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**MONKS AND MONASTERIES IN EGYPT
BETWEEN HOUSEHOLD AND ESTATE
A CASE STUDY FROM BAWIT***

1. INTRODUCTION

AMONG THE RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS OF EGYPT in the Byzantine and early Arab period, the monastery of Apa Apollo in Bawit constitutes a case apart. It is known not only from a dossier of around 500 texts in Greek and Coptic, but also from architectural remains which preserve some among the jewels of Christian art in Egypt.¹ The walls of the buildings on the *kom* of Bawit also display a multitude of inscriptions which, however still understudied, offer striking insights into the life of the monastic community and its relations with the world beyond its walls.²

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¹ For bibliography on Bawit, with particular regard to the textual material, see J. WEGNER, ‘The monastery of Apa Apollo in the Hermopolite nome and its relations with the “world outside”’, *The Journal of Juristic Papyrology* 46 (2016), pp. 147–247.

² Transcriptions of shorter and longer texts discovered on the walls of the buildings on the *kom* of Bawit during the excavations of Clédât and Maspero in the beginning of the twentieth century are to be found in J. CLÉDAT, *Le monastère et la nécropole de Baouït* [= *Mélanges de l’Institut français d’archéologie orientale* 12], Cairo 1904, and J. MASPERO, *Fouilles*

The ongoing excavations promise to further the understanding of the use of space within the monastic precinct, while recent studies on the documentary material from Bawit have shed revealing light on the economic activities and administrative procedures in the monastery.³

With material so rich and diverse, scholars have had – and will certainly continue to have – much to say about the monastery of Bawit. The outline of what this institution was has emerged clearly enough from the extensive scholarship on the subject: it was the home and place of spiritual and practical activities of a community of male monks (the associated female community which likely shared the *kom* with its male counterpart is poorly recognised).⁴ This organisation was headed by a superior,

exécutées à Baouît par Jean Maspero. Notes mises en ordre et éditées par Etienne Drioton [= *Mélanges de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale* 59], Cairo 1932. For recent work on the epigraphic material from Bawit, see F. CALAMENT, 'Nouvelles inscriptions à Baouît (campagnes de 2003 et 2004)', [in:] A. BOUD'HORS & C. LOUIS (eds.), *Études coptes X. Douzième journée d'études coptes, Lyon 19–21 mai 2005* [= *Cahiers de la Bibliothèque copte* 16], Paris 2008, pp. 23–38; EADEM, 'Du nouveau sur l'Apa Daniel, "père de *topos*" à Baouît', [in:] A. BOUD'HORS & C. LOUIS (eds.), *Études coptes XII. Quinzième journée d'études, Louvain-la-Neuve, 12–14 mai 2011* [= *Cahiers de la Bibliothèque copte* 20], Paris 2015, pp. 91–105; EADEM, 'L'apport des nouvelles découvertes épigraphiques à Baouît (2006–2012)', [in:] P. BUZI, A. CAMPLANI, & F. CONTARDI (eds.), *Coptic Society, Literature and Religion from Late Antiquity to Modern Times* [= *Orientalia Lovaniensia analecta* 247], Leuven – Paris – Bristol 2016, vol. 1, pp. 659–668; A. DELATRE, 'Des linteaux et des noms. Une enquête prosopographique à Baouît', [in:] A. BOUD'HORS & C. LOUIS (eds.), *Études coptes XI. Treizième journée d'études coptes, Marseille 7–9 juin 2007* [= *Cahiers de la Bibliothèque copte* 17], Paris 2010; H. ROCHARD & F. CALAMENT, 'Les peintres à l'œuvre à Baouît: témoignages épigraphiques et picturaux', [in:] S. BRODBECK, A. NICOLAÏDÈS, P. PAGÈS, *et alii* (eds.), *Mélanges en l'honneur de Catherine Jolivet-Lévy* [= *Travaux et mémoires* 20/2], Paris 2016, pp. 49–68.

³ G. SCHENKE, 'Micro- and macro-management responsibilities of the head of the monastery of Apa Apollo at Bawit', [in:] BUZI, CAMPLANI, & CONTARDI (eds.), *Coptic Society* (cit. n. 2), pp. 683–692; EADEM, 'Monastic control over agriculture and farming. New evidence from the Egyptian monastery of Apa Apollo at Bawit concerning the payment of *aparache*', [in:] A. DELATRE, M. LEGENDRE, & P. SIJPESTEIJN (eds.), *Authority and Control in the Countryside. From Antiquity to Islam in the Mediterranean and Near East (Sixth–Tenth Century)*, Leiden – Boston 2019, pp. 420–431; J. WEGNER, *Monastic Communities in Context. Monasteries, Society, and Economy in Late Antique Egypt*, Leuven 2021 (forthcoming), in particular chapters 3 and 4.

⁴ E. WIPSYCKA, *Moines et communautés monastiques en Égypte (IV^e–VIII^e siècles)* [= *The Journal of Juristic Papyrology Supplement* 11], Warsaw 2009, pp. 583–586. For inscriptions from

often styled archimandrite in recognition of his rank, and encompassed functionaries tackling managerial and fiscal tasks. The origins of the monastery are obscure. A connection has been made between Bawit and a prominent ascetic named Apollo who is supposed to have lived in the fourth century.⁵ The earliest archaeological remains unearthed on the *kom* of Bawit suggest monastic settlement only from the sixth century onwards⁶ (but given the state of excavation of the site it cannot be excluded that earlier installations had existed there and have not yet been discovered). It is also in the sixth century that we first see the monastery in papyrus documents. The number of texts associated with it peaks after the Arab conquest, in the seventh and eighth century. While new fiscal features had been introduced under the new rule, the monastery itself seems to have thrived and continued to pursue various economic activities.

One must not fall into the trap of instinctively treating the best documented case as the most representative, especially while dealing with a movement so diverse as Egyptian monasticism. The monastery of Apa Apollo was large and rich, probably larger and richer than other communities for which we have papyrological and archaeological data. However, with its fundamentally agricultural economic basis, a combination of communal life with partial independence of the monks, and multiple links to the surrounding countryside,⁷ it shared features with other monasteries known from the papyri and excavations.

halls 40–46 excavated by Maspero and associated with the community of women, see MASPERO, *Fouilles* (cit. n. 2), pp. 140–144, nos. 485–510. For a plan of the *kom*, see WIPSZYCKA, *Moines et communautés* (cit. above), between pp. 142 and 143. EADEM, *The Second Gift of the Nile: Monks and Monasteries in Late Antique Egypt* [= *The Journal of Juristic Papyrology Supplement* 33], Warsaw 2017, p. 323, features a map of the entire Bawit ‘agglomeration’ made up by the *kom* and the hermitages to the west of it (for a description, see pp. 326–328).

