—gifts no doubt which could be used in the Latin service, and not mere curiosities. This is one more proof of the fact, which becomes clearer and clearer as we penetrate deeper into the past, that Roman and Greek vestments were originally the same, or rather that the vestments, like the ritual and the language of divine worship at Rome, were adopted from eastern originals. As regards the colour of the Greek ministering dress, Goar remarks that red or purple vestments are used

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<sup>1</sup> Euchol. p. 113.

through the season of Lent, but that white is the normal colour for the rest of the year; and he cites Symeon of Thessalonica to this effect. Purple vestments, however, seem to have been regarded in general as befitting mournful rites, and to have been worn during the office for the burial of the dead. Besides the ordinary chasuble now in vogue among the Greeks there is a particular kind of phelonion, called the *πολυσταύριον*, worn by bishops; it is distinguished by being thickly sown with small embroidered crosses.

As regards the origin and use of the western chasuble, the materials for its history are so well known, and have been so thoroughly winnowed by various writers<sup>1</sup>, that it is needless here to speak at length. Suffice it to remark that up to the ninth century *planeta* was the term used to designate the ministerial supervestment; that from this point the term *casula* appears, and ere long the two names are used interchangeably; and that, finally, the later term, from which our 'chasuble' is derived, so far prevailed as to extinguish the older *planeta*. The transition from the secular to the ecclesiastical garment seems slow and hard to mark; but it is not surprising to find the most ancient testimony for the use of the *planeta*, as the distinctive vestment of priests and bishops at the altar, in a remote country like Spain, where probably the common dress differed widely from those classical models which in Italy both

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<sup>1</sup> See Marriott, *Vest. Christ.*, App. C, and p. lx seq.—G. Gilbert Scott, *Essay on the Hist. of Eng. Ch. Archit.*, p. 113 seq.—Chambers, *Divine Worship in England*, p. 60 seq.—Bock, *Geschichte der Liturgischen Gewänder*, i. 427.—Rock, *Church of our Fathers*, vol. i. p. 317, &c.

ruled the fashion of daily life and determined the form of clerical costume. If, for example, the priestly attire in Rome during the second century,—which doubtless differed only slightly from lay attire,—were introduced into less civilised places like Spain or Gaul at that epoch, it would at once be marked off as distinctively sacerdotal by contrast with a different type of dress in common use among the Spaniards or the Gauls. Thus an impetus would be given to the development of an exclusively ecclesiastical costume, and a certain fixity would be obtained earlier among remoter communities than at the very fountain-head, whence they drew their inspiration. It is in the Acts of the Council of Toledo (633 A. D.) that the *planeta* is first recorded as the priestly super-vestment, though even there it is only mentioned incidentally as the familiar ornament of the presbyter, with nothing to suggest that it may not have been in use for generations. There is artistic evidence that the chasuble was worn in Ireland as early as the eighth century; for to that date belongs the reliquary of St. Maedoc, on which are represented figures draped in full flowing chasubles with embroidered orfreys<sup>1</sup>. In Scotland priests in chasubles are found upon some very ancient sculptured stones; and in the Book of Deer, dating from the ninth century, chasubles are worn by the evangelists there depicted<sup>2</sup>. France is rich in sculptured evidence for the chasuble of the same epoch; for almost every plaque in the ivory covers of the Sacramentary of Drogon has one or more examples of

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<sup>1</sup> Warren, *Lit. and Rit. of the Celtic Church*, p. 112.

<sup>2</sup> Westwood, *Facsimiles of Anglo-Saxon and Irish MS.*, pl. li.

the vestment, and the Sacramentary at Tours, also belonging to the ninth century, bears further testimony to its prevailing use. England is rather destitute of early ecclesiastical art-remains; but the chasuble is found mentioned, apparently as long established, in the eighth-century Pontifical of Egbert. It is curious to find, in confirmation of the Coptic usage as described by Vansleb, that up to the tenth century, at least, the episcopal chasuble was distinguished from the sacerdotal by its hood; a tradition dating from very early times, as is proved by the fact that St. Isidore of Seville speaks of the *casula* as 'a garment provided with a cowl,' or hood<sup>1</sup>; and by the very name for the chasuble in Coptic, *κοκκλιοπ*, which is clearly derived from the Byzantine Greek *κουκούλλιον*, which occurs in the writings of Pachomius, Evagrius, and Palladius—a word ultimately traceable to the Latin *cucullus*. The elaborately embroidered maniple which was found in the tomb of St. Cuthbert, at Durham, bears still upon it the figure of St. Sextus, an early bishop of Rome, arrayed in a chasuble, which already has suffered some curtailment as compared with the ancient form, although the figure belongs to the tenth century. This is said to be the earliest English example of the chasuble. Others are contained in the Benedictional of St. Ethelwold (c. 970 A. D.), the miniatures of which display several fully vested figures<sup>2</sup>; and in the somewhat later pontifical of the Anglo-Saxon Church,—now in the Rouen Library,—there is a bishop depicted wearing

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<sup>1</sup> Marriott, *Vest. Christ.*, pl. lxvi.

<sup>2</sup> Bloxam, *Ecclesiastical Vestments*, pp. 14–16.

a chasuble which, like that of St. Sextus, is considerably shorter in front than behind. Another bishop in the same pontifical is represented in a cope; and this is the earliest instance known to Bloxam of that vestment. But surely an example some five hundred years earlier may be found in the mosaics of S. Apollinare in Classe near Ravenna, where the figure of Melchisedech, who is breaking bread at an altar, on which lie wafer and chalice, is robed in a violet cope, clearly defined by its golden border lines and fastened over the breast by a morse, in the fashion usual to this very day. A similar vestment is seen in a mosaic at the church of S. Vitale, Ravenna, worn in this case also by Melchisedech<sup>1</sup>, but not so distinctly shown, owing to the sideward position and the uplifted arms of the celebrant.

But although the shortened chasuble appears thus early in our own country, it had not in Anglo-Saxon times arrived at that pointed form, with which our mediaeval monuments have made us familiar. This further alteration arose not from general reasons of convenience, but from the specific requirement of more freedom of action in elevating the host, so that it might be seen by the people over the head of the celebrant, who stood with his back towards them. In Italy the priest faced the people at the moment of elevation, so that there the same cause did not operate. Yet even the Roman chasuble has suffered great diminution, as is proved for instance by the well-known eleventh-century fresco of St. Clement at St. Mark's, in Venice. On the other hand, there is an overwhelming mass of evidence to show that the ancient ample vestment continued in use in Rome

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<sup>1</sup> See *La Messe*, vol. i. pl. iii. and pl. ii.

down to the year 1600 A.D.<sup>1</sup>: and even at the present day the Roman rubrics require the full flowing chasuble. There are also in our own churches many sepulchral effigies and brasses, which bear witness to the fact that the ancient chasuble lasted side by side with the mutilated form of the vestment, almost up to the period of the reformation.

These chasubles in our own and in all Christian countries were not always of white: pale and golden yellow, crimson and purple, were not uncommon colours. The richest materials, too, were employed, such as silk, velvet, and cloth of gold; and these were embroidered with beautiful orfrees,—sometimes having costly jewels inwoven,—or even covered entirely with flowers and other designs in the finest needlework. No pains or cost were thought too great to adorn the apparel used at the service of our altars, and our churches were unrivalled in the splendour and number of their vestments, as many records still remaining testify.

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#### THE CROWN OR MITRE.

(Coptic ⲧⲉⲛⲧⲣⲁ<sup>2</sup>, ⲡⲓ ⲕⲗⲁⲉⲉ, ⲡⲓ ⲃⲣⲏⲡⲓ<sup>3</sup>:

Arabic التاج.)

Both branches of the ancient Church of Alexandria in Egypt recognise the mitre as part of the episcopal

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<sup>1</sup> G. Gilbert Scott, *Hist. Eng. Ch. Archit.*, p. 117 n.

<sup>2</sup> Denzinger, ii. 48.

<sup>3</sup> Peyron's Coptic Lexicon has also ⲃⲣⲏⲡⲉ, *diadem or σκήπτρον*. If *σκήπτρον* is the etymology of the word, we have another instance of an entire change of meaning in present usage of the Coptic as compared with its original.



insignia ; and in both the mitre is worn by the patriarch as well as by bishops. There is no reason for doubting the tradition which derives the use of the mitre by the patriarch of Alexandria from the presidency of Cyril at the Council of Ephesus<sup>1</sup>, in the year 431 A. D. : or, if that be too precise a statement to please historic minds, it may at least be maintained that the legend points to a very early use of the mitre in Egypt. Moreover, if we remember the deadly feud which, twenty years later, rent asunder the two branches of the Church and kept them in permanent antagonism ; and if we think how likely it is, on the one hand, that both lines of patriarchs should cling to all their ancient privileges, and how unlikely, on the other hand, that either line should borrow an innovation from its unorthodox rival ; then the fact that both the Jacobite and the Melkite Churches do acknowledge and retain the mitre may be taken as strengthening the legend, and almost establishing the existence of some sort of distinctive head-dress for the patriarch of Alexandria, at least as early as the first half of the fifth century, before the separation.

There is an antecedent probability that the use of the mitre arose early in the East, where the covering for the head has always been a matter of great dignity and importance, and where the modern *tarbûsh* or fez still remains as the direct descendant of the ancient Phrygian cap, which the earliest mitres both in the East and the West seem to have imitated. It is true that the evidence upon the question is not very copious ; but enough may be mustered to repulse all Roman claims to the mitre as an exclusively Roman vestment. Goar

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<sup>1</sup> Goar, *Euchol.*, p. 314.

himself cites Allatius as authority for a pontifical *καλύπτρα*, and further quotes from Coresius of Chios a story of a dispute between Theophilus, a patriarch of Alexandria in the tenth century, and the Greek emperor, who, to settle matters in a friendly way, conferred a royal crown upon the patriarch, and was himself received among the members of the patriarch's sacred college. We are told, too, that up to 869 A. D. the patriarch of Jerusalem wore on solemn occasions the mitre of St. James.

Turning now to the various rubrics, we find the mitre clearly mentioned as one of the insignia put on by the patriarch of Alexandria at his consecration. This is in the Tukian Pontifical. It is worth remark that none of the ancient Coptic versions of the order for the consecration of bishops contain very explicit evidence for the use of the crown or mitre. The fact may however be accounted for either by the utter confusion on the subject of the head-dress, which marks the rubrics in their present form; or by the supposition that the privilege of wearing the mitre was extended to bishops at a late epoch; or possibly by the custom now holding, by which bishops are forbidden to wear the mitre in presence of the patriarch. Yet in the ritual of the Syrian Jacobites the imposition of the mitre on the head of the new bishop is the most solemn act in his investiture by the patriarch. The mitre is twice mentioned in the order as given by Morinus<sup>1</sup>, and twice also in the text of Renaudot<sup>2</sup>. Renaudot asserts too

<sup>1</sup> Denzinger, Rit. Or., tom. ii. pp. 74, 75.

<sup>2</sup> Denzinger cites from Renaudot the words '*imponit illi cidarim seu mitram, alligatque illi epomidem,*' but adds in a note '*ornamentum de quo agitur (sc. mitra) est Mazzaphtho, amictus phrygio opere*

that in several Syriac manuscripts the mitre is mentioned under the name 'togo' (obviously the same as the Arabic 'tâg') as one of the episcopal ornaments. Asseman is therefore probably mistaken in denying the mitre to Syrian bishops; and there seems no question that it was worn by their patriarch.

It is extremely unfortunate that nearly all the really ancient Coptic paintings have perished, and that bronze or stone monuments—carved shrines or effigies of great ecclesiastics—are simply unknown in Coptic history. Yet from such scanty relics as the hand of time has spared some little evidence may be gathered for the early use of the mitre. Thus one of the saints whose figures are carved upon the panels now in the iconostasis at the church of Abu Sargah seems to wear some kind of head-dress

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*ornatus*,' thus asserting that by 'mitra' of the text is meant an amice with an embroidered orfrey. This mistake is sufficiently refuted by the remainder of the sentence quoted from the rubric—'*alligatque illi epomidem.*' *Epomis* is obviously the amice, and is quite distinct from the '*cidaris seu mitra.*' The synonym too proves that the *mitra* answers to our mitre. As regards the patriarchal mitre, there is no conflict among our authorities. I think, therefore, that Mr. Cutts must be mistaken in stating that the Jacobite Syrian patriarch 'does not wear a mitre but a veil on his head, which is thrown off at the reading of the Gospel.' (Christians under the Crescent in Asia, p. 84.) He describes this veil as 'set with plates and bosses of silver.' Doubtless it corresponds with the Coptic ballin, and is the *common* vestment of the patriarch, whereas the mitre is only used on great festivals. It is a mistake into which a traveller might fall very easily from seeing the patriarch celebrate without a mitre, and from failing to find any example of such an ornament. In the same way, the Coptic patriarch seldom wears the crown to celebrate, and in all the scores of visits that I have paid to various churches I have only seen one example of any mitre. Yet beyond all shadow of doubt the mitre is worn, not only by the Coptic patriarch, but also by the bishops.

resembling a low diadem. They date from the eighth century, and may be denoted as patriarchs by the cross upon the long spear-like staff which they carry. Probably of the same date, or a little later, is the ancient pillar-painting at Al Mu'allaḡah<sup>1</sup>, now much defaced, but still showing very clearly the patriarchal pall, and a nimbed head wearing a jewelled diadem. The diadem consists of a band of silver or gold divided into tiny compartments, each enclosing a precious stone—something like the diadem on the head of Justinian in the mosaic picture at S. Vitale, Ravenna,—and the intention is so obvious that, if this monument stood quite alone, it would alone suffice to prove the use of the crown as a distinctly recognised vestment at a time when the metal mitre at least was quite unknown in Europe. Between this fresco and pictures on panel, dating from the fifteenth or sixteenth century, there is a gulf void of artistic evidence. But thenceforward patriarchs, and patriarchal figures of St. Mark and of our Lord, become common : and they generally wear a golden crown beset with jewels. The shape however of the crown had by this time changed : and instead of the low diadem,—a narrow band or fillet of metal encircling the brow,—we find a solid covering for the head more resembling the royal crown of modern times. There is no instance in Coptic painting of the two-peaked mitre, familiar to us in Roman usage and in our own brass effigies and heraldic designs.

But though the mitre of western shape is quite unknown to Coptic bishops, the exact form of their own head-dress is not fixed after any rigorous model.

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<sup>1</sup> See illustrations, vol. i. p. 191, and vol. ii. p. 156.

The Copts in fact do not, strictly speaking, use the word 'mitre' at all : with them the mitre is a *tâg* or *crown* : and the crown may be made after many patterns, so long as it preserves the essential idea of a kingly head-dress, the symbol of sovereign power.

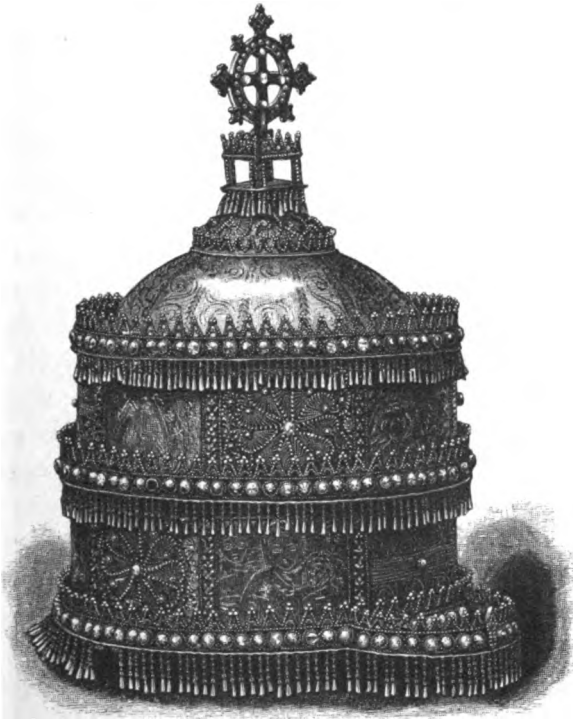


Fig. 28.—The Crown of the Coptic Patriarch.

Nor is there any recognised or necessary difference in the form of the crown as worn by bishops and as worn by the patriarch. The only distinction is one of usage, which forbids a bishop either to wear his crown or to hold his staff outside his own diocese, or during the presence within it of the patriarch, by whom his authority is overshadowed.

It must therefore be clearly understood that the form of the patriarchal crown given in the illustration has been determined by the artist's fancy, and has no symbolic or ritual significance whatever. The crown, which is of solid silver gilt and is covered with various enrichments, was sent as a gift from king John of Abyssinia, by whose order it was made, to the present patriarch Cyril. Much of the work upon it is extremely fine, and the whole produces an effect of real, though somewhat barbaric, magnificence. The body of the crown is cylindrical: the top is domed: and above the dome, which ends in a beautiful boss of filigree work, rises a little open tower supporting a cross set with five large diamonds. The cylindrical part is divided into two sections by three horizontal fillets or bands of raised work: each band is thickly studded with paste jewels of various colours separated by finely wrought metal bosses: a profusion of short tiny chains with pendants hang from the lower rim of every band, while on the upper rim stands a delicate open parapet of very minute workmanship. Vertically, the walls of the crown are divided by raised bands into eight sections, which are alternately filled with a spiral design of filigree work and chased with rude engravings of the Virgin and Child or other sacred figures. The front of the crown is distinguished by a small curved projection upon the lowest fillet. The dome is ornamented by a number of lines radiating from the centre, and the spaces between them are filled with a chased design of very graceful scrollwork. A glance at the illustration will show the triple character of this pontifical crown: but that character is due merely to a local accident,—the affectation of this form of crown by

the kings of Abyssinia<sup>1</sup>,—and must not suggest any comparison with the triple crown of the Roman pontiff.

The practice of the Melkite Church of Alexandria agrees with that of the Coptic Church in granting the mitre or crown to bishops, as well as to the patriarch; but dissents in having a specific form of mitre for the patriarch, different from the episcopal crown, and called by a distinguishing name. For the patriarchal mitre is called *tiara*, the episcopal *mitra*: and the distinction of shape is this, that the *tiara* is lofty and conical, resembling the western mitre without any cleft or horns at the top; while the *mitra* is a real crown, low, and rather globular than conical. It is impossible to say when this distinction arose, or for what reason. The only tiara which I have seen in Cairo is quite modern: it is made of crimson velvet, with a zone of silver or gold about an inch broad encircling the head, and from this zone four metal bands rise and meet at the top of the cone, upon which there stands a jewelled cross. Each of the four vertical divisions of the tiara encloses a porcelain medallion, painted with sacred figures, and set round with precious stones. The mitra has all the characteristics of a royal crown: it is generally made of silver gilt, more rarely of very rich velvet, covered with elaborate gold embroidery, and studded thick with jewels. The mitra, though of metal, is never of openwork: the ground is a solid plate of silver or gold, casque-like in this regard, and not a circlet with

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<sup>1</sup> The gold crown of king Theodore, captured at Magdala, has the same peculiarity. It may be seen at the South Kensington Museum.

bands of metal coming down from the top to meet it. There is at the church of St. Nicholas in Cairo a large collection of these crowns, some of which are ancient and exceedingly beautiful. The oldest there is a most magnificent specimen of silver-work and jewellery. The head-piece is of solid silver: round the bottom runs a circlet enclosing an exquisite design of small flowers repoussé. Immediately above this is another zone of the richest blue enamel, in which is wrought some sacred writing in Greek characters. Above this comes a third narrow band of delicate work, raised, and standing out from the ground; and all the points and angles of the design enclosed are set with lustrous jewels. The globe or main body of the crown is marked off into four equal compartments by vertical bands descending from a circlet near the top. These bands are of open silver work, soldered on to the ground, like the third of the narrow circlets just mentioned. In the centre of each compartment, and slightly raised, is an oval medallion of superb enamel, in which the Virgin, our Lord, and other sacred figures are wrought in soft yet resplendent colours, red, green, and blue; and round every medallion runs a border of costly gems. The circlet round the top of the crown, too, which receives the four vertical bands, is richly jewelled on the edges, while the interior consists of blue enamel enclosing a text from Holy Writ in Greek letters. But the topmost point is covered with a large boss, which tapers upwards in three low stages, all set with precious stones, and on the summit stands a small cross. From the style of the enamelling and of the workmanship generally, I think that this most sumptuous and splendid mitre may be assigned to



the eleventh or twelfth century: but no description and no picture can convey any idea of its beauty.

In the same treasury I saw several other crowns, all of rich metal work or jewelled embroidery, and some of them ancient. In every case the crown is surmounted by a cross, which is a characteristic feature of the bishop's head-dress, both Greek and Coptic.

It is, then, very clear that in both branches of the Church of Egypt the use of the mitre is not merely known, but ascends at least to a very considerable antiquity. It is clear, too, that Neale's account of the matter is very inadequate, when all he tells us is that 'the patriarch of Alexandria employs a cap resembling a crown, and never removes it during the liturgy<sup>1</sup>.' The Melkite patriarch of Alexandria wears no sort of cap, but only the tiara: and the Coptic patriarch wears a crown on all solemn occasions, and the only kind of cap which ever covers his head is a sort of *tarbûsh* concealed within the hood of the cope. There is, however, a cap recognised as a liturgical vestment at the present day, and dating from a very remote epoch. It is first mentioned by a Coptic writer of the twelfth century, a bishop of Akhmîm<sup>2</sup>, who gives it in a list of sacerdotal vestments and describes it as 'adorned with small crosses.' Renaudot merely cites this very interesting passage without criticism<sup>3</sup>, having no further evidence upon the subject. For a like reason, doubtless, Denzinger

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<sup>1</sup> Eastern Church: Gen. Introd., vol. i. p. 313.

<sup>2</sup> This author is repeatedly cited by Renaudot, as 'Echmimensis.' Denzinger gives his full name as 'Ferge Allah Echmimi,' which should doubtless be Farâg Allah Akhmîmi.

<sup>3</sup> Lit. Or., tom. i. p. 163. 'Mentio fit praeterea cidariſ quam sacerdos imponit capiti et quae cruciculis ornata est.'

prefers to reject the Coptic bishop's testimony, and to explain away the priest's cap as a mere misunderstanding of the *epomis*, or amice<sup>1</sup>. Such a confusion is extremely improbable, for the same authority mentions the amice in his list as a separate vestment of the priesthood. When all known authorities beside are absolutely dumb on the subject, and when not a grain of evidence could be found in any quarter, it was only natural for Denzinger to be suspicious of so isolated a statement: nevertheless the bishop was right, and the critic is wrong. The proof of this is remarkable, but quite modern: it has to leap across seven centuries of silence; but I think it strong enough to pass with an electric flash of conviction. For a cap exactly answering the description of the Coptic writer seven hundred years ago is now used in the service of the Church, not as a rule by priests, whose heads are generally covered by the shamlah or amice, but by deacons. For instance, in the church of Abu-'s-Sifain among the vestments is a cap of crimson velvet, shaped like the ordinary *ṭarbúsh*, but having the upper and lower rim encircled by a band of silver lace, and the sides divided into four compartments by vertical bands of lace: within each compartment is a cross of solid silver with smaller starlike crosses between all the branches, and another cross of silver lace is fastened on the top. A very similar cap of crimson velvet with four divisions may be seen at St. Stephen's church by the cathedral: but

<sup>1</sup> Rit. Or., tom. i. p. 130. 'Mentio fit etiam teste Renaudotio apud Echmimensem cidaris cruciculis ornatae, quam sacerdos capiti imponit, de quo (sic) tamen varia nobis dubia occurrunt, videturque nihil aliud esse nisi pilogion.'

in this example only two of the divisions are filled with crosses, the other two containing each a figure of the six-winged seraphim. But in every case the predominant impression is that the cap is 'adorned with small crosses,' precisely as described in the twelfth century. I have no doubt at all that the vestment was originally a priest's cap exclusively—such as existed in our English ritual of old, though traces of it are not common in our monuments<sup>1</sup>;—and as the use of the shamlah prevailed more and



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Fig. 29.—Priestly Cap.

more, was relegated to deacons, just as the priestly mode of wearing the stole seems to have descended even to sub-deacons. Indeed it is very probable that the priestly cap itself is a descendant from the earlier episcopal crown: and the mere fact that priests were able to wear in the twelfth century the 'cap adorned with small crosses'—obviously a head-dress of some splendour—constitutes in itself a powerful argument for the antiquity of the Coptic mitre.

<sup>1</sup> There is a brass in Hackney church, dated 1521 A.D. (figured in Waller's *Monumental Brasses*), in which a priest is shown wearing a low rather closefitting cap with a point on the top.

It is worth while dwelling a moment on the curious gap in the history of the priestly *cidaris* as an illustration of what may be called the accidents of evidence upon questions of ritual. Had Farâg Allah's statement stood absolutely alone, as Denzinger thought, the temptation to reject it, as he does, is almost irresistible: it seems so much safer to argue that, if such a vestment had existed, it must have been noticed by other writers. If, on the other hand, the mere existence of the cap as a present appurtenance of worship were the sole fact known about it, while pictures and books of the past were silent; then the critic would conclude with a great show of reason that the cap was a mere modern invention of no authority. Thus in either alternative, however faultless the logic, the conclusion would be wrong: and it is only the accidental coincidence of the two facts, divided by seven centuries, that establishes the truth, which either singly would seem to deny.

It remains to touch lightly on the use of the crown or mitre in other Churches of the East and in the West. I have already spoken of the Syrians as recognising the mitre, on the testimony of Renaudot and Morinus; and although Denzinger alleges Jacques de Vitry and Asseman against Renaudot, he is, as usual, uncertain and even contradictory, and his reasoning is quite unable to shake the solid authority of the great French ritualist<sup>1</sup>. Or even

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<sup>1</sup> Briefly Denzinger writes as follows (Rit. Or., tom. i. pp. 131-2): *Renaudot mentions among the bishop's ornaments the 'Thogo, corona sive mitra.'* According to Asseman '*mitras non deferunt Syri Jacobitae*' except the Catholics. *Renaudot speaks of 'mitram sive cidarim,' which is doubtful. Doubtful too is Morinus' rendering of the Syriac 'Maznaphtho' or amice by cidaris. Jacques de Vitry expressly states*

if there be not sufficient evidence to prove conclusively the use of the mitre by Syrian bishops, there is no question that the tiara is worn by the patriarch, both Jacobite and Maronite; and this fact creates a strong presumption that the privilege of wearing a crown was granted to bishops also, a presumption which is rendered almost certain by the identity of the Syriac *togo*, as given by Renaudot, with the Arabic *tâg*,—the name for the episcopal crown in the two languages.

The mitre is a customary ornament of the bishop among the Maronites, and is placed on his head at ordination, according to ancient rubrics. Regarding the Nestorian practice there is some ambiguity arising from the difficulty of interpreting the terms used in the pontificals. Denzinger says plainly, ‘*Mitras non gerunt nisi Chaldaei Romanae ecclesiae uniti*’<sup>1</sup>. Yet, from the close conjunction of the biruna with the pastoral staff in the rubrics, it is hard to doubt that the biruna means some sort of head-dress resembling a mitre, rather than an amice as alleged by Denzinger. Thus we read,

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*that Syrian bishops, except the Maronites, do not use mitre or ring.* Then follows immediately the list of the Syrian patriarch’s pontifical vestments, which I give word for word: *Apud Syros Maronitas et Jacobitas patriarcha insignitur Masnaphtha (sic) seu amictu simili Birunae Nestorianorum, Phatna seu Phainolio, orario seu epitachelio pontificio ad instar omophorii seu pallii Graecorum, tiara seu mitra, et baculo pastorali*: and in the same page the Biruna is defined as *cidaris phrygio opere ornata instar amictus*, and the Maznaphtho as *amictus phrygio opere ornatus*. It is clear at least that Denzinger has no argument to bring against Renaudot’s statement: and that when he charges Morinus with confounding cidaris and amictus, he reserves the right of the same confusion as his private privilege.

<sup>1</sup> Rit. Or., tom. i. p. 132.

‘episcopi . . . ordinati birunis et baculis’: ‘induit birunam et tradit virgam in manum eius dexteram’: ‘ornati birunis et baculis’: ‘episcopi suo ornatu et birunis induti et baculos tenentes’: ‘patres vero ornantur maaphris, birunis, baculis’: ‘princeps metropolitaram . . . induit eum biruna, et tradit illi baculum<sup>1</sup>.’ These passages cannot, of course, prove the usage of what we call a mitre, but they do prove the usage of some closely corresponding ornament. Among the Armenians the mitre is said to have been first adopted in the eleventh century. However that may be, at the present time their bishops wear both mitre and ring<sup>2</sup>, and are singular in the latter usage among all the oriental Churches. But the infulae or strings, which once depended from the mitre, have now become detached, and, curiously enough, are represented by strips of brocade fastened on to the shoulders of the cope<sup>3</sup>. None of the other Churches of the East ever had anything corresponding to the western mitre-strings, their head-dress being rather a crown than a mitre: and the singularity of the Armenians in using this mitre of western form, together with the episcopal ring, seems to give point to the legend which makes this mitre in the first instance a gift from Rome. The Armenians however agree with the Copts in the use of the priest’s cap, which they term ‘sagavard.’ Both bishops and priests remove their head-dress from the Cherubic Hymn to the end of the service.

<sup>1</sup> Denzinger, *Rit. Or.*, tom. ii. pp. 238, 244, 245, 249, 250, 255.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*, tom. i. p. 133.

<sup>3</sup> Fortescue, *Armenian Church*, p. 134. The reason of this change may be conjectured from a perusal of Neale’s remarks, *Gen. Introd.*, vol. i. p. 313.

As regards the Greek Church proper, Neale states that the mitre is unknown, but bishops wear 'a kind of bonnet,' which he illustrates by a woodcut, but does not further describe, nor even name. Except for the absence of the cross on the top, it bears considerable likeness to the crown of the orthodox Alexandrians, but presumably it is of some soft material and not of metal. This seems borne out by Rock<sup>1</sup>, who calls the Greek head-dress a round hat or cap, and states that it is known by the name '*tiara*.'

Turning our eyes now to the West, we shall find the closest analogy with Coptic practice in the earliest times and in the remotest countries. 'The Celtic bishops wore crowns instead of mitres<sup>2</sup>.' What a change of world is wrought by the change of two letters, from Coptic to Celtic! In the sixth-century life of St. Sampson that saint is represented as having seen in a dream 'three eminent bishops adorned with golden crowns.' Mr. Warren mentions the figure of 'an Irish bishop thus crowned on a sculptured bas-relief of great antiquity, part of a ruined chapel in the valley of Glendalough,' and is of opinion that the crown was used in the Anglo-Saxon Church up to the tenth century. Thus in the Benedictional of St. Ethelwold an ecclesiastic is depicted wearing a golden and jewelled diadem. Rock<sup>3</sup> too says that the early bishops wore crowns of gold set with jewels; but adds that a kerchief or head-linen was also borne by the Anglo-Saxon

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<sup>1</sup> Church of our Fathers, vol. ii. p. 62.

<sup>2</sup> See Mr. Warren's Liturgy and Ritual of the Celtic Church, p. 119, and the interesting notes on that and the following page, from which I have freely quoted.

<sup>3</sup> Church of our Fathers, vol. ii. p. 91.

prelates : it was tied with a fillet, the ends of which hung behind. The figure of St. Dunstan in the Cottonian MS.<sup>1</sup>, painted in the eleventh century, is shown wearing a round cap with two lachets hanging behind. In an eleventh-century fresco at S. Clemente in Rome the papal mitre is represented as a high conical cap<sup>2</sup>. There is a twelfth-century enamel in the Louvre in which Melchisedech, standing at the altar and administering the cup and wafer to Abraham, wears dalmatic, alb, chasuble, and a crown upon his head : but the crown here is doubtless rather a symbol of kingly than of priestly dignity. A sculptured figure over the portal of St. Denys of the same epoch shows a low but decided mitre<sup>3</sup>, having already indications of the horns, which started about that time ; and in a contemporary mosaic at St. Mark in Venice a precisely similar mitre is depicted. From the twelfth century onward the mitre is of frequent occurrence in pictures, brasses<sup>4</sup>, and monuments of all kinds, and the gradual evolution of the form now most familiar is very distinctly traceable. Ever since the mitre has been formally recognised as an ecclesiastical vestment in the West, the custom has been for the bishop to wear it at the mass, removing it only at the moment of office. Its usage nevertheless was

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<sup>1</sup> Westwood, Facsimiles, pl. 50.

<sup>2</sup> La Messe, vol. i. pl. xii.

<sup>3</sup> Id. ib., pl. xiii, xiv.

<sup>4</sup> The earliest known brass is that of Archbishop Ysowilpe, in the church of St. Andrew, at Verden, near Bremen, who died 1231. He wears a low flat mitre, yet with two decided peaks. Next in date comes the brass of Bishop Otto, of Hildesheim (1271), in which the mitre is slightly higher, but the peaks still are wide apart. About a century later we find the peaks sloping inwards and nearly meeting, as at present.



not confined by the church walls, but it was worn out of doors on festival occasions.

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THE CROZIER OR STAFF OF AUTHORITY.

(Coptic  $\pi\iota\ \alpha\upsilon\theta\omega\tau$ <sup>1</sup>: Arabic العكاز.)

The Coptic patriarch and all his bishops carry the pastoral staff; but the same rule which controls the wearing of the mitre by bishops, limits also the usage of the staff. For it is only in his own diocese, and when that diocese is not overshadowed by the visible presence of the patriarch within it, that a bishop may carry the staff, which the Copts call emphatically 'the staff of authority.' In the West the symbolism of the staff has always been a matter of some controversy: among the Copts both the term by which the staff is known, and the limitation placed upon its usage, agree in determining the emblem as that of jurisdiction. There seems no idea of pastoral care associated with the staff: and in fact the rod carried by the Coptic bishop denotes a royal sceptre, just as his head-dress denotes a kingly crown.

Accordingly the episcopal staff never under any circumstances has the crook-like form familiar in all western monuments. Its shape will be understood at once from the statement that it resembles the Greek and not the Latin type of crozier<sup>2</sup>, i.e. that the upper end terminates as a tau-cross with two

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<sup>1</sup> This again is a foreign word, but curiously enough nearer Hebrew than Greek: it corresponds to שֵׁבַט.

<sup>2</sup> The use of this word is sometimes, but wrongly, limited to the archiepiscopal cross as opposed to the episcopal staff in the

short symmetrical branches, instead of rounding off to a crook or spiral volute. But in the Coptic crozier these two branches are nearly always in the form of serpents' necks with heads retorted, and in the centre between the two heads is a small round boss surmounted by a cross. By a curious coincidence with western usage a flag or veil—the Latin pannicellus—is fastened on to the staff near the top at the natural place for grasping it. The veil is made of silk, and often of a green colour.

Enough has been now said to indicate the points of difference between the Greek and Egyptian crozier, and the peculiarities of the latter. First, if Neale is to be trusted<sup>1</sup>, the Greek pastoral staff 'in walking is used to lean upon, and is not much higher than the hand.' Curzon<sup>2</sup>, though not very clear upon the point, seems also to speak of a short patriarchal staff. Both authors give cuts showing the 'pateressa' or 'patritza,' as they variously call it, but unfortunately without any scale of measurement. Neale's woodcut, however, is obviously taken from Goar's<sup>3</sup> figure of the patriarch Bekkos in walking costume, and there the staff can only be about 3 ft. 6 inches in height. Goar's words, too, in another place<sup>4</sup>, point to the same conclusion: 'pastorali autem virgae Pontifex innititur progrediens: eius summa pars juxta manum transverso ligno sive eboreis serpentibus in sese capitibus mutuo retortis, ἀγκυρῶν δίκην, est ornata.' Again, he remarks<sup>5</sup> that the

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West. I shall not scruple to employ the term in its broader sense. For etymology, see Smith's Dict. Christ. Antiq. s. v. Pastoral Staff.

<sup>1</sup> Eastern Church: Gen. Introd., vol. i. p. 314.

<sup>2</sup> Monasteries of the Levant, p. 299.

<sup>3</sup> Euchol., p. 115.

<sup>4</sup> Ib., p. 314.

<sup>5</sup> Ib., p. 313.

'pateressa' (appropriately so called 'a paterna sollicitudine'), or 'dikanikion,' i.e. emblem of jurisdiction, is carried by bishops and abbots; it is, moreover, shorter than the Latin crozier, and not so richly adorned with precious metal or gems, and consequently is used in walking. All this is different from the Coptic staff, which is usually about 5 ft. 6 in. long, and is not used except as an ornament of church ceremonial. The patriarch, when he drives abroad,—for to walk is beneath his oriental dignity,—has with him a servant who carries a tall, plain, silver-headed staff or mace, but does not take his crozier. Another difference is this, that while the Coptic form agrees with the Greek in the characteristic design of the serpents' heads, the little cross between the heads seems an Egyptian peculiarity. A third point of contrast is the veil, of which I can find no mention in accounts of the Greek pateressa.