⁵ See T. VIVIAN, ‘Monks, Middle Egypt, and *metanoia*: The *Life* of Phib by Papho the Steward (translation and introduction)’, *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 7/4 (1999), pp. 547–571.

⁶ D. BROOKS HEDSTROM, *The Monastic Landscape of Late Antique Egypt: An Archaeological Reconstruction*, Cambridge 2017, p. 200.

⁷ See WEGNER, ‘The monastery of Apa Apollo’ (cit. n. 1), and EADEM, *Monastic Communities* (cit. n. 3).

2. LABELLING THE MONASTERY

The Bawit monastery as an entity and a subject of research can receive various labels (which I shall use interchangeably throughout this article). It was a community, or a constantly interacting group of interdependent persons with common interest and identity.⁸ It was also an institution in more than one sense of the word: as an established unit playing by a certain set of rules, and as a significant set of rules in itself. Finally, as an entity with defined boundaries between members and non-members, and with principles concerning leadership and hierarchy, it can be labelled an organisation.⁹ All of these labels are useful in defining, first and foremost, the structure of human relations within the monastery; they also hint at the relation – primarily managerial and administrative – between people and goods. In this latter aspect, however, a yet different model may be evoked to describe the reconstructed reality of the Bawit monastery.

An analysis of aspects of the Bawit economy proposed by Gesa Schenke underscores the similarity of the monastery's behaviour to that of the great Egyptian estate owners of the Byzantine period.¹⁰ Schenke emphasises especially the control over land and workforce wielded by the monastery, and its ability to extract profit from agriculture. Indeed, the monastery possessed extensive tracts of land and established a complex administrative structure consolidated around the head of the community and run by a multi-level network of representatives.¹¹ This structure was a result of a process of institutionalisation which, on one hand, responded to practical issues the community was faced with, and, on the other, was conducive to the emergence of internal hierarchies that were based on scope and character of responsibility and had no traceable relation to spiritual hierarchy.

⁸ C. GREY, *Constructing Communities in the Late Roman Countryside*, Cambridge 2011, p. vii.

⁹ WEGNER, *Monastic Communities* (cit. n. 3).

¹⁰ SCHENKE, 'Monastic control' (cit. n. 3), p. 429.

¹¹ A discussion of the intricate administrative structures of Bawit is found in WEGNER *Monastic Communities* (cit. n. 3), chapters 3 and 4.

The economic entities of Byzantine Egypt that constituted distinct administrative and fiscal units are labelled *oikoi* in the papyri. The documentation records *theioi/theiotatoi oikoi* (imperial estates), *endoxoi oikoi* (estates of senatorial and non-senatorial elites), and *euages oikoi* (estates of ecclesiastical institutions writ large).¹² The nature of these establishments is sometimes hard to grasp, as evidenced by the various definitions proposed in scholarship.¹³ In the documents, *oikoi* emerge as units responsible for taxation, economic transactions, and operations related to land management. In other words, it is the material aspect of *oikoi* that is best visible through the lens of papyrological documentation. Such close relation to materialities is attested as well in the monastic milieu, in the very use of the word *oikonomos* to describe the individual responsible for economic transactions. *Oikonomoi* were a common feature of monastic communities as recorded in the papyri (in Bawit, surprisingly, they are less prominent despite the scale of the monastery's economic operations¹⁴).

The understanding of a monastery as an *oikos* in the sense of economic unit with material value is expressed most strikingly in a letter from the end of the sixth century sent by Dioskoros of Aphrodito, in which a person of rank, connected to the personnel of the office of the *dux* of the Thebaid, is requested to intervene on behalf of a monastic institution.¹⁵ Dioskoros managed the affairs of this institution which had also its own *oikonomos* selected from among the monks. The letter speaks of a theft of animals belonging to the community and alludes to unspecified detrimental 'changes', most likely fiscal, which a group of local landowners wanted

¹² J. GASCOU, 'Les grands domaines, la cité et l'État en Égypte byzantine. Recherches d'histoire agraire, fiscale et administrative', [in:] IDEM, *Fiscalité et société en Égypte byzantine* [= *Centre de recherche d'histoire et civilisation de Byzance: Bilans de recherche* 4], Paris 2008, pp. 125–213, at 126.

¹³ R. MAZZA, 'Households as communities? *Oikoi* and *poleis* in late antique and Byzantine Egypt', [in:] O. M. VAN NIJF, R. ALSTON, & C. G. WILLIAMSON (eds.), *Political Culture in the Greek City after the Classical Age*, Leuven – Paris – Walpole MA 2011, pp. 263–286, at 264–266.

¹⁴ *P. Mich. Copt.* 14; *P. CtYBR* inv. 1767; *P. Brux. Bawit* 13, 19, 22, 27, 44; *P. Hermitage Copt.* 16; *P. Köln ägypt.* II 2.

¹⁵ *SB XX* 14626 (573–574 or 589–590 AD).

to impose on the monastic property. Speaking of the material status of the monastery, Dioskoros states that ‘also this holy house of God is a possessor’ (κτήτωρ ἔστιν καὶ αὐτὸς ὁ εὐαγῆς θεοῦ οἶκος, ll. 17–18). On the other hand, the inept monastic *oikonomos* is described as willing ‘to retire and leave the holy *topos* unadministered (ἀδιοίκητον) to the detriment of the most [...] public account’ (ll. 4–5). *Oikos*, *διοικησις*, *oikonomos* are in the very centre of Dioskoros’ argument which aims at the protection of the monastery’s material status. While similar rhetoric is unattested for Bawit, it is difficult to imagine that a monastery so much larger and better endowed than a local private foundation in Aphrodito would not be perceived as a unit where material value could be earned.

Nevertheless, while describing monastic institutions it is necessary to avoid the kind of reductionism which follows the separation of the material from the non-material. Such separation is all too easy when the sources are limited to papyrological documentation with its bias toward practical matters. This, fortunately, is not the case of Bawit, which besides the papyri and ostraca offers architectural remains, iconography, and epigraphic material that allow us to trace the monks’ own perception of the world in which they lived and operated. Putting aside the undeniably useful models of estate/*oikos*, the descriptive model which can be applied to the Bawit monastery and would encompass all types of sources and the different spheres of monastic life which they reflect, such as material concerns, spirituality, and labour is, I believe, that of a household. In what follows, I will discuss how the household model can be applied to the monastery of Apa Apollo and try to emphasise the advantages which conceptualising monastery as a household offers to our understanding of the relations of people to people and people to materialities in a monastic context.

3. MONASTERY AS A HOUSEHOLD: FEATURES

The word ‘household’ has two definitions in the Merriam-Webster English dictionary: 1) ‘those who dwell under the same roof and compose a family’; and 2) ‘a social unit composed of those living together in the same

dwelling'.¹⁶ Both definitions focus on coresidence as the key distinctive feature of a household; the same is true also of other dictionary definitions of the term. A more detailed definition featured in the OECD Glossary of Statistical Terms focuses more on the economic significance of living in a household and introduces nuance to the question of household coresidence:

The concept of household is based on the arrangements made by persons, individually or in groups, for providing themselves with food or other essentials for living. [...] The persons in the group may pool their incomes and may, to a greater or lesser extent, have a common budget; they may be related or unrelated persons or constitute a combination of persons both related and unrelated. A household may be located in a housing unit or in a set of collective living quarters such as a boarding house, a hotel or a camp, or may comprise the administrative personnel in an institution. The household may also be homeless.¹⁷

Moreover, in an old but still relevant study, Richard R. Wilk and Robert McC. Netting proposed a functional understanding of household, focused less on the composition or taxonomy of households, and more on the processes and phenomena occurring within them, namely production, distribution, transmission, reproduction, and coresidence.¹⁸

Studies of households have been pursued in the field of history and archaeology of the Greco-Roman Mediterranean, focusing primarily on the analysis of domestic spaces, the relation of household to family, the economic performance of households, the significance of gender and legal status within the boundaries of a household, and the continuity and change of household functions and structures between paganism and Christianity.¹⁹ Also the treatment of monasteries as households is, in

¹⁶ <<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/household>> (accessed 9 October 2021).

¹⁷ <<https://stats.oecd.org/glossary/detail.asp?ID=1255>> (accessed 9 October 2021).

¹⁸ R. R. WILK & R. McC. NETTING, 'Households: Changing forms and functions', [in:] R. McC. NETTING, R. R. WILK, & E. J. ARNOULD (eds.), *Households: Comparative and Historical Studies of the Domestic Group*, Berkeley – Los Angeles – London 1984, pp. 1–28.

¹⁹ From the rich bibliography of the subject, let us note a handful of most important publications: S. R. HUEBNER & G. NATHAN (eds.), *Mediterranean Families in Antiquity: Households,*

itself, not an entirely new proposition in the study of both the ancient monasticism and the later continuations of the monastic tradition.²⁰ However, in monastic contexts the use of the term ‘household’ is not always unproblematic. Rebecca Krawiec, in her study of Shenoutean monasticism, draws attention to the frequent conflation of ‘household’ and ‘family’ in the study of ancient history, and for the purpose of her own argument distinguishes between ‘household studies’ (focused on the economic functions of the family) and ‘family studies’ (focused on the relations between family members).²¹ Krawiec decides to use mainly the term ‘family’, reserving ‘household’ for lay units. This approach, however, seems to overemphasise the artificial division between two closely intertwined aspects of monastic life, namely the economic pursuits and the social and religious relations between the members of monastic communities, as well as ignore the social and symbolic functions of the household.

Using Wilk and Netting’s model of household activity and the OECD definition, which provide a detailed framework for an analysis of papyrological material from Bawit, we shall discuss the different aspects of the functioning of the monastery of Apa Apollon. While the result will by no

Extended Families, and Domestic Space, Chichester 2016; L. C. NEVETT, *Domestic Space in Classical Antiquity*, Cambridge 2010; B. A. AULT, ‘*Oikos* and *oikonomia*: Greek houses, households, and the domestic economy’, [in:] R. WESTGATE, N. FISCHER, & J. WHITLEY (eds.), *Building Communities: House, Settlement and Society in the Aegean and Beyond* [= *British School at Athens Studies* 15], London 2007, pp. 259–265; R. P. SALLER, ‘Household and gender’, [in:] W. SCHEIDEL, I. MORRIS, & R. P. SALLER (eds.), *The Cambridge Economic History of the Greco-Roman World*, Cambridge 2008, pp. 87–112; K. HARPER, ‘*Oikonomia*: Households, consumption, and production’, [in:] IDEM, *Slavery in the Late Roman World, AD 275–425*, Cambridge 2011, pp. 100–143; K. COOPER, *The Fall of the Roman Household*, Cambridge 2007; A. B. MULDER-BAKKER & J. WOGAN-BROWNE (eds.), *Household, Women, and Christianities in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages* [= *Medieval Women: Texts and Contexts* 14], Turnhout 2005.

²⁰ See, e.g., K. COOPER, ‘The household and the desert: Monastic and biological communities in the *Lives* of Melania the Younger’, [in:] MULDER-BAKKER & WOGAN-BROWNE (eds.), *Household, Women and Christianities* (cit. n. 19), pp. 11–35. For a later case study, see E. M. WIBERG PEDERSEN, ‘The monastery as a household within the universal household’, *ibidem*, pp. 167–190.

²¹ R. KRAWIEC, *Shenoute and the Women of the White Monastery: Egyptian Monasticism in Late Antiquity*, New York 2002, p. 135.

means constitute a universally applicable model (if only for the reason of discrepancies in the volume and quality of documentation available for different monastic establishments), it may provide a reference point in the study of other monastic dossiers with similar characteristics.

3.1. *Production, resources, and labour*

From the economic point of view the monastery at Bawit was an agricultural enterprise. It owned land from which it collected taxes²² and extracted surplus in the form of *aparche* collected by monastic functionaries.²³ The products which are attested as making their way into the monastery were wheat, wine, and fish preservatives, transported to Bawit from what was likely outlying properties of the community. The character of the monastery's rural estate, composed of parcels lying in different localities, meant that the work of managers and administrators was as vital to the functioning of Bawit as labour in the fields. Therefore, when speaking of 'production', we need to consider all the activities that resulted in goods being deposited in monastic storerooms (whether for internal consumption or for sale as surplus, we do not know, as the relevant sources are lacking).