It is, however, interesting to find that in the other branch of the Church of Egypt, the orthodox Greek or Melkite, the form of the episcopal staff exactly corresponds with that of the Coptic bishop's: for it has the cross and the veil, and is from 5 ft. to 6 ft. in height. Examples of the Jacobite crozier are so rare that I have never seen a single ancient specimen; but the Melkites, by better fortune or more careful reverence, have preserved from past times several beautiful staves, which are now in the treasury of the church of St. Nicholas at Cairo. In every case these staves have the lower end pointed, while the rod is divided into five portions by four knops or bosses at about equal intervals. These knops, and the serpents' heads, are generally enriched with jewels. I saw one staff of ancient ivory

with silver bosses finely jewelled; another of ivory stained green with jewelled silver bosses; two or three of ebony with silver bosses and silver serpents; and another of solid ivory most superbly carved, the bosses also of ivory, the cross above standing on a little crown of delicate pierced work. As a rule the stem between the bosses is hexagonal, not round.

Though I have called these examples ancient, it is not likely that any of them go back more than three or four centuries, for they are distinctly mediaeval in character and correspond closely with croziers portrayed in mediaeval Coptic paintings<sup>1</sup>. There is, for instance, in the church of St. Stephen by the cathedral in Cairo, a painting of St. Mark, robed as patriarch of Alexandria, and holding in his left hand a crozier of this kind. But although no very antique example of the crozier now remains, I have no doubt that the design dates from the early days of Christianity. It has already been suggested<sup>2</sup> that

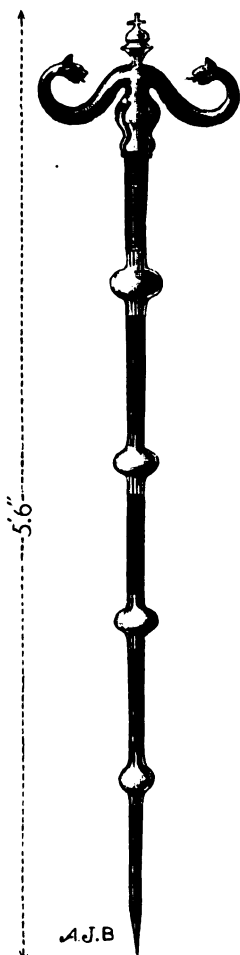


Fig. 30.—Coptic Crozier.

<sup>1</sup> Occasionally, however, the Coptic staff is depicted merely with a double volute, i. e. without the snakes, as at Mâri Mfna. On the patriarchal seal the staff has a single snake-headed volute: but this design is unknown elsewhere.

<sup>2</sup> Dict. Christ. Antiq. s. v. Pastoral Staff.

the western pastoral staff should be referred for its prototype not to the shepherd's crook, or the royal sceptre, but rather to the *lituus* or augur's wand of classical times. Similarly, I think the eastern crozier may be referred to the herald's wand, the *σκῆπτρον* or *ράβδος* of Hermes, the *caduceus* of the Latin Mercury, and referred with a certainty greater in proportion as the resemblance is closer and more striking. For in early as well as late classical works of art the rod of Hermes is represented as entwined with two serpents whose uplifted heads face each other<sup>1</sup>. This coincidence of design

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<sup>1</sup> See Adam's *Roman Antiquities* (10th edit., London, 1839), p. 220, pl. ii; and Smith's *Classical Dictionary*, pl. opposite p. 336. Dr. Smith is wrong in his statement about limiting the occurrence of the snakes to *late* works of art. His words are, 'In late works of art the white ribbons which surrounded the herald's staff were changed into two serpents' (p. 313). Now in the very earliest works of art the wand appears with a head in the form of the figure  $\wp$ , which may or may not be intended for the pair of snakes, but cannot possibly be meant for ribbons. This form, for example, is frequent on coins of the sixth century B.C.: it occurs also on a vase in the so-called Chalcidian style about 550 B.C. Perhaps the earliest certain instance of the serpent-wand is on the François vase, which cannot be later than 500 B.C. (see *Monumenti Inediti*, iv. liv.): here it is carried by Iris, while Hermes carries a staff of the same design, but not apparently finished off with serpents' heads. There is now in the British Museum a *κηρύκειον* of bronze, about 2 ft. long, on which the snakes are distinctly figured: from the lettering of the Greek inscription upon it, it must be as early as 450 B.C. For the foregoing information I am indebted to Mr. Cecil Smith, of the British Museum.

It is quite clear, then, that the snake-headed wand was familiar long before even the foundation of Alexandria: and I have no doubt that its adoption in the mystic cults of the Great City accounts for its presence at this day in the ritual of the Coptic Christians.

is obviously much stronger than in the case of the lituus, where the comparison depends merely on the vague fact that the lituus was curved. Moreover, the comparison in the one case is weakened by the fact that the augur was obliged to carry his wand in the right hand; it is strengthened in the other case by the fact that Hermes is always depicted carrying his staff in the left hand. What was the exact symbolism of the two serpents attached to the herald's wand among the Greeks is not very certain; but this much is clear, that the wand was carried by heralds and ambassadors in virtue of their office, and as an emblem of peace<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> See Smith, Dict. of Greek and Roman Antiquities, p. 218, and the cut there given from Millin's *Peintures des Vases Antiques*, where the κηρύκειον is about 4 ft. long on the scale given by the figure. This length contrasted with the shortness of the lituus is another point in which my comparison has the advantage of the other. Hyginus says the serpents were regarded as an emblem of peace, because Mercury once found two serpents fighting and separated them with his staff. Macrobius derives the symbolism from Egypt: (Saturn. I. xix.) '*In Mercurio solem coli etiam ex caduceo claret, quod Aegyptii in specie draconum maris et feminae figuraverunt*': alluding apparently to the winged disk of the sun with the Uraeus serpent on either side. In a note Preller cites schol. on Thuc. i 53 κηρύκειον ἔστι ξύλον ὀρθὸν ἔχον ἐκατέρωθεν δύο ὄφεις περιπελεγμένους καὶ ἀντιπροσώπους πρὸς ἀλλήλους κειμένους, ὅπερ εἰώθασι φέρειν οἱ κήρυκες μετ' αὐτῶν. This wand was not used by Roman heralds. Thus Pliny remarks, '*Hic complexus anguivum et efferatorum concordia causa videtur esse quare exteræ gentes caduceum in pacis argumentis circumdata effigie anguivum fecerint. Neque enim cristatos esse in caduceo mos est.*' (Nat. Hist. xxix: 12 fin.) Of course it is possible that the Greek κηρύκειον may, after all, have derived its form from Egypt, and be a relic of some early ophidian worship: or the tau-cross, which seems to have been used from a very high antiquity in Egypt, may have become associated with

Its official character alone may have caused it to be adopted by the Church of Alexandria as their bishops' 'staff of authority;' and as an emblem of peace, it is at least not unsuitable to the heralds of the gospel message.

Another interpretation associates the eastern crozier with the idea of the brazen serpent raised aloft by Moses. This seems to me both less probable and less appropriate. Yet it is only fair to remember that in the West at least the symbol of the brazen serpent had an ancient place of honour in church ceremonial; it is found, for instance, in an Anglo-Saxon ritual, and was retained, even in England, up to the sixteenth century<sup>1</sup>. For on Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Eve, after the singing of nones, a procession went to the church door carrying a staff which ended upwards in a serpent; in the serpent's mouth was set a taper, which was solemnly kindled, and from this all other candles were lighted<sup>1</sup>. A similar ceremony seems clearly implied by a rubric in the Mozarabic liturgy, and the serpent-rod was used at Rouen as late as the eighteenth century. It is worth enquiring whether the curious serpent candlestick at Mâri Mina, of which I have given an illustration elsewhere<sup>2</sup>, may

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the serpent in the symbolism of some sect of early Egyptian mystics. The tau-cross in its Egyptian form was undoubtedly adopted as a religious symbol by the primitive Christians of Egypt.

<sup>1</sup> Lit. and Rit. of the Celtic Church, p. 53. The expression in the note '*hastam cum imagine serpentis*,' seems to suggest a reference to the brazen serpent. I have quoted largely from this page of Mr. Warren's work.

<sup>2</sup> Vol. i. p. 59.

not originally have been intended for the same ceremonial usage on Easter Eve; but there is no decisive evidence on the point forthcoming. No doubt the express comparison made by our Lord of his own uplifting on the cross to the uplifting of the brazen serpent sufficed to coin the emblem, and to coin it with a very clear impression. Thus St. Ambrose distinctly says, 'The brazen serpent is a figure of the cross, and a fitting symbol of the body of Christ;' and even Tertullian admits its appropriateness. But, granting both the existence and the fitness of the emblem in itself, what one does not see is its suitability as applied to the episcopal office. It would seem something very like arrogance for a bishop to appropriate so obviously sacred a symbol.

Yet a third interpretation remains in the case of the Coptic crozier as faintly possible but extremely improbable. It is just conceivable that the idea might be that of the triumph of the cross over the dragon, the victory of Christ over the power of the Evil One. This, however, would imply that the second serpent was merely added for the sake of symmetry, and it would imply also an entire difference of symbolism in the Coptic and Greek crozier,—there being no cross upon the latter, and any such difference is in the last degree unlikely. On the whole, then, it seems fairest to suppose that the eastern episcopal staff has come down in unbroken succession from the herald's wand of pagan Hellas. There is thus not the slightest necessity for tracing its development back to the ordinary crutch or walking stick. Such a supposition would quite fail to account for the serpents, and is decidedly weakened



by the fact that the crutch in the form of a tau-cross remains side by side with the crozier to this day a familiar appurtenance of worship in every Coptic church. Nor is its use confined, as was originally the case in England, to 'aged and sickly ecclesiastics,' as Rock declares<sup>1</sup>; but the length of the Coptic services, and the general absence of seats, make it welcome even to the young and hale. Had it once been consecrated to the bishop's office, it would scarcely have continued in the hand of every layman.

It is curious that the rubrics in the known Coptic pontificals are silent on the subject of the crozier. The reason of this no doubt is that when the ordination is accomplished, and the bishop or patriarch is seated on his throne, he is required to hold, not the staff, but the book of the gospel; and similarly this book is a more common ornament than the staff in Coptic paintings. But that the staff really formed part of the bishop's investiture, we learn from Vansleb; who relates that after the ordination service the bishop proceeds to the patriarch's abode, and is there presented with a 'small bronze cross and with a staff in the form of the letter T.' The same author tells us that when the patriarch is fully arrayed at his investiture, he takes from the altar 'a large iron cross which serves among the Copts in place of the pastoral staff.' It may be true that such a cross figures in the ordination ceremony, but it is not true that the patriarchal staff differs from the episcopal in the manner alleged. St. Michael is sometimes painted

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<sup>1</sup> Church of Our Fathers, vol. ii. p. 184, note 22. Rock says that the use of the crutch lasted till the middle of the twelfth century: but notice that his authorities are all French.

carrying the Jerusalem patriarchal cross with three transoms: and in the eighth-century carved panels at Abu Sargah each of the three horsemen, probably St. George, St. Mercurius, and St. Demetrius, carries a long staff ending upwards in a cross, and almost exactly resembling that borne by St. Gregory, as figured in the Hierolexicon<sup>1</sup>: but the staff here is probably only a spear with a fanciful embellishment. Evidence such as this is not sufficient to refute the express testimony of present custom, and of the most ancient paintings, in favour of the serpentine design of the patriarchal staff. Moreover, Vansleb's words, if true, would prove too much, denying the familiar form of crozier altogether.

As regards the other eastern Churches, the investiture with the pastoral staff is a matter of some ceremony among the Syrian Jacobites: it is delivered to the bishop during the service, with the words, 'The Lord hath sent thee a rod of strength out of Sion.' When the patriarch is being ordained, every bishop present grasps the staff with his right hand, and all hold it together: then the senior bishop raises the patriarch's hand above all the others, and rests it on the top of the staff, and the rite is thus accomplished<sup>2</sup>.

Among the Maronites the staff is allowed to 'periodeutae'<sup>3</sup>, as well as to bishops and patriarch<sup>4</sup>. The words and the ceremonies used at the delivery of the staff, in the case of the two latter orders, are the same as those used among the Syrians. The

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<sup>1</sup> See Smith's Dict. Christ. Antiq., p. 1566.

<sup>2</sup> Denzinger, Rit. Or., tom. ii. pp. 75-77.

<sup>3</sup> Id. ib., p. 176.

<sup>4</sup> Id. ib., pp. 203, 208, 223.

crozier is mentioned along with ring and pall in the eleventh century<sup>1</sup>.

For the Nestorian staff I have already cited sufficient evidence. The Armenian Church grants the staff to *vartaped*s at their ordination, first with words which make it symbolical of the power of rescuing sinners from the snares of the Evil One, and turning them to repentance: again with words which emphasise the duty of preaching: and thirdly, with words which recall the pastor's office of comforting the mournful and afflicted. In the same service it is called the 'priestly staff,' with a direct allusion to the good shepherd, and the 'royal sceptre<sup>2</sup>.' At a further stage of the *vartaped*'s ordination it is made suggestive of preparing the way of the Lord: again of climbing the hill of Sion: and lastly, of strength and courage. There is therefore a very ornate symbolism and ritual connected with the delivery of the staff to the *vartaped* at the various stages of his ordination. In the case of a bishop, the crozier is once delivered with the words, 'Receive this bishop's staff, that you may chastise and punish the froward, and govern and feed those that obey in the law and teaching of God always<sup>3</sup>.'

The rubrics, of course, say nothing about the form of these eastern croziers: but fortunately there is some independent evidence. The Jacobite Syrian Church seems to employ both the crook and the tau-cross staff: thus at the church belonging to that community at Urfa there is 'a double-headed bishop's staff, the volutes being of serpents, and like our Anglo-Saxon

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<sup>1</sup> Gerhard, *De Eccl. Maronitarum*, Jena, 1668 (not paged).

<sup>2</sup> Denzinger, *Rit. Or.*, tom. ii. p. 324.

<sup>3</sup> *Id. ib.*, p. 337.

style of design<sup>1</sup> (sic), and also 'a single-headed crook of more modern type.' The same authority mentions a long 'ivory crutch, looking like a patriarchal staff,' in the Nestorian church at Kochanes<sup>2</sup>. This, presumably, is a tau-cross without serpents, but is not by any means determined as the normal form of crozier by evidence so ambiguous. Among the Armenians the crooked pastoral staff of Roman form is used by patriarch and bishops, while the ancient serpentine crozier is still retained by the lower order of vartapeds<sup>3</sup>.

In the West the first mention of the pastoral staff is in the acts of the Fourth Council of Toledo, 633 A.D.; but it is there mentioned with the ring in an incidental manner, which must rather than may point to already long established usage. And there is no doubt that in the Celtic and British Churches the staff goes back to the very beginning of ceremonial worship. The Latinised Saxon or Celtic name for the staff was *cambutta*, or sometimes *cambo*: it is found for example in the Gregorian Sacramentary, now in the library of the college at Autun, and in the Egbert Pontifical. Tradition tells of a golden staff adorned with gems as borne by St. Patrick: and two of his followers, St. Dagaueus and St. Asic, as well as St. Columba, are said to have been very skilful makers of the staff in precious metals<sup>4</sup>. The staff covered with plates of gold and enriched with

<sup>1</sup> Christians under the Crescent in Asia, p. 84.

<sup>2</sup> Id. ib., p. 218.

<sup>3</sup> Fortescue, Armenian Church, p. 134. Yet Denzinger says, 'Episcopi baculum pastoralem adhibent similem Græcorum,' vol. i. p. 133.

<sup>4</sup> Warren, Lit. and Rit. of the Celtic Church, pp. 115-116.

glorious designs in pearls, which St. Columba received from St. Kentigern, was still found at Ripon in the fifteenth century. The shape of the Anglo-Saxon and Irish crozier was peculiar. Originally it seems to have been quite short, rather like a sceptre than a crook. The volute at the top was less strongly marked than in the later and more familiar type : in fact the form may be roughly compared to that of a note of interrogation<sup>1</sup>. Professor Westwood, however, mentions a very curious and unique example, now in the museum of the Kilkenny Archaeological Society : it is in the form of a tau-cross, 'having a boat-shaped head with the ends recurved and terminating in a dragon's head.' This surely is a very striking coincidence with eastern usage, and adds another link to the evidence connecting the early Irish and oriental Churches. Even in later examples of the staff, Irish, English, and continental, the dragon or serpent in some form or other is a very common ornament of the whorl. Thus the top of a staff found in the ruins of Aghadoc cathedral ends in a dragon's head, which is seizing the leg of a man, and is itself seized by another dragon. An extremely fine crozier sold in the Castellani collection<sup>2</sup> was of gilt bronze enamelled, and had in the whorl a figure of St. Michael and the Devil, the knop being of open work with lacertine monsters.

It is easy to trace the development of the staff from the simple crook, which is illustrated, for instance, in an illuminated eleventh-century MS. in the library of Troyes<sup>3</sup>, in a fresco of the same period in the church of S. Clemente at Rome, in the mosaics

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<sup>1</sup> See Westwood's *Miniatures*, p. 152, pl. 53.

<sup>2</sup> See *Academy*, March 15, 1884.      <sup>3</sup> *La Messe*, vol. i. pl. 10.

of St. Mark's at Venice, or in our own country in the twelfth-century effigy of Bishop Joceline in Salisbury cathedral. The next stage was to fill the whorl with a vine-leaf or some simple foliated ornament, such as appears in the crozier on another stone monument in Salisbury cathedral, that of Bishop Egidius in the thirteenth century<sup>1</sup>. Finally, figures and grotesques were worked in with elaborate skill; and it is possible that the frequent use of the serpent was due to considerations of artistic fitness rather than of religious imagery. The veil or pannicellus on the stem of the crozier does not seem to be figured in very early monuments, though the mere fact of its use on the Coptic episcopal staff is some argument for its antiquity. The veil is represented on a brass of Archbishop Grenfeld in York minster, dated 1315 A.D., on that of Abbot Eastney at Westminster, 1498, and that of Bishop Goodrich at Ely cathedral, 1554<sup>2</sup>. Oxford has two good examples of the veiled crozier on painted glass—one in the east window of the Bodleian Library, the other in the north aisle of Christ Church cathedral, where is a window containing an interesting figure of the last Abbot of Osney.

A cross, generally of Greek or nearly Greek form, is characteristic of an archbishop as opposed to a bishop in the West. An early instance is furnished by the fresco at S. Clemente referred to above, where both the crook-headed and the cross-headed forms of the crozier may be seen together; and for an English illustration one may mention the late fourteenth-century brass of Robert Waldeby, archbishop of York, in Westminster Abbey. Except for

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<sup>1</sup> See Bloxam's *Ecclesiastical Vestments*, pp. 22, 28.

<sup>2</sup> Waller, *Monumental Brasses*.

the doubtful evidence of Vansleb, there is no analogy in Coptic usage for the cruciform staff of the archbishop or patriarch.

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MINOR ECCLESIASTICAL ORNAMENTS.

Of the other ornaments worn by the Coptic clergy it is not necessary to speak at any length. Priests, bishops, and patriarch alike, in both branches of the Church of Alexandria, wear the pectoral cross even in their ordinary attire, but concealed according to ancient custom in the folds of their raiment. These crosses are usually of silver; and though I have not actually seen any enclosing relics, I have no doubt that originally in Egypt, as in all other parts of the Christian world, they were often used as reliquaries. In fact there are three or four reliquary crosses, which may have been worn on the breast, though somewhat large for the purpose, among the treasures at the orthodox Alexandrian church of St. Nicholas in Cairo. They are beautiful specimens of Byzantine goldsmith's work, and richly covered with jewels. The Greek name for the pectoral cross is *ἐγκόλπιον*. Nikephorus, patriarch of Constantinople, mentions an elaborate golden enkolpion in the ninth century; and the patriarch Symeon, more than five centuries later, records it as among the bishop's insignia. In the West we read of a silver cross worn by St. Gregory<sup>1</sup>, and in England by St. Elphege of Canterbury; while in bishop Lacy's Pontifical its use is enjoined as obligatory. St. Aidan's cross was among the relics at Durham in the fourteenth

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<sup>1</sup> Rock, Church of Our Fathers, vol. ii. p. 176.

century<sup>1</sup>. No doubt in many cases, and more especially in the very early days of Christianity, the pectoral cross was worn largely by laymen as well as by clergy, and served both as a token of

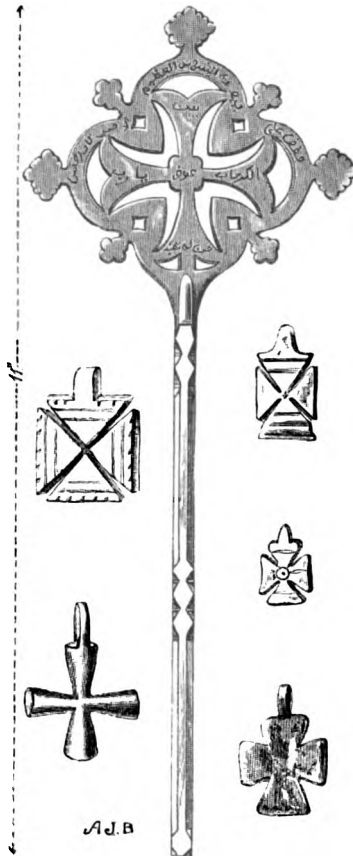


Fig. 31.—Benedictional Cross and small Amulet Crosses.

the faith, and among the more superstitious as a talisman or amulet. The cut shows five small Coptic amulet crosses, three at least of which are of extreme

<sup>1</sup> Warren, *Lit. and Rit. of the Celtic Church*, p. 115.



antiquity. Three are of bronze, one of stone, and one of horn or bone. The designs are of a rude archaic simplicity, and the bronze specimens are patinated. The most ancient example perhaps is a small cross of solid bronze with four nearly equal branches, rounded, but slightly tapering inwards. The second bronze cross is rather of Latin form, but made from a tiny oblong plate with the angles cut out so as to leave four broad short branches. Two other examples have diagonal lines cut on the surface and deepened at the angles. All the crosses have small projections pierced to form a ring for suspension. They may date from the second or third century of our era.

Processional crosses are found in all the churches; the designs are very varied, and often beautiful.

Sandals cannot be reckoned among the Coptic ecclesiastical ornaments. It is a rule that all who enter the haikal put off their shoes at the door, and this applies even to the celebrant. Renaudot<sup>1</sup> questions the statement of Severus, bishop of Ashmunain, supported as it is by one independent manuscript, that sandals were worn by the Syrian clergy. The Nestorian celebrant however does not approach the altar barefoot, but retains his shoes<sup>2</sup>: while the Armenian priests<sup>3</sup> wear special sandals or slippers.

The Armenians also use the ring, which they may have borrowed from the West, as it does not seem to be recognised in the other oriental Churches. It is not surprising that the episcopal gloves, which do not appear in the West till the twelfth century, should be unknown among eastern ecclesiastical

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<sup>1</sup> Lit. Or., vol. ii. p. 54.      <sup>2</sup> Christians under the Crescent, p. 220.

<sup>3</sup> Fortescue, Armenian Church, p. 134.

vestments. But the Coptic clergy possess one ornament not found in western Christendom which



Fig. 32.—Head of Processional Cross of Silver.

may fitly be mentioned here,—the hand-cross. Patriarch, bishops, and priests alike employ it to

give the benediction ; it is also used in the baptismal ceremony, and in other solemn acts of worship. The patriarch when seated on his throne in the church, and not actually celebrating, holds in his right hand a golden cross, and in his left the crozier : and it will be noticed that the small cross figured on the seal of the patriarch has two keys attached as symbols of his supreme office. The ordinary benedictional cross is of silver : sometimes of base metal or bronze. It is generally engraved with a dedicatory inscription, and is nearly always of the form given in the woodcut above. The Melkite patriarch also uses a cross of gold, or of silver-gilt enamelled, to give the benediction.

Lastly, some mention must be made of the epigonation, if only to deny its existence as a Coptic vestment. It is frequently found depicted in late Coptic paintings. Any one entering the cathedral at Cairo, and finding that all the ecclesiastical figures on the panels of the iconostasis wear the epigonation, might reasonably number it among Coptic vestments : and if further he found the same ornament not merely in new pictures, like those at the cathedral, but in others a hundred years old, and not merely in Cairo but in a remote and unfrequented Delta village like Tris, and even at the monastery of St. Macarius in the desert, his conclusion would seem certain. Yet I venture to say that it would be quite erroneous. In the desert, in the Delta, and in Cairo I have closely questioned priests and laymen, and never found a single Copt who knew even the name of the epigonation in any language, much less its meaning. When I pointed it out, it was always noticed with a sort of surprised curiosity : no one could give the

smallest reason for its presence, but all agreed in denying that it was an ecclesiastical vestment. Similarly the rubrics are entirely silent on the subject; nor is there one particle of literary evidence to show that the Copts ever acknowledged the epigonation. The pictures, as I have said, are very late—painted, in fact, at a period when the Copts were entirely dependent for their sacred pictures on the Greeks. A glance at the cathedral iconostasis will show that it, like the whole building, is the work of Greek and not of Coptic artists. The Copts of to-day and the Copts of a hundred years ago alike have been too inartistic to paint their own pictures, and too ignorant or too careless to check the painters whom they hired. The Greek artists have naturally followed Greek tradition, and have flooded the Coptic churches with pictures portraying peculiarly Greek vestments. Thus it is that all recent pictures in the sacred buildings of the Copts are absolutely worthless as evidence for ritual. Moreover, it is specially easy to understand how this particular vestment was familiar to the Greeks in Egypt: for they had not to go to Constantinople to discover it, but saw it and still see it continually in their own Melkite Egyptian churches. The epigonation, of course, in its present stiff lozenge-like form, dates only from mediaeval times: and it would therefore be an unheard-of thing, if the Jacobites adopted it from the Melkites so long after the Churches had been sundered. We have already seen that both communities retained such vestments as were in use at the time of the separation, but did not borrow from each other subsequently. But it was natural that the Melkites should fall rather

under the influence of Constantinople, while the Copts never bowed their stubborn independence. Thus the Melkites readily received the epigonation, and the Copts firmly rejected it; until by the negligence of these latter times it has seemed, and seemed falsely, to creep in unawares. For, though all the pictures in Egypt were to bear witness in its favour, the custom of the Coptic Church and her canons alike disown it altogether.

Some very beautiful epigonatia belonging to the Melkite Church may be seen at the treasury of St. Nicholas in Cairo; and as they are finer than anything of the kind yet described in English, I may be pardoned for giving some details about them<sup>1</sup>. The best are from two to three hundred years old; and all are lozenge-shaped. One has a ground of crimson velvet, and is delicately wrought over in gold embroidery. A border runs round the edges: within the lozenge a circle is described cutting off the four corners or spandrels, which are filled with the four evangelistic symbols. The circle itself or rather circular zone, about two inches broad, is decked with fourteen medallions, of which the topmost contains the Trinity, the lowermost a prophet, and the others each an apostle. Within this zone the Resurrection is depicted forming the main design. Every medallion and every outline is marked out with tiny pearls. Another example bears date 1673 A.D., and, like the last, has a circle described within the lozenge. The spandrels are

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<sup>1</sup> Neale gives a diagram of an epigonation, *Gen. Introd.*, p. 311. It is also figured by Goar, *Euchol.*, pp. 114 and 115. None of these engravings convey any idea of splendour. The descriptions are very meagre.

filled with scroll-work : the circle is set round with fine large pearls : within the circle is a most splendid design of the Magi bringing gifts to the Holy Child. The whole is embroidered in gold with extreme fineness. Angels above in the air descending head foremost are represented with really wonderful foreshortening. All the drawing is true and graceful, and all the figures wrought as delicately as with a brush. The drapery is natural and flowing : the pose admirable : the general effect that of a soft yet sumptuous picture. Altogether, it is one of the most beautiful pieces of needlework in any country.

Laymen, as well as monks and ecclesiastics, carry a rosary, which properly consists of forty-one beads, or sometimes of eighty-one. But the Copts are not so careful about the number as their Muslim fellow-countrymen. For the Muslim rosary consists very strictly of ninety-nine beads, divided by marks into three sets of thirty-three : each set as it is told is accompanied with the words ' Praise be to God ' or some like prayer ; whereas the Coptic formulary is ' Kyrie Eleëson,' repeated as in the service forty-one times. The priest's rosary should be distinguished by having a little cross attached : but laymen sometimes usurp the symbol. In the West the rosary does not seem to date earlier than mediaeval times : but in the East and in Egypt it goes back to the furthest antiquity. Palladius mentions a hermit who carried pebbles and cast one away for every prayer : and St. Antony is sometimes depicted as wearing a rosary at his girdle in Coptic paintings. There is even some reason to suppose that the rosary was worn in the East before the Christian era.

## CHAPTER VI.

### *Books, Language, and Literature of the Copts.*

#### BOOKS.

**O**F the priceless literary treasures which belonged to the churches of Egypt some few have been rescued, many have been destroyed, and some few possibly remain to reward research. Every monastery, and probably every church, once had its own library of MSS.; and to this day there is no such thing as a printed book used in sacred service. Curzon's discovery of most precious MSS. at the monasteries of the Natrun desert, as recorded in his thrilling narrative, is too well known to need repetition here<sup>1</sup>. The same writer mentions books of less value in the rock-cut church of the Convent of the Pulley in Upper Egypt—including one book with a rude illumination, which Curzon may be pardoned for deriding, as it is the only one he ever saw<sup>2</sup>. He mentions also books found at Madinat Habu<sup>3</sup>, and at the White Monastery near Sühâg<sup>4</sup>. At the latter the priest spoke of above one hundred parchments destroyed in 1812, when the place was

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<sup>1</sup> Monasteries of the Levant, pp. 97-110.

<sup>2</sup> Id., p. 116.

<sup>3</sup> Id., p. 123.

<sup>4</sup> Id., p. 132.

pillaged by the Mamelukes. So, too, among the lonely mountains in the far eastern desert by the Red Sea, the monasteries of Antonios and Bolos<sup>1</sup> once contained libraries, so rich in ancient treasures that their loss is little less deplorable than the more distant destruction of the great library at Alexandria by 'Amr. For it is only four hundred years ago since the slaves employed by the degenerate monks at these two monasteries rose one night against their masters and slew them; and after awhile, tiring of a dull life so far out of the world, abandoned the place altogether. For eighty years the buildings remained deserted, or visited only by wandering Beduins, who plundered all that was worth plundering in the churches, burnt all that was worth burning—and the books, by a fatal ignorance, were placed in the latter category—and destroyed all that was capable of destruction. But in course of time other monks slowly drew back to the ruins, repaired the churches, and rebuilt the walls. Since then the monasteries have passed three tranquil centuries, in which the daily sound of chaunt and cymbal has never ceased, and the inmates' life has never varied, except when some phenomenal traveller has sought a night's shelter, or some tribe of wild horsemen have dashed in vain against the fortress walls. There are still some books in the tower or keep of Dair Antonios; and though apparently they do not date further back than the reoccupation, yet they deserve a more careful scrutiny than they have received. For the monks in returning may very well have

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<sup>1</sup> Arch. Journ., vol. xxix. p. 129. Vansleb too mentions books here.



brought *old* books with them. Dair Bolos, which lies two days' journey away from Dair Antonios, is also said not to contain a single ancient MS., since all perished at the time of the slaves' insurrection or the abandonment; and the prevalence of this report has deterred travellers from the tedious and dangerous pilgrimage. There are, however, reasons for doubting the accuracy of this rumour.

Very few of the remaining MSS. are on vellum, or go back beyond the sixteenth century. The paper employed is cotton paper or carta bombycina, as it is technically called, a beautiful vellum-like material of great antiquity. A sixth-century MS. on this paper exists in the museum of the Collegio Romano at Rome<sup>1</sup>, and Curzon speaks of a Coptic MS. in his possession on the same material dated 1018. The fact, therefore, of being written on paper instead of vellum is by no means decisive against the age of a manuscript, although doubtless the majority of ancient writings are on vellum.

The MSS. are all written with a reed pen, such as the Arabs use to-day, and such probably as has been in use in Egypt ever since writing began. The characters are bold uncials, there being no cursive in Coptic. Black and red ink are both employed freely, for the red is by no means confined to the rubrics. Most of the missals and lectionaries have large ornamental capitals and an illuminated cross at the beginning: and some have a considerable amount of other ornament. Both Professor Westwood<sup>2</sup> and Messrs. Silvestre and Champollion<sup>3</sup> have given facsimiles of Coptic illumination, and their

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<sup>1</sup> Curzon, *Monasteries of the Levant*, p. 123.

<sup>2</sup> *Palaeographia Sacra Pictoria.*      <sup>3</sup> *Universal Palaeography.*

remarks are well worth reading. It may be admitted at once that for the most part these illuminations are, though well designed, rather rude in execution, and will not bear comparison with the finest miniatures of the West. Still they deserve more notice than they have received, being often extremely curious and original. The following account of a MS.—perhaps of the fourteenth century—brought by the writer from Egypt, and now in the Bodleian Library, may serve to give some idea of Coptic miniature painting in general, though unfortunately the book is not in good condition, and the illuminations have in many places been blurred and spoiled by the English binder, who pasted tissue paper over them to strengthen the pages. It differs from earlier MSS. in containing not a single human figure, a result which one would be inclined to attribute rather to unconscious Muslim influence than to want of skill in this branch of art, were it not for the continuous practice of painting pictures and icons for the churches. Birds, however, are depicted in the most extraordinary varieties of grotesque attitudes. Sometimes it is a creature with large red head and stiff, wingless, mummy-like body, reaching down the whole side of the page. It has tiny legs or none at all; the body is divided by vertical bands and covered with black and yellow scrollwork; in its mouth it carries something which may be a fruit or a jewel. Sometimes, again, it has a long thin serpentine form winding about the margin of the page, and making in several convolutions pouches which contain unfledged nestlings; while other strange little birds are pecking at various parts of their remarkable mother. The little ones in the pouches are often

so roughly indicated as to look like nothing but the relics of a spider's den—a mere heap of random legs and wings. Some of these birds are plainly plucking at their own breast, and there can be little doubt that they are meant for pelicans, and represent the familiar Christian emblem; but it is by a very singular confusion that the serpent and the bird—the antitheses of the symbol—are here blent together. Smaller birds with retorted drooping heads, which are common, may be meant for doves, but look more like ducks; other birds are seen tumbling about, standing on their heads, and very rarely flying. In the fine genealogy of our Lord in this volume there is a sort of broad pillar down the left side of the page, and every name is written between a bird's head on the one side and a golden rose on the other. Gilt is sparingly used in these illuminations, the chief colours being red, pale yellow, olive green, and black; azure blue and cobalt are rarer.

No other animals are drawn in this volume, and there is scarcely a sign of flower-painting beyond a doubtful sort of tulip design in black, and one or two clusters of blossoms, or grapes, or some other fruit at which birds are pecking.

While, however, the birds unenclosed in borders are scattered at random up and down the pages, far the greater part of Coptic ornamentation is purely conventional and systematic. These conventional designs may be divided into two classes—the geometrical, which consist of narrow ribbons interlacing in endless variety, and the foliated, which comprise many forms of the acanthus. Interlacing work is employed chiefly for elaborate borders at the beginning of a prayer or lection, and for large crosses at

the end. The borders are usually made up of concentric squares or oblongs in order round the page<sup>1</sup>, or of ribbons in long parallels with plaited knots at intervals<sup>2</sup>, or of small crosses in twisted bands<sup>3</sup>. The large crosses which generally fill a page are not more often of the Greek than of the Latin form<sup>4</sup>. There is one example of a cross in a quatrefoil<sup>5</sup>.

The best specimen of the acanthus pattern is at the beginning of our Lord's genealogy<sup>6</sup>. At the right side medallions filled with acanthus are enclosed by bands of interlaced ribbons. The ribbon-work on the left side is in gold; the medallions on the right have a blue ground with gold designs. The oblong space across the top is surrounded with a blue and gold band of acanthus work; the ground within being part red and part blue, worked over with like foliage in gold. This illumination is really of high merit, approaching to the fineness and splendour of the best work in the early mediaeval copies of the *korân* in the public library at Cairo. The acanthus has always been a favourite subject with eastern artists of all kinds. It is found in luxuriant profusion in the stucco-work, carved woodwork, and marble of the ancient mosques; in the splendid early ivories of the Coptic churches; and in the trays, lamps, and inkstands which the Cairo workers in brass may be seen every day chasing in the Khan al Khalili. Nor is it at all uncommon in the miniature painting of the West. Thus it occurs in an early form in the Latin Gospels at Trinity College,

<sup>1</sup> Bodleian MS., p. 29.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*, p. 42.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*, p. 107.

<sup>4</sup> *E. g. id.*, p. 145.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.*, p. 41.

<sup>6</sup> *Id.*, p. 164.

Cambridge, dated the end of the tenth century<sup>1</sup>; and it is frequent in a more conventionalised form in the eleventh century, for example in the Arundel Psalter<sup>2</sup>.

It would be very interesting, if it were possible, to trace in the ornamentation of their books one more link of connexion between the Churches of Egypt and Ireland. One is met at once, however, by a serious stumbling-block in the fact that the acanthus, which, as I have shown, is very frequent in Egyptian design, is never found in Irish ornamentation<sup>3</sup>. Again, for the slender spiral lines in complex coils, for the squares filled with cross-lines in Chinese-like patterns, and for the red dotted outlines, which are three of the main characteristics of Irish work, there is no counterpart in Coptic illumination. Nor can the uncouth bird designs described above be considered a fair analogue for the great variety in Irish MSS. of lacertine animals and birds with bodies 'hideously attenuated<sup>4</sup>' and necks, legs, tails, and tongues drawn out into long interlacing ribbons. There remains, then, by this method of exhaustion, only one prominent characteristic common to the two schools, namely a love of borders designed in very ingenious and intricate plaitwork; though even here it should be noticed that the Irish are more fond of rounded angles than the Copts. The western MS., with ornamentation

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<sup>1</sup> Westwood, *Facsimiles of Anglo-Saxon and Irish Ornaments*, pl. 42.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*, pl. 49.