A striking feature of the monastic life in Bawit as recorded in the documents is the bustling activity of the monks in both production *sensu stricto* and in management of production, agricultural or otherwise. As the documents cannot be dated in a precise manner, what we are seeing reflects a general tendency over a longer period rather than a snapshot of a moment in the monastery's economic history. The administrative-managerial tier consisted of superiors issuing orders concerning the delivery of goods,²⁴ their subordinates executing them, and others, like the 'fathers of the field' (most probably heading agricultural sub-units of the

²² *P. Brux. Bawit* 31, an account of taxes in barley from the *ousia* of Kos.

²³ SCHENKE, 'Monastic control' (cit. n. 3).

²⁴ Most of the superiors' orders are collected in S. J. CLACKSON, *It Is Our Father Who Writes: Orders from the Monastery of Apollo at Bawit* [= *American Studies in Papyrology* 43], Cincinnati 2008. See also *P. Köln ägypt.* II 18–29.

monastery),²⁵ and unlabelled functionaries supervising the labour and collection of surpluses.²⁶ The machinery they ran was powered by numerous hands. Both papyri and inscriptions from Bawit reveal a wide range of occupations in crafts (pottery, construction, tanning, weaving, decorative arts), services (healthcare, teaching) and transport (camel-herding) that were practiced by the monks.

The papyri bear a handful of attestations of monastic workforce in agriculture. ‘Brothers assigned to the field of Kame’ (*P. Brux. Bawit* 26), ‘Apa Kolthe assigned to the field of Kame’ (P. Duke inv. 259), ‘brothers of the western workplace’ harvesting at a place called Rane (*P. Köln ägypt.* II 21), Apa Joseph who speaks of sowing the fields in *P. Köln ägypt.* II 43, or the two monks in *P. Mon. Apollo* 26 who undertake work on land of the monastery were all monks-farmers. Another category of monks doing practical jobs for their community were the collectors of *aparche*, who collected rents and taxes from monastic land, and the profit which went to the monastic storehouses. The role of the collectors as currently interpreted by papyrologists consisted also in shouldering the fiscal responsibility for the monastery’s landholdings.²⁷ Their role was crucial given the importance of land taxes in the budget of a landowner such as the Bawit monastery, and it could be fulfilled only in an organisational pattern which allowed individual monks to have private resources at their disposal.²⁸

The monastery certainly employed tenants from ‘the world’ to exploit its landed property, as attested through mentions of rents in the *aparche*

²⁵ ‘Father of the field’ (πατρ μφο): *P. Bawit Clackson* 52 and 85; the bilingual, Greco-Coptic *P. Lond. Copt.* II 1130 features the Greek equivalent of the term, πατήρ ὀργάνου.

²⁶ *P. Köln ägypt.* II 41 and 43.

²⁷ SCHENKE in *P. Köln ägypt.* II, p. 49.

²⁸ That the monks possessed money, most likely drawn from rents on land they owned as private landowners or from artisanal production marketed in ‘the world’ is clear from the numerous loan contracts from Bawit which feature monastic figures as debtors. See T. MARKIEWICZ, ‘The church, clerics, monks and credit in the papyri’, [in:] A. BOUD’HORS, J. CLACKSON, C. LOUIS, & P. SIJPESTEIJN (eds.), *Monastic Estates in Late Antique and Early Islamic Egypt. Ostraca, Papyri, and Essays in Memory of Sarah Clackson* [= *American Studies in Papyrology* 46], Cincinnati 2008, pp. 178–204, at 199–201; DELATTRE in *P. Brux. Bawit*, pp. 257–259; WEGNER, ‘The monastery of Apa Apollo’ (cit. n. 1), pp. 232–234.

collection documents (curiously, only one of monastic tenants is directly attested in papyrological record²⁹). The practice of employing tenants may have been implemented due to the insufficient number of able-bodied monks to the acreage of monastic land³⁰ as well as the impracticality of deploying monastic workforce in remoter locations. However, as we have seen, the pool of workforce on monastery's lands also included members of the community. Moreover, given the numerous attestations of craftsmen, artisanal production must have taken place on the *kom* of Bawit on a significant scale. Within the community, value could be earned through manufacturing products on the spot rather than purchasing them on the market, and the same was valid for services.³¹ Two inscriptions on the walls of a reception room in the monastery, the so-called hall 6, indicate that the space was plastered and decorated with paintings by members of the community.³² Thanks to such an arrangement, the means which would have otherwise been spent on external specialists could remain with the community and be allocated elsewhere or saved. The ostraca from Bawit also record monastic labour being pooled for transport activities.³³

²⁹ P. Pierpont Morgan Libr. inv. M 662 B (6a) verso; for the edition, see A. DELATTRE, P. PILETTE, & N. VANTHIEGHEM, 'Papyrus coptes de la Pierpont Morgan Library I. Cinq documents du monastère de Baouît', *Journal of Coptic Studies* 17 (2015), pp. 33–53.

³⁰ DELATTRE in *P. Brux. Bawit*, p. 55, speculates that monks in Bawit could have numbered as many as 1,000 and perhaps more in the period when the monastery flourished. Estimates based on the analysis of the capacity of the built spaces on the *kom* should be treated as indicating the upper limit for the number of monks, since all buildings are unlikely to have been inhabited simultaneously. We have no way of calculating the total acreage of land owned by the Bawit monastery. An account of *embole* in wheat and barley due from the *ousia* of Koussai which is connected with the monastery (*P. Brux. Bawit* 31) suggests that the *ousia* in question measured c. 721 arourae (A. Delattre's communication 'Agricultural management and food production at the monastery of Bawit' at the symposium *Monastic Economies in Egypt and Palestine, 5th–6th Centuries CE* at the Oxford University, 16 March 2016).

³¹ Cf. HARPER, *Oikonomia* (cit. n. 19), p. 133, on slave-based household economy of the Roman world.

³² MASPERO, *Fouilles* (cit. n. 3), pp. 63 and 64, nos. 58 (painter Joannes) and 60 (Helias the painter and Papnoute who plastered and painted the room).

³³ Monks as camel-drivers are mentioned in *O. Bawit* 10, 24, 46, 50, 54, 63, 68; *O. Bawit Frib.* 11, 12; *O. Bawit IFAO* 4, 6, 14, 21; *SB Kopt.* I 228, II 1028.

3.2. *Distribution and consumption*

Monks 'assigned to the fields of Kame' and the harvesters of the 'western workplace' are known to us from superiors' orders for the issue of bread and fish sauce. They received these foodstuffs from monastic storehouses and thus participated in a system of redistribution that must have covered a part of the community; just how large a part it was, we have no way of knowing. The disbursements themselves may be interpreted in two ways: either as an extra remuneration for work done for the monastery, or as a part of a regular distribution system which merited registration on account of it taking place outside the kitchen and refectory. The documentary material of Bawit also mentions an infirmary,³⁴ which, according to monastic tradition well-known from literary sources, was (alongside the refectory) one of the focal points of the monastic redistributive system.

The main problem with uncovering the distribution patterns within the monastery of Bawit results from the complex organisational scheme of the monastery. As noted above, the monks of Bawit could possess cash, and the credit-related contracts in which they feature as creditors imply that as a result of moneylending, they also could come into possession of goods whose ultimate destination is, unfortunately, unknown. The contracts which take the form of sales on advance payments stipulate the repayment of the loans in wine, must, wheat, or oil.³⁵ While these goods could have been incorporated into the common stocks of the monastery, it is equally possible that they were consumed by the monks who acquired them (and, possibly, their immediate surrounding). At least in theory, such an arrangement could place financially independent monks outside or next to the redistributive system of the monastery, relieving the pressure on the overall monastic infrastructure and allowing to obtain surpluses which could be redistributed elsewhere or sold on the market.

The excavations in Bawit have uncovered domestic units consisting of rooms surrounding courtyards, which were likely inhabited by groups of

³⁴ ΠΜΑ ΝΝΕΤΩΩΝΕ: *P. Brux. Bawit* 1.

³⁵ *P. Amst.* I 47 and 48; *P. Athen. Xyla* 6; *SB XVI* 12267, XXII 15595, 15596; *P. Coptic Museum inv.* 3512; *P. Mon. Apollo* 34, 36; *P. Bawit Louvre* 16, 18.

monks. In two of such units, buildings 1 and 2, which both have been dated to the seventh century, archaeologists discovered kitchens with fireplaces and ovens;³⁶ the existence of further similar installations is suggested by anomalies registered during a magnetic prospection of the *kom*.³⁷ Their presence indicates that the inhabitants of these units enjoyed a degree of liberty in meal preparation; it is in such kitchens that the products acquired through moneylending and obtained from independent economic activity of property-possessing monks could be processed. The analysis of archaeological material leads to the conclusion that the large ‘household’ that was the monastery of Apa Apollon encompassed numerous smaller households with their own circuits of distribution and supply.

Given what we know about monastic tradition and ethos, the separate arrangements for distribution and consumption of goods could have coexisted with commensal practices involving members of several micro-households. Eating common meals was one of the identity-building elements in monasteries, and we would expect the monks belonging to one community under uniform leadership to gather at least on great religious feasts and the days of commemoration of saintly figures venerated in the monastery. Such communal meals could have taken place in large rooms fulfilling the function of refectories, such as the so-called room 19 discovered by Jean Clédât, which measured 23 by 5 metres: originally a free-standing building which became surrounded by subsidiary rooms in later phases of its existence.³⁸ Another space possibly designated for commensal

³⁶ For building 1, see L. PANTALACCI & S. DENOIX (eds.), ‘Travaux de l’Institut français d’archéologie orientale 2007–2008’, *Bulletin de l’Institut français d’archéologie orientale* 108 (2008), pp. 369–521, at 404; for building 2, see EAEDM (eds.), ‘Travaux de l’Institut français d’archéologie orientale 2008–2009’, *Bulletin de l’Institut français d’archéologie orientale* 109 (2009), pp. 521–698, at 563.

³⁷ T. HERBICH & D. BÉNAZETH, ‘Le kôm de Baouît. Etapes d’une cartographie’, *Bulletin de l’Institut français d’archéologie orientale* 108 (2008), pp. 165–204, at 186.

³⁸ CLÉDAT, *Le monastère et la nécropole* (cit. n. 2), p. 103. For a description of the room, see J. DORESSE, *Les anciens monastères coptes de Moyenne Égypte (du Gebel-el-Teir à Kom Ishgaou) d’après l’archéologie et l’habitiographie* [= *Neges ebrix. Bulletin de l’Institut d’archéologie yverdonnaise* 4], Yverdon-les-Bains 2000, pp. 316–317.

practices was hall 6 (c. 29 by 7 metres): a finely decorated room which was likely open also to visitors to the monastery.³⁹ Festal meals could be one of the occasions on which the leadership of the monastery would tap into the communal stockpiles of wine, grain, and fish sauce which streamed into the monastery from the countryside as testified by numerous transport documents from Bawit.⁴⁰

3.3. *Transmission and reproduction*

In a minimalistic approach, the functions performed by a household could be reduced to reproduction and subsistence.⁴¹ The former was related to life-cycles of the household and depended on biological fertility; the latter encompassed biological survival as well as protection of means through which the survival was achieved, and passing them down to the next generation.

At first glance, nothing is more remote from monastic ideals than concerns about reproduction and survival, as the monastic life was conceived of as a subversion of the models of lay family and household. In reality, the monastic movement more often engaged in creative dialogue with societal patterns than rejected them altogether. Despite the elaborate schemes of ‘world substitution’ (documented for certain coenobitic communities⁴² but not necessarily implemented universally in all strands of Egyptian monasticism), the monks found ways of integrating worldly concerns – including the care for material security – into their mental framework.⁴³

Monasteries not only wanted to survive, but also to grow and to last. When Athanasius of Alexandria formulated his famous phrase about the

³⁹ MASPERO, *Fouilles* (cit. n. 2), pp. 20–23.

⁴⁰ For the transport documents from Bawit, see *O. Bawit*, *O. Bawit IFAO*, *O. Bawit Frib.*

⁴¹ HARPER, ‘*Oikonomia*’ (cit. n. 19) p. 113.

⁴² See, e.g., B. LAYTON, ‘Rules, patterns, and the exercise of power in Shenoute’s monastery: The problem of world replacement and identity maintenance’, *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 15/1 (2007), pp. 45–73.