<sup>3</sup> Westwood, *Palaeographia Sacra Pictoria*, chapter on Book of Kells, p. 2.

<sup>4</sup> *Id. ib.*

nearest the Coptic style, is perhaps the Psalter of St. John at Cambridge, belonging to the ninth century<sup>1</sup>; but on the whole, the resemblance between Egyptian and western art is too slight to bear the weight of any serious theory.

The matter, however, is somewhat changed, if we pass from the inside to the outside of these service-books. The likeness between the metal cases in which the Coptic gospels are enclosed and the Irish *cumhdachs* has been already brought out; moreover the Irish practice of enclosing missals and other books for carrying about in leathern cases, called *polaires*<sup>2</sup>, is exactly paralleled by the Abyssinian, if not the Coptic, custom, as described and illustrated by Curzon in the narrative of his visit to the monasteries of the Natrun lakes<sup>3</sup>. As a rule, however, at the present time Coptic MSS. are merely bound in brown or red calfskin, with arabesque devices stamped upon the covers and on the flap which protects the front edges. Sometimes, in the absence of a flap, the book is kept closed by leather strings fastened in the place of clasps and serving the same purpose. These service-books belong only to the churches; or, if the people have them for private devotion in their own houses, they never bring prayer-books or missals to public worship, where they follow the words as they fall from the priest's lips with reverence and intelligence, and keep their eyes fixed upon the sanctuary.

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<sup>1</sup> Westwood, Facsimiles, pl. 30.

<sup>2</sup> Warren, Lit. and Rit. of Celtic Church, p. 22.

<sup>3</sup> Monasteries of the Levant, pp. 105-6.

## THE COPTIC LANGUAGE.

The Copts can boast of no great poets, historians, philosophers, or men of science. Their only literature is religious: and the fact that they have neither witchery of speech nor treasures of knowledge to offer has caused their language to be treated with a strangely undeserved indifference. For there is no language with a higher antiquity, a more abnormal structure, or a more curious history. The records of five thousand years ago chiselled on the monuments of Egypt still remain sculptured, though standing in everlasting silence; the very words uttered by the great men of Hellas are still heard sounding, though no longer written in the ancient manner of writing: yet these two, the lost utterance of the old Egyptian speech and the lost character of the old Greek writing, are united and preserved in the Coptic of to-day. The romance of language could go no further than to join the speech of Pharaoh and the writing of Homer in the service-book of an Egyptian Christian. Now, however, the study of Coptic is likely to be rescued from the neglect which it has long suffered by the kindred study of hieroglyphics, as philologers are shamed and forced out of their indolence by the zeal of historians and antiquarians.

A subject of this nature requires, of course, a large treatise to itself—a treatise for which the materials are as yet hardly ripe, and which would besides be somewhat out of place in these volumes. The present notice therefore will be as brief as the

state of the materials at hand and the scope of the writer's purpose demand.

The Coptic language to-day is no doubt virtually the same tongue that was spoken by the builders of the pyramids: and it still retains many words scarcely changed from that epoch. The vocabulary however is neither purely Aryan nor purely Semitic, but a mixture of both. In the same way the grammatical structure of Coptic is half Semitic, half akin to the African languages. It was probably in very early Christian times that Coptic became fixed in the form that survives, although it was not until the sixth century that Christianity became definitely the established religion. Up to that date the worship of Osiris had lingered on, particularly in remote country places, where the gospel was unheard or awoke but faint echoes. Then however the bishops began to wield secular power, and amongst other signs of government they took the important office of distributing corn to the people out of the hands of the city prefects<sup>1</sup>. It was at this period, according to Messrs. Silvestre and Champollion, that Coptic *writing* began: but it is difficult to understand for what reasons they assign the beginning of letters to so late a period. In the third and fourth centuries the monasteries of the desert were thronged with monks, many of whom could talk no language but their native Coptic. Thus St. Antony, who knew no Greek, was first set thinking on monastic life by hearing the gospel read in Coptic; and Palladius speaks of regular service and celebrations<sup>2</sup>, which he

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<sup>1</sup> Universal Palaeography, by Silvestre and Champollion, translated by Sir F. Madden, p. 122.

<sup>2</sup> Rosweyde, Vitae Patrum, lib. viii. p. 712.



witnessed, and which must imply set forms written in the vernacular. We know moreover that the Psalms were translated into Coptic about the year 300 A. D. by Pachomius: and although this is perhaps the earliest date assignable with certainty, it is extremely difficult to conceive that the need for setting down liturgical forms in writing did not assert itself irresistibly some time before that. It is of course possible that the most ancient forms of prayer in the Coptic vulgar tongue may have been written not in Greek but in demotic characters: but, interesting as the fact would be, there is not sufficient evidence to establish it, though there is reason to think that in some way or other demotic writing was preserved in use among the Copts for full a thousand years into the Christian era. There seems no decided point of contact between Coptic and hieroglyphic writing. Long before the Persian conquest the knowledge of hieroglyphics was limited to the priests: even as early as the fourteenth century B. C., the scribes who visited Bani Hassan could not understand the inscriptions, and those of the twenty-first dynasty blundered hopelessly in their copies of the Book of the Dead. So that it is matter of surprise rather than otherwise to find that hieroglyphics were not entirely disused in the time of Clement of Alexandria, and were even partially understood a century later. But their pagan character doubtless excluded them from recognition by the Christians. There is a contemporary story that at the time of Chosroës' invasion of Egypt, about 600 A. D., a saint who took refuge in a tomb was able to read the ancient inscriptions on the walls: but the probability is that the writing was demotic not hieroglyphic.

The White Monastery in Upper Egypt, which was built by the empress Helena with massive exterior in the style of ancient Egyptian architecture, contains many hieroglyphic stones, with inscriptions mostly upside-down, and therefore probably unintelligible to the builders. Vansleb mentions an inscription on the altar-stone of a little chapel dedicated to St. Michael in the convent of St. Matthew near Asnah—‘characters which were not hieroglyphics, and in a language that we know nothing about<sup>1</sup>.’ There can, I think, be little doubt that the inscription was demotic—though there is nothing to fix the date—and, if so, the fact is extremely interesting as tending to show the existence of a demotic Christian ritual.

Concerning the collision and interaction of Coptic with Greek and with Arabic more evidence is obtainable—evidence which goes to prove that Greek did not exercise nearly so powerful an influence as Arabic over the indigenous Egyptian. Origen for instance remarks that if a Greek wanted to teach the Egyptians, he would have to learn their language, or his labour would be vain<sup>2</sup>. The emperor Severus collected vast numbers of books on magic and shut them up in Alexander’s tomb : and Diocletian, enraged at a revolt and fearing lest the people should grow rich again, gathered together

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<sup>1</sup> The convent is dedicated to Matthew the Poor, not to the evangelist as Vansleb implies. The former is a Coptic saint, commemorated on the 3rd December.

<sup>2</sup> The material of this and the following paragraphs is borrowed mainly from the learned work of Étienne Quatremère, *Recherches Critiques et Historiques sur la Langue et la Littérature de l’Égypte*. Paris, 1808.

with great care all books on alchemy written by the old Egyptians, and burned them in public. These writings were presumably in the demotic character. In early Christian times Greek was spoken by a few of the well educated natives. Thus, while St. Paul the hermit spoke Greek<sup>1</sup>, St. Antony knew only Egyptian, and letters of his in that language, written to the monasteries, were extant in the time of Abu 'l Birkat. We read too of St. Athanasius' letters being translated into the vernacular. In the Syriac life of St. Ephrem it is related that when the holy man visited Egypt to see the famous Anba Bishôî, the two worthies were unable to converse, each knowing only his mother tongue: but each thereupon received a miraculous gift of speech. The author of an Arabic note upon a Coptic MS. states that before the Arab conquest the lessons were read in Greek, but explained in Coptic. Abu 'l Muḥassan relates that one 'Abdullah, son of 'Abd al Malik, governor of Egypt, ordered the registers of the divans or public offices to be kept in Arabic instead of Coptic in the year A.H. 96: but to this day the system of book-keeping in Egypt is a traditional mystery in the hands of the Copts. Severus, bishop of Ashmunain, who compiled a history of the patriarchs of Alexandria from Coptic and Greek MSS. in the monastery of St. Macarius, says in his preface that he made the translation into Arabic, because Arabic was everywhere spoken, and most of the people were ignorant of Greek and Coptic alike. This seems to have been in the ninth century. Yet in the ninth century Coptic was by no means unknown: for Joseph, the LII patriarch,

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<sup>1</sup> Rosweyde, *Vitae Patrum*, p. 18.

at his trial about 850 A. D., addressed the assembly in Coptic, and was understood even by Muslims who were present.

By the eleventh century doubtless Coptic had become less generally intelligible<sup>1</sup>, though it lingered on for centuries afterwards. The constitutions of the patriarch Gabriel II., c. 1140 A. D., ordered bishops to explain the creed and the Lord's prayer in the vulgar tongue, i. e. in Arabic. The Vatican MSS. are covered with marginal notes in Coptic: and Al Maḳṛtzi, writing in the early fifteenth century, constantly implies that Coptic is a living language. In speaking, for example, of the monasteries near Siût, he avers that the monks there use the Sahidic dialect, and that the women and children of Upper Egypt talk scarcely anything but Sahidic. So of Darankah he remarks that 'the inhabitants are Christians: all, great and little, speak Coptic and interpret it in Arabic.' Another Arab author, Abu Şalah, in his history of the monasteries of Egypt tells of a custom at Asnah still existing, by which Christians assist at Muslim weddings, and head the procession of the bridegroom through the streets, reciting Sahidic texts and maxims. Vansleb, visiting Egypt in 1672, conversed, as he alleges, with the last man who spoke Coptic as his mother tongue.

Such briefly are the facts, which bear witness to a slow process of extinction. Yet in face of such evidence, it is curious to find what wild mistakes about the Coptic language are made by grave authorities upon Church matters. Thus Denzinger declares that '*uno aut altero seculo post Arabum tyrannidem vernaculus lingue Aegyptiacae usus*

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<sup>1</sup> Renaudot, *Hist. Pat. Alex.*, p. 467.

prorsus interiit<sup>1</sup>—a swiftness of decay, or rather destruction, unparalleled in the history of language. Neale errs no less in the opposite direction in gravely recording a diocese in the south of Egypt ‘where the Copts are better educated than in any other portion of the patriarchate, and the Coptic language is generally spoken, whereas not above two persons understand it in Cairo<sup>2</sup>.’ Coptic is, of course, still the language of ritual. The mass and most of the prayers are recited in Coptic: the gospel is first read in Coptic and then rendered in the vernacular Arabic: some parts of the service are in Greek: while the rubrics where they are found, as well as some of the prayers and the psalms, are in Arabic. Generally, however, one may say that the *text* of the service-books now used is Coptic: and the earlier among them have no other language. But as the ritual language decayed from common use, we find rubrics, marginal notes and headings, and finally parallel translations in Arabic. It is worth remarking that there seems to be no example of a Coptic and *Cufic* MS.: which would seem to show that the need of a vernacular translation was not felt until after the *Cufic* had given way to the present cursive form of Arabic writing. Indeed the only instance of *Cufic* employed in any sacred building of the Copts, as far as I am aware, is the inscription on the ancient cedar screen at Al Mu'allakah. Yet curiously enough some traces of *Cufic* survive in encyclical or other ceremonial letters of the Church even at the present day. Thus in a letter from the patriarch of Alexandria to the archbishop of Canter-

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<sup>1</sup> Rit. Or., tom. i. p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Eastern Church: Gen. Introd., vol. i. p. 118.

bury, written forty years ago, while the title and address are in ordinary Arabic of a very ornamental style, the formal greeting is in Cufic, and there are some words of Cufic at the end.

Coptic MSS., then, fall naturally into three classes each with its own historical significance. First, anterior to the Arab conquest, come bilingual MSS. in which the literary Greek and the vernacular Coptic stand side by side together. These are generally written on papyrus, and go back to the sixth century or possibly earlier. Sometimes more-over the two languages are found together inscribed on tiles or stone : and apparently there was a time when such inscriptions were common.

Next, the Greek text was omitted, and the Coptic stood alone. This change began with the settlement of the Arabs in Egypt, when the Jacobite faction among the natives sided with their conquerors against the Melkites, and strove with equal vigour for the destruction of Melkite churches and the suppression of the Melkite language. Still it is not till the tenth century that Graeco-Coptic MSS. disappear entirely. At that period Greek cursive writing became general, but the Copts never adopted any form of cursive : probably because Coptic was already assuming a hieratic character, and was therefore not to be degraded to the uses of common life ; while the Arabic was passing from the beautiful but stately Cufic to its present fluent and graceful form, and thus became adapted to the needs of business or friendly intercourse.

The third class of MSS. is that in which Arabic has been formally acknowledged as the vulgar tongue, and is received into the text side

by side with the dead or dying Coptic. These MSS. date from the thirteenth century, or even earlier, and continue up to the present time, although the language of the mass has been unspoken for two hundred years; and even among the priests who have to read it, there are but few who read with understanding.

To this day, however, there remain sundry phrases and fragments of Greek, like fossils embedded in the Coptic ritual language. Thus the *κτρίε ελεσον* is a familiar word in the mouth of the present worshippers at various parts of the service: most of the proclamations uttered by the deacon to the people are still in Greek, *απαζεσθε αλληλους επ φιληματι αγιω, εις ανατολας βλεψατε*: other sentences in the canon, as *ο κτριοc μετα παντων γεων, και μετα του πνευματου σου, δοξα πατρι και υιω και αγιω πνευματι*: and particular words, as *παρδεισος, προφητης, παρθενος, κοσμος, ακαστασις, ο αγγελος, παντοκρατωρ*. The eucharistic bread is still stamped with the trisagion in Greek—*αγιος ισχυρος αγιος αθάνατος αγιος ο θεος*, although the Coptic word for God is of ancient Egyptian origin.

A word concerning the dialects of the Egyptian language will not be out of place here<sup>1</sup>. (1) The *Memphitic* or *Coptic proper* was the language of Lower Egypt, and derives its name from Memphis, the ancient capital, which stood a little south of the modern Cairo. Nearly the whole Bible exists in this dialect, and the Pentateuch, Book of Job, the Psalms,

<sup>1</sup> See Dr. Tattam's *Compendious Grammar of the Egyptian Language*, 2nd edit., 1863.

the Prophets, and the New Testament have all been published. (2) The *Sahidic* is so called from the Arabic السعید<sup>1</sup> the name given to Upper Egypt, or the district of which Thebes was capital, whence the dialect is also termed *Thebaic*. It is curious to remark that the Sahidic, though more remote from the centre of Greek life, yet adopted more Greek words than the nearer Coptic; and both in Coptic and Sahidic writing Greek words are very often found where the native language had a perfectly good equivalent. In Sahidic it is much more usual than in Coptic to express the vowels by lines above the consonants. In the Sahidic dialect almost an entire version of the scriptures, including a complete New Testament, exists, though it is only in MS.; and, owing to the dormant state of Coptic scholarship in England, nothing has been done towards collation since the close of the last century. (3) The *Bashmûric* dialect, so called from Bashmûr a province in the Delta, has distinct analogies with Coptic and with Sahidic, but is of a ruder character, as was natural from the wild nomadic habits of the people by whom it was spoken. Only a few fragments exist in this dialect, and they have been published.

The study of the language in modern times dates from Kircher's 'Prodromus Coptus,' which was published in 1636. Eighty years later Blumberg issued a Coptic grammar; and in 1778 a Coptic bishop of Arsinoe, named Tukt, published an Arabic and Latin treatise called 'Rudimenta Linguae Copticae.' But

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<sup>1</sup> Strictly it should rather be Saidic, as there is no *h* in the Arabic; but the conventional form is the most convenient.



the first scientific grammar of the three dialects was that written by Tattam, and published in 1830<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> It would ill become a writer on this subject, and most of all an Oxonian, to pass over in silence the great and memorable services rendered by Oxford to the study of Coptic. The zeal of the learned was first awakened in the matter by the rich collection of oriental MSS. presented by the traveller Huntington to the Bodleian Library in the seventeenth century. Dr. Marshall, rector of Lincoln College, who is described as a master of eastern languages, and who published a translation of Abu Ḍaḡn at Oxford in 1675, worked at Coptic with such success that he was on the point of bringing out an edition of the New Testament in that language, with Latin translation and notes. But when only a single sheet was through the press, the rector's task was ended by an untimely death. Thereupon Dr. Fell, bishop of Oxford, who had already paid for a fount of Coptic type for the work, summoned from Cambridge a learned scholar named Thomas Edward; who, after sundry discouragements, at last brought out, not the New Testament, but a Coptic lexicon. About the same time Witsen, the burgomaster of Amsterdam, sent a fount of Coptic type as a gift to the University Press at Oxford: and in the year 1716, D. Wilkins, a German by birth despite his Anglicised name, published a Coptic and Latin New Testament at the expense of the University.

Jablonski worked for some time at Oxford copying MSS.: and after his death the well-known Dr. Radcliffe purchased many of his treasures from his son.

Dr. Cumberland, bishop of Peterborough, began the study of Coptic with rare enthusiasm at the age of eighty: and George Whiston copied and translated into Latin the Pentateuch;—two Englishmen, though not Oxonians, whose names may be recorded.

In 1765 M. Woide, having obtained from Scholtz at Berlin extracts from a lexicon, grammar, and essays on the Coptic language, showed them to Dr. Durell, then vice-chancellor of Oxford: and Drs. Durell and Wheeler together finally secured the publication of all three works at the charges of the University. Woide was next entrusted with the publication of the Sahidic version, and far advanced the work, but never lived to see it finished. It was, however, promptly taken up by Professor Ford, the professor of Arabic at Oxford, who revised and corrected the whole with the

Coptic literature has been already described as essentially religious. There is, however, I believe, no example of a complete Coptic Bible, nor are all the books of the Old Testament found quite entire, even in a detached condition. But besides the versions of scripture before mentioned, there exist also several apocryphal gospels and gnostic works of various descriptions; while lives and acts of the saints, sermons, homilies, and martyrologies abound<sup>1</sup>. But while all the churches in or near Cairo have their own collections of books, the only library properly so called, and housed in a separate apartment, is that belonging to the patriarch. It has, I believe, recently been examined and catalogued by a French savant, who does not seem however to have discovered any pearl of great price<sup>2</sup>. The books in the churches are all service-books of one sort or another. A good idea of their nature may be formed from the following list of MSS. found in a church at Asnah, near Luxor:—

1. Canons of the Coptic Church,—12th century.

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help of the original documents; and the text was issued from the Oxford Press in 1799.

Since that date very little has been done for the study of Coptic in England, and not much in Oxford: but the University Press published in 1835 Tattam's *Coptic Lexicon*, in 1836 his *Minor Prophets*, and his *Major Prophets* in 1852. Yet few know what Oxford scholars have done for the language in the past: so lost are the achievements of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in the oblivion of the nineteenth.

<sup>1</sup> For a list of such works, see *Catalogus Codd. Copt. MSS. in Museo Borgiano*: 4to. Romae, 1810.

<sup>2</sup> The patriarch of the orthodox Church of Alexandria has also a library of Greek MSS. at the church of St. Nicholas, in Cairo: it contains one ninth-century MS., several of the thirteenth, but nothing remarkable.

2. Book of the gospels,—13th century.

3. Lectionary,—14th century.

The above are on vellum : the rest on paper.

4. Consecration of monks,—1358.

5. Consecration of the various orders in the church ; to wit, psalmodos, anagnostes, subdeacon, deacon, archdeacon, priest, hegumenos, chorepiscopos, and lastly, bishop, metropolitan, and patriarch—which three have the same service<sup>1</sup>,—16th century.

6. Psalter for the canonical hours,—16th century.

7. Euchologion or benedictional,—16th century.

8. Minor prophets,—16th century.

9. Funeral service,—16th century.

10. Mystagogia or confessio,—16th century.

11. Consecration of chrism and oil of the lamp,—16th century.

12. Order of baptism and consecration of altar-vessels,—17th century.

13. Consecration of altars and fonts,—18th century.

14. Many copies of gospels, epistles, the three liturgies, and the various consecration services<sup>2</sup>.

Every church has specially attached to its service a book called in Coptic 'sýnaxár,' i.e. *συναξάριον*, or lives of the saints, from which a portion is often read at matins, in accordance with a very ancient custom sanctioned, for instance, at the third Council of Carthage in 397 A.D. This book corresponds closely to the passionals of our English churches, from which the lessons at matins were sometimes

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<sup>1</sup> This is not the case in Renaudot's MS. The Syrian Jacobites and the Maronites have the same service for bishop and metropolitan, but that for patriarch is different : so generally in the Church of Alexandria.

<sup>2</sup> See Academy, Dec. 28, 1882, article by J. H. Middleton.

taken, or to the martyrology, which was read at the end of prime-song<sup>1</sup>. The *sýnaxár* is confined within the sacred walls, and there is no copy of it in any private person's possession. It has, of course, been rendered into Arabic for use at service: and the legends printed at the end of this work, which are from the Arabic version, will serve to give an idea of the miraculous traditions to which the faithful still listen with unquestioning reverence.

The liturgy or book of the mass is called in Arabic 'khu<sup>l</sup>ági,' which is a corrupted form of 'euchologion.' The lectionary for the year, or 'k<sup>o</sup>t<sup>m</sup>árus,' is a term of less certain origin. One may mention also the 'agb<sup>t</sup>áh' or psalms for the canonical hours and for festivals, there being a distinct arrangement for regulars and seculars, and also a separate psalmody for the feast of our Lord and of the Virgin. Two other books, namely, 'kitáb al paskah,' or the office of Holy Week, and the 'disnári,' or hymns of saints and martyrs, are said to have been compiled by Gabriel, LXX patriarch, about the year 1135<sup>2</sup>. The *sýnaxár* is ascribed to one Anba Bu<sup>t</sup>ros, bishop of Malg.

In addition to the foregoing books every church possesses a careful inventory of all its sacred vessels and other belongings, which are verified once a year by the wak<sup>t</sup>l or overseer. In this too all gifts to the church are entered, sometimes, though not always, with the donor's name added. It is called the Offering Book, and resembles in some ways the book of benefactors which belonged to some of our great English

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<sup>1</sup> Rock, vol. iii. pt. ii. p. 212.

<sup>2</sup> See Vansleb, *Histoire de l'Église d'Alexandrie*, p. 62.

churches in olden times, though it is not kept in the same place of honour, nor bound in the same costly materials. For at Durham cathedral, for instance, we read that the book of benefactors 'did lye on the High Altar, an excellent fine Booke, very richly covered with gold and silver, conteininge the names of all the benefactors towards St. Cuthbert's Church from the foundation thereof:' and again, 'there is another famous Booke yett extant conteininge the reliques, jewels, ornaments, and vestments, that were given to the Church by all these founders<sup>1</sup>.'

It is greatly to be hoped that these Coptic inventories will some day be examined by an Arabic scholar with sufficient tact, patience, and skill to get at them and to decipher them. None knows better than the writer what it will cost in time, temper, and money, before they are rendered accessible. But if, as is certain, they correspond in some ways to our own church inventories; and if, as seems highly probable, some few at least among them can boast a considerable antiquity, they ought to yield results of the greatest interest to ecclesiology, and to repay in the richest manner the largest expenditure of time and trouble.

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<sup>1</sup> Durham Rites, ed. Surtees Society, pp. 14, 15.

## CHAPTER VII.

### *The Seven Sacraments.*

*Baptism and Confirmation.—Eucharist.—Penance.*

**C**ONTINUOUSLY since the dawn of Christianity the Copts seem to have acknowledged seven canonical sacraments, namely baptism, confirmation, eucharist, penance, orders, matrimony, and unction of the sick. Of the particular nature of these mysteries, as interpreted by the Church of Alexandria, much has already been written, but rather in times past than in our generation, and rather by continental<sup>1</sup> than by English authorities. Something therefore yet remains which may fitly find a place in this work ; inasmuch as no mere description of sacred buildings can be complete without some account of the ceremonial for which they were designed. For architecture is, of course, ancillary to ritual. Yet the present writer cannot pretend to do more than touch lightly on liturgical matters, recording the testimony of others, and adding facts which have fallen under his own observation.

Baptism<sup>2</sup> of infants is allowed no less by present custom than by the ancient canons : which, founded

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<sup>1</sup> The Assemani, Vansleb, Renaudot, Denzinger, &c.

<sup>2</sup> Baptism is called المعمودية : confirmation, التثبيت.

on the Mosaic law of purification, make the age of forty days necessary for male children, and eighty days for females, before they can receive the rite. For these are the periods in which the 'days of purification are accomplished': and it is necessary for the mother to be present in the church<sup>1</sup>. Where however there is peril of death, or other extreme necessity, the child may be baptised at once without regard to age. The Jewish practice of circumcision on the eighth day is general, but neither compulsory nor counted a religious ceremony: yet circumcision *after* baptism is very strongly prohibited. The same canon of age for infant baptism prevailed in the Ethiopian, Syrian, and Nestorian Churches: but the Armenians and modern Nestorians fix the ceremony for the eighth day after birth, and we read of the same custom holding even in Cairo. But although Coptic history records many violations of primitive practice at various epochs, the canons are never really changed or abrogated. Thus about 750 A.D. the patriarch Khail I. reënforced the regulation enjoining the baptism of infants. Christodulus three centuries later forbade the two sexes to be baptised in the same water; and ordered that, according to ancient custom, infants should receive the communion fasting at their baptism. So Macarius II. and Gabriel II., both in the twelfth century, denounced circumcision after baptism. Indeed it is only from

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<sup>1</sup> Pococke is wrong in giving the age as twenty-four days for a girl: see *Description of the East*, vol. i. p. 246. Barhebraeus (*Chronicon Ecclesiasticum*, ed. Abbeloos et Lamy, Louvain, 1872) says thirty days for a boy, and so apparently a Vatican MS., quoted by Asseman, though agreeing about the age of eighty days for a girl: but there is no real doubt on the subject.

these stringent enactments, as a rule, that we discover from time to time the prevailing laxity of practice.

Certain seasons of the year are appointed and others forbidden for the exercise of the rite, but exception is always made in cases of danger. The whole of Lent, Holy Week, and Eastertide are considered unsuitable times for baptism. Macarius, bishop of Memphis in the eighth century, relates that at Alexandria during the early ages of the church, baptism was conferred only once a year on Good Friday<sup>1</sup>: but the statement is mixed with legend and seems apocryphal. The canons of Christodulus prohibit baptism on Easter eve and during the season of Pentecost. From the remotest antiquity to the present day the season most commended for baptism is the feast of Epiphany: but Abu Ḍaḡn<sup>2</sup>,—an untrustworthy authority, but possibly right in this instance,—gives Easter day and Pentecost as the times at which baptism was conferred in the seventeenth century.

We have already seen that scarcely a single church in the whole of Egypt possesses a baptistery external to the sacred building: and that while in many of the fabrics the Epiphany tank is at the western end near the principal doorway, yet now in most cases the baptistery proper and the font are found in various positions, which would necessitate the entrance of the infant into the church before the accomplishment of the ceremony. There is however one monument remaining, which illustrates with singular clearness the ancient custom of administering

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<sup>1</sup> Vansleb, *Histoire de l'Église d'Alexandrie*, p. 83.    <sup>2</sup> P. 16.



the rite without the church, yet in a building specially consecrated for the purpose. A glance at the plan of the fourth-century church of the White Monastery<sup>1</sup> will show the earliest known arrangement in strict accordance with the most primitive ritual. There the candidate was received first into a small vestibule, then led into the baptistery; and when the rite was ended, he passed into the opposite chapel, still without the church, and received the eucharist; which completed his initiation, and gave him the right henceforth to enter the place of worship. The next step was to remove the baptistery and the chapel just within the western wall of the church, so that they occupied the narthex, but were still probably walled off from nave and aisles, or at least from the latter. Such an arrangement seems to have existed originally at Abu Sargah, as the western apse with its frescoes still remaining testifies. Finally, as the rigidity of early custom slackened, the partition between the baptistery and the church was removed: the need for a neophyte chapel disappeared: and the position of the font became a matter of accident and indifference<sup>2</sup>. But in all cases the Copts disallow the baptism of infants in private houses. It is a matter of necessity that all should come to the consecrated building. The font is often called the 'Jordan'; but the ancient Coptic name ⲧⲕⲟⲗⲧⲉⲛⲉⲣⲁ is, of course, of Greek origin.

Bernard of Luxemburg, Jacques de Vitry, and

<sup>1</sup> See vol. i. p. 352.

<sup>2</sup> Denzinger is wrong in saying that the Coptic baptistery ought to be 'versus orientem ex parte sinistra ecclesiae.' Rit. Or., tom. i. p. 25.

others have spread a ridiculous story that the Copts baptise their children with fire<sup>1</sup> by branding a cross on the forehead after baptism. The story is a pure fiction, but may have arisen from the Ethiopian custom of gashing and tattooing the face. All over the world baptism is performed by natural water : but the Copts, in common with the catholic custom, require that the water be specially consecrated. And this consecration takes place each time that the ceremony has to be performed with fresh water : whereas in the Latin Church the benediction of water is a more solemn service, held but once or twice in the year, and the water so consecrated is reserved to be used as occasion arises. Abu Ḍaḡn agrees with all the authorities in stating that after baptism the water must be let off by a drain : and though Tukt asserts that at one time the priests in Cairo reserved a small quantity for use in case of emergency<sup>2</sup>, the canons rather show that no ceremonies were required where the life of a child would be in danger from delay. Of the same tenour is a well-known legend, which tells of a certain woman who, in crossing the sea to Alexandria with two young children, was caught in a furious storm : so being in great peril, and fearing lest her children should perish unbaptised, she drew blood<sup>3</sup> from her breast and sprinkled them, repeating the formula. Subsequently, when she took

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<sup>1</sup> Rit. Or., vol. i. p. 14. In treating of the Coptic rites and ceremonies my obligations to Denzinger are so great that I once for all acknowledge them to save the trouble of perpetual reference.

<sup>2</sup> Neale affirms this absolutely of present practice (Gen. Introd., vol. ii. p. 977) : of course erroneously.

<sup>3</sup> Denzinger says sea-water was used : but the legend as given at the end of this volume speaks of blood.

her children to the bishop in Alexandria to be regularly baptised, the water in the font became frozen or petrified, to prevent the repetition of a ceremony thus declared lawful. Lastly, any remaining doubt concerning the reservation of the hallowed water is removed by the words at the end of the service, which pray that the water may be changed again to its former nature, and return to earth deconsecrated; and the rubric orders the priest to pour in a little fresh water; to let off the water of baptism; and to take care that none use it thereafter.

Immersion is the only form of baptism recognised by the Christians of Alexandria, who thus differ from the Greeks. For in the Greek rite, though immersion is used, aspersion is regarded as of equal, if not superior, importance. There is some question regarding the manner of the Coptic immersion, whether each of the three immersions or only the last is total; for about the trine immersion there is no controversy. Originally it is probable, from the silence of the canons, that the child was plunged wholly under water thrice; but for the last three or more centuries the custom has been for the priest to dip the body first up to the middle, the second time up to the neck, and the third time over the head. Vansleb declares that in order to make the form of a cross the priest takes the child's right wrist and left foot in one hand, and left wrist and right foot in the other<sup>1</sup>; which may have been true, but sounds like a species of torture. Among the Nestorians the candidate stands in water up to the neck, and the priest thrice dips the head under; but the

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<sup>1</sup> Histoire, p. 81.

Armenians and other eastern communities mingle aspersion with the rite of immersion. All, however, seem to agree,—and the Coptic canons on this point are very explicit,—that in case of a weak or sickly child immersion shall not be judged necessary, but the sacrament may be duly administered by trine aspersion.

The same doctrine is laid down clearly in what seems to be the earliest extant account of Christian baptism, the 'Teaching of the Apostles,' which may belong to the second century<sup>1</sup>. There it is commanded to 'baptise in living or fresh water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. If living water fails, use other water; and use warm water, if cold would be hurtful. If neither warm nor cold be obtainable, then pour water thrice upon the head in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Before baptism let both him who baptises and him who is to be baptised fast, and all others who may; you shall command him who is to be baptised a day or two before.'

While the essentials are the same, considerable advance is made on the foregoing ritual, or at least in explanation of it, in the earliest authentic account of the sacrament as administered in the Church of Alexandria. This account is found in the Apostolical Constitutions, which date probably from the fourth or fifth century<sup>2</sup>. Here it is enjoined that the candidates for baptism are to fast on the preparation of

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<sup>1</sup> See *Διδάχη τῶν Ἀποστόλων* by bishop Bryennios, Constantinople, 1883, pp. 27-29.

<sup>2</sup> See Tattam's *Apostolical Constitutions*, London, 1848, p. 52 seq. for Coptic and English version: and Bunsen's *Christianity and Mankind*, London, 1854, vol. vi. p. 465, for Greek version.

the sabbath ; and on that day are to assemble before the bishop and kneel down. Then, laying on his hands, the bishop is to exorcise from them every evil spirit ; to breathe upon them ; and to seal them upon the forehead, the ears, and the nose. They keep the vigil in reading and exhortation.

Early next morning, at cockcrow, comes the benediction of the water, which must be drawn or flowing into the font ; or, if water be scarce, they may use any water available. The meaning of this obscure passage doubtless is that the water should, if possible, be drawn from the sacred well, such as we have seen is found in Abu Sargah and most of the Egyptian churches. Sponsors are required for those too young to answer for themselves, and the sponsors are to be parents or kinsmen. The bishop is to give thanks over the oil, which he is to place in a vessel or crewet, and to call it the 'oil of thanksgiving'—the name 'myron' not being used here;—and a second oil he is to exorcise, and call it the 'oil of exorcism.'

A deacon, holding the oil of thanksgiving, is to stand on the right hand of the priest ; and another deacon with the oil of exorcism on his left. Then follows the renunciation ; after which the candidates are to be anointed with the oil of exorcism, and to pass unclothed and to stand in the water. Each now repeats the confession of faith, during which he is dipped three times ; he is then taken up out of the water, and anointed with the oil of thanksgiving or holy chrism ; is clothed, and enters the church. There the bishop lays his hand upon them, and with a prayer anoints each one upon the head, and seals his forehead, saluting or kissing him ; and

all are to 'say peace with their mouths.' Thus the rite of confirmation is ended.

The 'seal,' here and elsewhere, seems to mean the sign of the cross: by 'saying peace' the formula of the pax is no doubt intended.

Immediately after baptism and confirmation follows the holy communion. The bishop is enjoined to give thanks over the bread and over the cup; and to bless also milk and honey. When the bread has been divided, the bishop gives each a portion, saying, 'This is the bread of heaven, the body of Christ Jesus;' and with the cup he says, 'This is the blood of Christ Jesus our Lord.' Likewise the milk and honey are given to every one.

So much for the Apostolical Constitutions. Let us turn now to another version of the ceremony, written two or three centuries later by Severus<sup>1</sup>, patriarch of Alexandria in 646 A.D. The ceremony begins with a 'mixing of the waters,' a phrase which is not further explained here, but means that the priest stirs or moves the water with his hand. Next comes a burning of frankincense, with a prayer against the 'princes of the power of the air;' after which the priest blows thrice with his breath on the water. He then makes the sign of the cross, without oil, thrice on the forehead of every child, and exorcises him, making several more crosses upon the face. The children turn to the west to make the renunciation, and back to the east again; and the priest makes three crosses on each one's forehead with olive oil,—obviously the oil of exorcism, or oil of the catechumens.

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<sup>1</sup> See *Maxima Bibliotheca Veterum Patrum*, Lyons, 1677, tom. xii. p. 728.

Incense is now kindled, and then come the prayers for the benediction of the water. The priest insufflates upon the surface in the form of a cross, and with several invocations makes four crosses on the water with his finger, signing each cross from east to west and from north to south. Then from a phial or crewet he pours chrism, or oil of thanksgiving, upon the water in three crosses. Next he pours olive oil over the head of each child, places him in the font, lays his right hand upon the head, and with his left thrice lifts the child from the water, saying, 'N. is baptised in the name of the Father, Amen; in the name of the Son, Amen; and in the name of the Holy Ghost, Amen.' The wording of the ritual here signifies that the child is dipped three times under water, and nothing is said about any difference in the manner of the three immersions.

After the formula the child is taken out of the font, and anointed three times on the forehead and on all his members with holy chrism; is dressed in his own clothes; and brought to the altar, where he receives the eucharist. The whole ceremony is brought to a conclusion by the priest crowning the newly baptised children with garlands.

Here confirmation is rather implied than stated, and nothing is said about the giving of milk and honey. Bishop Macarius, whom I have cited above, and who lived a century later, mentions the custom as belonging to the early Church. In olden times, he says<sup>1</sup>, baptism being administered only on Good Friday at Alexandria, the patriarch and several bishops met in the church of the Evangelists, uncovered the font, and read the exhortation. Next

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<sup>1</sup> Vansleb, *Histoire*, p. 85.

day they assembled in the same building, where the patriarch consecrated both the chrism and the oil of exorcism or galilaeon, i.e., *έλαιον άγαλλιάσεως*, as they call what the Latins term the 'oleum catechumenorum.' This accomplished, they proceeded to the baptistery, where the patriarch baptised three male children; and when the bishops had baptised the rest, the patriarch anointed them all with both kinds of oil. Mass was now celebrated; and after the newly baptised children had received the bread and wine, they received also milk and honey mixed in the same chalice<sup>1</sup>.

At the present day the ceremonies do not differ appreciably from those recorded by Severus. At the commencement of the service a prayer of purification is said over the mother of the child, and she is anointed with oil on the forehead: and though this rite is not recorded in any ancient documents before Vansleb, it is in the last degree unlikely that it has arisen in modern or even mediaeval times. Silence in questions of ritual is always a dangerous argument: it is so very difficult for a writer, and specially for an early writer, not to omit some detail, as Severus quite wrongly omits all mention of milk and honey. The exorcism, benediction of the water, and anointing with oil, are still customary: but the first oil used is pure olive oil, which is blessed by the priest. The child is unclothed, raises his hands in

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<sup>1</sup> Neale strangely denies that there is any trace of the giving of milk and honey in Coptic ritual (*Gen. Introd.*, vol. ii. p. 971): but states that it existed in the Church of Carthage, and is still retained in that of Ethiopia. Rock (vol. iii. pt. 2. p. 102) says that milk and honey were given in our own Church after the eucharist on Maundy Thursday, and anciently to the newly baptised on Holy Saturday.



the form of a cross to make the renunciation, turning to the west, and recites the creed turning to the east<sup>1</sup>. All his limbs are again anointed with the second oil or the galilaeon. The burning of incense, the insufflation, the three crosses of chrism on the water, the trine immersion, the laying-on of hands or confirmation, the anointing with chrism,—all have their place in the service of to-day. The chrism is anointed on forehead, eyes, nose, mouth, ears, hands, feet, knees, back, shoulder, arms and heart : then the priest breathes crosswise on the face of the child, who is dressed in a white robe, crowned with a crown, and girt with a crossing girdle about his waist. He receives the holy communion : or, if too young to take it, the priest dips a finger in the chalice, and moistens the infant's tongue : and after the eucharist he receives milk and honey mingled.

During all this ceremony, which with many prayers and chaunts and lessons from the scriptures occupies a long time, the sealed copy of the gospel is resting on the gospel-stand<sup>2</sup> in the baptistery : tapers are set about it, and are kindled during the greater part of the service. After the celebration of the mass, the clergy arrayed in their most gorgeous vestments move in procession thrice round the church. The child is carried by the bishop or priest, before whom walks an acolyte bearing the cross of benediction<sup>3</sup>, upon which are fastened three lighted tapers : the other clergy follow, and acolytes bearing candles and beating bells and cymbals.

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<sup>1</sup> Vansleb (*Histoire*, p. 204) states that the priest writes the child's name on a piece of paper and throws it into the water.

<sup>2</sup> See illustration, vol. ii. p. 60.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.* p. 232.

On the eighth day after baptism, and not before <sup>1</sup>, the girdle is loosened with a good deal of ceremonial: for the act is regarded as the completion of the rite of baptism. The ceremony is held in the baptistery of the church, and not at private houses as Vansleb alleges. A vessel of pure water is placed on the gospel-stand, with a cross lying upon the rim and tapers kindled around. Incense is burned, and various prayers and portions of scripture recited. The water is signed thrice in the form of a cross by the priest, who then removes the girdle, and washes the child and his clothes.

Though the use of lights at the baptismal service is thus recognised by the Church of Egypt, the priest does not hand a lighted taper to the candidate, as was customary in western ritual.

It will be observed that the practice of the Coptic differs from that of the western Church in the union of confirmation with baptism, although they are regarded essentially as two sacraments, not as one; in the use of the holy chrism for confirmation; and in allowing confirmation by the priest as well as by the bishop. In all these particulars the Copts have retained the early teaching of the catholic Church, which the westerns have abandoned <sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Abu Dakn makes the rite take place on the third day: and in the same passage he affirms that salt is mingled with the chrism by the Copts,—a monstrous statement. Some *Syrians* in Cairo adopted this heretical practice in the time of Christodulus, but not the Copts. The Malabar Christians mingled oil and salt with their eucharistic bread, as recorded in Govea's account of the Portuguese mission: see the French translation published at Brussels in 1609.

<sup>2</sup> The words of St. Basil regarding baptism should be remembered. He says:—'Consecramus autem aquam baptismatis et

THE EUCHARIST<sup>1</sup>.

To discuss fully the ceremonies appertaining to the Coptic celebration of the mass would require a voluminous treatise in itself. But such discussion being beyond the scope of this work, and in some sense beside its purpose, it must suffice here to indicate the most prominent or peculiar points of Coptic usage, avoiding altogether all questions concerning authenticity of texts and order of prayers in the various liturgies,—questions which are too well known to the world to require restating, and too little studied by the writer to make his remarks other than incompetent.

No minister beneath the rank of priest is allowed to celebrate the *korbân* : but a simple priest cannot communicate a bishop or any higher dignitary<sup>2</sup>. When the patriarch celebrates, he administers the

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oleum unctionis, praeterea ipsum qui baptismum accipit, ex quibus scriptis? Nonne a tacita secretaque traditione? Ipsam porro olei unctionem quis sermo scripto proditus docuit? Iam ter immergi hominem unde est traditum? . . . . Nonne ex privata et arcana hac traditione?' See *Divi Basilii Magni Opera*, p. 324 B. Paris, 1566. So St. Augustine remarks: 'Unless this sign be used, whether on the forehead of believers, or on the water whereby they are regenerated, or on the chrism whereby they are anointed, nothing is rightly accomplished.'

<sup>1</sup> Arabic *القربان* or the offering, *القُداس* the mass, *الذبيحة* the sacrifice, or *الذبيحة غير دموية* the bloodless sacrifice: Coptic, **† προσφορά**. The first of these names, '*korbân*,' is identical with the word used by our Lord, as given in the English version: it answers to our '*oflete*.'

<sup>2</sup> Vansleb, *Histoire*, pp. 202-3.

ofete first to himself and then to the other clergy according to their orders : but if, when a priest is celebrating, the patriarch wishes to communicate, he goes to the altar after the fraction, repeats the prayer of absolution and the confession, and communicates to himself and to any others whom he pleases. Every bishop has the same right in his own diocese. A *ḵummuṣ* in communicating takes the spoon himself, but receives the wafer from the priest, who places it in the spoon : a priest receiving from a priest does not touch with his hand any part of the sacred elements, nor any vessel. The celebrant must wear dalmatic and amice on ordinary days, and all the seven vestments on high festivals.

At the present day those who receive are allowed within the *haikal* ; but originally entrance seems to have been denied to all below the rank of deacon. The deacon stands not beside the priest but fronting him, i. e. on the eastern side of the altar, and facing the people. This custom is said to have originated in the times of feud between the Jacobite and Melkite factions, when it was no uncommon thing for a Melkite mob to rush into a Coptic church, slay the priest at the altar, and scatter the sacred elements. If ordered by the priest, the deacon may give the cup to communicants, as appears from the Apostolical Constitutions and from later authorities.

We have already seen that infants are admitted to the communion immediately after baptism and confirmation : and at any ordinary celebration to-day one may see children in arms receiving. Previous fasting is indispensable to a right communion, and this canon applies even to children :

it is a rule beyond question and without exception. The time of fasting dates from vespers of the day before the celebration. Bodily cleanliness is a further necessity both on the part of the people and the priest: the latter is specially required to wash his feet before entering the church. Communion is not to be administered to persons unknown, i.e. to any strangers whom the priest has not examined concerning their profession of faith, for fear lest an infidel receive it unawares. The Pontifical of Gabriel specially cautions the priest to be careful about women, as they come veiled to mass. Confession also is rigidly enforced, and penance inflicted in case of sin: and the severity of the penance is doubtless the reason why so few to-day partake of the holy mysteries.

All receive the *ḳorbân* standing and not kneeling: indeed kneeling is altogether against the Coptic custom, except on the day of Pentecost, their attitude of humility being prostration. A communicant is not allowed during the rest of the day to eat or drink with a Jew or Muslim; nor may he remove from his mouth anything which has once entered there; nor may he smoke tobacco. Anciently, according to Vansleb, it was also customary to eat lupines directly after the celebration, as a measure of defence against certain Sabaeans, who frequented the Coptic churches, but to whom any fruit grown on an angular stalk was an abomination.

The bread used for the *ḳorbân* is of the finest wheaten flour specially purchased out of the church moneys. It must be baked in the oven attached for that purpose to most if not all of the sacred buildings: and the baking must be done by the door-

keeper or sacristan<sup>1</sup>, who during the process must chaunt fixed portions of the psalms in a solemn manner<sup>2</sup>. The bread must be leavened: it must be baked on the morning on which it is required for the mass, and must be made up into round cakes or wafers, each about three inches in diameter and an inch in greatest thickness; and it must be stamped on the upper surface with a device of crosses, round which runs a sacred legend in a band. Denzinger<sup>3</sup>



Fig. 83.—Eucharistic Bread.

gives a cut in which the legend is  $\Delta\Gamma\text{I}\text{O}\text{C} \times \Delta\Gamma\text{I}\text{O}\text{C}$   
 $\times \Delta\Gamma\text{I}\text{O}\text{C} \times \chi\text{R}\text{I}\text{O}\text{C} \times \text{C}\Delta\text{B}\text{E}\omega\text{T}$  (it should, of course,

<sup>1</sup> Called, therefore,  $\text{القائم}$ . Women are specially forbidden to prepare the wafer.

<sup>2</sup> Possibly for a similar reason the ofsete was sometimes called 'singing-bread' in England.

<sup>3</sup> Rit. Or., tom. i. p. 81. The Dict. Christ. Antiq. has the same cut.

be κῤῥιος): Neale<sup>1</sup> reproduces the same illustration, which is taken from Sollerius, to whom all statements concerning the form of the Coptic oflete seem ultimately traceable. Vansleb<sup>2</sup> however gives the same inscription omitting the ϸβρωτ; and it is possible that the versions of the legend so recorded were actually found: but undoubtedly the inscription at present used differs, and is ✠ ΔΥΙΟϸ ΙϸΧῤῥοϸ ✠ ΔΥΙΟϸ ΔΘΑΠΔΤΟϸ ✠ ΔΥΙΟϸ Ο ΘΕΟϸ, as rendered in the accompanying woodcut, which is from a photograph of a wafer made at the cathedral. Nor have I seen any variation from this form at any of the churches. The diagrams given by Neale and Denzinger are further inaccurate: for within the band of writing, which should not be quite on the edge of the wafer, there are twelve equal crosses each marked off in a square of its own, the whole arrangement forming one large cross. Neale indeed speaks of twelve crosses: but his figure gives eight in little detached squares, and eight more in a larger central square. Denzinger's design is the same: but he gives another rather different cut, which professes to represent the back of the wafer. This, I think, is a mistake: for the wafer is never stamped upon the back.

The inmost square of the wafer, consisting of four smaller squares, is called in Coptic ιϸβοδοικον, ιϸβδδαικον, or σποτδαικον, a name rightly explained by Renaudot as a corruption of the Greek δεσποτικόν, sc. σῶμα, i. e. 'the body of the Lord.' The isbodikon is reserved for intinction in the chalice.

<sup>1</sup> Patriarchate of Alexandria, vol. ii. p. 214. It is obvious here how the mistake of ϸ for Κ arose.

<sup>2</sup> Histoire, p. 100.

Greek custom is not far removed from the Coptic, as regards the wafer. For the Greeks use a small round cake stamped with a square, called the *ἀμύδος*, which is divided into four smaller squares which contain the letters  $\overline{\Gamma\text{C}} \overline{\text{XC}} \text{NI KA}$ . The *ἀμύδος* stands out above the wafer, and is cut off in the prothesis: at consecration it is broken into four portions, of which  $\overline{\Gamma\text{C}}$  is put into the chalice,  $\overline{\text{XC}}$  is given among the clergy, and the rest among the laity.

The Armenians also stamp the housel, but merely with a figure of our Lord. The wafer is unleavened, and is baked in an oven attached to the church on the morning before celebration. All the four parts into which the consecrated wafer is broken are put into the chalice.

Among the Nestorians the wafer is made of fine flour from wheat gleaned by young maidens, which is ground in a handmill and mingled with leaven. The leaven is prepared by the clergy, and the bread made, within the precincts of the sacred building. The Nestorian wafer also is stamped with a device: it resembles the Coptic bread in size, but is much thinner.

In our own country the wafer was sometimes stamped. Rock<sup>1</sup> cites Eldefonso for the statement that the inscription should be  $\overline{\text{XP}\overline{\text{C}}}$   $\overline{\text{IHC}}$  or  $\overline{\text{DS}}$ , the only variation being  $\overline{\text{XP}\overline{\text{C}}}$   $\text{A}^{\dagger}\overline{\Omega}$ : but other variations are certainly found<sup>2</sup>. A wooden mould for

<sup>1</sup> Vol. i. p. 149, note 24.

<sup>2</sup> M. de Fleury has sent me a drawing of some breads from a ninth-century missal in the Bibliothèque Nationale. Two of these are covered with various inscriptions, one containing  $\overline{\text{REX DS}} \overline{\text{IHS}} \overline{\text{XPS}} \overline{\text{VERITAS}} \overline{\text{LUX}} \overline{\text{PAX}} \overline{\text{GLORIA}} \overline{\text{VIA}}$ , and the cyphers of the four evangelists disposed round a large central cross.



such breads is preserved in the museum at Dublin : but sometimes the mould was of iron, and was called a singing-iron for a reason analogous to that suggested above. Thus in 1429 at York there were bequeathed 'tria instrumenta ferri, vocata syngyngirons, ij alia instrumenta ferri pro pane ad eucharistiam ordinando<sup>1</sup>.' That the practice of stamping the housel is very early seems proved by the continuous testimony of artistic monuments. The wafers figured in the sixth-century mosaics at Ravenna, in S. Vitale and S. Apollinare in Classe, are designed with a central cross : on the golden altar of Milan, dating from the ninth century, St. Ambrose is figured standing behind an altar, on which are four crossed wafers : a like wafer is shown in the eleventh-century missal of St. Denys<sup>2</sup> : and wherever the wafer is painted in Coptic pictures, it is represented with a single cross in the same manner. This fact in no way militates against the antiquity of the present Coptic design, being attributable merely to the smallness of the scale on which the wafer has to be rendered<sup>3</sup>.

The eucharistic wine is unfermented, and is made from the juice of dried grapes or raisins, which are left to soak for a considerable time in water, and then crushed in a wine-press. A press of the kind

<sup>1</sup> Raine, York Fabric Rolls, Glossary, p. 353.

<sup>2</sup> La Messe, vol. i. pls. viii, xiii.

<sup>3</sup> In the Coptic MS. of the fourth century, to which allusion has been already made, the prayer of consecration varies from all other known MSS. in having between the words 'didst give thanks' and 'didst break' the expression  $\Delta\text{K}\Phi\rho\alpha\text{V}\text{I}\zeta\epsilon$ , i. e. 'didst seal': and though the term is commonly used in Coptic to denote the making of the sign of the cross, yet in this connexion it seems to suggest that the wafer in use at that period was stamped.

at Abu's-Sifain has already been described: but the wine is usually made at Cairo in the satellite church called by the same name in the Hârat-az-Zuailah. There it is distributed to the churches in large wicker-covered jars, holding three or four gallons apiece, some of which I saw stored in a deep aumbry. The wine is made of sufficient strength and in sufficient quantity to last the whole year round. Raisin-wine is prohibited rather than enjoined by the canons: but the use of it doubtless arose partly under pressure in times of persecution, and partly from the cultivation of the vine becoming obsolete in Egypt. In case of necessity even date-wine is allowed. But whatever wine is used must be pure, untrampled by the foot, and free from all acid flavour. Offerings of wine<sup>1</sup> for the mass were common in ancient times: and there is a special canon forbidding the priest to receive it in the vessel brought by the layman. Most of the churches now have a small crewet or phial of unconsecrated wine kept on a little bracket attached to the haikal-screen. Wine of the same kind and made in the same manner was found in use by the Christians at Malabar about the year 1600: but that sect mingled oil and salt with their eucharistic bread,—a practice strongly denounced by all Coptic authorities.

Three liturgies seem to have been used from very early times by the Church of Alexandria,—the liturgy of St. Basil, of St. Gregory of Nazianzen, and of St. Cyril: the last is also called by the name

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<sup>1</sup> When a new cask was broached, the first of the wine was often given to the church. In the Coptic liturgies, for this reason, the wine is often called **†ⲁⲛⲁⲣϫⲏ**, or the first-fruits.

of St. Mark. On ordinary occasions the liturgy of St. Basil is recited : that of St. Gregory is reserved for three solemn festivals, the midnight masses of Epiphany, Easter, and Christmas : and that of St. Cyril is used during the seasons of the Great and the Little Fast, i.e. Lent and Advent<sup>1</sup>. The hour for ordinary mass on Sunday is always tierce : no second celebration is allowed on the same altar during the day, and no vestment or vessel which has served once at the mass may be used again till the day following.

At the commencement of the service all who enter the church salute towards the altar, and kiss the hem of the veil which hangs before the door of the sanctuary, or else prostrate themselves before the threshold. This custom of course does not apply to women, who worship apart in the galleries or other place appointed. It is usual now for the choir to chaunt the 'Hymns of Moses' while the altar is being prepared by the deacons. Besides the ordinary covering, which is generally coloured, the altar must have a second vestment, which shrouds the whole fabric. All the vessels, such as the chalice, paten, dome, ark, and spoon, must be in readiness upon the altar, upon which also are two candlesticks with tapers.

Before the prayer of preparation the priest must examine all these vessels, and see that the altar-board is firm in its place beneath the coverlets ; and he must set the ark or coffer upon it, and the chalice within the coffer. After the prayers of preparation and thanksgiving he goes to the door of the haikal

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<sup>1</sup> Lord Bute states that this liturgy is only used once a year, viz. on the Friday before Palm Sunday (Coptic Morning Service, p. ii).

to take the oflete from the hand of the deacon. Three wafers are brought upon a tray: the priest touches them to see if they are freshly made, wipes them, and waves his hand over them: then he selects one of the three, which is carried to the altar together with the crewet or phial of wine. This ceremony seems to correspond with the greater entrance of the Greek liturgy: but it is not now attended with the same pomp in the Coptic as in either the Constantinopolitan or the Melkite Egyptian ritual. Tapers are next kindled, and held by the deacons beside the altar: one also holds the crewet, and another a vessel of water. Thus a procession moves round the altar with tapers and thuribles, the priest carrying the wafer in a small silken corporal, or, as is more usual, upon one of the tiny mats described above. Having made the circuit of the altar the priest stands in his own place before the altar, facing eastward, and turning his back to the congregation. A little cold water is now mixed with the wine in the chalice, not warm water as in the Greek celebration. During the prayer of oblation, which follows, the priest signs both the elements with the sign of the cross: and when the prayer is ended, he places upon the chalice the little mat or *ṭabak*, which serves as its cover, and which answers to the lesser veil of the rubrics. Similarly he places immediately over the wafer a small round veil marked with three crosses: above it he sets the dome or star: and then, placing the paten upon the ark, so that it rests also on the chalice<sup>1</sup>, he covers the whole elements with the larger veil, which is of silk, and

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<sup>1</sup> The ark is just high enough to hold the chalice: the rim of the chalice is flush with the top of the ark.

has a large cross embroidered upon it. This accomplished, the priest kneels and kisses the altar.

At the prayer of absolution to the Son, the celebrant and his attendants kneel outside the haikal in a circle before the door, bowing from time to time. Then taking the censer, he stands holding it before the altar during the prayer of incense: he waves it over the elements: and walks round the altar swinging the thurible, while the choir sing the three anthems of the incense. He then descends, and stands before the door facing eastward, and scatters the fumes about the doorway: after which he turns about and swings the censer towards the people in every part of the church, while chaunt and song continue; and as the priest moves censuring them, the people rise and bend their heads.

The epistle is now read in Coptic from the lectern, which stands a few feet from the haikal door in the choir, and the reader faces eastward, having his back to the people. During the reading clouds of incense are still arising in the haikal; and when it is finished, and the choir have sung a brief chaunt, the same lesson is read in Arabic; but the reader now stands on the steps before the haikal and faces the congregation. A lection from the Acts is read in the same manner; or sometimes in lieu a chapter is recited from the history of the Church, or the life of a saint. And when the reading is ended, the reader kneels and bows his head to the ground before the door of the sanctuary. The first gospel is read by the priest, who stands before the people holding the book in his left hand, and in his right a lighted taper.

From this point processions round the altar con-

tinue with burning of incense up to the trisagion, which is chaunted by the choir. Then comes the prayer of the holy gospel, said by the priest facing eastward; and after it the deacon, coming out at the door of the haikal, shouts aloud, 'Stand ye people for the holy gospel.' Hereupon the celebrant censes the sealed silver book of the gospel, and delivers it to another priest, who, after kissing it and laying it upon the lectern, sings the gospel in Coptic, facing eastward. As he sings, the celebrant stands facing westward before him, and censes the textus continually; a deacon on each side of him holds a lighted taper, and a candle is burning upon the tall standard candlestick, which is always set up for this purpose beside the lectern<sup>1</sup>. An Arabic version of the same passage is then given from the doorway, the deacons still holding their tapers by the reader, who now faces the people; and the celebrant still waves the thurible. Deacons and acolytes, who generally wear the *ṭarbūsh*, as do all the people during the service, remove it at the reading of the gospel.

When the gospel is thus finished, the priest and all the clergy kiss the silver book; and in olden times the gospel was wrapped in a silken veil, being carried in procession about the church, and even given to kiss to the people<sup>2</sup>. The lights are ex-

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<sup>1</sup> See illustration on p. 66 supra.

<sup>2</sup> It is possible that this custom may account for the practice of enclosing the textus in a complete shell of metal. This procession and return to the haikal correspond to the lesser entrance of the Greek ritual. In the West the custom of lighting a candle at the reading of the gospel was general as well as 'per totas orientis ecclesias.' (Hieron. *adv. Vigilant.*, iii. 13.) Rock mentions that in our own country after the lection the subdeacon took the book for the bishop to kiss, then to priests and people: and that the tapers

tinguished and the gospel borne back to the sanctuary. All the ministers stand round the door while the prayer after the gospel is recited inaudibly. Notices of services and other matters are here given ; and if there be no homily, at this point occurs the dismissal of the catechumens.

The choir now sing an anthem, after which the priest falls down and kisses the threshold of the sanctuary, while reciting in a low voice the prayer of the veil or the curtain. Then, ascending to the altar, the priest kisses it, while the choir stand without the door, singing in antiphons. Next, after the prayer for the catholic Church of Christ, and for the congregation, the creed is repeated by all together ; whereupon the priest washes his hands thrice, and turning round wrings them dry before the people. Then, after bowing to the other clergy and making the sign of the cross over the congregation, he utters the words ' Peace be unto all,' and recites the prayer

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were then extinguished (vol. iii. pt. 2. p. 32). The *Ordo Romanus* says that the deacon received the gospel from the subdeacon, and held it to be kissed by clergy and laity. Pope Honorius III in the thirteenth century forbade the gospel to be kissed by any layman except an anointed prince, quite forgetting the meaning of the ceremony. In Russian and Greek churches the kiss is allowed generally to laymen, as with the Copts. In Egypt, however, the book seems originally to have been kissed while open by priests, and to have been closed for the people. This kissing the gospel is, of course, quite distinct from the pax or kiss of peace, which seems to have been first used in England in the thirteenth century. The pax is mentioned as an instrument first in the constitutions of archbishop Gray, of York. It was abandoned gradually after the reformation, owing chiefly to disputes about precedence. Yet the gospel was sometimes kissed in England instead of the pax, and the cross in Germany. (See *Lay Folks' Mass Book*, ed. Canon Simmons, pp. 221, 296.)

of the kiss of peace. Meanwhile he removes the greater veil or corporal from the oflete, and the paten from the chalice; and on the top of the chalice one may see now the lesser veil<sup>1</sup> resting, while the priest holds high over his head a like veil or ṭabaḳ of green colour with a golden cross for all the people to see. At the words 'Greet one another with a holy kiss,' the priest turns westward, and bows slowly to all the people; and the people salute each other, each turning to his neighbour and touching his hand. The triumphal hymn follows, and the people shout 'agûs, agûs, agûs,' retaining to this day the ancient words. Now the lesser veil, or red ṭabaḳ, is removed from the chalice; and the priest taking it in his right hand, holds also the green ṭabaḳ in his left, and raises his arms. And in like manner he takes many more little mats, which are upon the altar, and holds them with outspread arms<sup>2</sup>, during the commemoration of the Redemption. It may be that the mats are so consecrated for subsequent usage at the communion.

At the institution, the celebrant first holds his hands over the smoke of the thurible, which is presented by the deacon; then signs the oflete thrice, and breaks it into three portions, which, however,

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<sup>1</sup> The lesser veil, shown in this manner, is usually a small round red mat, embroidered with a cross in gold.

<sup>2</sup> I cannot find any explanation of this custom in the rubrics, but merely record what I have witnessed. In Lord Bute's 'Coptic Morning Service,' p. 80, the rubric directs the priest to remove the chalice-veil; to sign himself, the deacon, and the people with it; and so replace it. The work cited is not however quite an accurate guide to the Monophysite ritual; but there is a very general agreement, because the converts to the Church of Rome among the Copts are prohibited from becoming Latins, and bidden to retain their national liturgy.



remain contiguous. The chalice is signed in the same manner, and moved in the form of a cross before the priest. During this ceremony a lighted taper is held by deacons on either side of the celebrant, and all the deacons, acolytes, and choristers remove their *ṭarbûshes*. Just before the invocation all the congregation bend low their heads, murmuring words of adoration, and rise and bend again. After a sentence or two from the priest all the people cry 'Kyrie eleëson.' It is at this point that the offertory is made. Two acolytes move about the church, each bearing an alms-dish, and a taper which is specially lighted for the purpose, doubtless in emblematic remembrance of the familiar text. Chaunts continue to be sung by the choir during the prayer of intercession, and the commemoration of the living, and the diptychs of the dead<sup>1</sup>; and during the same period the celebrant from time to time holds aloft in either hand one of the little mats, which lie in great numbers upon the altar. The cover of the elements is also changed; and for the saffron-coloured veil which rested before over them, another of deep crimson with a white border is

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<sup>1</sup> It is customary among the Copts once every year, in the season of Lent, to write on a piece of paper the names of living and dead relatives, whom they wish commemorated at the mass. I have known laymen go round all the churches of Cairo in one day, leaving at each a paper in which is wrapped a fee varying according to the means of the supplicant. The usual form of commemoration is,—'Remember, O Lord, thy servants, whose names are here written, in the kingdom of heaven; the living, M. or N.: the dead, M. or N.' Special prayers for special cases are sometimes added: thus for a son dismissed from his employment a father will ask intercession in the words, 'Loosen, O Lord, the perplexities of Yûsuf.'

substituted, and the people are signed with the sign of the cross. Now comes the preface to the fraction; and when the priest says 'The holy body,' he takes the housel, and, placing it in his left hand, lays his finger on the spot where it is broken. And at the words 'The precious blood' he removes his finger from the bread, and dipping it lightly in the wine, makes the sign of the cross upon it. With the same finger he now signs the isbodikon and another part of the housel, so that three crosses in all are made upon the sacred element. After the pax commences the prayer of the fraction, during which the priest breaks the housel into five portions, which he arranges on the paten in the form of a cross, leaving the isbodikon unbroken in the centre; and the smaller portions are again broken up into little pieces, which are called 'pearls,' as in the Greek ceremonial.

Next all the people say the Lord's prayer,—not, of course, kneeling, but standing and stretching out both hands and looking upwards, according to ancient custom. At the 'sancta sanctis' the priest elevates the isbodikon over his head, lowers it into the chalice, and with it makes the sign of the cross upon the wine. Taking it out he signs the remainder of the housel with it, and so accomplishes three crosses of the bread upon the wine, and of the wine upon the bread: whereupon the isbodikon is placed in the chalice. When the confession of faith has been recited, the veil is placed upon the housel, and the priest kisses the altar, reciting a sentence of adoration. On the removal of the veil which follows, the star or dome is seen resting on the paten, and under it a small green veil embroidered with crosses, which covers the wafer. Suddenly the

priest takes the paten in his hand, and raising it over his head, turns towards the people, and stands in the doorway of the sanctuary thus holding it aloft, while all the people shout 'Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.' During the consecration a deacon stands on either side of the priest holding a burning taper.

The celebrant himself communicates, and administers to the other clergy, and to the laity in order. Each one as he receives holds in his hand one of the little mats; and when he has partaken, he wipes his lips with the mat carefully, lest any particle fall upon the ground. The communion is administered by means of intinction with the spoon, but the isbodikon is specially reserved for the ministers of the altar. If a bishop be present, he communicates himself, dipping the spoon into the chalice. Even little children receive, and are admitted into the haikal. Women however are not so admitted<sup>1</sup>; but the priest comes down from the sanctuary and administers to them in their own place, whether in the gallery or at the west end of the church. Communicants now are very few, and for the most part children. They walk round and round the altar, and continue receiving until all the wafer is consumed. Then the priest drinks to the dregs what remains in the chalice: wipes the inside

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<sup>1</sup> In the Celtic rite, women were not allowed to receive unless they were veiled, an eastern custom ordered to be observed in the Apostolical Constitutions, and still remaining with the Copts. Mr. Warren mentions also an Irish church in North Munster, where women were forbidden to enter,—as was the custom at Anba Shanúdah: and another church, where they were not allowed to approach the altar. See *Lit. and Rit. of Celtic Church*, pp. 136–138.

with his finger and licks his finger: washes out the chalice with water, and drinks the rinsings. In like manner the paten is washed, and the rinsings are drunk by the deacon. I have seen a deacon after the celebration place the spoon repeatedly upon his lips and eyes and forehead,—a custom which carries one back, very curiously, through fifteen hundred years to the time of Cyril of Jerusalem, who, in the middle of the fourth century, wrote in his directions for communicants as follows:—‘Further, touching with thy hands the moisture remaining on thy lips, sanctify both thine eyes and thy forehead and the other organs of sense<sup>1</sup>.’ What other Church preserves in so startling a manner the minutiae of primitive tradition?

Finally, when the vessels are washed and the blessing given, water is sprinkled by the bishop, if he be present, over the altar and in the air about the sanctuary and over the ministers. Then the bishop comes out from the haikal preceded by a deacon, who carries a silver basin and ewer: the deacon pours water over the hand of the bishop: and the bishop scatters it in all directions over the people, who throng round holding up their faces. Eulogiae, or unconsecrated wafers, are now distributed, and the congregation disperses. These wafers are of the same size and form as that used for consecration, and neither smaller nor mingled with salt, as Vansleb<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> My note of this custom was written in the very words more than three years before I knew of the passage from Cyril. (Catech. Mystag. 22.)

<sup>2</sup> Histoire, p. 100. The statement, however, is open to question. The term employed in the Greek rite for this wafer is *ἀντιδωρον*: in Latin ‘panis benedictus.’ In our own Church the blessed bread

with doubtful truth alleges to have been customary two centuries ago. The Copts do not use salt in any part of their ritual whatever.

So far I have not mentioned the use of the fan or flabellum: partly because it is not mentioned in the rubrics, and partly for another reason. For in the elaborate ceremonial of the mass to-day, inasmuch as generally little more than the celebrant is visible through the narrow opening of the haikal-door, and the celebrant's movements are rendered obscure by his eastward position, and sometimes also by clouds of incense, it is very difficult to follow intelligently the action of the ritual, and to ascertain what happens at any particular moment<sup>1</sup>. Moreover, as the fan now in use is merely a corporal or veil, and the number and usage of the veils are somewhat perplexing, it is the more troublesome to decide at what point a veil is waved in place of the flabellum. I believe however that the elements are fanned just before and just after consecration<sup>2</sup>: but repeat that conclusive observation of all the details in the eucharistic service is next to impossible.

Reservation of the consecrated housel is not practised in the Church of Egypt, which therein differs from the Church of Constantinople. For the Greeks enclose the reserved host in a casket of silver

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and kiss of peace were forbidden to notorious sinners. See Rock, vol. iii. part 2. p. 185.

<sup>1</sup> Rubrics tallying more or less with parts of the foregoing description of the mass, may be found in Hammond's *Liturgies*, pp. 195-233; and Renaudot, *Lit. Or.* tom. i. pp. 153-302, where much valuable information is collected.

<sup>2</sup> The canons of Athanasius partly imply this: see Vansleb, *Histoire*, p. 288 fin. It agrees too with the rubrics in the liturgy of St. Chrysostom.

or wood, which is wrapped in a silken veil, and hung up against the eastern wall of the sanctuary, with a lamp burning before it. Among the Copts it was ordered that if a crumb of the wafer were found after the priest had drunk the rinsings, it should be given to a deacon, or even to a layman who had not drunk water: but if not even a layman were forthcoming, the particle was to be wrapped in a veil, and placed between two burning tapers with the eastern lamp in the niche also burning. The priest was then to watch beside the host till the mass on the following day, to receive the crumb fasting, and to undergo a severe penance for his negligence. In the eleventh century the monks of Dair Abu Maḳâr in the western desert were in the habit of reserving the host from Palm Sunday to Maundy Thursday. When the patriarch Christodulus<sup>1</sup> discovered this practice he forbade it, as against the rule of the Church, under pain of excommunication. The monks, however, persisted, and insolently asked whether he were better than his predecessors, who had allowed the custom: whereupon Christodulus withdrew into the library in the tower of the monastery, and composed there a treatise, which was read publicly by a bishop, and proved so convincing as to silence opposition. Henceforth the custom was abandoned. Renaudot, in relating this anecdote, remarks that the reservation here spoken of does not mean the reservation for the communion of the sick, which was always customary, the isbodikon being reserved after its immersion in the chalice at consecration. It cannot however be questioned that this distinction is quite erroneous: neither the

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<sup>1</sup> Renaudot, *Hist. Pat. Alex.*, p. 429.

isbodikon nor any other part of the housel was or is reserved for the communion of sick persons<sup>1</sup>, nor for mingling in the chalice at a subsequent celebration, as was customary in both Greek and Roman ritual. The legend of the devouring of the eucharist by a serpent and the consequent discontinuance of reservation has already been mentioned.

Consecration must always take place in a sacred building, except in cases of extreme necessity in regions where there are no churches. As regards the communion of sick persons, no doubt there have been times in Coptic history when the *ḳorbân* was kept over the day of celebration for their advantage; or rather for the advantage of the priests, who were thus saved the trouble of consecration at unforeseen moments. Nevertheless, where this practice prevailed, it was distinctly an abuse: for the canons strictly order that, in case of need, when the sick person is unable to come to the church, the consecration must notwithstanding be accomplished within the sacred walls and there alone; then the priest is to go in procession, bearing the *ḳorbân* and accompanied by deacons and acolytes, who carry thuribles and tapers. And although now the ceremony is shorn of all its pomp, still both rule and custom are that the priest takes a portion of the consecrated wafer, which has been signed with the wine, to the house of the sick person. There if, as sometimes happens, he finds that the invalid from causes either physical or moral is unfitted to receive the eucharist, he does not carry it back to the church, but consumes

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<sup>1</sup> So Vansleb, *Histoire*, p. 130. So also Pococke, vol. i. p. 248, states that none of the Copts, not even those who have joined the Church of Rome, reserve the host. I can vouch for present custom.

it forthwith himself. In order that he may be ready for this contingency, he is obliged to go to the house fasting. The housel is only given to the sick after confession, and in no case where sense or consciousness is failing.

Great reverence and care are required of those who handle the sacred elements. In the Pontifical of Gabriel a young and unpractised deacon is forbidden to hold the cup or to administer with the spoon, for fear lest he might spill a drop of the wine, or let fall an atom of the wafer. If the spoon slips into the chalice, the deacon must so leave it, and use another. Similar cautions abound in the canons from the earliest times. Negligence on the part of a priest who lets fall an atom of the housel is punished by forty days' inhibition from the service of the altar and from communion, fasting to be enforced during that period, and fifty prostrations to be made nightly.

The doctrine of the real presence, of the change of the bread and wine into the very body and blood of our Lord, is held by the Copts in its most physical literalness. When Gabriel, the LXX patriarch, went to the Natrun monasteries to be proclaimed there, he had a dispute with the monks regarding the confession of faith preceding the eucharist. It ran thus:—'I believe and confess that this is the body of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, which he received from the mother of God, the holy Virgin Mary, *and made one with his Godhead.*' Some of the monks refused the last clause, on the ground that it was a later addition: but finally agreed to receive it when further qualified by the words 'without sundering, mingling, or confounding.' This is the form which remains in use at present: and it is



preceded by the words—‘The holy body, the precious, pure and true blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of our God. The body and blood of Emmanuel, our God, this is in unity of substance.’ The invocation too prays that the Holy Spirit may come and ‘make this bread the body of Christ and this wine his blood.’ And the reality of the belief is shown by a legend of the eleventh century. It is related that a certain anchorite named Peter had his forefinger bound up for fifteen years ; and when he came to die, two priests attending him with great importunity prevailed upon him to show the finger. When he took off the wrapping, his finger was seen to be red, as if coloured with fresh blood. Peter then told them that once when saying mass in church (apparently at the Red Monastery), when he came to the consecration of the chalice and touched the surface of the wine with his finger, he said within himself, ‘Will this indeed become the blood of Christ?’ Thereupon the wine rose in the chalice so as to cover his finger, and stained it with a stain of blood, which remained indelible. From that day forward he never consecrated again.