⁴³ For more on this subject, see WEGNER, *Monastic Communities* (cit. n. 3), chapter 4.

Egyptian desert becoming a city inhabited by throngs of people moved to choose monastic life by the example of the great Antony (*VA* 14), he was speaking of a desirable phenomenon. It was in everyone's best interest that more and more men and women choose to devote themselves to incessant prayer and praise of God. While Athanasius' text referred to monks living in solitude, growth was also beneficial to communities of monks living together. The history of the Pachomian *koinonia* is punctuated by new monasteries being established or joining the congregation *ad maiorem Dei gloriam*.⁴⁴ By co-opting ever new members from younger generations, the monastic way of life could be reproduced and the movement perpetuated.

The concerns of the transmission of subsistence means and the patterns of reproduction are, for the most part, very difficult to trace in the Bawit material. Among the documents from the monastery of Apa Apollo there is nothing comparable to the testaments of superiors of the monasteries of Phoibammon and Epiphanius in Thebes, which are texts devised to enable the proper transmission of monastic patrimony and of the basic rules of handling it.⁴⁵ We know that men in superior positions in Bawit purchased land, possibly with the intention of joining it to the monastic estate;⁴⁶ the documentation also points to an active pursuit of land transactions involving local village communities that were effectuated by central

⁴⁴ See the *Lives* of Pachomius: Bo 49 = G1 54a; Bo 50 = G1 54b; Bo 51 = G1 54c; Bo 52; Bo 54 = G1 81a; Bo 56 = G1 80; Bo 57 = G1 83a; Bo 58 = G1 83b. See A. VEILLEUX, *Pachomian Koinonia: The Life of Saint Pachomius and His Disciples*, vol. 1 [= *Cistercian Studies Series* 45], Kalamazoo 1980.

⁴⁵ For the St Phoibammon testaments, see E. GAREL, *Héritage et transmission dans le monachisme égyptien. Les testaments des supérieurs du topos de Saint-Phoibammôn à Thèbes* [= *Bibliothèque d'études coptes* 27], Cairo 2020; the only testament from the monastery of Epiphanius is P. KRU 76. See also M. C. GIORDA, 'Writing monastic testaments: A communication from generation to generation', [in:] M. CHOAT & M. C. GIORDA (eds.), *Writing and Communication in Early Egyptian Monasticism* [= *Texts and Studies in Eastern Christianity* 9], Leiden – Boston 2017, pp. 129–150; E. R. O'CONNELL, 'Transforming monumental landscapes in late antique Egypt: Monastic dwellings in legal documents from Western Thebes', *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 15/2 (2007), pp. 239–273.

⁴⁶ P. Mon. Apollo 24.

monastic administration.⁴⁷ While nothing can be said about the way in which transmission of leadership and property was handled in Bawit, it is at least implied that superiors took opportunities to enlarge monastic patrimony and thus expand the subsistence base of the community in their care.

The process of acculturation to monastic life is as obscure in Bawit as elsewhere in Egypt. The inscriptions on the walls of the monastery show that monks arrived to Bawit from different rural locations, but we can gauge neither the geographic catchment area of the monastery, nor the demographic and social profile of the newcomers. Documents and inscriptions from the monastery of Apa Apollo feature numerous individuals introduced in Coptic as *koui* (κοῦι), or ‘small’ – an adjective which can refer either to the young age or to inexperience in monastic life.⁴⁸ In some inscriptions, the individuals labelled as *koui* appear alongside others who do not bear this epithet, suggesting their participation in smaller sub-groups in the monastery. Elsewhere, inscriptions mention ‘the father of the small ones’ (πῶτ νεκοῦι), who could be a head of an intentionally created grouping of young and inexperienced members of the community collectively acculturated to monastic life.⁴⁹ They could undergo this process in dedicated spaces within the monastery, like the ‘cell of the little ones’ (τῆρ νεκοῦι) mentioned with its Greek equivalent τῶν μικρῶν παιδιῶν in a bilingual document from Bawit.⁵⁰ In this case, it is possible

⁴⁷ *P. Mon. Apollo* 26.

⁴⁸ *P. Bawit Clackson* 6, 10, 11; *P. Bawit Louvre* 56 (?). Inscriptions: MASPERO, *Fouilles* (cit. n. 2), nos. 8, 89, 20, 22, 35, 36, 76, 94, 114, 198, 200, 202, 249, 267, 308, 344, 346, 350, 352, 376, 415, 416, 429, 461, 499, 500, 505, 507, 508, 510, 520, 530, 537; CLÉDAT, *Le monastère et la nécropole* (cit. n. 2), p. 42, no. vi; p. 95, no. vi; p. 96, no. xi; p. 97, nos. xii, xiii, xvi; p. 98, no. xx; p. 107, no. vi; p. 108, nos. viii, xii; p. 109, no. xv; p. 110, no. xxviii; p. 112 no. xxxvi; p. 113, nos. xlv, xlv, xlix; p. 114, nos. lvii, lxiii; p. 115, no. lxxviii; p. 166, no. lxxviii; p. 123, no. ii; p. 125, nos. ii, v; p. 126, nos. vii, viii; p. 127, nos. xi, xii; p. 130, no. ix; p. 138, nos. ii, iii; pp. 150–151, no. i; p. 151, no. ii; J. CLÉDAT, *Le monastère et la nécropole de Baouît* [= *Mélanges de l’Institut de l’archéologie orientale* 39], Cairo 1916, pp. 8–9, no. i; p. 22, no. vi; p. 45, no. xi; p. 46, no. xii; p. 47, no. xix.

⁴⁹ MASPERO, *Fouilles* (cit. n. 2), nos. 249 and 376; Clédat, *Le monastère et la nécropole* (cit. n. 3), p. 113, no. xlv.