Masses for the repose of the souls of the dead in the Romish sense are entirely unknown in the Church of Egypt, for the simple reason that the Copts have no belief whatever in purgatory. Apparently they hold that the soul after death continues in an intermediate state, awaiting judgment, during a period of forty days : and during this period, or indeed after it, prayer for the dead and mention at the mass is not discouraged. But there is no expiation of sin after death by suffering, and no traffic in the terrors of eternity.

PENANCE OR CONFESSION<sup>1</sup>.

The sacrament of confession was held in the early Church of Egypt, and is held unwaveringly as a point of doctrine at the present day. But, needless to say, doctrine and practice have conflicted at various points of Coptic history. In the middle of the twelfth century John, the LXXII patriarch, is even said to have abolished the sacrament altogether: and about 1174 Marḳus ibn Al Ḳunbâri made a great stir throughout Egypt by preaching that there could be no forgiveness of sin without confession. More than two centuries earlier Sanutius, the LV patriarch, spoke very clearly upon the point: for in sending letters of absolution to a certain deacon he wrote, 'the bonds of this deacon are loosed by my word, nor is there cause why any of the faithful should hinder him from the eucharist': and subsequently he gave his opinion, that whosoever receives the holy communion without confession of sin only makes his sin the greater.

Confession can only be made to a priest: and in these days it is only the ḳummuṣ or archpriest who can give absolution. After hearing the confession the ḳummuṣ enjoins such penance as he deems fit: and this must be accomplished before absolution is granted. A general confession of sin is not regarded as sufficient; nor could the priest mete out the due measure of penance for sin veiled in general expressions. Silent confession over the smoke of burning

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<sup>1</sup> Arabic الاعتراف.

incense is said to have been substituted for open admission of guilt, when John abolished the sacrament : and the same custom spread to the Ethiopians. But that departure from canon law was only temporary, though the neglect of right confession lasted for a long period. The form of absolution seems to be the same that is contained in the prayer of absolution to the Son, and is deprecatory.

The penitent stands before the priest with bended knees and bowed head. Both say the Lord's prayer together ; and after some other prayers the priest gives the absolution and his blessing. During the orisons the penitent makes three prostrations before the altar, and one before his father confessor, whose feet he kisses beseeching his prayers. Penance follows, and must be strictly carried out, the penitent rendering account of all his thoughts and actions to the priest. When the penitent has accomplished all that was enjoined, the priest says over him a second prayer of absolution, ere he can be admitted to partake of the holy mysteries. In the Church of Abyssinia it is said to be customary to touch the penitent with a spray of olive : and the same practice, once common in western Christendom, still prevails in some of the larger churches at Rome.

When an apostate or notorious evil-liver is received again into the communion of the Church, the priest pronounces the benediction in the name of the Trinity over a vessel full of water, and pours in chrism thrice in the form of a cross. Lections are then read from the scriptures : the priest pronounces the prayer of absolution over the penitent, blesses the water again, and makes over it the sign of the cross. The penitent is now unclothed, and sprinkled thrice by

the priest with the words 'I wash thee, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.' When the penitent has resumed his clothes, the priest recites other prayers and the form of absolution, dismissing him with the words 'Thou art healed: go thy way, and sin no more<sup>1</sup>.'

Confession and absolution are specially necessary at the point of death.

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<sup>1</sup> See Vansleb, *Histoire*, p. 190. The account seems to contain some needless repetition.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### *The Seven Sacraments (continued).*

*Orders.—Matrimony.—Anointing of the Sick.*

#### ORDERS <sup>1</sup>.

**R**ECOGNITION is given at present to the following orders in the hierarchy of the Coptic Church :—patriarch, metropolitan, bishop, chief priest or *ḵummuṣ*, priest, archdeacon, deacon, reader <sup>2</sup>. The sub-deacon also is a distinct order, and his position is clearly defined as inferior to the deacon ; but his rank is not distinguished by a special name in common parlance. To these orders that of monk <sup>3</sup> is to be added : and the rubrics mention also singer, and doorkeeper or sacristan, as officials of the church, though these do not receive ordination at the hands of the bishop <sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Arabic الكهنوت.

<sup>2</sup> Arabic القسيس, القمص, الاسقف, المطران, البطرك, or البطريرك  
الانجيلي, الشماس, رئيس الشماس.

<sup>3</sup> Arabic الراهب.

<sup>4</sup> In a fourth-century MS. the orders given are patriarch, bishop, priest, deacon, subdeacon, reader, monk ; which occur in the commemoration at the mass : see *Fragmentum Evangelii S. Johannis* by A. Georgius, pp. 308–9 (Rome, 1789, 4to.). Precisely the same list is mentioned by Joseph, deacon of Abu Maḵâr, early in the eleventh century : see Quatremère, *Recherches Critiques et Historiques sur la Langue et la Littérature de l’Égypte*, p. 248.

*The Patriarch.*

The full style and title of the patriarch is 'The most holy Pope and Patriarch of the Great City of Alexandria and of all the Land of Egypt, of Jerusalem the Holy City, of Nubia, Abyssinia, Pentapolis, and all the Preaching of St. Mark.' Renaudot gives the title differently, adding 'et Fostati Babylonis,' which obviously can only date from Mohammedan times. The name 'pope' or 'baba or papa' has given rise to much controversy, but may probably be derived from the Coptic πῖ ἀπᾶ or πῖ ἀββᾶ. Renaudot of course assumes that the title came from Rome to Alexandria<sup>1</sup>: but Al Maḡrīzi says that the bishop being called *al āb*, or father, the patriarch was called by pre-eminence 'father of fathers' or *al baba*<sup>2</sup>, and that the title was borrowed by Rome, having been in use at Alexandria since the time of the first patriarch: and the account given by Eutychius is substantially the same. The Copts however acknowledge three other ecumenical patriarchs,—those of Rome, of Ephesus, whose seat is now changed to Constantinople, and of Antioch. The pope of Rome would preside in an ecumenical council: the patriarch of Alexandria bears the title of 'Judge of the World,' and has authority to determine the date of Easter; the patriarch of Antioch is 'Judge between the Patriarchs,' and would have the privilege of consecrating the holy chrism, if all the patriarchs happened to meet together for the

<sup>1</sup> Lit. Or., vol. i. p. 349.

<sup>2</sup> See Malan's History of the Copts, pp. 27 n. and 28 n.

Maundy Thursday service. Besides the foregoing, the Copts recognise three honorary patriarchs, those of Jerusalem, Bagdad, and Abyssinia. In an assembly of patriarchs he of Jerusalem would carry the cross: Bagdad preserves the faith, and is judge in any difference between the religions of the East<sup>1</sup>.

Formerly, of course, the seat of the patriarchate was at Alexandria: but after the Mohammedan sovereigns had fixed their capital at Cairo, the chair was transferred thither for reasons of practical convenience. Al Mu'allakah is, strictly speaking, the cathedral church of the two Cairos: and the residence of the patriarch was established there first after the removal. But as Abu Sargah and even Abu-s-Sifain seem to have contended at various times for the cathedral supremacy, so also the residence of the patriarch seems to have varied. In the last century it was fixed in the Hârat-ar-Rûm: but after the French invasion the then patriarch built the present cathedral in the Azbiklah quarter of Cairo, and the adjoining dwelling which still serves as the 'palace.'

Concerning the election of the patriarch in the earliest days of the Church, the twelve presbyters ordained by St. Mark, and the thorny statement of Eutychius, there has been enough of controversy<sup>2</sup>. Suffice it here to remark that all historical evidence establishes the election by means of a council comprising the chief among the clergy and the chief among the laity. The patriarch was chosen by a synod of bishops, and their choice was ratified by

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<sup>1</sup> Vansleb, *Histoire*, pp. 9-10.

<sup>2</sup> See Renaudot, *Lit. Or.*, tom. i. p. 360 seq.: Neale, *Alexandria*, vol. i. p. 9 seq.

the people : or the people might put forward a candidate, and the bishops confirm the election. Before the year 700 A. D. the election always took place at Alexandria : then, when the seat of the patriarchate was removed to Cairo, the election was generally held at Cairo until about 1000 : next came a period during which the honour was taken in turn by the rival cities : and finally Cairo made good an absolute claim to preëminence. Yet even when Cairo was recognised as the place of election, the ceremony of enthronement was always held at Alexandria, and was followed by a formal proclamation at Dair Macarius in the desert. Indeed on rare occasions the patriarch was elected at that monastery.

Immediately after the death of the pontiff, letters notifying his decease are sent from Alexandria to all bishops, monasteries, and chief laymen, summoning an assembly to meet together. The first care of the council is to appoint the senior bishop as president, to obtain leave from the temporal sovereign for the election, and to prepare themselves by solemn prayers and fasts and vigils. When the assembly was held at Alexandria, the chief priest of the church of St. Mark had the right of nomination : and though in Cairo the right of proposal is said to have rested with the Cairenes, some more or less phantasmal prerogative seems always to have accompanied the representatives of Alexandria. Often the nominee was received with acclamation by all parties, more particularly if he had been designated by the will or word of the late patriarch. But in case of disagreement decision was sometimes very difficult ; until, as the story goes, the Mohammedan vizier in the eleventh century recommended the Copts to follow



the Nestorian custom<sup>1</sup>. From the year 884 A.D. the Nestorians in electing a new patriarch chose first of all one hundred candidates, who were reduced through a process of elimination by voting to fifty, twenty-five, ten, and three. The three names were written on separate slips of paper, and placed together with the name of Christ on the altar : and after celebration an innocent child drew one from among them. If the name of Christ was drawn, all three candidates were rejected as unworthy ; and the whole process was repeated, until the matter was settled. This method, first adopted in Egypt for the election of Sanutius, the LXV patriarch, was afterwards used occasionally in doubtful cases. A similar method was even used for the election of a bishop, when Macarius LXIX refused to nominate to the vacant see of Maṣr. In the Coptic practice, however, the names were placed *under* the altar, not upon it. When the candidate was thus chosen, whether by acclamation or lot, the senior bishop solemnly proclaimed his name in the church, and the assembly shouted *ἀγιος, ἀγιος*.

It was required of a patriarch that he should be of free birth, the son of a 'crowned' mother, i.e. by a first husband : for a widow is not crowned if she remarries. He must moreover be sound in body, unmarried, not less than fifty years of age, and never stained by bloodshed : he must be a learned person, of blameless life and pure doctrine, a dweller in the desert, and no bishop. The last limitation was enforced with such unvarying rigour, that from the time of St. Mark to the days of Cyril LXXV in

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<sup>1</sup> This story is perhaps open to question, as John XLVIII is said to have been chosen in the same manner.

1235 A.D. no single instance occurs of a pontiff raised from the episcopate. But the requirement of monastic life is not justified by the most ancient canons or traditions of the Church. In 609 A.D. Andronicus was elected, being a deacon of Alexandria: and amongst others who were not monks may be mentioned Agathon about 663 A.D., and his successors John and Isaac: John XLVIII in 775; Ephraim LXII in 977; Zacharias in 1002; Gabriel in 1131, deacon of Abu-'s-Sifain; and Marķus in 1163. Now however the requirement is essential, though obviously prejudicial to the welfare of the people. For how can a mere recluse, who has lived far apart from the thought and movements of his time, who has had no practice in dealing with men, and is often as ignorant of letters as of life,—how can such a man hope to know and rule the spirit of the Church, or with helpless hand to guide the vessel in these times of storm and peril?

If the new pontiff was present at the assembly, he was placed in the midst and his election confirmed: but if, as more often happened, he was in the desert, a deputation of bishops and laymen was sent to bring him from the monastery, whence, according to a curious custom, he was brought in chains. This custom is said to date from the latter part of the second century. For the story is that when Julian XI was dying, he had a vision of a man bringing grapes to him: and in the morning there came an ignorant rustic, saying that he had found a very fine bunch of early grapes in his vineyard<sup>1</sup>, and had brought them as an offering to the patriarch. When

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<sup>1</sup> The legend is interesting as bearing witness to the cultivation of the vine in Egypt at that epoch.

Julian saw him, he exclaimed, 'This is the man whom the angel of the Lord hath shewn unto me.' So the countryman was seized, and protesting violently his unfitness for the office, he was placed in fetters, and so ordained. In the ninth century we read that Joseph LII on his election refused to quit the monastery, and was dragged away in chains. Sanutius LV, being chosen against his will, was taken in chains to Alexandria for his enthronement; and the same thing is recorded of Ephraim LXII. Indeed it is stated that the practice of fleeing into the wilderness and being brought back in irons formed a regular part of the ceremony of installation. Vansleb puts the matter differently<sup>1</sup>: he remarks that the office was so disliked, that when the day of election drew near, any one who thought himself likely to be chosen forthwith went into hiding; and the council got janissaries from the Muslim ruler to hunt down the fugitives, and to bring them in fetters to Cairo! No doubt there were times when the burdens and dangers of the office were enough to alarm the strongest spirits; though at other times, in the eleventh century for instance, the primacy was the object of a violent competition, in which no method was too unscrupulous. No doubt too the fear of election sprang in many cases from a real sense of unworthiness, or from that counterfeit form of the same virtue which is characteristic of the Egyptians,—the dread of responsibility.

After the decision had been made, and the new patriarch elected, an inquisition was often held into his life and character, to ascertain that he fulfilled the requirements of the canons. Sometimes also he

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<sup>1</sup> Histoire, pp. 12, 13.

was compelled to sign a solemn bond and covenant engaging to perform certain acts on his accession. Thus Michael LXVIII promised, among other things, to pay the annual tribute to Alexandria; to eschew and to anathematise the practice of simony; and to restore the churches of Al Mu'allakah and Al 'Aḍra Hârat-ar Rûm to their bishops; for these churches had been usurped by Christodulus. But no sooner was Michael seated on the throne than he tore up the deed, laughing in the face of Sanutius, bishop of Maşr, who demanded his church, flatly denying his covenant, and threatening to excommunicate any witness who dared come forward against him: and, finally, he excommunicated Sanutius for celebrating on the same day at Abu Sargah and Al Mu'allakah.

If the chosen candidate had attained no higher order than monkhood, he passed through all the other necessary orders on successive days before the day of consecration, which must be a Sunday. He was made deacon on the Thursday, priest on Friday, and *ḳummuş* or chief priest on Saturday: but he was never made subdeacon, and never consecrated bishop. If, on the other hand, before election he were deacon or priest, but had never become a monk, it was essential for him to be ordained monk before receiving the higher orders. For this purpose he was invested with the whole angelic raiment,—the robe, the hood, the leathern girdle, and the hermit's cloak. As perpetual celibacy and a life of special holiness were required of the patriarch, so doubtless the requirement of monk's orders, signifying death to the world, was in accordance with the most primitive tradition. But it is one thing to dress the new pontiff in the angelic habit as a symbolical

act of ritual, and quite another thing to make anterior monkhood an essential of election. The latter is a vulgar act of realism, and a perversion of ancient custom.

On the day of consecration the patriarch elect is brought in chains to the church,—properly to the church of St. Mark in Alexandria, having passed the preceding night in vigil by the tomb of the evangelist. But in later times, when the body of St. Mark had been stolen and the church destroyed, the patriarch seems to have kept the vigil by the side of his predecessor, from whose neck he took the patriarchal pall. The ordinary matins service is sung, and is followed by a solemn mass, in which the senior bishop pontificates. After the reading of the lessons the chains are loosed; and when the passage from the Acts is finished, a procession is formed to the altar. First come deacons bearing uplifted crosses, burning tapers, and flabella: then a priest swinging a thurible, and behind him another priest bearing the silver or golden gospel: next the arch-deacon: the senior bishop followed by the other prelates walking two and two: the patriarch elect, vested in dalmatic and amice, and moving with bowed head between two priests: and lastly all the other priests in due order. Thus they advance with music and chaunts to the haikal, where all salute the altar. After the first gospel the senior bishop sits on the throne, and all the bishops sit on the bench of the tribune beside him, facing westward: but the patriarch stands below between the altar and the throne, and faces eastward, a priest holding him on either side: and all the priests and deacons sit on the lower steps below the prelates. Then the senior

bishop gives the decree or instrument of election to a deacon, who takes it to the ambon, and reads it aloud. All the bishops subscribe their consent: after which three priests and three deacons of Alexandria, and either the abbot of Dair Macarius, or the ruler of Alexandria or Babylon, i.e. Cairo, sign the document.

Now the bishops come down and stand by the altar. After various hymns and prayers with incense the senior bishop lays his right hand in silence on the head of the patriarch, while the archdeacon makes a proclamation: again he lays on his hands, and recites the invocation, while all the bishops stretch forth both hands, and lift their eyes above. Then the bishop signs the patriarch with a cross<sup>1</sup> upon his head, proclaims him 'archbishop in the holy Church of God of the great city of Alexandria,' and vests him with the *paṛtrashil* and chasuble. All return to their places in the tribune, while the systatical letter or instrument of ordination is read by a deacon from the ambon. Very long prayers follow, until the bishop proclaims the patriarch, when all the people shout *ἀγιος, ἀγιος*. Then the gospel is placed four times successively on the patriarch's head: the chief bishop and all the bishops lay on their hands: and when the patriarch has received the pall and cope, crown and staff, he is led up to the throne, and thrice made to sit upon it. The bishop next proclaims in Greek his name and title, while all the bishops doff their crowns. The patriarch

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<sup>1</sup> The language of the rubric here rather suggests the use of chrism, but is not clear upon the point: indeed there is no plain evidence for the practice of anointing at ordination in the Church of Egypt.

sits on the throne, holding the book of the gospel, and bishops, clergy, and laymen all salute him. Then the patriarch proceeds to celebrate the *korban*. He reads the gospel himself, and at the words 'I am the good shepherd' all the people cry again *ἀξίος, ἀξίος*: at the end of the service he gives the peace, and retires in procession to the sacristy, where his liturgical vestments are put off, and he is apparelled in a dark cope. So returning to the throne he gives the benediction, and passes from the church to the patriarchal palace, or 'cell,' as it is called in significant contrast<sup>1</sup>. He rides on his own mule in a great procession, all the clergy going before him, and the lay folk following after. At the head of the procession three crosses are carried, and the picture of St. Mark and his banner. In olden times at Alexandria the procession made a station in the midst of the city, where prayers were recited; and thence with renewed chanting they moved on to the patriarch's dwelling. There all the clergy and notables of the people came to pay homage; and a three days' festival was celebrated, first in the church of the Gospel, next in that of St. Michael, and finally in that of St. Mark. At the last service, when mass was ended, it was customary for the patriarch, sitting on the throne, to hold the head of St. Mark instead of the gospel, and to place a new veil or covering upon it.

That venerable relic has long since disappeared.

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<sup>1</sup> The ceremonies of installation are given rather differently by Vansleb (*Histoire*, pp. 162-9), who mentions a large cross of iron as laid on the altar under the paten, and taken by the patriarch instead of the crozier, when he assumes his pontifical robes. But interesting as the fact would be, I can find no other evidence for it.

The story is that early in the seventh century an Arab crew broke into the church and carried off the coffer in which it was preserved, thinking it held some great treasure. But the vessel was unable to leave the port; and 'Amr, sending to know the reason, discovered that they had taken the head. When it was brought again to land, the ship glided out of harbour. Then 'Amr wrote to Benjamin the patriarch, who had fled to Upper Egypt, recounting what had happened, recalled him, and gave him 10,000 dinars to build a church in honour of the event; and that church is called Al Mu'allakah<sup>1</sup>.

At the present day the patriarch lives in a simple manner, having the income of an average country living in England. A lay council has been created to assist him in the management of the church revenues; indeed there is some likelihood of all the endowments, ecclesiastical and monastic, being placed in commission. Great reverence is shown to the office of the patriarch, however unworthy the person of him who occupies the chair. It is still customary to 'worship' before him, i.e. to fall prostrate on the ground, laying the forehead in the dust, and then to kiss the pontiff's hand.

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### *Metropolitan and Bishop.*

There are four metropolitans, or archbishops, under the jurisdiction of the Coptic patriarch,—

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<sup>1</sup> So Vansleb, *Histoire*, p. 169: but there is obviously some mistake in the name.

A great part of the materials used above is taken from Renaudot's treatise *De Patriarcha Alexandrino*.



those of Alexandria, Manûflah or Memphis, Jerusalem, and Abyssinia<sup>1</sup>. All these receive their consecration at the hands of the patriarch; but the ritual differs in no way from that used at the consecration of a bishop, except that the service in the case of a metropolitan ends with a special invocation on his behalf.

A bishop may be recommended or elected by a council of clergy and laity, but his ordination must be at the hands of the patriarch. It is considered better, perhaps, that he should never have been married; but the only requirement essential is that he should not have been married a second time. When a candidate is presented to the patriarch, the latter makes enquiry of six or seven witnesses, who answer for the piety and learning of the bishop designate. Sometimes a deacon is chosen, and the intervening orders of priest and archpriest are conferred on consecutive days; moreover, as in the case of the patriarch, if the bishop designate is a secular, he must receive the angelic raiment and the order of monkhood. Vespers must be kept on Saturday preceding the Sunday of ordination, and the night passed in vigil, during which the new bishop repeats the whole of the psalms and the gospel of St. John. The neighbouring bishops, clergy, and laity are summoned to attend the ordination ceremony.

When the office of matins is over, the patriarch and bishops enter the church in solemn procession, and moving to the choir, wait there while the mass

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<sup>1</sup> Vansleb mentions only three, Damietta, Jerusalem, and Ethiopia. No doubt the see of Damietta was once metropolitan: but it is not so at present owing to the diminished importance of that city. The cathedral too was seized by the Muslims about 1670.

commences; then all enter the haikal, and take their seats upon the tribune. Meanwhile the candidate stands at the south side of the choir with a burning taper before him; and on the altar lie the episcopal vestments, including a silk epitrachelion, embroidered with the figures of the twelve apostles. After the lection from the Acts, the patriarch comes down from his throne and stands in the doorway of the sanctuary with the bishops around him; and when he has given them the cross to kiss, he sends three of their number to the bishop designate, who makes a prostration before them. Then a procession is formed, the three bishops holding the stole of the candidate, and passes round the church and into the choir again. The instrument of election is formally delivered to the patriarch, who hands it over to a deacon to read from the ambon.

Turning now eastward to the altar, the pontiff takes from it the dark-coloured ballin, and places this on the new bishop instead of the shamlah<sup>1</sup>, having thrice signed it with the sign of the cross. In like manner the epitrachelion is given, and the wearer signed thrice on the forehead. Another procession now moves down the church; and at the western end the new bishop sits or kneels upon the ground during the singing of a hymn. Then, singing still, they pass to the door of the haikal; and the bishop falls down before the altar, and kisses the

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<sup>1</sup> This seems to be the meaning of the rubric in Renaudot: but it is quite impossible to be certain about it. It will be remembered that the 'black hood' in the painting of Anba Shanûdah has three white crosses upon it.

cross at the hand of the patriarch, who signs his forehead thrice crosswise. The kyrie is sung here, and the bells are rung.

After prayers and the pax, the senior deacon cries, 'Lift up your hands, O bishops;' whereupon the prelates all raise their hands, and lay them on the shoulders of their new brother, while the patriarch lays hands upon his head. In the subsequent prayers the patriarch turns eastward; but faces westward again to sign the cross thrice on the forehead of the new bishop, and to vest him in full episcopal apparel. When the bishop is fully arrayed, the patriarch delivers to him the small cross wherewith to give the benediction: and after a prayer lifts his hand over the bishop, crying *ἀγιος*, to which all assembled answer *ἀγιος*.

The next part of the ceremony takes place in the choir, all the clergy standing there, while the admonition is read to the new bishop; who, after hearing it, kisses the threshold of the sanctuary. Thence he is taken back to the haikal, where he kisses the altar; and so he is led up the steps of the tribune, and takes his seat on the right hand of the patriarch, holding the book of the gospel. Mass forthwith commences, and proceeds in the accustomed manner, except that some special versicles are used at the kiss of peace. The patriarch communicates himself, confesses the new bishop, and administers, giving the wafer and the cup separately into the bishop's hand. Then the corporal is placed over the sacred elements; the bishop retires to the doorway, and the patriarch, turning westward, places the book of the gospel on his head, saying the pax. Then the deacon proclaims the reading of the gospel from the ambon,

and the patriarch reads a passage from St. John<sup>1</sup>. After the words 'Jesus stood in the midst and said unto them, "Peace be unto you,"' the patriarch holds out the gospel over the head of the bishop; again, at the words 'As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you,' he does the same thing, crying out *ἀξιως*. Then he resumes, and at the words 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost,' he breathes in the form of a cross upon the face of the bishop, crying again *ἀξιως*, and the cry is taken up by the clergy and the people, the choir singing and the bells ringing; and lastly, at the words 'They are retained,' all the people shout, 'A hundred years.' The patriarch and bishop return to the altar, remove the veil, and administer the communion to the rest of the clergy and laymen; while the choir sing the benediction. At the end of the service, when the benediction is to be given for the dismissal of the congregation, the patriarch robes the bishop in a dark-coloured processional cope, and invites him to give a separate benison. All then proceed to the patriarch's dwelling, and a three days' festival is kept. Here, too, the patriarch often presents the new bishop with a small hand-cross and with a crozier; but that is not a necessary part of the ceremony of ordination. It is, however, necessary for the bishop to fast during the week which follows his consecration<sup>2</sup>, and during that time to study diligently the duties of his office; and meanwhile the pontiff sends letters commendatory to his diocese.

The installation of the bishop at his own church

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<sup>1</sup> C. xx.

<sup>2</sup> Vansleb, *Histoire*, p. 172. Yet the same writer gives three weeks as the period of fasting in another passage. See p. 33.

must take place on a week-day, and three other bishops at least must be present to accompany him. When he arrives at the village or dair nearest his own town, the people come to meet him in procession, and prostrate themselves before him. Then the clergy read a chapter from St. Matthew<sup>1</sup>, and conduct him with chaunts and music through the town to the church. The senior bishop says set prayers before the door, recites Psalm cxvii. and part of another chapter of St. Matthew<sup>2</sup>; other prayers and forty kyries follow, and they enter. Just within the door the senior bishop reads the prayer of absolution over the new prelate; then come more lessons, and the procession moves to the haikal, where all fall down before the altar, and the new bishop takes the lowest seat on the tribune. After matins, the bishops put on their liturgical vestments and begin the mass, the new bishop reading some of the prayers and censing the altar. They invoke upon him the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and lead him in procession round the church. On returning to the haikal they lay their hands on his shoulders, and then take him up to the throne, where the senior bishop makes him sit, thrice replacing him as he tries to rise, and the choir all cry *Agios*. Thus sitting on the throne the bishop holds the book of the gospel in his hand, the prelates and priests kiss him in order, while the deacons chaunt to music. He descends and reads the gospel, during which the chief bishop places the silver book upon his head three times; then returning to the altar he accomplishes the celebration. The installation, like the consecration, is followed by three

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<sup>1</sup> C. xxi. 1-7.

<sup>2</sup> C. xvi. 13-19.

days of festival, but the bishop's fasting is now turned to feasting.

The number of episcopal sees under the jurisdiction of the patriarch of Alexandria is at present fourteen; but in ancient times was far greater. Vansleb in 1673 transcribed a catalogue of the sees from an old MS. shown to him by the then bishop of Siût; in this there are nearly one hundred given, and that number falls far short of the total which can be found recorded in church documents. In his own time Vansleb mentions fifteen as still existing:—

1. Naḳâdah, 2. Girgah, 3. Abu Tîg, 4. Siût, 5. Manfalût, 6. Ḳosḳâm, 7. Malâfah and Miniah, 8. Baḥnâsah, 9. Atfiah, 10. Taḥta and Ashmunain, 11. Faiûm, 12. Bilbais, 13. Mansûrah, 14. Damietta, 15. Manûf, Bahairah, and the port of Alexandria, which are united. At present there remain the following:—
1. Gîzah, 2. Faiûm and Baḥnâsah, 3. Miniah and Ashmunain, 4. Sanâbu and Ḳosḳâm, 5. Manfalût, 6. Siût, 7. Girgah and Akhmîm, 8. Abu Tîg, 9. Kainah, Ḳûss, and Naḳâdah, 10. Asnah, 11. Al Khartûm, 12–14. three dioceses in Abyssinia under the metropolitan.

### *Ḳummuṣ.*

There are two senses in which the term ḳummuṣ is used, or its Coptic equivalent Ⲅⲩⲣⲟⲗⲗⲉⲛⲟⲥ, which is a slightly corrupted form of the Greek ἡγούμενος. The secular ḳummuṣ, or archpriest, has a position somewhat corresponding to that of an English rector; he is the chief priest in charge of a church, to which there may be other priests as well as deacons attached. The name applies even to the superior of the cathedral. In its other meaning it signifies the head or

abbot of a monastery. It is very difficult to decide whether any particular church was originally secular or religious: and therefore it is not surprising to find that the superior in both cases is called by the same name; though in all probability the term hegumenos was once distinctly monastic.

When a priest is to be ordained *ķummuş*, he is brought to the church, and set in the choir arrayed in his sacerdotal vestments. Two archpriests lead him between them in procession round the church, and bring him to the door of the sanctuary, where the bishop is standing. All bow before the altar, and the bishop says the prayer of incense; then after other prayers lays his hand upon the priest's head. Moreover, the bishop signs his head thrice with the sign of the cross; the priest kisses the altar; and the *ķorbân* is celebrated. After communion a form of exhortation is read, admonishing the new *ķummuş* of his spiritual duties.

### *Priest.*

For the ordination of a priest the canonical age is thirty-three years. Testimony is required from the clergy that he be of good character and understanding, lawfully married, and a deacon in holy orders. If not already a deacon, he must be made reader and deacon on successive days previous to the day of ordination. When the day has come, he must be vested as deacon, wearing a dalmatic, and the orarion over his left shoulder, and be brought to the choir,—the bishop being within the *haikal* accompanied by a priest. The candidate is led in procession round the church; then bows low

before the altar, while the bishop, facing eastward, proceeds with the prayer of morning incense. At the prescribed moment the bishop turns to the west, and lays his hand on the candidate's head, repeating an orison. Resuming the eastward position he continues praying; then turns westward again to sign the candidate's forehead with a cross. The proclamation of the candidate as priest follows, whereupon the bishop makes three more crosses on his forehead, and vests him in sacerdotal apparel. After the thanksgiving a priest delivers the exhortation; there is also a special admonition concerning the duty of confessing the people and of exercising great discretion in dealing with penitents. The new priest kisses the book containing the exhortation, and the threshold of the haikal, and the hand of the bishop. Then he receives the communion, and the bishop's hands are thrice laid upon his head, and all the people shout *ἀγιος* with the name of the priest and his cure. According to Vansleb the bishop also breathes upon his face, saying, 'Receive thou the Holy Ghost;' but the rubrics do not seem to mention insufflation.

Ordination is followed by a fast of forty days, the fast lasting from sunset till three o'clock in the following afternoon.

#### *Deacon.*

For the ordination of the deacon the ceremonial is almost the same as that appointed for ordination of the priest: except that the deacon wears no stole when he is presented to the bishop, and that the process of investiture with the insignia of the order



consists in the placing of the orarion upon the left shoulder. Vansleb records that the eucharistic spoon is likewise delivered to the deacon as a symbol of his office, and held all through the mass; and that at the end of the service the bishop breathes upon his face. The *ἀξίος* is called thrice by the clergy.

When an archdeacon is ordained, there is a special additional form of prayer, and a particular arrangement of the orarion, as described in the account given above of the ecclesiastical vestments; but otherwise the service and ritual do not differ from those of the inferior order.

The subdeacon stands at the door of the haikal without dalmatic or other ornament. The bishop does not ordain him by imposition of hands: but after the prayer of morning incense places one hand on each temple, so that the thumbs meet on the forehead, and so recites an orison. The sign of the cross is also made on the subdeacon's forehead once, and subsequently thrice, as in the case of the higher orders; and the orarion is placed over his left shoulder. He kisses the altar, and receives the eucharist; but the bishop at no time lays hand upon his head.

As the deacon holds the spoon, so the subdeacon holds a lighted candle in his hand all through the celebration of the *κὀρβάν*.

#### *Reader.*

The candidate for the office of reader in the Church stands before the haikal without dalmatic, with head uncovered and bowed low. He is brought, as usual, in procession, and presented to the bishop, who stands in the doorway. The bishop asks, 'Do

ye bear witness that this person is in very truth worthy of the order?' and the answer is, 'Of a truth, our father, he is worthy.' Then the bishop, with a pair of scissors, cuts a large cross through the hair of the candidate, and a smaller cross in the angles between the branches. After a prayer westward, and another towards the altar, the bishop, again facing to the west, holds the temples of the candidate during another orison; then he delivers the book of the gospel, and administers the eucharist; but the ordination is accomplished without the imposition of hands.

There is no other form of tonsure than that just mentioned recognised by the Coptic canons or practised by any order. Something of the same kind is done at the ordination of the subdeacon in Abyssinia<sup>1</sup>, according to Alvarez; and the subdeacon is made to touch the keys of the church, a veil is placed upon his head, and a cruse of water is delivered as his symbol of office.

No reader, nor subdeacon, nor singer may enter the sanctuary, though they receive the eucharist before the laymen.

The singer is signed with the sign of the cross, and receives a benediction from the bishop, of course without imposition of hands.

### *Monk.*

Three years of noviciate are required before the order of monkhood is conferred. Then the abbot, standing at the door of the haikal, bids the novice lie prostrate on the ground, and reads over him

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<sup>1</sup> Denzinger, Rit. Or., tom. ii. p. 6 note.

the burial service in token of his death to the world. The crosswise tonsure is made upon the monk's head, and the abbot vests him with tunic, hood, and girdle, accompanying each investiture with the appointed orisons. Then, unless the monk demand the askm or angelic habit, the abbot pronounces absolution and gives his benediction. For the angelic habit a separate service is appointed, and the monk receives a kind of cloak resembling a cope; the cross is laid upon his head, and a special exhortation is read explaining the arduous duties involved in the assumption of this garb of asceticism.

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#### MATRIMONY<sup>1</sup>.

Marriage is not allowed to be celebrated during the season of Lent; but the most common time now is just before the fast commences. The sacrament of matrimony in the Coptic Church is surrounded with much solemnity, and retains some traces of ancient and even pre-Christian custom which have disappeared from western ritual.

It is the duty of the priest to ascertain that both parties to the marriage are acting of free will and not of compulsion. On the appointed day the bridegroom and the bride are separately escorted in procession with music through the streets to the church. When the bridegroom reaches the door, the deacons bearing tapers and bells and the priests meet him there, singing 'Blessed is he that cometh in the

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<sup>1</sup> Arabic الزَّجْر.

name of the Lord.' Other chaunts follow, and the bridegroom is then conducted to the choir. Similarly the bride is welcomed with the 'Ave, Maria' at the door, and led to her place in the division or gallery for women. All the clergy are dressed in white: and if the patriarch perform the office of benediction, the clergy escort him to the church in procession. The raiment destined for the bridal, a golden cross, a golden ring, a girdle, and incense, are placed on a tray in the choir: and sometimes also a new silken cope, which it is customary for the bridegroom to present to the patriarch, who puts on the gift for the service. The service comes just after matins.

The penitential psalms are first recited, and incense is burned: then the patriarch or celebrant is solemnly censed by the other clergy. Kyries, alleluias, and psalms are next sung and followed by the epistle: then the choir is censed, and the gospel read in Coptic and Arabic with the customary ceremonies. Several orisons from the liturgy are now said ending with the prayer of absolution to the Son: after which the tray of vestments is unveiled, and the patriarch blesses each one singly. In these the bridegroom is arrayed, being clothed first in a white silken tunic reaching to the feet, then with the girdle about his waist, and with a white covering on his head: moreover the patriarch places the ring on the ring-finger of the bridegroom's right hand, and pronounces over him his benediction.

The celebrant now moves down from the choir leading the man to the place where the woman is waiting, and bids him give to her the ring, to which also a crown is fastened. And when the woman puts forth her hand to take them, she thereby signifies

her willingness to become his wife, and the celebrant inclines their heads together. Thence the man and woman go to the doorway of the choir, and the bride stands at the bridegroom's right hand. Thus standing they are covered by the priest with a single veil of white silk or fine linen, symbolical of pure and holy union. Appropriate prayers are recited, and hymns are sung, accompanied by the burning of incense, and divided by a lection from the gospel. When they are finished, the priest or patriarch begins the benediction of the bride and bridegroom; and whenever he mentions their names, he signs them with the sign of the cross<sup>1</sup>. Liturgical prayers continue with music; and after the pax the priest blesses a vessel of oil, and anoints both bride and bridegroom on the forehead and on the wrist: he blesses also the crowns, and after an orison places them on their heads, and cries in a loud voice, 'With glory and honour the Father has crowned them, the Son blesses them, the Holy Ghost crowns them, comes down upon them, and perfects them': and other forms of blessing follow, varying with the customs of the several churches.

Then the man and woman stand with their arms crossed before them, and the golden cross is laid upon their heads, while the priest pronounces over them the absolution. This is followed by an exhortation, at the end of which the priest delivers the bride to the bridegroom, joining their hands, and gives another benediction. During some versicles which

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<sup>1</sup> In the previous benediction of the bridegroom, according to Vansleb, the priest stands behind him facing eastward, and touches the back of his head with the silver or golden cross. See, however, Denzinger, *Rit. Or.*, tom. ii. p. 364 seq.

follow, a procession is formed, and moves round the church with lights burning and music playing. When they have returned, the canon of the mass begins. Man and wife partake of the holy eucharist, and are then escorted in procession to the doors of the church, and so through the streets homewards.

On the eighth day after marriage a solemn service is held for the removal of the crown. Certain prayers and lections are recited in due order; and when they are finished, the priest takes off the crown from the head of the bride and bridegroom, and dismisses them with his benediction.

It will be seen, then, that the Coptic marriage service corresponds in its main features, particularly in the coronation and removal of the crown, with the same service in the Greek, as given by Goar<sup>1</sup>. It corresponds also with the Latin rite, as recorded in the ninth century by pope Nicholas, who brings out four points as essential—the offerings to the church, the benediction, the veiling, and the crowning<sup>2</sup>.

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#### ANOINTING OF THE SICK.

In the Arabic names for this sacrament, which signify 'oil of the lamp' or 'oil of the sick'<sup>3</sup>, there is

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<sup>1</sup> Euchol., pp. 396, 400.

<sup>2</sup> For other ceremonies connected with the Coptic marriage, see Lane's *Modern Egyptians*, vol. ii. p. 290 seq. Lane's account of the Copts is fairly accurate on the whole, though warped by that morbid prejudice which disfigures most English writings about them. See, for example, the thoroughly unjust article on the Copts in the new *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

<sup>3</sup> زيت المرضى or زيت لقنديل.

nothing to denote that it is to be administered solely as the last rite of the Church to those who are departing. So far therefore the Coptic differs from the Romish practice.

In the Pontifical of Gabriel the rites of the sacrament of unction are described as follows. A lamp with seven branches<sup>1</sup> is filled with purest olive oil of Palestine, and placed on a stand before a picture of the blessed Virgin: near it also are set a cross and the silver book of the gospel. Seven priests, or any other convenient number, assemble in the church. The service commences with a thanksgiving, followed by burning of incense, a portion of an epistle, and some appropriate orisons. Then the chief priest lights one of the wicks, making the sign of the cross over the oil, while his brethren sing psalms. Other prayers follow; and at a time appointed the second priest likewise makes the sign of the cross over the oil, and kindles the second wick: and so on with intervals of prayer and chaunt until the whole seven wicks are kindled in order.

When all the prayers and lessons belonging to the lighting of the lamp are thus accomplished, the sick person, if he be in such a condition that he is able to take part in the service, advances to the door of the haikal, facing to the east. There the chief priest holds the silver gospel and the cross high above his head, and then lays his hands upon the sick man's temples: but while the chief priest alone recites the orisons, all the priests severally give their benediction, recite the Lord's prayer, and open the gospel, reading the passage on which they chance to open.

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<sup>1</sup> See the illustration of such a lamp on p. 76 *supra*.

Moreover the creed and other prayers are uttered : the cross is again uplifted over the sick man : and a procession is formed and passes round the church, bearing the seven-wicked lamp and lighted tapers, while they sing, praying to God that the sick man may be healed through the intercession of saints and martyrs. At the end of the procession the sick man returns to the choir, and standing at the door of the haikal, as before, is anointed with the oil. In case the sick person is too ill to endure the long and fatiguing ceremony of the service in the church, a substitute is put in his place, but the service is not performed outside the consecrated building, and is intended as an intercession for the recovery of the sick, and not as the Church's final benediction of a soul passing to eternity.

The Armenian rite for the anointing of the sick closely resembles the Coptic in its use of a seven-wicked lamp : but differs in allowing the service to be held at the bedside, in cases where the sick person is unable to go to the church.

This practice of anointing the sick with oil from a church lamp is extremely ancient. St. Chrysostom clearly speaks of persons who had been anointed in faith with oil from such a lamp, and had been cured of divers diseases. Oil of the lamp is also mentioned as used for unction of the sick in the life of Nilus the younger<sup>1</sup> : and monks and others are said to have been healed of evil spirits in this manner, the anointing being given at the hands of a priest. The same custom and the same expression are also found in Greek ritual, which contains a prayer for the

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<sup>1</sup> Vita, viii. 58, 59 : Boll. Sept. 26, quoted in Dict. Christ. Antiq. q. v.



anointing of the sick with oil of the lamp<sup>1</sup>. Seven priests also are required, as in the Coptic ritual; and the oil is kept burning in a seven-wicked lamp before the principal icon of our Lord in the church: but wine is used in this lamp in lieu of water<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Euchol., p. 842.

<sup>2</sup> Id., p. 436.

## CHAPTER IX.

### *Various Rites and Ceremonies of the Church.*

*The Holy Oils.—Consecration of a Church and Altar.—Consecration of a Baptistery.—Festival of Epiphany.—Palm Sunday and Holy Week.—Seasons of Fasting.*

#### THE HOLY OILS.

**F**ORMAL usage and canon law in the West alike recognise three distinct kinds of oil as employed in the service of the Church, called chrism, oil of the catechumens, oil of the sick. There are many vestiges in Coptic rubrics showing that three kinds of oil have been used from time immemorial in the ritual of Egypt: and there still exists at the church of Anba Shanûdah in Old Cairo a chrismatory containing three crewets, one for each of the several sorts. But the correspondence is rather in practice than in theory: for it is doubtful whether the Church of Alexandria ever formally recognised more than two kinds of oil, each having a specific and separate ritual name and purpose. In the early fourth-century fragment of a Coptic MS., published by Georgius, two kinds are mentioned, and called  $\Delta\Upsilon\text{I}\text{O}\text{N}$   $\alpha\alpha\Upsilon\text{P}\text{O}\text{N}$  and  $\Delta\Upsilon\text{I}\text{O}\text{N}$   $\epsilon\lambda\alpha\text{I}\text{O}\text{N}$ ; and so perpetually we find chrism and

olive oil distinguished. The latter was also called in Greek ἀγαλλιᾶσεως ἔλαιον, whence, by a curious corruption, the term *galilaeon*<sup>1</sup> was formed in Coptic, and constantly stands in the rubrics and prayers for the secondary oil. There is no difficulty whatever in understanding the use of three oils in practice and the recognition of two in theory by the Egyptians: for while the galilaeon answers generally to the 'oleum catechumenorum' of the Latins, and the oil of the lamp answers to the 'oleum infirmorum,' yet the material of these two oils, namely the galilaeon and the oil of the lamp, is precisely the same in both cases, pure olive oil of Palestine. They are therefore virtually one and the same oil, and stand together in contrast to the myron<sup>2</sup> or chrism, which is an elaborate compound.

The most essential ingredient in the composition of the holy chrism is balsam grown in the garden by the Virgin's well at Maṭariḥ, the ancient Heliopolis. It was here, according to the legend, that the Holy Family rested on their flight into Egypt: and it is related that they hid in the hollow of a tree, across which a spider wove his web, and so deceived the pursuers. A mediaeval Arab writer thus cites a mention of the balsam of Maṭariḥ: 'in vicinia Fostatæ sunt ab austro vicus Menf et a septentrione urbs nominata Ainschemes . . . dicunturque ambae horti fuisse Pharaonis, cui Deus maledicat. In Ainschemes provenit balsami arbor, quod nullibi terrarum nisi hic nascitur<sup>3</sup>.' As a matter of fact the

<sup>1</sup> An intermediate form is also found, ἄγαλλιᾶλαιον.

<sup>2</sup> The term is in use at present in the Arabic form المجرور.

<sup>3</sup> See *Descriptio Ægypti*, translated from the Arabic by J. D. Michaelis, Göttingen, 1776, p. 127.

balsam-tree is found also in Arabia, and though the last tree in Egypt is said to have perished in the great inundation of 1615, it may very well have been restored. Tradition, however, insists that the balsam grew only in the garden at Maṭariāh, and required to be watered from the well in which the infant Christ was washed. There is a story that in the twelfth century a certain Jew, who had become vizier to the sultan 'Azīz, son of Saladin, flatly denied this truth; and, to prove his contention, had another well dug close to the Virgin's fountain. For a year the balsam trees were watered only from the new well; and the result was that they yielded not one drop of balsam. Next year the vizier caused them to be watered in equal quantities from both wells: and they produced then half the usual amount of balm. The third year, when the water of the Virgin's well alone was used, the yield of balm recovered, and attained its full measure<sup>1</sup>.

Several boilings are required for the myron, and each is a process precisely ordered. The amount of every drug used is defined by rigid prescription, and portioned by weight and measure. At the first boiling the various herbs and spices, which include lilies and cassia, are put in a pot, and covered with fresh water, and so left to steep for a day. Next morning eight pounds of pure oil, which has never been contained in any vessel of leather, is poured upon the spices, and made to boil all day over a moderate fire, the fuel for which is olive wood or decayed church pictures<sup>2</sup>. While the mixture is

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<sup>1</sup> See also *Evangelia Apocrypha*, ed. Tischendorf, 2nd edit. p. 193. (*Evang. Infant. Arab.* c. xxiv.)

<sup>2</sup> This custom recorded by Vansleb (*Histoire*, p. 91), still con-

boiling the whole of the Psalms are recited. From time to time the spices are stirred with a wand of olive; and as the water fails, it is replenished. In the evening the pot is taken off the fire, and the oil left to cool all night till the following morning, when it is strained through linen.

Then red roses of Persia, white sandal-wood, and other aromatics are placed in a cauldron of fresh water and left for six hours; when the oil of yesterday is placed with them, and the whole is boiled for four hours over a slow fire, and strained again.

For the third boiling other spices are chosen, steeped, boiled with the oil resulting from the day preceding, and strained as before. Next day white storax, saffron, aloe-wood, and more red roses are used with other things, and boiled as before until all the water has evaporated; when the remaining mixture is clarified by straining. This on the fifth day is added to a decoction of yellow amber and storax or balsam, and boiled over a slow fire made of oak charcoal, until the amber and the storax are dissolved. Then the chrism is passed through a linen strainer into a clean vessel, and is stirred daily for seven days, when it is ready for consecration<sup>1</sup>.

According to ancient custom the hallowing of the myron should always, if possible, take place at the church of St. Macarius in the western desert. Originally it was done in the church of St. Mark

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tinues: it accounts for the disappearance of all really early paintings from the churches.

<sup>1</sup> The manner of making chrism as described by a Coptic prelate, in answer to a demand from the Maphrian of Mosul, is given in a MS. in the Bibliothèque Nationale at Paris. (XIV. No. 100.)

at Alexandria, and when the change took place it is impossible to say, but probably not later than the seventh century. There seems too some ambiguity concerning the day proper for the consecration,—whether it should be Maundy Thursday, as in the western rite, or Good Friday. But the Coptic legend is that the day was changed to Good Friday, and the place to Dair Macarius, c. 390, by the patriarch Theophilus, in obedience to the command of an angel seen in a vision. The same angel taught Theophilus the right spices to use for the chrisim, and the right manner of its preparation. Theophanius LX is said to have restored the custom of consecrating on Good Friday, which had been abolished by his predecessor c. 950 A. D. During the thirty years which followed, the practice varied between Thursday and Friday, until Ephraim LXII by an ordinance settled Thursday as the right day for ever. Thursday, of course, is the day recognised by the Church all over the world for the consecration of the chrisim; and if the Copts ever changed it, they were doubtless conscious of error. Hence the supposed sanction of the change by an angel's voice, as in the legend. As regards the change of place, it may very well have followed close upon the Arab conquest; for the ceremony required great pomp and great preparation, and it is no wonder that the scene was changed from the alarms and persecutions of the city to the unbroken quiet of the desert monastery.

When the day has come, the patriarch and a great number of bishops and clergy and laity assemble at the church of St. Macarius. The two oils which await consecration, the myron and the galilaeon, are

placed in separate vessels on the high altar <sup>1</sup>. Service begins with a thanksgiving accompanied by incense, and a prayer is recited by the patriarch. Then follow several lessons, during which the pontiff is seated on his throne, and when they are ended a procession is formed, which passes round the church. At the head a processional cross is carried: then come twelve subdeacons each bearing a lighted lamp: twelve deacons with silver flabella: twelve priests with censers of burning incense: the patriarch walking under a white silken canopy, upheld by four deacons, and carrying the vessel of holy oil covered by a white veil: and on either side of the patriarch and behind him are other ecclesiastics bearing flabella and crosses. As they move, all sing, 'Behold the ointment of the Lord' <sup>2</sup>: and when they return to the haikal, the patriarch places the myron again upon the altar <sup>3</sup>, and proceeds with the long but beautiful consecration service. After the benediction of the oils the *korbân* is immediately celebrated: and when it is over, the myron and the

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<sup>1</sup> According to Vansleb the 'mystagogia,' which he defines as the creed of the apostles, is placed between them. The same writer mentions two 'altars' of wood specially made, one on each side of the high altar: but the term is obviously inaccurate, mere pedestals being required if anything, and no mention being made even of these in the rubrics. The statement doubtless arises from a misapprehension: I think it possible that altar-boards may have been used as stands for the vessels but placed *upon* the high altar. See *Histoire*, p. 231 seq.

<sup>2</sup> The Copts say that the chrism represents the balm used at the entombment.

<sup>3</sup> According to Vansleb the myron is placed on one of the wooden pedestals, and the galilaeon on the other: but see the rubric in Denzinger, *Rit. Or.*, tom. i. p. 251, where nothing of the kind is mentioned.

galilaeon are both placed in the cavity under the high altar, where they remain until Tuesday in Easter week. On that day after mass the patriarch distributes to the bishops sufficient quantities to last them for the coming year. It should be noticed that in the prayers of benediction, where the uses of the chrism are specified, the anointing of regeneration is mentioned, and the anointing of bishops and priests, and the consecration of altars: but in the benediction of the galilaeon it is stated that 'priests and martyrs' have been anointed with it. From the tenour of the prayers in the latter case, it is clear that the galilaeon is regarded as possessing a mystic virtue against idolatry and witchcraft, a power of defence against the assaults of the devil, and a power of healing for soul and body. It is therefore needful in some way to all the faithful: and accordingly we find that to this day all folk, whether cleric or lay, are anointed once a year in the season of Lent with the galilaeon.

But present practice has departed somewhat from the primitive tradition. For while the galilaeon seems almost to have disappeared through a confusion with the oil of the sick, which is hallowed from time to time as required; the consecration of chrism has become an extremely rare occurrence. Not that its worth has been in any way depreciated: on the contrary it is regarded still as no less necessary than sovereignly precious: but for the last two or three hundred years at least it seems to have been made in larger quantities, and consequently at longer intervals. For the ceremony, which should be annual, now takes place once in every thirty or forty years. According to Pococke a definite



interval of thirty years is prescribed ; but this is not the case. A list of dates, for instance, at which the consecration was held in the thirteenth century shows irregular intervals varying from six to fifteen years<sup>1</sup>. The myron is now used only at confirmation, and at the dedication of a new church, altar, picture or vessel, according to the testimony of the present patriarch.

There is a close resemblance between Coptic and Greek usage as regards the myron : for the same term is used in both languages. The preparation is as elaborate : for the Greeks use oil, wine, balsam, myrrh, storax, cassia, cinnamon, marjory, and in all some thirty-six aromatics<sup>2</sup>. Moreover the consecration is attended with much the same ceremonial. The oil is carried in procession in an alabaster box, which is covered with a veil ; before it move deacons with lighted tapers, and on each side of it are seven deacons carrying fans, which they hold above the vessel. But the pontiff instead of carrying the holy oil receives it from the chief priest or bishop at the door of the sanctuary, and places it on the altar.

In the West the chrism was made merely of oil and balsam. The three oils were consecrated together, the chrism being borne in a vessel of gold, while the *oleum sanctum* and *oleum infirmorum* were held in silver vessels : and the procession through the church resembled that of the oriental ritual. Chrism was used for the latter unction at baptism and for confirmation ; for the consecration of a church, altar, and bells ; for the consecration of

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<sup>1</sup> The MS. in the Bibliothèque Nationale gives the years 1299, 1305, 1320, 1330, 1340, and 1346 A.D.

<sup>2</sup> Goar, *Euchol.*, p. 637.

bishops, priests, and kings ; and it was placed on the hands of the deacon, and on crucifixes at their benediction. But in the Latin rite the chrism and balsam were set on the altar separately : during the service the bishop mingled a portion of the oil with the balsam on the paten, and then replaced it in the golden vessel. Curiously enough exactly the same method of mingling the chrism is found in the Jacobite Syrian ritual, which otherwise tallies rather with the Coptic, particularly in the details of the great procession, and in the prominence given to the use of flabella. The Syrians recognise only two oils, and call the second the 'oil of anointing' : it is used for the first unction at baptism, and for the healing of the sick.

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#### THE CONSECRATION OF A CHURCH AND ALTAR.

The Coptic order for the consecration of a church having never been published, it is impossible to give anything like a complete description of the ceremonies customary. In giving therefore such points of usage as can be ascertained, others no less essential will have to be passed in silence owing to want of information.

The service commences with vespers on the evening before a Sunday, and lasts through most of the night, the act of consecration being reserved for Sunday morning. A great number of clergy and bishops assemble with the patriarch in the building ; but it does not appear whether there is any ceremony at the western door, such as was usual in our own country. Seven earthen vessels of water are ranged

in front of the haikal, and the neck of every vessel is wreathed with leaves of a plant called '*silk*'<sup>1</sup>. Seven lamps also are burning before the haikal, and seven censers of incense between the vessels of water and the screen. A large portion of the psalter is then sung, and followed by a long series of lessons; and after every lesson a hymn is chaunted. Next the patriarch censures the building, while the clergy sing another hymn. Prayer after prayer continues, varied only with kyries from the people and portions from all the four gospels. When the moment comes for the benediction of the water, all kneel down until the orison is finished.

Then all rising, the clergy form a long procession headed by the patriarch: the vessels of water are borne along in this procession, and the clergy, who all wear their most splendid vestments, carry tapers, thuribles, flabella, and a magnificent book of the gospel. They go first into the haikal, where the patriarch or bishop sprinkles the walls and top of the altar with water, which he takes from the earthen vessel in a gourd: then he sprinkles in like manner the walls of the haikal, particularly the eastern niche, and also the pillars and dome of the altar-canopy. From the haikal the procession passes round the whole church; and the pontiff sprinkles in the same way the walls, angles, columns, and, where possible, the roof, saying at each place, 'The holy consecration of the house of God.'

After the first procession a second is made, in which the places sprinkled are signed with the *silk*

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<sup>1</sup> Apparently white beet. See Vansleb, *Histoire*, p. 215. It is questionable whether the plant is not rather used as the instrument of aspersion.

leaves in the form of a cross. Finally, there comes a third procession, in which a vessel of holy chrism is borne before the pontiff, who signs the myron with the sign of the cross upon the altar, walls, columns, and all the places that were touched with the leaves, and sprinkled with the hallowed water. The consecration of the church is now accomplished, and the marks of consecration are sometimes recorded by the incision of crosses. Thus all the pillars at Abu Sargah have dedication crosses cut into the marble: others are seen in Al Mu'allakah, Al 'Adra Hârat-az-Zuailah, and elsewhere: and the crosses often cut on the architrave joining the columns of the nave may have the same origin. It seems, however, an invariable rule that no record was preserved of chrismal crosses signed upon plastered surfaces.

In the foregoing account no mention is made of a procession round the outside of the church: and I have no doubt that such a procession never formed part of the ceremonial, for the simple reason that there is scarcely a single church in Egypt which is so far detached on the outside as to render an exterior circuit possible. In our old English ritual the procession passed round the church outside, as well as inside, and the bishop made twelve crosses with chrism upon the walls externally, and twelve internally. On the outside, the places where the chrism was signed were often marked by an incised cross in a roundel: and inside, where the chrism was placed upon a plastered surface, the spot was marked by a similar design painted. In the British Museum there is a French miniature<sup>1</sup> representing a bishop on a ladder making a cross upon the wall of

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<sup>1</sup> Add. MSS. 18,143.

a church. The *Ordo Romanus* prescribes twelve as the total; but twenty-four was the more usual number; and the full number was marked upon any chapel added to an earlier building. Nine of the inside crosses remain in Henry VII.'s chapel at Westminster: outside crosses are tolerably common. In England the size and shape varies: thus large and fanciful devices may be seen outside Salisbury cathedral, and on the church of Ottery St. Mary the crosses are held by angels. The Coptic form is generally that given in the woodcut<sup>1</sup>—a Greek cross having the upper and lower limbs slightly elongated and having all the branches hollowed with sloping sides. The nearest approach to this form in England is found at Chichester cathedral.

In the Anglo-Saxon ritual as recorded in the *Ecgbert Pontifical*, the bishop, pausing at the western door on his arrival, strikes it with his staff and is then admitted. A hymn was sung outside, and a litany within the nave: then the bishop wrote the alphabet on the floor, and passing to the altar exorcised and blessed salt and water, blessed also some ashes, and mixing salt and ashes, made a cross with the mixture on the water. Wine also was mingled with the water; and the bishop, dipping his finger in the water, first signed the cross on all the corners of the altar, and then walked seven times round the altar sprinkling water upon it with a branch of hyssop. In the same way he walked all round the church, inside and outside, sprinkling the walls; and he sprinkled also one large cross the length and breadth of the building. Then the hallowed water was poured away, and the altar dried with a cloth:

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<sup>1</sup> P. 21 *supra*, figs. 1 and 2.

incense was offered, and a cross with oil was made in the centre and at each corner of the slab ; and the same five places were subsequently anointed with chrism. Crosses of chrism were made also on the walls. Special prayers and rites for the consecration of the altar and all the sacred vessels followed : relics were enclosed in the altar or in the slab : the bishop placed two small crossed tapers and a little heap of incense and kindled them together over the five spots marked by the crosses of chrism : and the service was brought to an end by the celebration of mass<sup>1</sup>.

Ceremonies not very different in kind, though different in order, are prescribed in the Greek office for the dedication of a church ; but there is no mention of writing the alphabet on the floor. Moreover, when the bishop after knocking has been admitted to the church, he proceeds at once to set up the altar-slab on the pillars which form the usual sub-structure. Then the slab is washed with lustral warm water, which is poured on crosswise, and in the same way with wine : after which three crosses of chrism are poured on the slab, and from these the whole slab is anointed. Three crosses are likewise marked with chrism on each pillar. The antimensia are consecrated at the same time ; and when they are removed, the altar is vested in its three normal coverings. Not till this is accomplished does the bishop go round the church, marking all

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<sup>1</sup> The Roman ritual for the dedication of a church continues, for the most part, unchanged to the present day. A full account, with illustrations, may be seen in the *Pontificale Romanum Clementis VIII ac Urbani VIII jussu editum, inde vero a Benedicto XIV recognitum*. Mechlin, 1873.

the walls and columns. The relics are deposited after a separate entrance in grand procession to the church. They are placed in a hole in the foundation of the altar between the two easternmost pillars: or, if the altar happen to have a solid substructure, they are placed in a cavity in the middle of the eastern face of the altar. Chrism is poured upon the relics, and the hole is fastened up with lead or with the cement which is used for the slab, and which consists of mastich, wax, and marble dust. This done, the mass proceeded.

The Greeks also, like the Copts, use chrism to anoint the eucharistic vessels and church pictures at their dedication.

The consecration of the altar follows that of the church in the Coptic ritual, which therefore so far agrees rather with western than with Greek custom. For in Egypt when the pontiff has consecrated the church, he returns, and standing before the altar censes it, while psalms and orisons are chaunted. Then he makes upon it three crosses of chrism, saying, 'We anoint with myron this altar, which is built in honour of St. —, in the name of the Father ✠, and of the Son ✠, and of the Holy Ghost ✠.' After many more prayers he prostrates himself before the altar, and all the clergy do the same: then the altar is vested with its covering, and the cross and the book of the gospel are laid upon it, while the clergy and the people sing. A procession is formed and passes with sounds of music three times round the altar; and mass is celebrated. Afterwards the patriarch breaks the gourd and the water-vessels, and the fragments are taken away and cherished by the people.

## THE CONSECRATION OF A BAPTISTERY.

Such rubrics relating to the position of the baptistery as survive prescribe that it should be at the south-east corner of the church. These rubrics, however, which are of mediaeval date, not only show a departure from the original custom, which placed the baptistery at the *south-west* corner in the narthex; but are in themselves of no great authority. For I have already shown that, once the baptistery was removed within the body of the church, no inflexible rule for its position was known or followed. It is, however, essential that the picture of our Lord's baptism should be placed against the wall, or in a niche near the font.

The consecration must take place on Sunday, if possible, and at the preceding vespers the font must be well washed. Eastward of the font three lamps, filled with pure oil of Palestine, must be kindled at the rising of the sun. Three water-pots filled with fresh water must be provided; also an instrument of aspersion made of palm twined with leaves of *silk*; some basil; a new sponge; and candles burning on candelabra. The service commences in the church, where, after various psalms and lessons with prayers, the pontiff censures the altar saying the prayer of incense. Then the pontiff sits upon his throne, while the catholic epistles are read; after which a procession with incense passes round the church into the new baptistery, where the bishop signs the font and each of the three water-vessels with the sign of the cross, and blesses the water. At the



prayer of absolution to the Son the bishop puts on his crown or ballin; and when it is ended, casts the hallowed water into the font, and breaks the vessels. Then he takes the aspersory of palm, and dipping it in the water sprinkles the whole font in crosses, saying, 'Alleluia,' to which the clergy answer, 'Alleluia.' In the same way he sprinkles all the walls of the baptistery; and then, while psalms and other chaunts are sung, he washes the inner part of the font with the basil. Next the water is let off from the font, which is sponged out and dried. This done, the bishop, receiving a vessel of chrism covered with a veil, opens it, and signs with the holy oil five crosses on the interior of the font, one at each side and one in the middle. At the east he exclaims, 'I consecrate ✠ this font for the baptism of the Holy Spirit': at the west, 'I consecrate ✠ this font in the name of the Holy Trinity, of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost': at the north, 'I consecrate ✠ this font after the manner of the fonts of our holy fathers the apostles': at the south, 'I consecrate ✠ this font after the manner of the font of St. John the Baptist': and lastly, when he signs the cross upon the middle, he says, 'Blessed ✠ be the Lord God, now and for ever!'. According to one rubric, when the bishop has made the five crosses, he also makes two circles with the chrism, one round the lower and one round the upper part of the interior. The service ends with the benediction.

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<sup>1</sup> Denzinger, Rit. Or. tom. ii. pp. 236-248.

THE FESTIVAL OF THE EPIPHANY<sup>1</sup>.

Volumes would be required to give an account in detail of all the religious customs of a people so much given as the Copts to ceremonial. Here it must suffice to sketch lightly some of their more solemn observances.

Of all the festivals of our Lord, one of the most characteristic in its mode of celebration is that of the Epiphany, which the Copts call the Theophany, or more familiarly the Festival of the Tank. This happens about the 16th January at night. The midnight office is recited in the narthex beside the greater tank, which has been filled with water. After the office the patriarch or bishop retires to the sacristy, and is vested in full pontifical apparel. He returns in procession with the other clergy, and a cross of iron is carried before him by a deacon. Special psalms and special hymns are then sung, and beside the tank is placed a candelabrum with three tapers which are lighted<sup>2</sup>. Then comes the benediction of the water, various prayers and lessons being recited over it: moreover the pontiff censes it and stirs it crosswise with his pastoral staff, as do also all other bishops present in due order. This benediction lasts about two hours; but when it is over, the patriarch blesses also all the clergy and the congregation, sprinkling them with the holy water. Originally the custom was for the people to rush tumultuously into the water, each striving to be one

<sup>1</sup> عيد المغطاس or عيد الغيطاس.

<sup>2</sup> An illustration is given above, p. 70, of the very candlestick seen by Vansleb at this ceremony. See his *Voyage*, p. 342.

of the three whom the patriarch dipped thrice, and who were thus supposed to receive a special blessing. Those who failed of that distinction dipped themselves: and when the men had finished, they retired to the choir, while the women came and disported themselves, according to Vansleb, quite drapeless. It is not surprising that such a custom led to scenes of unseemliness, which caused its abolition.

After the aspersion follows the ordinary office of matins, and a festival celebration of the *ḳorbân*. The gospels and epistles which are read during the service relate to the baptism of our Lord in the river Jordan; as, of course, for every festival special epistles and gospels are appointed.

The origin of this curious Epiphany custom goes back to the remotest Christian antiquity. The early Christians near the Jordan are said to have commemorated the festival by bathing in the river; and the place where our Lord is supposed to have been baptized was specially frequented<sup>1</sup>. St. Chrysostom remarks on the practice of consecrating water at night on the feast of Epiphany; and other early evidences might be cited. It is probable that at first in Egypt some spot on the bank of the river Nile was chosen for the ceremony; and in remote places any stream or well of water served the purpose. Later, and more particularly after the Arab conquest, when the open performance of the rite was rendered dangerous or impossible, the benediction of the water took place within a sacred building, and it became customary to build the large tank generally found in the narthex. Quite in

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<sup>1</sup> It is one of the duties of the Copt, on his pilgrimage to Jerusalem, to bathe in the Jordan.

accordance with this theory, we may notice that the earliest churches of all—those distinctly anterior to the Muslim invasion—have no such tank. Such, for instance, are the church of the White Monastery and most of the churches of the desert; while, on the other hand, buildings decidedly later than the Mohammedan era, such as Abu Sargah and Abu's-Sifain, have a tank which is plainly part of the original structure. That anciently in Egypt the festival of the Epiphany was associated specially with the sacrament of baptism admits of no question; but what was the exact nature of the association, how far the Epiphany tank was used as a font for baptismal immersion, and for what period such usage lasted, are problems which seem beyond solution. But the presence of the lighted candles at the ceremony of consecration looks like a baptismal reminiscence, as was also the unclothing of those who plunged in the water.

The Melkites retain the Epiphany consecration of water in a somewhat different form. A small cross decked with sprays of olive or some leafy shrub is blessed, and thrown into a river or any convenient water, after a service of prayer held by the bishop over the water. The bishop and his clergy are arrayed in full processional vestments, and so march down to the riverside, followed by the multitude of the people. When the cross is thrown into the water, a number of men plunge in, and struggle for its possession; for it is supposed to bring to the owner a blessing for the coming year. There is a Melkite church and community at Port Said, where I have seen the ceremony performed, for want of fresh water, on the quay of the harbour.

The like ceremony lingers to this day also in Armenia. There, after the liturgy on the feast of Epiphany, a large metal vessel of water is set up in the choir, and a procession passes round the church. In this procession the priests carry a taper and a gospel, deacons carry a taper and a thurible, the subdeacons a taper only. Last comes the celebrant, who carries a large cross. When they return to the choir, the celebrant hallows the water, dividing it crosswise with the cross, and pouring upon it chrism in like manner. After the service the people carry away the water to sprinkle their houses, wells, and streams; but the same form of benediction is repeated on that day in the open air over all rivers and fountains in the vicinity.

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#### PALM SUNDAY AND HOLY WEEK.

Osanna Sunday is the name given by the Copts to the feast of palms, which, doubtless, was celebrated by them long before a similar celebration found its way into western ritual. There is a solemn midnight<sup>1</sup> service held in the church, at which the bishop blesses branches of palm. A grand procession then forms, the clergy bearing crosses and tapers and palm branches: they sing as they move, and make a station singing before every altar and all the principal pictures and reliquaries. Passing

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<sup>1</sup> The Coptic hours are (1) Midnight or Matins. (2) Dawn or Lauds, at 6 a.m. (3) Tierce, at 9 a.m. (4) Sext, at noon. (5) Nones, at 3 p.m. (6) Vespers, at 6 p.m. or sunset. (7) Compline, at 7.30 p.m.

thus round the church they return to the haikal, where the mass is accomplished. The lessons read are those appointed for the dead, because all obsequies are, if possible, avoided during Holy Week. In olden times, before the days of persecution, and sometimes even after the Arab conquest, a great procession passed from the principal church at Alexandria through the town bearing the blessed branches. To this day the people carry them home, and weave from them baskets and other like things, which they send to their friends. In the Nestorian and Armenian rituals Palm Sunday is celebrated with the same benediction of branches.

At one o'clock in the night following Palm Sunday in Egypt the prayers of Eastertide begin, and ought to be continued without ceasing until Easter morning. The mass is not celebrated on the Monday, Tuesday, or Wednesday; and all the prayers are recited in the choir, while the door of the haikal is closed.

On Maundy Thursday<sup>1</sup> tierce, sext, and nones are duly recited; after which, if there be no consecration of the holy oils to come first, a procession is formed to the small tank in the nave, where the patriarch blesses the water with ceremonies similar to those ordained for Epiphany: but the gospels and hymns on this occasion dwell upon the subject of our Lord's washing the feet of his disciples. At the end of the prayers the patriarch gives his benison to the assembled priests and people, sprinkling them with water from the tank: then also he washes the feet of sundry persons, both cleric and lay, and

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<sup>1</sup> Called خميس العهد or Thursday of the Covenant.

dries them with a towel. On this day, immediately after the washing of feet, the door of the haikal is opened for the celebration of the holy communion, after which it is closed again : but in this mass the kiss of peace and the commemoration of the dead are omitted.

In the Armenian rite for Maundy Thursday a vessel of water is placed in the choir, and chrism is poured crosswise upon it at the benediction. When the bishop has washed the feet of clergy and people, he also anoints them. Then, resuming the cope, which was laid aside for the feet-washing, he is lifted up on high, and dispenses the people from fasting during Eastertide.

The churches continue open all night with ceaseless services, in which the hymns, orisons, and lections relate to the Passion. On Good Friday<sup>1</sup> morning at tierce a small cross is set up in the nave ; but at the eleventh hour the cross is replaced by a picture of the crucifixion. The nave meanwhile is illuminated with a great number of tapers and lamps. Then the priests put on their vestments, and offer incense before the picture, singing the praises of the Crucified. All the hymns and chaunts on this day are very slow and mournful in tone : the gospels all commemorate the crucifixion. Prayers for all the faithful are recited at the end of the sixth, ninth, eleventh and twelfth hours : and a certain number of genuflexions are made by the congregation at various places, where the name of Christ is named. When the twelfth hour is over, the bishop or *kummuş* uplifts the cross, on which three tapers are burning,

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<sup>1</sup> الجمعة الكبيرة or Great Friday.

while the people cry one hundred kyries towards each of the cardinal points. Then a procession forms and passes three times round the church, carrying the picture of the crucifixion, which they take to the altar. Upon the altar a silken veil is lying; and the cross, which was set up in the nave, and the picture, being placed on the veil, are covered with rose-leaves and myrrh and basil; then the veil is folded over them, and thus they are removed and buried underneath the altar. This ceremony of course typifies the entombment of our Lord, and corresponds to the burial of the rood in the Easter sepulchre, as practised in our ancient English Church. While it is enacting, the congregation pray; and when it is finished, they go to their homes and break their fast.

Here again a comparison of Armenian custom is interesting. A representation of the tomb of our Lord is set up in the midst of the choir on Good Friday: on it is a cross engraved or painted with a figure of Christ, which the people kiss. It remains in this position until the commencement of the mass on Easter eve.

On the night of Holy Saturday<sup>1</sup> the whole psalter is recited. There is also a procession through the church, in which stations are made, while the choir sing the song of the Three Children: the story of Nebuchadnezzar is also read. Mass is celebrated as on Good Friday, except the lessons, half of which

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<sup>1</sup> سبت النور or Saturday of Light. The name points to the custom of kindling Easter fire as practised in the Greek Church: but I cannot ascertain positively that the Copts agree with the Greeks in this particular.



are read in a mournful tone, half in a tone of joy. After mass all the gospel of St. John is read, and the silver book of the gospel is carried in procession round the church : a great number of hymns follow, and the service lasts all through the hours of darkness.

On Easter<sup>1</sup> morning the psalms and hymns of the resurrection are sung, and after them come the censuring of the altar and the office of matins. Immediately following matins the celebration of the *korbân* commences : but on this occasion it is necessary for the priest to wear all the liturgical vestments at matins as well as at mass. As soon as the epistles are ended, and before the gospel of the mass is begun, the doors of the *haikal* are closed : then, the priests standing within the sanctuary, and the deacons without in the choir, all together sing the hymn of the resurrection. It is apparently at this point that the cross and the picture of the crucifixion are disentombed from the cavity under the altar. When the hymn is finished, the doors of the *haikal* are thrown open again, and priests and deacons pass three times round the church in solemn procession. They chaunt appropriate music as they move, and they carry with them the picture of the resurrection. On their return to the choir the picture is put in its accustomed place, and the remainder of the service is performed in the manner usual on Sundays.

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<sup>1</sup> عيد القيامة i. e. the Festival of the Resurrection, or العيد الكبير i. e. the Great Festival.