⁵⁰ *P. Lond. Copt.* I 1130.

to envisage these individuals as children, even though their presence in Egyptian monasteries is generally poorly documented.⁵¹

No rules prescribing proper monastic conduct have been preserved from Bawit, and we do not know what the new monks in the monastery would have to learn when becoming members of the community. The presence of ‘teachers’ (*kathegetai*) among the monks of Apa Apollo indicates that a system of internal monastic education was in place at Bawit.⁵² Regardless of whether the efforts of the *kathegetai* were directed toward new monks or the entirety of the monastic population, we can imagine them as persons responsible for reproduction and perpetuation of monastic teachings and, through it, for sustaining the monastery itself. Similar function is thought to have been fulfilled by iconographic programmes of decoration in the monastery. The painted figures of Apostles and monks on the walls of rooms and halls served as exemplars and ‘memory prompts’ referencing the right way of life and worship that were to be replicated by community which gathered inside the decorated spaces.⁵³

3.4. Coresidence

In a bipolar model of monastic residence, with the solitary anchorite on the one extreme and the coenobite on the other, the monastery of Apa Apollo is situated somewhere in the middle. While exemplifying the ‘middle way’ of Egyptian monasticism, the monastery of Apa Apollo makes

⁵¹ For children in Egyptian monasteries, see C. SCHROEDER, *Children and Family in Late Antique Egyptian Monasticism*, Cambridge 2020. The author artificially inflates the number and significance of children in monastic communities of Egypt and treats polysemic designations as unequivocal references to child novices or children in the direct care of monks.

⁵² P. CLACKSON 36; CLÉDAT, *Le monastère et la nécropole* (cit. n. 3), p. 108, no. viii; IDEM, *Le monastère et la nécropole* (cit. n. 49), p. 2; MASPERO, *Fouilles* (cit. n. 3), nos. 390, 434.

⁵³ See T. K. THOMAS, ‘The honorific mantle as furnishing for the household memory theater in late antiquity: A case study from the monastery of Apa Apollo at Bawit’, [in:] G. BÜHL & E. DOSPËL WILLIAMS (eds.), *Catalogue of the Textiles in the Dumbarton Oaks Byzantine Collection*, Washington DC 2019, available online at <<https://www.doaks.org/resources/textiles/essays/thomas>> (accessed 11 October 2021).

clear the virtual uselessness of the rigid categorisation of types of monasticism perpetuated by John Cassian. The *kom* in Bawit was a distinct element of the landscape, and a wall which surrounded at least a significant part of the monastic settlement additionally helped to distinguish between the monastic and non-monastic territory. Coresidence in broad terms was realised within this distinct space: all monks living there could call themselves its inhabitants. Elements such as rooms for common meals and churches could be the focal points of communal life (it must be noted, however, that none of the rooms that can be interpreted as refectories could hold the entire community). The space on the *kom*, however, was internally divided into ensembles of rooms surrounding courtyards. As mentioned before, food could be prepared and served independently in these ensembles which were equipped with kitchens, and the painted spaces inside the clusters of rooms could be the foci of prayer for their inhabitants as part of religious practice independent from communal celebrations in the churches on the *kom* (of which there were three).⁵⁴

We do not know (and have no way of knowing without excavating the vast *kom*) how many such ‘houses’ functioned simultaneously, but what we do know is that this complex organisation translated into a particular mode of expressing identity by the monks. Inscriptions and, to a lesser extent, documents, mention individuals labelled as ‘father of the cell’ and ‘man of the cell’ or ‘the one of the cell’.⁵⁵ The ‘cells’ could be none other than the clusters of habitations: separate ‘micro-households’ uniting smaller numbers of monks who ate together and possibly shared resources. Monks of the Bawit monastery identified themselves with these ‘cells’, and this was the first level of their identification. The second level, attested in legal documents and *aparche* arrangements, was constituted by the link between individuals and the monastery as a whole: in

⁵⁴ For the importance of visual cues in monastic practice, see E. S. BOLMAN, ‘Depicting the Kingdom of Heaven. Paintings and monastic practice in early Byzantine Egypt’, [in:] R. S. BAGNALL (ed.), *Egypt in the Byzantine World, 300–700*, Cambridge 2007, pp. 408–433.

⁵⁵ MASPERO, *Fouilles* (cit. n. 2), nos. 59, 60, 80, 388, 444, 477; CLÉDAT, *Le monastère et la nécropole* (cit. n. 3), p. 105; p. 108, no. vii; pp. 126–127, no. x; CLÉDAT, *Le monastère et la nécropole* (cit. n. 49), pp. 8–9, no. i.

the papyri, ‘monk of the monastery of Apa Apollo’ is the standard designation of a community member.⁵⁶ Importantly, this was the only designation displayed to the world outside: none of the many loan contracts between Bawit monks and laypeople makes any reference to a ‘cell’ or any other kind of monastic subdivision while introducing the monastic party.

Such double identification, while it may seem counter-intuitive at first glance, can be observed elsewhere in Egyptian monasticism. Outside Bawit, and quite far from it, in the monastery of Naqlun in the Fayum, loan contracts introduce two monastic creditors as ‘Apa Neilos, monk and *proestos* of Pyrgos and St Phoibammon of the Mountain of the Cells’ (*Oros Kellon*) and ‘Abba Menas, monk of the monastery of *Kothbau* of the Mountain of the Cells’.⁵⁷ The situation of Naqlun was different than that of Bawit, as the former monastery was a *laura* uniting rock-hewn hermitages in a low *gebel*, and a settlement on a plateau below it.⁵⁸ In such an establishment labels of individual hermitages were more important than in a more consolidated organisation such as the one at Bawit, hence their mentions in loan contracts as elements of identification. However, the position of the Naqlun monastery as a discrete entity and point of reference for lay parties is clear from a letter – almost contemporary to or slightly later than the contracts – in which four clerics are addressed as the representatives of *hagion Neklonion* (most likely a distortion of *Oros Kellon* in the Egyptian language).⁵⁹ As *laurae* and mixed-type monastic communities were relatively frequent among Egyptian monasteries, it must have been not uncommon for monks to feel connected to large, all-encompassing structures and smaller, more intimate units in which they lived their everyday lives.

⁵⁶ This nuance of self-identification has been observed by BROOKS HEDSTROM, *Monastic Landscapes* (cit. n. 6), p. 210.

⁵⁷ *P. Naqlun* II 21–22 (Neilos) and 23 (Menas).

⁵⁸ For the organisation of the Naqlun monastery, see T. DERDA & J. WEGNER, ‘Πατέρες τοῦ ἁγίου Νεκλονίου. Functionaries of the Naqlun monastery in the first two centuries of its existence’, [in:] A. ŁAJTAR, A. OBLUSKI, & I. ZYCH (eds.), *Aegyptus et Nubia Christiana. The Włodzimierz Godlewski Jubilee Volume on the Occasion of His 70th Birthday*, Warsaw 2016, pp. 73–97.

⁵⁹ *P. Naqlun* 39 (= *P. Gascou* 29).