## THE SEASONS OF FASTING.

The Copts have been at all times noted for the number and severity of their seasons of abstinence : nor even at the present day has the general recognition of such seasons in any way diminished, though now, as before, there are many individual examples of laxity. Lent is, of course, the most important time of fasting, and so is called the Great Fast<sup>1</sup> in contradistinction to Advent or the Little Fast<sup>2</sup>. In ancient times Lent began on the day after the feast of Epiphany, and lasted for forty days. Holy Week was then a separate season, some six weeks later than the end of Lent, and coinciding with the Jewish Passover. But tradition relates that the Coptic patriarch Demetrius at the end of the second century fixed the time for Lent as at present, and joined on to it the season of Holy Week.

The Coptic Lent begins on Monday, and lasts up to Palm Sunday. During this time the people are forbidden to eat meat or eggs or fish, or to drink wine. Coffee also is forbidden. Moreover no food or drink whatever may be taken between the hours of sunrise and sunset : but in cases of special weakness a dispensation is granted of such a kind as may be needful. The Mohammedan fast of Ramadân somewhat resembles the Christian Lent in its regulations, and was probably borrowed from it. During Lent mass is celebrated at nones except on Saturday and Sunday.

The greater part of Holy Week is also observed

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صيام الكبير<sup>1</sup>.

صيام الصغير<sup>2</sup>.

as a fast by the Copts, and every Friday up to the hour of nones.

It was, and still is to some extent, customary during Lent for the Copts to undertake a great pilgrimage to Jerusalem. The journey on camels occupied about fifteen days, and great numbers went together<sup>1</sup>. They reached Jerusalem for Palm Sunday, spent the week in visiting the holy places, and on Easter morning attended mass in the church of the Holy Sepulchre. A pilgrimage to Jerusalem formed also one of the canonical penances.

Advent lasts for forty days preceding the feast of the Nativity<sup>2</sup>, and is rather less severe in its regulations than Lent, fish for instance not being prohibited. But on Christmas eve, as well as on the eve of Epiphany, a fast is appointed until sunset.

Another fast is that called the Fast of Heraclius. The legend is that on his passage through Palestine that emperor all along his route promised safety to the Jews: but when he arrived at Jerusalem, he was entreated by the Christians there to massacre the Jews, in revenge for cruelties practised by them, and particularly for the pillage of the Holy City, in which the Jews had leagued with the Persians. Heraclius, hesitating to break his promise and to cancel the bond given even in writing, was overpersuaded by the Christians, who all engaged for themselves and their posterity to fast a week for him to the end of the world. So the massacre was ordered, and the fast continues. It preceded Lent, but now has been incorporated with it, the first

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<sup>1</sup> According to Abu Daḡn as many as 60,000 Copts sometimes started from Cairo: but the estimate is obviously exaggerated.

<sup>2</sup> عيد الميلاد.

week of the great fast being called the Fast of Heraclius.

The third great fast of the Coptic Church, called the Fast of the Apostles, begins with Pentecost and lasts for about forty days : but the time of its duration varies. Another period of abstinence for three days, which is called the Fast of Niniveh, comes about a fortnight before Lent : and a fifteen days' fast in honour of the Assumption of the Virgin is observed, beginning on the first day of August.

## CHAPTER X.

### *Legends of the Saints*<sup>1</sup>.

#### LEGEND OF ABU-'S-SIFAIN OR ST. MERCURIUS.

**O**N this day died St. Mercurius, who was of the city of Rome. His grandfather and father were hunters of wild beasts: who going out upon a certain day, as was their wont, were met by two men with faces of dogs<sup>2</sup>, who slew the grandfather. And when they were fain to slay the father also, the angel of the Lord prevented them, and said, 'Touch him not, for from him shall come forth good fruit.' Thereon the angel surrounded the men with a fence of fire; and they being straitened besought the father of Mercurius, and did worship before him: and God changed their hearts into meekness, so that they became as lambs, and entered with him into the city. After that Mercurius was bestowed on him of God, but his father called him Philopater. As for the dog-faces, they abode in that house a long time and were converted, abiding until Philopater grew to man's estate and became a soldier. They were wont to go with him into the wars, and none could withstand them, because their faces remained as aforetime. Afterward they died.

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<sup>1</sup> See pp. 259, 260, supra.

<sup>2</sup> Sic: it seems to be an expression denoting the heathen.

As for the saint, he became one of those to whom God gave power and courage : and the people of the city called his name Mercurius. At this time there was at Rome the king Dacius, who was a worshipper of idols ; and a flock of barbarians coming upon his city, he gathered together his army, and went out to meet them. But, seeing their multitude, he became amazed and affrighted. Howbeit Mercurius went forward unto him and said, 'Fear not : God will destroy our enemies, and will deliver them into our hand.' When he left the king, a man of light robed in long white raiment appeared unto him : in his hand was a sword which he gave unto Mercurius saying, 'If thou dost vanquish thy enemies, remember the Lord thy God.' Wherefore when Mercurius prevailed over them, and went back as a vanquisher, the angel appeared unto him, and brought to his mind to remember the name of the Lord. So when the war was ended, and the king wished to worship his idols, together with his soldiers, Mercurius went not to worship. King Dacius hearing thereof made him come, and was astonished when he saw that the love of Mercurius to him was changed. But Mercurius cast in the king's face his garment and his girdle, saying, 'I will not deny my Lord Jesus.' Whereupon the king was exceeding wroth, and commanded to beat him with palm rods and with scourges : but fearing that the people would rise against him for Mercurius' sake, he led him bound with iron chains to Caesarea, and ordered that his head be taken there.

So was his holy war accomplished, and he won the crown of life in the kingdom of heaven.

May his intercession be with us.

After his martyrdom, in the days of Julianus the heathen king, who persecuted the believers, St. Basil asked Mercurius with great beseeching to avenge him on the heathen king: wherefore the Lord sent St. Mercurius, who pierced the king with his spear, and slew him. Before the departing of his soul, he filled the palm of his hand with blood, and sprinkled it towards heaven, saying, 'O Lord, receive the soul which thou gavest me.'

And his image is under him<sup>1</sup>.

May his prayers be with us and preserve us. Amen.

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#### LEGEND OF ABU-'S-SIFAIN<sup>2</sup>.

On this day we feast for the consecration of the church of the great martyr, lover of his parents, Mercurius Abu-'s-Sifain, hero of Jesus Christ.

His father was of Rome, a hunter of wild beasts, and this martyr was bestowed upon him by the word of the angel of the Lord. His name was at the first Abâdir, and he was brought up among the faces of dogs.

When he grew up, he became a soldier; and in the reign of the king Dacius, a heathen king and worshipper of idols, Abu-'s-Sifain went to him and threw down his girdle before his face; and then girded himself, and said, 'I do not deny my Lord and my God Jesus Christ.' The king ordered him to be

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<sup>1</sup> I. e. the figure of Julian is under St. Mercurius in the pictures. *Abu-'s-Sifain* is so called because of his many battles: he is generally depicted brandishing two swords.

<sup>2</sup> Another version of the same story.

beaten with palm rods and scourges; then sent him to Caesarea, where he was beheaded: and his war was completed, and he obtained the crown of life. After his martyrdom they built churches in his name.

In the time of St. Basilius there was a king, a hypocrite, whose name was Julianus. This king imprisoned Basilius and went to war abroad. Basilius saw in his prison some other Christian prisoners, for whom he went to pray; and while he prayed he looked on the wall, and saw a painting of Mercurius riding on a horse and carrying in his hand a spear. St. Basilius besought him to kill the king, and to deliver the people of Christ from the royal tyranny. Then the picture vanished from the wall, and at once returned, and in it Mercurius showed his spear dripping with blood. Thereupon Basilius asked, 'Hast thou slain him?' He bowed his head. This is the reason that the painters always paint Mercurius leaning down his head, and St. Basilius before him.

May his prayers be with us, and save us from the enemy till the last breath. Amen.

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#### LEGEND OF ANBA SHANŪDAH.

On this day died the holy father, the monk, the worshipper Anba Shanŭdah, the archimandrite from the city of the Cataracts in Akhmŭm. His father was a tiller of the soil and kept a flock of sheep; these sheep he gave to his son to watch. Shanŭdah's custom was to give his food to the other



shepherds, and then going down to a lake of water in the winter, when it is very cold, in this lake he stood and prayed. A holy old man said that he saw the ten fingers of Shanûdah shining like ten lamps.

His father took him, and went to his uncle Anba Yagûl, that he might bless him. Howbeit Yagûl took the boy's hand, and put it upon his own head, saying, 'Bless thou me; for thou shalt be a great saint for a great multitude.' So his father left him with his uncle. On a certain day a voice was heard crying from heaven and saying, 'Anba Shanûdah is hallowed archimandrite for all the world.' Then Shanûdah began from this time to do many devout things and many worshippings. At his uncle's death he was put in his place; and he became a light to all the country, and made many discourses and rules for monks, abbots, laymen, and women. He went to the Council of the Two Hundred at Ephesus with the Father Cyrillus. His disciples did not wish to take him in the ship; so a cloud carried him, and he passed before the patriarch, who was in the ship, and greeted him. All were amazed.

Jesus Christ came many times to speak with him, and he washed Christ's feet and drank the water. The Lord revealed to him many hidden things, and he prophesied many prophecies, and lived like Moses one hundred and twenty years. At his death he saw an assembly of saints who came behind him: he saw also our Lord Jesus Christ, and said, 'Hold me, that I may worship the Lord.' They lifted him up, and he worshipped. Then said he unto them, 'Farewell in the Lord.' He left with the young many commandments: and he died in peace.

May the blessing of his prayers be with us.  
Amen.

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#### LEGEND OF MÂRI MÎNA.

On this day we feast for the holy father Mâri Mîna. He was born at Mareotis near Alexandria. The finding of his body after burial was on this wise. None knew where he was buried: but the Lord wished to show where the holy body lay. It came to pass that a certain shepherd, watching his flock near a hill, saw a lamb with a soreness bathing himself in the river, and then rolling in dust over that place where the body of the saint was buried; and at once the lamb was cured. The shepherd was amazed, and took every lamb which had the same sickness to that place, made them bathe, and then roll in the dust. All were cured forthwith. He did likewise with sick men; and all sick persons who put the dust upon them were made whole. Howbeit none knew the reason of this thing.

Now the king heard of the shepherd; and having a leprous daughter he sent her to the shepherd, who wrought on her the same cure by the same means. When she wished to know the reason of this thing, Mâri Mîna appeared to her in a vision, and said unto her, 'My body is in this place: the Lord bids thee to dig, and to bring it forth.' Being awakened, she did according to this word, and brought forth the noble body, and built on the spot a church.

Then the king bade all chiefs and notables to build houses near the place; and the city was called

Mareotis. Many wonders were shown from this body. The patriarch and bishops came and consecrated the church, and the fame of its wonder spread on every side. All this was wrought by the power of the martyr Mâri Mîna.

May his blessing and intercession be with us. Amen.

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#### LEGEND OF MÂRI TADRUS.

His father was called Yûân, who came from the village Shatb in Upper Egypt. He was taken prisoner to Antioch; where he dwelt, and married a daughter of the place, who worshipped idols, and knew not God's worship. She bore him this saint called Tadrus. But when she wished to present him to the house of idols, and to teach him her worship, the father was angry and suffered her not. So she drove him away from the house, and kept the boy with her. The father prayed without ceasing that God would lead his son in the way of salvation.

When the saint grew up, he learned science and wisdom; and God enlightened the two eyes of his heart, so that he went to a bishop, who baptised him. His mother hearing thereof waxed very wroth. The boy asked if his father was dead or no, and a servant of the house told him that his mother drove him away for being a Christian. Tadrus became a soldier of the king, and then a captain of an army. When the king went to make war with the Persians, he took this saint with him to accompany his son. In the city of Ukhaitus (*sic*) there was a great dragon,

which the people of the city worshipped; and they were wont to offer him year by year some one that he might eat him. There was a Christian widow in the city who had two children; and it came to pass that the people took the children, and offered them to the dragon, at the time when Mâri Tadrus was there. The woman stood before him and wept, telling him her matter. When he knew that she was a Christian, he thought 'This widowed woman is persecuted, and God will avenge her.' Then he got down from his horse, and turned his face to the east and prayed; and he went towards the dragon, all the people watching him from the walls. The length of this dragon was twelve cubits: but the Lord gave Tadrus power against the dragon, and he pierced him with his spear and slew him. Thus he delivered the widow's two children. Thence he went to Upper Egypt to look for his father. There he found him, and knew him by means of tokens which his father showed him. He abode in that place until his father died: then he went back to Antioch, where he found the king had become a heathen, and was persecuting the believers in Christ. So he went to the king, and confessed before him the Lord Jesus Christ. Ere this the priests of the idols had slandered him to the king, and the people of Ukhaitus told the king 'This is the man that killed the dragon, our god.' Thereupon the king commanded to torture him. He was punished by instruments of torture, but the Lord strengthened him. Then the king commanded to burn him; so they threw him in the fire, and beheaded him. His martyrdom was accomplished.

A woman of the faithful took his body, which she

purchased for a great sum, and hid it in the house, till the end of the persecution. Then she built churches in his name. Howbeit some say that this woman was his mother.

May his intercessions be with us. Amen.

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LEGEND OF MÂRI GIRGIS, OR

ST. GEORGE.

This saint was born in the year 280 of the Messiah. He was of noble parents and brought up with a good education. When he was fourteen years old, his brother died, and he became a captain in the army at Dicaeopolis. Then he fought and slew the great dragon, and delivered the king's daughter, on whom the lot fell a certain year to be given up to the dragon. Whereupon the king for his good courage made him vizier, not knowing that he was a believer in Christ. He is called the first martyr under Diocletian. Now on a certain day Mâri Girgis saw a proclamation against the Christian religion, and tore it down publicly with great anger. Henceforth he scorned office and all worldly things, and prepared to defend the faith. So he distributed his wealth, freed his slaves, and went to the court: there he spoke to the king and chiefs saying, 'How, O king and chiefs, durst ye make such proclamation against the religion of Christ, the true religion?' The king was wroth, but hid his anger, and signed to the consul Magnetius (*sic*) to answer for him. The consul said, 'Who emboldened thee to do this thing?' Mâri Girgis

answered and said, 'I am a Christian, and come to witness to the truth.' Then the king told him under threat of torture to worship his idols: when Mâri Girgis refused, the king ordered him to be driven out and pierced with spears. Howbeit the spears nowise hurt him. Then he was cast into prison, where they tied his feet, and put a paving-stone upon his breast. He continued till next day thanking God; and on the morrow, being brought before the king, he persisted in his faith. Then the king ordered him to be tied by thin ropes on a board set with iron spikes, so that the cords cut his flesh: also a cupboard with knives inside it was put on his breast. But Mâri Girgis endured this torture, thanking God.

So the king, fearing he would die, loosed him, and told him again to believe in the heathen gods. But Girgis refused. And a dark cloud appeared with thunder and lightning, and a voice came out of the cloud saying, 'Fear not, O Mâri Girgis: I am with thee: whereat astonishment fell on the bystanders. Next he was put in a tank full of hot plaster, where he remained three days without suffering any evil. Thus far, then, the torments of the saint: now shall come his wonders.

A sorcerer once presented to him a magic cup. Girgis made the sign of the cross on it, the life-giving cross which belongs to our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be glory. When he drank of the cup, he took no hurt. The sorcerer seeing this believed in our Lord Jesus Christ.

By power of prayer accepted before our Lord the thrones on which the heathen kings were sitting blossomed into leaf and flowers.

By prayer also he once cured a widow's son.

May his prayers and intercessions be with us.  
Amen.

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LEGEND OF ABU KÎR AND YUḤANNA, OR  
SS. CYRUS AND JOHN.

Abu Kîr was of the city of Damanhûr, near to Abu Sir west of the Nile. He had a brother called Philipa: and both were very rich. They agreed with two priests called YuḤanna and Abtulmaz, and the four went to Kartassah, where was the governor. Before him they confessed the Lord Jesus Christ. He commanded them to be shot upon with arrows; but the arrows came not nigh them at all. Next he commanded them to be cast into a burning fiery furnace; but the Lord sent his angel, and delivered them from the fire. Then the king commanded them to be bound to the tails of horses, and to be dragged from Kartassah to Damanhûr. All this was done to them, and they took no hurt. At last the king commanded them to be beheaded by the sword outside the city of Damanhûr. Their martyrdom was accomplished, and they obtained its crown. Some men came from Sâ al Ḥaggar, and took the body of Abu Kîr, and built thereover a church. But the bodies of the other three saints were taken by people of Damanhûr, who wrapped them in goodly apparel, and placed them in Damanhûr.

May the prayers of all be with us, and save us from the evil enemy till the last breath. Amen.

Afterwards an angel appeared to the patriarch

Cyrillus of Alexandria, bidding him take away the bodies of Abu Kîr and Yuḥanna. So the people went and dug them out, and carried them with honour to the church of St. Mark at Alexandria by the river. There they built a church over them.

Near this church was an underground labyrinth of the idols, where the heathen were wont to meet every year to make a feast to the idols. When they saw the wonders that were shown from the bodies of these two saints, they left their idols and their labyrinth, and became Christians.

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LEGEND OF YAKÛB AL MUḤAṬṬ'A, OR ST. JAMES  
WHO WAS CUT TO PIECES.

On this day won martyrdom Mâri Yakûb al MuḤaṬṬ'a. He was of the soldiers of Sacrâtus, son of Safûr king of Persia. He was greatly beloved by the king, who took his counsel in many things; and for that reason he inclined the heart of this saint from the worship of Jesus Christ. His mother and wife and sister hearing of this wrote unto him a letter, saying, 'Why hast thou forsaken the faith in Jesus Christ, and followed the created elements, to wit fire and sun? Know that if thou dost persist herein, we shall be as strangers unto thee henceforward.'

When he read this letter, he wept with bitter weeping, and said, 'If my kinsfolk are estranged from me, how can I be estranged from the Lord Jesus?' From this time forth he began to read in



Christian books; and he wept, and forsook the king's service. But when certain persons told the king about him, he bade him come; and seeing that what they reported was true, he commanded to scourge him with grievous scourgings. Howbeit this changed not his belief. Then the king commanded to cut him with knives. So they cut off the fingers of his hands, then the toes of his feet, and his legs, and his hands and his arms, and they cut him into thirty-two pieces. . Whenever they cut a limb from him, he sang hymns, and said, 'O God of the Christians, receive unto thee a branch of the tree in the greatness of thy mercy: for if the vine-dressers dress the vine, it will blossom in the month of Nisann<sup>1</sup>, and its branches will spread abroad.'

When nought remained save his breast, his head, and his waist, and he knew that the time drew near for the deliverance of his soul, he asked of the Lord to have mercy on them, and to pity them, saying, 'My hands are not left unto me, that I may lift them up unto Thee, and here my limbs are thrown around me: wherefore receive, O Lord, my soul.'

Forthwith Christ Jesus appeared unto him, and comforted him, and strengthened him, and he was glad. Ere he gave up the ghost, he made haste and took his holy head (*sic*) and went to the places of light to Christ who loved him. His body was taken by God-fearing men, who wrapped it well, and put it in a goodly place. His mother and wife and sister, hearing of his martyrdom, rejoiced exceedingly; and came to the place of his body, and wept thereon, and put upon it costly apparel and spices.

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<sup>1</sup> I. e. in the springtime. Nisann corresponds to April.

In the reign of Arcadius and Honorius, two good kings, a church and monastery were built upon it.

The king of Persia hearing of this monastery, and of the martyrs and of their bodies, and the miracles which were shown from them, commanded to burn the bodies of the saints in every place throughout his kingdom. Then some of the believers took the body of St. James, and coming with it to Jerusalem, placed it with St. Peter the bishop of Raḥûi. With him it continued till Marcian became king. At that time St. Peter took it and came into Egypt, unto a city called Baḥnâsah. There he abode some days, and with him certain monks. While they were singing hymns at the sixth hour near the body, St. James appeared unto them with a multitude of Persian martyrs, who were clad in Persian raiment. And they sang hymns with them and blessed them. Afterward the saint said unto them, 'My body shall lie here according to the Lord's commandment.' Then Peter the bishop, wishing to return to his own country, took with him the body and bare it to the sea: thus he disobeyed the word of the saint. But the body was caught away from their hands to the place where it was before.

May his intercession preserve us for ever. Amen.

It was said that his body in Persia, when there was a feast and the people were gathered together around it, was wont to move in its coffin till the end of the feast. Where the body of the saint now is none knoweth.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

## LEGEND OF THE FIVE AND THEIR MOTHER.

This day we make the feast of Kōsman and Dimian and their brothers Antinous, Laudius and Ibrabiūs, and their mother. These were from the city of Daperma in the Arab country. Their mother was called Theodora. She was a God-fearing woman, a widow, and kind of heart. She taught her children medicine, and they visited all, and chiefly the poor, without money or price. When the king Diocletian became heathen, he heard that these heroes did break upon the worship of the idols. He bade them to come, and tortured them with all manner of torture, such as beating, burning with fire, and casting them into bath furnaces during three days and three nights. From all this the Lord made them arise without scathe. Their mother continually comforted them, and strengthened them to bear the torment.

Then she blasphemed the king to his face, and all his wicked gods also. The king commanded to behead her, and she won the crown of life. Her body remained after her death cast away, and none dare bury it: but her son Kōsman cried and said, 'O people of the city, have ye no pity in your hearts to carry the body of this old widowed woman to burial?'

Hearing this one called Buḡtor, son of Romanus, took the body, wrapped it in a shroud, and buried it. Then the king ordered him to be banished to Egypt, where he died.

As for her children, the next day they also were

beheaded and obtained eternal life. When the persecution was over, the people built to them churches, which were consecrated on such a day as this; and from them were shown many miracles.

May their prayers be with us. Amen.

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LEGEND OF ABU NAFR.

On this day died the good father, the master of fair report and of good old age, the saint Abu Nafr, the wanderer in the wilderness of Upper Egypt. This is according to the word of St. Bifnutius, who desired to see the wanderers, who are servants of God. He saw some of them, and wrote their story; among whom was this saint.

He saith, that when he entered the wilderness, he saw a fountain and a palm-tree, and the saint Abu Nafr coming towards him; he was naked, and the hair of his head and of his beard covered his body. Bifnutius seeing him was afraid, and thought that he was a spirit. Abu Nafr crossed before him, and prayed the prayer of the gospel, which is 'Our Father which art in heaven.' Then he said to him, 'Welcome, O Bifnutius.' When he heard himself called by his name, and heard also the prayer, his fear departed. Then the two began to pray together; after that they sat and communed together about the marvels of God. Bifnutius asked Abu Nafr to tell him what was the reason of his coming to this place, and where he had been before that?

He answered and said, 'I had been in a monastery, in the which are pious and good monks. One day I heard the monks speaking about the

dwellers in the wilderness, namely the wanderers, and praising them for every kind of excellence. I asked them, "Why are they better than you?" They said, "Because they dwell in the wilderness, but we are near to the world: and if one day we are angry, we find some person to comfort us; and if we are sick, we find those who visit us; and if we are naked, we find those who clothe us; anything whatsoever we desire we can obtain; but all these privileges are not for the dwellers in the wilderness." When I heard them speak thus, my heart burned within me; and in the night I took a little bread, and went out from the monastery: then I prayed, and asked our Lord for a place to dwell in. So I walked on. The Lord directed me to a place where I found a holy man, and with him I abode till he taught me the way of wandering. Thus I came to this place, wherein I found this palm-tree, which gives every year twelve clusters of dates, and every cluster is enough for one month. This is my food, and my drink is from the water of this fountain. It is now three score years that I am here. All this time I have not seen any face of man but thine only.'

While they were speaking the angel of the Lord came before them, and ministered unto them the body of our Lord and his blood. After that they ate very little food. Then the colour of the saint Abu Nafr was changed, and became like fire, and he bowed his knee and worshipped before God. Then to Bifnutius he said, 'Fare thee well,' and gave up the ghost<sup>1</sup>. The saint Bifnutius wrapped him in a piece of linen, and buried him in a cave. He sore coveted to dwell in his place; but as soon as he

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<sup>1</sup> The Arabic idiom is the same exactly.

buried him, the palm-tree fell and the fountain was dried up. This came to pass by the device of God, that he might enter again into the world, and preach the knowledge of the holy wanderers whom he had seen, but specially of the saint Abu Nafr. In truth he came to the world, and told the story of this saint, and the day whereon he died.

May their prayers be with us. Amen.

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#### LEGEND OF ANBA BARSÛM AL 'ARIÂN.

On this day died the holy father and the great, Anba Barsûm al 'Ariân, who is naked from all vice and clad with virtue; who is perfect among the saints and in the love of God. This saint was of Egypt; his father's name was Wagû, a scribe to the Tree of Pearls<sup>1</sup>. His mother was daughter to Al Tab'aûn. His parents were very rich; and when they died, the uncle of the saint seized upon all their possessions. Howbeit Barsûm made no quarrel with him, but left all the wealth of this world, and lived the life of the good men and of the wanderers. He possessed nought of this world's goods, and always went naked, abiding in the church of the great martyr Mercurius at Old Cairo<sup>2</sup> in a grotto dark and swampy, underground. He prisoned himself therein, and abode there nearly twenty years, praying alway day and night without ceasing. His food was beans moistened with unsavoury brine; his drink also was brine. He was a very devout man, and there was

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<sup>1</sup> The sister of the last khalif of the Fatimite dynasty was called 'The Tree of Pearls,' A.D. 1000.

<sup>2</sup> See the plan of the church of Abu-'s-Sifain in vol. i.

no manner of worship but he did it. God gave him power over devils, and was with him in secret and in public; because this saint showed himself at the end of time, when men could not achieve virtue by reason of their weakness and feeble-mindedness. So God showed forth this father, who excelled many saints in his devotion, his eating and his drinking, his patience and his modesty, his charity for all men and well-doing for all, his pity upon them and upon all creatures, and his making all men equal before him in whatsoever they asked. He murmured not at any, but was long-suffering<sup>1</sup> and of good patience. With him great and small were one, poor and rich, bond and free: all were equal before him in charity. All this that he might accomplish and make perfect all that was written about the saints that went before: that men might know of a surety, by seeing and not by hearing.

So when he came out from the cave, he went on the roof of the church; there he abode suffering heat and cold during winter and summer. And he always tormented himself, staying in the sun all the days of the summer, so that his skin became black; and this he did for devotion and for worship, and for torture of nature, which he ever suffered. On the roof he remained nigh fifteen years. At this time arose in Egypt a great persecution, wherein all the churches of the Copts were shut, and the Copts were obliged to wear blue turbans of ten cubits in length; also their other raiment was changed. They were dismissed from their offices, and were compelled to ride the wrong way, and to put on a kind of shoe which is called 'thasûma,' and when-

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<sup>1</sup> The Arabic is literally 'long-minded.'

ever they entered the bath they had to put little bells round their necks. So that they were in sore need in all things. They were persecuted and despised by the vulgar, who erewhile honoured them; and the khalf of this time was resolved to kill them all, but God did not empower him. The reason of all these things was their sins: for the apostle saith, 'Sin being accomplished begetteth death.'

But this father Barsûm was always praying and beseeching God with a fervent heart for the brethren. He fasted forty days continually, till God took away again his anger from them. Then the governor of Egypt took him out from the church, and persecuted him and imprisoned him; but Barsûm foreknew this one day before it happened. When he was in prison, he neither ate nor drank, but whatever the believers brought him he gave to his fellow-prisoners. When some of them asked of him, 'When shall we be delivered from prison?' he answered, 'On this day': and so it was.

Then they took him out of prison, and led him into exile to the monastery of Sharân. There he stood on the roof, as he was wont in Egypt. No man without God's help could excel him in devotion, worship, austerity, and suffering the torture of nature. For his food was of the things that are maggoty, and was shown openly to venomous reptiles; yet he ate it very delicious and sweet by the grace of God. And this is as the holy old man, full of innocence, hath said in his book: 'God changed the bitterness of their torment into sweetness:' and also as the holy Mâri Ishâc Sûriâni and Mâri Şimân al 'Amûdi say, that 'God clothes his saints with a garment of light; so that they feel neither heat nor cold.'



This saint all his life never lay on the ground but with naked skin. He was comforter to every believer or unbeliever who took refuge with him. He changed not his turban to blue, but God kept him from all his adversaries. Most of the governors of this time, princes and judges to wit, were wont to resort unto him; and they saw him wearing a white turban; and God protected him from their enmity. None dare force him to wear the blue turban. He converted many souls to salvation, and that out of despair. He used alway to say that all sins are forgiven after repentance. He always spake in holy similitudes, which were not understood save by those enlightened of God. He was a great comforter to the people, because by his prayers God put away his anger. Churches were opened, men rode the right way, and were employed in office, and their raiment was made right, and all the aforesaid changes were abolished save only the blue turbans.

The brethren were suffered to ride horses in journeys; and God destroyed every one who wished to kill them, so that men might glorify God the Almighty; and God was pleased with his people, and had compassion on them. These things were caused by the prayers of this father, Barsûm. God gave him the grace of prophecy, healing of bodies and souls, and knowledge of things to come; and he was accomplished in all holiness. His look drew all men to good works, and whosoever saw him did not wish to leave him. This was for the grace and kindness and love which were in him. He hated the glory of this world, and feigned madness. But God has shown to all that he is the wisest of men, whose single aim was the love of God and doing his commandments.

Barsûm was always comforted by the Holy Spirit, which dwelt in him. Ever he looked to God, to the innocent angels of light, to the prophets, apostles, martyrs, and saints. He went in the spirit to their dwelling of light, as he showed to those whom he trusted well. This father dwelt in the monastery fifteen years, and his age was sixty years. His old age was good and pleasing to God; and when he accomplished his good works, he died unto the Lord who loved him, and inherited the lofty dwellings of light with the holy saints. His body was buried in the monastery of Sharân, known also by the name of Abu Marķûra. This was in the year 1033 of the martyrs<sup>1</sup>.

May his prayers be with us till the last breath. Amen.

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#### LEGEND OF THE VIRGIN'S ASCENSION.

On this day we feast the feast of the ascension of the body of the immaculate Lady the Virgin Mortomariam<sup>2</sup>, Mother of Christ the Son of God, the Word made flesh from her. After her death our fathers the apostles were sorely grieved for loss of her, and the Lord promised them that he would show her to them in the flesh. On a certain day they saw her in the flesh sitting at the right hand of him who was made flesh from her, and she was in great glory. She stretched forth her hand, and blessed every one of the disciples; and she was girt round by a great

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<sup>1</sup> If this date is correct, the 'Tree of Pearls' is wrongly identified at the beginning of the legend.

<sup>2</sup> The Arabic is مرتومريم.

company of angels and saints. David the prophet praised her, and said, 'The queen stood at thy right hand in raiment of gold.' Then the souls of the disciples were glad, and they fell on their faces, and returned full of joy.

This feast was appointed in the Church for the everlasting remembrance of the Mother of God.

May her intercession be with us. Amen.

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LEGEND OF ŞİMÂN AL HĀBIS AL 'AMŪDĪ, i. e.

SIMEON THE PRISONER OF THE PILLAR,

OR SIMEON STYLITES.

On this day died Simeon the Prisoner of the Pillar. He was of Syria. When he was a child, he kept sheep for his father, and he went to church every day. After that the grace of the Lord moved him. So he arose, and came to a monastery, wherein he continued always worshipping God with great devoutness and diligence.

He was wont every day to carry dust and ashes on his head, and he vexed himself with fastings and great thirst. Then he bound his two sides against the flesh with a rugged rope, till it ate its place away, and an evil smell came forth. The monks could not abide this evil smell, and would not suffer him to come nigh them. Seeing the monks misliked him, he came out from the monastery and went into a dry pit, where he stood. The abbot of the monastery saw a vision as it were of one saying unto him, 'Ask of my servant Simeon'; and in this vision he saw also that he who appeared rebuked the monks for the

departure of the saint from the monastery. The abbot told his vision to the monks, who were sore amazed, and soon came out searching after him. Thereupon they found him in the pit, without food or drink, and worshipped him, asking forgiveness of him; and they brought him back with them to the monastery. When he saw them giving him glory in the monastery, he could not suffer it; but went out, and came to a rock where he stood sixty days without sleeping. Thereafter the angel of the Lord appeared unto him, and said unto him that the Lord had received his prayers for the salvation of his own soul and of many others. Then he stood on a pillar thirty cubits high for the space of fifteen years. The Lord wrought at his hand many wonders; and he was wont to exhort all who came unto him. His father searched after him, but found him not, and died without seeing him. As for his mother, she knew where he was after many years, and came to him while he was on the pillar. She wept greatly, and then fell asleep under the pillar. The saint asked of God to do good unto her, and she died in her sleep. They buried her under the pillar.

Howbeit, Satan had malice against Simeon, and smote him in the legs with grievous sores. He continued most of his time standing on one foot for many years, until his leg was full of worms, which fell down under the pillar. Once there came unto him the chief of the robbers, and passed the night nigh him. Simeon asked of God to do him evil: so the robber died not many days after. Then he asked of God, and God brought forth a fountain of water under the pillar. After this he went to another very high pillar, where he stood nigh thirty years: and

when he accomplished forty-eight years in prayer, the Lord wishing to give him rest from the weariness of the flesh, he exhorted men and turned many heathen to the Lord Jesus: then he died and went unto the Lord.

The patriarch of Antioch, hearing of his death, came and bore him to Antioch with great glory.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

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#### LEGEND OF MARÍNA.

On this day died the chosen saint, bride of Jesus Christ, Marína.

She was the daughter of a heathen father and mother, and her father was a priest of idols in Antioch. He loved her very much, and she was very beautiful to look upon. When she came to the age of fifteen years, her mother died; whereupon her father brought her to a Christian woman, at whose house she stayed till her father's death.

One day she heard her foster-mother telling of the troubles of the saints and their martyrdoms, how they shed their blood for the name of Christ. So, desiring to become a martyr, she asked God to give her power and help, that she might conquer the heathen. At this time there came to the throne a heathen king, known by the name of prince Valerius, who came from Asia to Antioch to the end that he might seize the Christians. It came to pass that when St. Marína came out with her hired servants and handmaids, the heathen prince saw her beauty, and his heart departed out of him. He commanded his soldiers to lay hands on her, that he might take

her unto him to wife. When the soldiers desired to take her, she made the sign of the cross upon her body, and said, 'Have mercy on me, O Lord, and forsake me not.' The soldiers returned to the governor, and told him, 'We were not able to take the damsel, because she called on Jesus Christ.' When he heard that, he commanded them to bring her, and he questioned her of her faith. She answered and said, 'I am a Christian, believing in Jesus of Nazareth, who will deliver me from thine unbelief and from the wickedness of thy heart.' Then the prince, being wroth in his soul, straightway offered a sacrifice to his abhorred gods; and made her stand before him, and told her, 'Know, Martina, that I have pity upon thee: so follow thou my counsel, and offer sacrifice to the gods, and thou shalt have great honour.'

She answered and said, 'I do not waver from the worship of God, my God, but I offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving to my Saviour Jesus Christ.' He said to her, 'To this Galilean who was crucified of the Jews?' and threatened her with many punishments. She did not obey him, but said she was ready to be tormented and to rest with the wise virgins. So he became angry, and commanded to beat her with rods, and her blood ran upon the ground. Then they combed her flesh with sharp knives, and threw her into a dungeon. The Lord always cured her from all this suffering. While she was in the dungeon praying, a great dragon came out upon her, opened wide his jaws, and swallowed her. Her soul was ready to depart from her; but she stretched out her hands, and made the sign of the cross in the dragon's belly. Forthwith the mouth of the dragon

gaped open, and she was delivered, and came out in great safety. Then she turned and saw somewhat like unto a black man, putting his hands on his knees, and saying unto her, 'Cease to pray, and obey the king's commandment.' When she heard that, she caught him by the hair of the head, and took a cudgel which she found in a corner of the dungeon, and smote therewith the devil's head. Thus was the devil tormented by her, and besought her to lighten his suffering. She answered him 'Shut thy mouth': then she made the sign of the cross upon him, and the earth opened and swallowed him up.

The next day the king commanded her to be brought before him, and bade her worship the idols. She spake roughly unto him; whereon he commanded his soldiers to hang her up, and to kindle a fire under her to burn her. After that they threw her into the water to drown her: but she asked of the Lord that this water might be a baptism unto her. So a dove came down upon her carrying in his mouth a crown of light. She plunged in the water thrice. Many persons believed at that hour: and their heads were taken by the sword. Howbeit the prince grew weary of torturing her, and said, 'If I leave her alive, all the people of Antioch will believe.' So he commanded to take her head. The executioner led her outside the city. There seeing the Lord, to whom be glory, and angels of light, she said unto the swordsman, 'Wait that I may pray': and when her prayer was ended, she said, 'Do thy bidding.' Howbeit he would not; but she said, 'Unless thou accomplish it, thou hast no lot or part with me.' He went up to her exceeding sorrowful,

and made the sign of the cross upon the sword, and took the head of the saint. Thus she won the crown of martyrdom. The executioner went hastily to the prince, and smote his own neck with the sword, confessing the Lord God of this martyr, and won everlasting happiness.

May their prayers be with us. Amen.

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#### LEGEND OF TAKLA.

On this day died the apostolic and holy Takla. This saint lived in the days of St. Paul: and it came to pass that when St. Paul went out from Antioch into Iconia, there was at Iconia a believer called Sifarus, who took him to his house; and a great multitude came together to hear his doctrine.

This virgin, Takla, when she heard the apostle speaking, looked from a window that she might learn his doctrine, and continued in this estate three days and three nights, neither eating nor drinking. His words went down to the depths of her heart and her soul. But her parents and her servants became exceedingly sorrowful, and desired her to change this way of thinking. It came to pass that her father met Dîmas and Armukhânîs, and he complained unto them of his daughter. They made him ask help of the prince against Paul, who bade Paul come, and examined his doctrine and his estate. He found no cause against him, but commanded to bind him.

As soon as the saint Takla heard thereof, she put off her jewels, and went to the apostle in the dungeon,



and bowed herself before his feet. When her own people found her not, they knew that she was at the apostle's feet. So the prince ordered to burn her. Her mother also cried out saying, 'Burn her,' that all women might take warning of her example; because many noble women believed the word of Paul. Then the prince commanded also to burn Paul with her. So they brought them forth out of the dungeon. As for Takla, her mind and her eyes were with St. Paul. She beheld St. Paul praying: and he ascended with his body through the heaven. So, making the sign of the cross on her body and her face, she cast herself into the fire. Then the women who were standing by wept for her; but the Lord sent forthwith much rain and lightning, and the furnace became like cold dew; and she was delivered from the fire, as one that comes out of a garden. She went at once to the place where St. Paul was hidden, and asked him to cut her hair, and suffer her to be his handmaid. He did this thing for her sake. When she went to Antioch, one of the Batarka saw her, and finding her very beautiful, desired to marry her: howbeit she spake roughly unto him. Wherefore he stirred up the ruler of the city against her; who commanded them to throw her unto the lions. She stayed among the lions two days, and the lions licked her feet. Then they bound her between two oxen, who dragged her through all the city: and when this did no harm unto her, they let her go free. She went unto St. Paul, who comforted her, and increased her in the faith, and bade her go and preach of Christ. So she went to Iconia, where she preached Christ; and then she went to her own country.

There she converted her father and her mother to believe in Christ Jesus; and after that, inasmuch as she had accomplished her apostolic strivings and her accepted warfare, the Lord desired to give her rest from the troubles of this world. So she died, and won the crown of them that confess and preach. It is said that her body is now in Singâr, as it is written in the History of the Patriarchs.

May her prayers be with us. Amen.

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#### LEGEND OF ABU SĪKHÎRÛN.

On this day won martyrdom the noble saint Abu Sīkhîrûn, who was of Kalîn in the Gharbleh, a soldier of Ariâna, ruler of Ansinâ. When the commandment of the heathen king Diocletian came to worship idols, this saint stopped in the midst of the assembly and spake scorn of the king and his gods. None dare torment him by reason of his warlike strength: but they imprisoned him in the ruler's prison. When it happened that the ruler of Ansinâ came to the city of Siût, they brought Abu Sīkhîrûn unto him and five soldiers with him, whose names are Alphanus, Armasius, Aikiâs, Petrus, and Kiranius; these agreed with Abu Sīkhîrûn to shed their blood for the name of the Lord Jesus. When they came before the ruler, he commanded to cut their girdles, and to torture them. Some of these five were crucified, and of some the heads were taken; but it was commanded that the saint Abu Sīkhîrûn should be beaten gloriously. Next, it was commanded to tear off the scalp of his head even unto the neck: and he was bound to the tail of a mule and dragged

through the city. Then he was cast into a tank full of lead, and the tank was covered; next he was crushed together and thrown into a bath furnace. But in all of these punishments the angel of the Lord came unto him, encouraged him and made him whole, comforted him and gave him much patience. When they were perplexed by his torture, they called a great magician, named Iskandarû, who feigned to bewitch sun and moon, to ascend up into the sky, and to have dealings with the stars. He ordered the door of the bath to be shut: then he took a snake, and as he uttered certain words the snake was split asunder into two pieces: next, he took its poison and its fat and its liver, and put them into a brazen cauldron, and brought them unto the saint. Then he made him enter into the bath, and gave him to eat of this cooked poison. But the saint cried aloud saying, 'O chief of devils, do all thy power upon this son of Christ'; and he suffered no harm. The sorcerer was greatly astonished, and the saint said unto him, 'The devil, whose help thou dost implore, will torment thee by the power of my Lord Jesus Christ.'

Forthwith the devil came, and began to buffet the magician, until he believed in the Lord Jesus. The ruler hearing thereof, took the head of the sorcerer, and his wrath was greatly multiplied against the saint. He tormented him with many torments, the saint always thanking the Lord Jesus. At last he commanded that his head should be taken by the edge of the sword. So he won the crown of everlasting bliss.

May the intercession of this saint be with us, and guard us, and save us. Amen.

## LEGEND OF ST. SOPHIA.

On this day died the saint Sophia.

This saint went to church with some Christian neighbours, and she believed in the Lord Jesus. She went to the bishop of Manûf, who baptised her in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, one God; and she continued in going to the church. But a certain man went and told unto Claudius, the ruler, that she was baptised. He therefore made her come to him and questioned her of the matter: and she confessed and denied it not. He punished her with many punishments. First, he beat her with thongs of cowhide: then he passed a hot iron over all her joints, and hung her up. During all this she was ever crying aloud, 'I am a Christian.' So the ruler commanded to cut off her tongue, and to lead her back to prison; and he sent his wife unto her, who began to speak softly and promised many promises: but the saint heeded not. At last he commanded to cut off her head. Then St. Sophia prayed a long prayer, in the which she asked of God to forgive the ruler and his soldiers for her sake. Then she bowed her head to the swordsman, who cut off her head with the edge of the sword; and she won the crown of martyrdom and immortality in the kingdom of heaven.

A Christian woman took her holy body, which she purchased for a great price, and wrapped it in many precious wrappings, and put it in her house, and here many wonders were shown from it. People saw on the day of her festival a great light upon her body, and much frankincense come forth there-

from. When Constantine became king of Constantinople, and heard of the body, he sent and transported it to the city of Constantinople, and built to her a great church in the which he placed her body. Many miracles were shown from it.

May her prayers and blessings be with us, and save us from the wicked enemy. Amen.

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#### LEGEND OF ST. HELENA.

On this day we feast for the consecration of the temple of the Holy Resurrection<sup>1</sup>.

The holy queen Helena in the twentieth year of the reign of her son Constantine, after the assembly of the holy council at Nicaea, took great riches and said to her son, 'I have made a vow to go to the Holy Resurrection, and to seek for the body of the cross which giveth life.' The king was very glad, and sent with her soldiers, and gave unto her much wealth. When she came there and had taken a blessing from these holy places, she began to search for the cross, and she found it after much weariness. She glorified it with great glorifying, and worshipped it with great worship. Then she set to build the temples of the Resurrection, and Golgotha, and Bethlehem, and the Cavern and the Height, and Gethsemane and all the temples, and to overlay them all with jewels, and gold, and silver. At Jerusalem was a holy bishop who counselled her not to do this thing, and said unto her, 'After a little time the heathen will come and spoil the

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<sup>1</sup> I. e. the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

places, and throw them down, and take away all thy doing. Thou oughtest to build rather with such good building as is customary, and give what remains of the money to the poor.' She hearkened to this counsel, and gave him much money, and charged him so to do. When she came to her son, and told him what she had done, he was greatly rejoiced and sent other money, and straitly urged them to build, and commanded wages to be given in full tale to the workers at the end of every day, lest they should become weary and God be against him. When the building was accomplished, in the thirtieth year of the reign of Constantine, he sent many vessels and much precious apparel, and charged the patriarch of Constantinople to take with him bishops, and sent to Athanasius, patriarch of Alexandria, to take with him also bishops, that they might assemble with the patriarch of Antioch and of Jerusalem, and consecrate the temples that were built. All were assembled and bode until the sixteenth day of the month Tôt. Then they consecrated the temples which were built: and on the seventy-eighth day they passed all round these places carrying the cross, and worshipped the Lord, offering the mysteries and glorifying the cross. Then they departed to their own homes.

May their intercession be with us till the last breath. Amen.

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#### THE FINDING OF THE CROSS.

On this day is the remembrance of the glorious cross of our Lord Jesus. This was discovered by

the God-loving queen Helena, mother of Constantine, when she cleared away the heap at Golgotha. Now the reason of this heap is, when the miracles were shown from the holy sepulchre, such as raising of the dead and curing of cripples, the Jews waxed wroth, and cried out in all Judea and Jerusalem that every one who sweeps his house or who has dust must cast it upon the sepulchre of Jesus of Nazareth. They continued in doing this above two hundred years, so that the heap became a mountain; till St. Helena came and took the Jews, of whom she imprisoned one Juda till he revealed unto her the place. Then she discovered the holy cross, and built for it a church, which was consecrated. They feast unto the cross on the seventeenth day of the month Tôt; and all the Christians were wont to make pilgrimage to this church at the feast of the Resurrection.

It came to pass that Isaac of Samra, while he was walking with some men in the way, waxed athirst and found no water. They passed nigh unto a pit wherein was bitter water of an evil savour. The people were greatly straitened, and Isaac of Samra began to mock them. The priest waxed zealous for zeal of God and disputed with Isaac; but Isaac said unto him, 'If I behold power in the name of the cross, I will believe in Christ.' Then the priest prayed over the bitter water, and it became exceeding sweet, so that all the people drank thereof and their cattle also. Howbeit Isaac, when he wished to drink, found the water which he had put in his bottle full of worms. He wept, and bowed himself before the priest Ogdos, and believed in Christ, and drank of the water, in the which was the virtue to be sweet

unto believers and bitter to unbelievers. Moreover in the water was seen a cross of light. They built upon the pit a church: and when Isaac came to Jerusalem, he went unto the bishop and was baptised by him, he and all his family. The cross was found in the tenth day of the month Barmahât; and as this day falleth in time of fast, the feast was made on the day of the consecration of the church, which is the seventeenth day of Tôt.

Glory and worship to our Lord Jesus Christ for ever and ever. Amen.

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#### LEGEND OF GIRGIS OF ALEXANDRIA.

On this day obtained martyrdom Mâri Girgis of Alexandria. His father was a merchant of Alexandria: and having no son, he went to the church of Mâri Girgis on the day of his feast (which was on the seventh day of Hator), and asked this saint to intercede for him before the Lord, that he might bestow on him a son. The Lord heard his prayer, and gave him a son whom he called Girgis. The mother of this saint was sister to Armenius, governor of Alexandria.

His parents died, and he remained at his uncle's house. His age was then twenty-five years; and he was loving to the poor, and merciful and kind. Armenius had an only daughter, who went on a certain day with her friends to walk. It happened that she saw outside the city a monastery, in which were hidden monks who were praising God with sweet voices. Their praise was rooted in her heart, and she began to ask the young man Girgis, her



aunt's son, the meaning of these hymns. He declared it unto her, and declared also the punishment of sinners, and the reward of the righteous. When she returned to the house, she avowed to her father that she believed in Christ Jesus.

At the first he spake smoothly unto her to return from that way, but she hearkened not; then he commanded to take her head, and she won the crown of martyrdom. Howbeit certain men told the governor that Girgis was the cause of all these things. So he took him and tormented him very hardly, and then sent him to the village of Ansinâ, where he was tormented with all sorts of torments: and at the last they took his head, and he won the crown of martyrdom. A deacon called Samuel took the holy body and went unto Memphis. When his uncle's wife knew that, she sent and took his body, and put it with the body of her daughter.

May their prayers and intercessions be with us.  
Amen.

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#### LEGEND OF ABBA MAĦARŪAH.

On this day won martyrdom Abba MaĦarŭah, who was from Faiŭm, a God-fearing man. When he heard the news of the martyrs, he came to Alexandria desiring to die in the name of Christ Jesus. It was told him in a vision, 'It is destined for thee to go to Antioch.' While he was thinking after this vision how he could reach Antioch, and was seeking a ship, the Lord sent unto him his angel, who carried him on wings from Alexandria to Antioch, and made him stand before Diocletian the king, and confess

before him Christ Jesus. The king asked him of his name and his country, and was astonished at his presence; and offered him many rewards and benefits, the which he refused. Then the king threatened him, but the saint feared not: so he commanded to torment him. They tormented him once; once they let loose upon him lions; once they burned him in fire; once they put him in a large cauldron of copper. Thereafter they took his head by the edge of the sword, and he won the crown of martyrdom. He was made an exchange for all the martyrs of Antioch who won martyrdom in Egypt.

May his intercession be with us. Amen.

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#### LEGEND OF THE ANGEL MIKHAÏL (MICHAEL).

On this day we feast for the angel Michael, chief of the angels, the merciful angel who makes intercession for all mankind.

This angel was seen of Joshua, the son of Nun, in great glory in the likeness of a soldier of a king. He was afraid and bowed before him, saying, 'O sir, art thou with me or against me?' The angel answered and said, 'I am the chief of the powers of heaven, and on this day I will deliver the Amalekites into thy hand, and give thee dominion over Artha.'

This is the angel who comforts and strengthens the saints, and makes them longsuffering, until their war is accomplished. Charities and feasts were made unto the saints in his name on the twelfth day of every month: because this angel asks of

the Lord the fruits of the earth and the rise of the Nile, that the Lord may make them perfect.

Once a man called Dorotheos and his wife Theïsta were wont to feast to the angel Michael, on the twelfth day of every month ; and for this cause God, by the intercession of the angel, granted them riches out of poverty: for these holy persons finding nought wherewith to make the feast, took their clothes to sell them in order to make the feast. The angel appeared to Dorotheos, and commanded him to go to the seller of sheep and buy from him a lamb for one-third of a dinar, and to a fisherman to buy from him a fish for one-third of a dinar : and not to open the fish. Then he must go to the seller of wheat and take from him all that he needs, and not sell his clothes. When the man made the feast, as he was bidden, and called the people as was his wont, he went to search for a little wine in a cupboard, and was astonished to find much wine, more than he had need of. When the guests went away, the angel came in the likeness which he had when he appeared to Dorotheos, and bade him open the fish, in which he found a parcel containing three hundred dinars and some gold. The angel said to them, ' This is the price of the sheep, and the fish, and the meat, and the gold is thine : because the Lord remembered thee and made mention of thy charities. So hath he rewarded thee in this world, and he will reward thee in the world to come.' While they were astonished, he said unto them, ' I am Michael, one of the angels, who have delivered thee from all thy troubles, and offered thy charities before the Lord.' They worshipped him, and he vanished out of their sight, and rose up into heaven.

This angel has wrought many wonders.  
May his intercession be with us for ever. Amen.

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STORY OF ANBA ZACHARIAS.

On this day died the father, the patriarch Anba Zacharias.

This saint was of Alexandria, wherein he was a priest. He had a good repute, chaste in body, meek in behaviour, venerable in years. When the patriarch Anba Philotheos died, the bishops were gathered together with the Holy Ghost to choose under God's counsel one who should be convenient. While they were at the church of St. Mark the Apostle, seeking for the one convenient, they heard that a certain man, having procured by power of station and money a letter from the sultan, was coming and bringing with him servants, thinking to be patriarch. Therefore being sorely grieved against a man who would fain become patriarch by power of money and place, they continued in prayer to God that he would choose for them a patriarch. During that time Zacharias, while he was coming down from the staircase of the church, carrying in his hand a bottle of vinegar, let slide his foot, and fell rolling down to the lowest step; howbeit the bottle of vinegar in his hand remained whole and unbroken. The bishops and priests were sore amazed hereat, and asked the people of him, both great and small. Inasmuch as all men ascribed unto him great virtue, the laity<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The laity (notables) always have a voice and meet with the bishops in council for the election. The khedive has a veto.

agreed with the bishops to make him patriarch, and he was chosen.

Many sorrows accompanied him ; amongst the which a monk sued him at law before the governor, who took him and bound him and threw him to lions : but the lions wrought him no harm. The governor took vengeance on the keeper of the lions. Then he made the lions hungry and slew a beast in sacrifice, and smearing the patriarch with its blood threw him to the lions. Yet they wrought him no evil. Then the governor bound him in prison by the space of three months, and threatened him, sometimes with killing, sometimes with casting to lions, and with burning by fire, if he would not forsake his faith. None of these three things made him afraid. Then he promised great reward, vowing to make him judge of judges of the Muslims ; but all these promises bent him not. And when the governor brought him out from the dungeon, he also vexed him in many things : among which many churches were demolished. And the persecution endured for nine years. Then the Lord God the Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ, made all these troubles to vanish away, and the governor commanded the saint to repair the churches, and to restore unto them all things whatsoever were taken away from them. The churches were built again, and Zacharias also set to build other churches : and it was ordered that cymbals be beaten in the churches.

Thus the things appertaining to the churches and to the faithful became straight, and this father lived thereafter twelve years, and was chief during twenty-eight years.

Then he removed to the Lord.

May his prayers be with us and preserve us all.  
Amen.

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LEGEND OF PETER THE PATRIARCH, THE LAST OF  
THE MARTYRS.

On this day won martyrdom Anba Butros, patriarch of Alexandria, who is the last of all the martyrs.

His father was an assistant to a priest in Alexandria, and he was called Theodosius. His mother's name was Sophia.

Both feared God greatly; and they had no son. On the fifth day of the month Abib, which is the feast of the two saints Peter and Paul, the woman saw a company of Christians walking with their sons before them, all dressed in goodly raiment. She waxed exceeding sorrowful, and wept, and asked the Lord Jesus with tears before the holy altar to bestow on her a son. That night Peter and Paul appeared unto her, and told her that the Lord had heard her prayers, and would give her a son who should be called Peter; and they commanded her to go to the patriarch that he might pray over her. When she awakened she told her husband, who was greatly rejoiced. Then she went unto the patriarch, and asked of him to pray over her, telling him the vision. He gave her his blessing, and after a little while a son was given to her, this saint Peter. When he was seven years old, they delivered him to the patriarch, as Samuel the prophet was delivered. He became as the patriarch's own son, and was

consecrated by him, first reader, then deacon, then priest. He helped him greatly in the business of the church; and when the patriarch who is called Anba T'āuna was dying, he counselled that Peter should be chosen in his place. So when he came to the chair, the church was filled with light from him. This came to pass in the days of Diocletianus.

Now there was at Antioch a patriarch who followed the king's counsel, and he had two sons. Therefore their mother, being unable to baptise them in their own country, took them with her to Alexandria. But while she was yet at sea the waves became furious; and fearing that her sons might die in the water without being baptised, she wounded her breast, and with her blood she made the sign of the cross upon the face of her two sons, and baptised them in the name of the Holy Trinity. Howbeit, they were delivered from the waves, and came to Alexandria; where they were brought to be baptised with other children; but whenever the patriarch wished to baptise them, the water became stone. This came to pass thrice. So the patriarch asked her of the matter, and she told him all that had happened in the way. He was astonished and glorified God, saying, 'Thus saith the Church, that there is only one baptism.'

In the days of this Peter, Arius, the disobedient, was excommunicated of the patriarch, because he hindered him and was stubborn. When Arius heard that St. Peter was always teaching the people in every place not to worship heathen gods, he sent messengers to take his head; who caught Peter and bound him. When the citizens heard of this thing, they took their swords and their armour, and came

to the dungeon to fight with the king's messengers (*sic*). When Peter saw that many would be killed for his sake, he wished to die for his people and to be with Christ: so he sent to bid all the people come, and comforted them, and counselled them to abide in the true faith. Howbeit Arius, knowing that Peter was going to the Lord leaving him excommunicate, besought the chief of the priests to make intercession with the patriarch to loose him; but Peter would not. Then he told unto them a vision which he saw in the night; wherein he beheld Jesus, his raiment parted asunder, and his hand covering his body with the robe. And Peter said, 'O Lord, who hath parted thy raiment?' And he answered, 'Arius; because he hath parted me from my Father. Wherefore beware thou of him.' Thereafter the patriarch asked of the king's messengers in secret to break through the prison wall from within and from without, and to take him to accomplish the king's order. They did as he commanded; they took him out to the city to the place where was buried St. Mark the Evangelist. There he prayed; and after greeting all the people he gave himself up to the swordsman, and prayed, saying, 'O Lord Christ, suffer my blood to extinguish the worship of idols.' A voice from heaven came unto him and was heard by a holy virgin, the voice as of one saying, 'Amen, be it unto thee according to thy wish.' The swordsman took his holy head, and his body remained standing upright by the space of two hours, till the people came; who came in haste, being nigh to the dungeon, yet not knowing what had happened unto him, until one told them. So they took St. Peter, and wrapped him, and made him sit



on his chair, on the which none ever saw him sit before while he was in life. For while he was alive he said, 'I sit not thereon, because I see the power of the Lord sitting upon it.' Then they buried him in the place of the bodies of the saints. He was eleven years on the throne.

May his prayers and intercessions be with us. Amen.

STORY OF THE PATRIARCH ANBA MARKUS,  
about 1800 A. D.

On this day died the patriarch Anba Markus, the CVIII of the patriarchs of Alexandria.

This father was of a village called Tammah, and from his youth loved ever to wander in solitude. Since therefore, by exceeding love for loneliness, he desired to become a monk, he went to the monastery of St. Antonius, father of monks. There he became monk, and waged much spiritual warfare. When the patriarch Anba Yuânîs<sup>1</sup> the CVII died, all the bishops and priests assembled in Cairo, and made a drawing of lots to find the person meet for the office. When they had prayed to God to guide them in choosing the man most worthy, the lot fell upon Markus. So they sent after him the abbot of the monastery, who was accompanied by a troop of Beduin, and brought him to Cairo, albeit against his will, bound with iron chains. The fathers, the bishops, and the priests came together, and made him patriarch of the chair of St. Mark of Alexandria. His name before he was made patriarch was John, and they gave him

<sup>1</sup> A Coptic form of Yuḥanna or John.

the name of Mark<sup>1</sup>. During his bishopric there were many afflictions and many adversities, and this chiefly, that two years after his coming to the chair a multitude from the Frank countries, called the French, came and took possession of Egypt. The inhabitants of Cairo rose against them, and there was war between them for three days. Then the patriarch changed his house from the Hârat-ar-Rûm to the Azbiklah. Then a vizier from Turkey came, accompanied by certain English folk, and they drave out the French from Egypt. The people suffered very much at the hand of the French: many places were laid waste, and many of the churches made desolate. The patriarch also suffered many adversities; for which cause he left Hârat-ar-Rûm, and came to the Azbiklah, where he built a large precinct and a large church in the name of St. Mark the Evangelist. This is the first who inhabited the Azbiklah. He was always repairing churches and monasteries which were in ruin; and was ever awake to preach to the people, and to teach them night and day. Moreover he consecrated many bishops. And when the metropolitan of Abyssinia died, and certain monks and priests came with a letter from the king of Abyssinia asking a metropolitan, Marķus consecrated for him one who went with the Abyssinian priests, and also sent to them books of sermons and of doctrines, because he had heard that certain of them had become heretic. A wonder was also wrought by this father on this wise. One year the river Nile did not overflow its borders; wherefore the viceroy

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<sup>1</sup> This was only because his predecessor was called John. Mark is not an official title.

asked of the Coptic patriarch and the other patriarchs to pray for the rise of the water of the Nile. So Markus and all the priests and Christian people came together and prayed to God, who hearkened to their prayers, and made arise the water of the Nile higher than its wont.

When he was sick with the sickness of death he called unto him the chief of the bishops, and said unto him, 'My time is come to leave this world: so must thou and thy brethren meet together and consecrate a patriarch: neglect it not.' After three days his soul departed to the Lord, and he was buried in the church of Azbiktah which he had built; and great was the pomp of his burial. He sat on the chair thirteen years and four months.

May his blessing be with us till the last breath. And to our Lord be praise for ever. Amen.



## INDEX TO THE SECOND VOLUME.

- ACANTHUS, pp. 243. 244. 245.  
 'Αἴψ 46.  
 Alb, *see* Vestments.  
 Alchemy 251.  
 Alms-dish 289.  
 Altar 1-36.  
   — board 3. 7. 283.  
   — canopy 28 seq. 194.  
   — casket, *see* Ark.  
   — cavity 305. 352. 353.  
   — coverings 35-36. 283.  
   — lights 56.  
   — of wood 6-7.  
   — portable 25-28.  
   — slab 7 seq.  
 Ambon 64. 314.  
 Amice, *see* Vestments.  
 'Αμύδς 280.  
 Ampulla 56.  
 Amula 56.  
 Angelic habit 308. 323.  
 Anointing the sick 326 seq.  
 Antimensia 27.  
 Apostolical Constitutions 268.  
 Apse 194.  
 Aquamanile 54.  
 Arcosolia 8. 13.  
 Ark 42 seq. 55. 283.  
 Armenian altar 23. 33. 60.  
   — usage 49. 50. 263. 280. 328.  
     349. 350. 351. 352.  
   — vestments 122. 126. 142. 162.  
     169. 184. 214 bis. 227. 233.  
 Armlet, *see* Vestments.  
 Aspersions 268. 292. 339. 345.  
 Aster or dome 39.  
 Aumbry 78.
- Babylon 167.  
 Baldakyn, *see* Altar-canopy.  
 Ballin, *see* Vestments.  
 Balsam 331.  
 Banner 311.  
 Baptism 262 seq. 388. 399.  
   — of fire 266.  
 Baptistery 264. etc.  
 Basin, *see* Ewer.  
 Beduin 240.  
 Bell 45. 50. 79. 273. 316. 323.  
 Benediction 292. 316. 327.  
   — of oil 333 seq.  
   — of palm 349.  
   — of water 266. 271. 272. 339.  
     344. 346. 350. 391.  
 Biruna 213.  
 Books 239-246.  
 Bowing before altar 309. 319.  
 Bread, eucharistic, 277.  
 Breastplate 102. 123.  
 British usage 171. 198. 215.  
 Burial of the rood 352.  
 Burnus, *see* Cope and Chasuble  
   (Vestments).
- Cambutta 228.  
 Candelabrum 68. etc.  
 Cap of priesthood 209 seq.  
 Casula 196.  
 Chains put on patriarch 306. 309.  
   401.  
 Chalice 37 seq.  
 Charta bombycina 241.  
 Chasuble, *see* Vestments.  
 Chrism 19 seq. 269. 271. 299.  
   337. 340. 343. etc.

- Churches built over martyrs' bodies 362. 367. 368. 369. 388.  
 — dedicated to martyrs 360. 365.  
 Cidaris 203 n.  
 Circumcision 263.  
 Colobion 110.  
 Coloured vestments 112. 113. 195. 196. 200.  
 Confession 277. 296. 298. 315. 320.  
 Confessionary, *see* Crypt.  
 Confirmation 262 seq.  
 Consecration of altar 343. etc.  
 — of baptistery 344 seq.  
 — of bishop, *see* Orders.  
 — of church 338 seq. 363. 372. 390. 391.  
 Cope, *see* Vestments.  
 Coptic language 247-257.  
 — dialects of 255.  
 Corona 75.  
 Corporal 17. 45. 48. 50. 315. 335.  
 Crewet 55. 271.  
 Cross, amulet 233  
 — benedictional 57. 234-235. 273. 315. 323. 325.  
 — of consecration 19. 21. 22. 340.  
 — pectoral 231.  
 — processional 233. 234. 309. 335.  
 Crown, baptismal 273.  
 — bridal 63. 305. 325.  
 — episcopal, *see* Vestments.  
 Crucifix 57.  
 Crutch or staff 83. 225.  
 Crypt 13 seq.  
 Cucullus 198.  
 Cufic writing 253.  
 Cumhdach 246.  
 Cursive writing 241.  
 Curtain 30 seq. 39. 194.  
 Cymbal 82. 240. 273. 397.  
 Dalmatic, *see* Vestments.  
 Demotic writing 249. 250. 251.  
 Dikanikion 219.  
 Diptychs 49. 289.  
 δισκοκάλυμμα 46.  
 Dome, eucharistic, *see* Aster.  
 Dove 383.  
 ἐγκόλπιον 231.  
 ἐγχείριον 144 n. 163. 169.  
 Egyptian mythology 94.  
 Elevation of host 82. 182. 183. 291.  
 Emblems 92.  
 Enamelling on glass 70-71.  
 Ephod 98. 102. 123.  
 ἐπιμανίκια 104. etc.: *see* Vestments.  
 Epiphany ceremonies 346 seq.  
 — tank 349.  
 ἐπιτραχήλιον 128 etc.: *see* Vestments.  
 ἐπωμίς 102. 203. etc.: *see* Amice (Vestments).  
 Eras, Arabic terms for, 96 n.  
 Ethiopia 25. etc.  
 Eucharist 275 seq. 373. etc.  
 Eulogiae 292.  
 Ewer 53.  
 Excommunication 399, 400.  
 Exorcism 269. 272.  
 Fan, *see* Flabellum.  
 Fanon 122.  
 Fasting 23. 276. 296. 316. 320. 354.  
 Flabellum 46 seq. 292. 309. 335. 339.  
 — processional 49.  
 Font 271.  
 Fresco, *see* Mural painting.  
 Frontal for lectern 68.  
 Gabathae 72.  
 Galilaeon 272. 273. 331.  
 Gallican usage 161. 171.  
 Georgia 51.  
 Girdle 359. 386 (*see also* Vestments).  
 — at baptism 273. 274.

- Girdle at marriage 324.  
 Glove 233.  
 Gong 81.  
 Good Friday 50. 351.  
 Gospel, book of, *see* Textus.  
 — stand 59. 60. 273. 274.  
 Greater entrance 284.  
 Greek altar 6. 20. 23. 25. 32-36.  
 — language 255.  
 — usage 44. 80. 169. 215. 280.  
 293. 328. 337. 342-43 etc.  
 — vestments *passim*, *see* chapters  
 on vestments.  
 Griffin's egg 78.
- Handbell, *see* Bell.  
 Haṣīrah, *see* Mat.  
 Hieroglyphics 249.  
 History of the Patriarchs 386.  
 Hood 183.  
 Hours of prayer, Coptic 349 n.
- Iconostasis 32. 33. etc.  
 Illumination 241 seq.  
 Images 83-84.  
 Immersion 267. 383.  
 Imposition of hands 310. 315.  
 320. 321. 322.  
 Incense 270. 285. 286. 325. 335.  
 etc.  
 — box 62.  
 Infulae 214.  
 Insufflation 271. 273. 320. 321.  
 Irish usage 51. 60. 61. 81. 112.  
 171. 197. 215. 229. 245.  
 Isbodikon 279. 290. 291.
- Jewelled vestments 98. 168. 177.  
 Jordan 265.
- καλύπτρα 202.  
 Kiss of peace, *see* Pax.  
 Kissing altar 287. 315. 321.  
 — bishop 317.  
 — cross 314.  
 — curtain 283.  
 — gospel 286.
- Kissing threshold of sanctuary,  
 287. 315.  
 Kneeling 277. 290. 339.
- χέρνιβον 54.  
 χιτώριον 101.
- Labyrinth 368.  
 Lafâfah, *see* Corporal.  
 Lamps 69 seq. 194. 327.  
 Lance, eucharistic 44.  
 Language, Coptic 247-257.  
 Lectern 65 seq.  
 Legend 89. 266. 297. 306. 312.  
 355. 357 seq.  
 Lenten veil, *see* Veil.  
 Lights, ceremonial use of, 39. 55.  
 96. 273. 274. 284. 285. 286.  
 289. 294. 321. 323. 326. 328.  
 335. 344. 346. 351.  
 Liturgies 282.
- Magician 387.  
 Malabar Christians 134.  
 Mandatum 350.  
 Maronite altar 24.  
 — usage 50. 80.  
 — vestments 122. 127. 134. 136.  
 147. 162. 187. 213. 227.  
 Marriage crown 63.  
 Marriage of clergy 305. 313. 319.  
 Mass for the dead 297.  
 Mat, eucharistic 44. etc.  
 Matrimony 323.  
 Melkite community 48. 49. 61.  
 106. 133. 276. 348.  
 — vestments 116. 132. 138. 160.  
 168. 191. 207. 219. 237.  
 Mention at the mass 289 n.  
 Milk and honey, 270. 272. 273.  
 Miracles 388.  
 Mitra, 207.  
 Mitre, *see* Crown (Vestments).  
 Monuments 203.  
 Mosque 77.  
 Mount Athos, 80. 91. 93. 96.  
 Mural paintings 83 seq. 360.

- Myron 330: *see also* Chrism and Oils.
- Napkin 164.
- Nestorian altar 6. 24. 33.  
— chalice 38.  
— usage 77. 263. 280. 305.  
— vestments 127. 142. 170. 187. 227.
- Νεφέλη 46.
- Nile, rise of 395. 403.
- Oils, holy 56. 269. 270. 272. 325. 327. 331 seq.: *see also* Chrism and Galilaeon.
- οϊνάνθη 28.
- Olive branch 299.
- Orders 301 seq.  
— archdeacon 321.  
— archpriest or κῦμμος 318.  
— bishop 313.  
— deacon 320.  
— metropolitan 312.  
— monk 308. 322.  
— patriarch 302 seq. 396. 401. etc.  
— priest 319.  
— reader 322.  
— sacristan 301.  
— singer 301. 322.  
— subdeacon 321. 322.
- Osiris, worship of 94. 248.
- Ostrich-egg 77.
- Oven 277.
- Oxford University and the study of Coptic 257 n.
- παλλίον 160 n.
- Palm 344. 349.  
— Sunday 349.
- Paschal candle 68.
- Patēn 39. etc.
- Patriarch, *see* Orders.
- Pax 49. 60. 270. 286. 315.
- Pelican 243.
- Penance 277. 298.
- περιστήθιον 122.
- Persecution 375.
- Persian martyrs 369.  
φαινῶλιον etc. 101.  
φακιδίον 149 n.
- Phare 74.
- Pictures 87 seq. 311. 349.
- Pilgrimage 355. 391.
- Piscina 17.
- Planeta 196.
- πολυσταύριον 196.
- Pope, title of 302.
- Prayer before altar 398.  
— to saints 96.
- Procession 48. 49. 176. 191. 273. 309. 311. 313. 314. 319 bis. 321. 326. 328. 335. 339. 340. 343. 349. 350. 352. 353. 390.
- Prostration 296. 343.
- Pulpit 65.
- Purgatory 297.
- Purification 263.
- Pyx 55.
- Real Presence, doctrine of 296-297.
- Relics 12 seq. 68. 311. 342. 369.
- Reservation of host 54. 293.  
— of hallowed water 267.
- Ring 214. 233. 324.  
ρίπίδιον 49.
- Rosary 238.
- Sacraments, the Coptic 262-329.
- Sacred letters of Sanutius 3.
- Sacring bell 82.
- Sagavard 214.
- Salt, use of 274 n. 282. 292. 341.
- Sanctus bell 82.
- Sandals 233.
- Screen 194. etc.
- Sees, the Coptic 318.
- Semantron 80.
- Sepulcrum 17.
- Serpent 218. 219. 223. 224.
- Service books 258 seq.
- Sick, communion of the 295.



- Sign of the cross 270. 274. 287. 288. 299. 315. 319. 320. 322. 325. 344. 345. 366. 382 bis. 383. 384. 399.
- Singing-irons 281.
- Spoon, eucharistic 40. 276. 291. 321.
- Stamping the housel 279-280.  
*στιγάριον* 101. 115.
- Stole, *see* Vestments.
- Synaxar 259.
- Syrian altar 24. 27.  
— usage 48. 263. 338.  
— vestments 122. 136. 140. 141. 142. 162. 166. 170. 185. 202. 212. 226. 227.
- Tabak, *see* Mat.
- Ἰταλῶν, *see* Vestments.
- Tarbûsh 201.
- Teaching of the Apostles 268.
- Textus 57 seq. 273. 309. 310. 317. 322. 327. 339.
- θάλασσα 17.
- Throne 309. 317.
- Thurible 309. 339. etc.
- θυσιαστήριον 1.
- Tiara 207. 215.
- Tonsure 322.
- Tower 81.
- Tribune 309. 314.
- Turban 375. 377.
- Urceolus 54.
- Varkass 122.
- Vartaped 227. 228.
- Veil, eucharistic, 45. 285. 286. etc.  
— Lenten 35.  
— of crozier 219.
- Vestments 17. 97-238.  
— Alb 99.
- Vestments.  
— Amice 98-100. 117 seq. 276.  
— Armlet or sleeve or epimankion 99. 100. 104. 114. 163 seq. 165.  
— Ballin 118.  
— Chasuble 101. 105. 173 seq. 199.  
— Cope 99-100. 173 seq. 199.  
— Crozier or staff 217 seq. 346.  
— Dalmatic 98. 109 seq. 276.  
— Epigonation 169. 235 seq.  
— Girdle 98-100. 103-104. 124 seq.  
— Maniple 98. 138. 144 n. 163. 164.  
— Mitre or crown 120. 156. 184. 200 seq.  
— Omophorion or pall 143 seq. 162.  
— Rational 101. 102. 117 n. 122.  
— Shamlah 118 seq. 314.  
— Stole 99. 127 seq.  
— — epitachelion or patrashil 128. 129 seq.  
— — orarion 128. 134 seq. 321.  
— Superhumeral 101. 102.  
— Ἰταλῶν 120.  
Vestments, eastern origin of 125.
- Wafer 278 seq.
- Wanderers of the desert 372. 374.
- Washing the altar 9. 342.  
— of eucharistic vessels 292.  
— of hands at mass 287.  
— of feet 122. 145 n. 350. 361.
- Water mixed with wine 284.
- Wine, eucharistic, 281.  
— for lamp 329.  
— other use of 341.
- Women 277. 291.
- Worshipping the patriarch 312.

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