4. MONASTERY AS A HOUSEHOLD: TOWARD A CONCLUSION

In the light of the observations noted above, was the monastery of Apa Apollo in Bawit indeed a special type of household? Or was it rather composed of ‘hundreds of groups, or households, of men and some women’,⁶⁰ while on the higher level of organisation it was gradually losing its household-like features? All of the functions and features of a household listed in the definitions cited in the beginning of the present article are to a lesser or greater extent observable in the Bawit material. The problem with analysing this material and the relations recorded therein consists in our inability to determine with precision, in each and every case, which patterns of ‘household-like’ behaviour were enacted on the level of the whole community, and which occurred only in the smaller units. However, the most likely answer is that all the discussed features were present within the ‘micro-households’ and in the monastery as a whole, but were handled differently due to the difference of scale. In particular, the pooling of labour and resources of individual monks, visible in agriculture and fiscality, was subject to mechanisms of control on the community level and was characterised by a high level of documentarisation of the related procedures. The ‘estate-like’ formal administrative process recorded in the Bawit documentation does not deny ‘household-like behaviour’ in the sphere of production and distribution, but rather represents a necessary evil in a ‘super-household’ counting hundreds of members, in which certain concerns, common to all household units, such as maintaining and exploiting the sustenance base or securing fiscal solvency, were greatly intensified.

When we look at the sharing of financial means through participation in fiscal securities, and at the exploitation of internal monastic labour in the context of the household model, certain idiosyncrasies of the monastery of Apa Apollos – such as the *aparche* collection system or leasing communal land to monks in exchange for fiscal payments⁶¹ – become

⁶⁰ THOMAS, ‘The honorific mantle’ (cit. n. 53).

⁶¹ *P. Mon. Apollo* 26; see T. S. RICHTER, ‘The cultivation of monastic estates in late antique and early Islamic Egypt: Some evidence from Coptic land leases and related documents’, [in:] BOUD’HORS *et alii* (eds.), *Monastic Estates* (cit. n. 28), pp. 205–215.

more understandable as expressions of care and concerted efforts undertaken for the well-being of the whole community. The 'model' monasteries of late antique Egypt – mainly the Pachomian and Shenoutean federations which are known from extensive corpora of literary texts, and which influenced to the greatest extent the way in which communal monasticism in Egypt is understood – look more uniform and cohesive than Bawit, their production and distribution systems are more legible, and the outlines of their 'substitute families' of monks are drawn with clearer and bolder strokes. On the other hand, the double identity of the Bawit monks – citizens both of the monastery and of particular cells within it – and their status, further complicated by the economic links to the world which they maintained through the possession of material assets, seem hardly conducive to the creation of a system of shared participation. However, as far as the documents can show us, it seems that such a system was, in fact, in place at Bawit, and that numerous monks pooled their resources and labour to ensure the survival of the community. The fragmentation of distribution circuits did not translate into an inability to maintain a common circuit of production of value. Within this system, the various types of contributions of individual monks and their groups to the subsistence of the community can be fully acknowledged and validated in the analysis, as the people, their means, and their labour are become organically connected to the agricultural and fiscal reality in which they operated. The fact that the monastery was not fully autarchic in terms of labour does not erase this observation and invalidate the application of the household model; while households usually attempt to achieve self-sufficiency, they are also capable of reaching out to external sources of labour if need arises.

Continuity and survival were important in the monastic life at Bawit not only in its economic aspect. Perpetuation of the patterns of piety and thought was achieved through teaching and visual cues contained in painted depictions, while the idea of future generations of monks repeating familiar practices in the same material setting is inherent in the 'epigraphic habit' consisting in the commemoration of names in wall graffiti and inscriptions. The very fact of putting down in writing the names of monks of all ranks – from superiors through 'fathers of the cell' down to

‘brothers’ with no particular labels – points to an inherent belief that there would be someone to read the inscriptions and pray for those recorded in them. The care for a continued material and spiritual sustenance achieved through activities shared by inhabitants of the Bawit *kom* – the monastic home *sensu largo* – underscore the characteristics which the monastery shared with ordinary rural households of Egypt. These features indicate that the difference between the former and the latter lies mainly in scale rather than in goals and ways of achieving them. While ‘reading’ the monastery as a household we are capable of seeing it clearer as a *locus* of labour, shared responsibility, and reproduced identity which, in turn, allows us to avoid simplistic breaking down of the components of monastic life into materiality and spirituality.

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Abstract: This article discusses the rhetorical usage of the verb *αἰκίζεσθαι* ('abuse', 'thrash', 'brutalize') and its derivatives in petitions from Roman Egypt. Curiously, this description of violence only appears in petitions from the Roman period. Using theories of conflict resolution and social control, it is argued that the writers of these petitions, the majority of whom lived in villages in the Arsinoite nome, used the concept of *aikia* in an attempt to overcome the inefficiency of the Roman Egyptian legal system by augmenting the severity of the crimes they suffered. The usage of the verb *αἰκίζεσθαι* (often paired with the noun *πληγαῖς*) emphasized the brutality and socially transgressive nature of the attack and presented it as something that needed to be addressed by the authorities immediately, as it affected the entire social order. Over time the phrase *πληγαῖς αἰκίζεσθαι* became formulaic in its expression, suggesting that it was not just contained to a handful of petitions. Rather it was a linguistic phenomenon in itself that reveals the effects of the social and legal environment of Roman Egypt on the language of petitions.

Keywords: Roman Egypt, violence, *aikia*, petitions, social control, rhetoric, Greek law, Roman law.

Grażyna BĄKOWSKA & Adam ŁAJTAR

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Keywords: Marina el-Alamein, Roman jewelry, Sarapis, religious acclamations, 'megatheism', Greek inscriptions.

Lucia C. COLELLA

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Keywords: Roman will, M. Sempronius Priscus, P. Berol. inv. 7124, ChLA X 412, CPL 220.

Federica NICOLARDI

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in a fragment of the Life of Philonides (P. Herc. 1044)

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parallelism allows, in turn, to understand better the text of the papyrus and to supplement a technical term referring to relatives' consent to the manumission of slaves.

Keywords: Philonides of Laodikeia on the Sea, Herculaneum papyri, Greek manumission, ἀπελευθερώω, εὐδοκεῖν.

Joanna WEGNER

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Keywords: Bawit, Egyptian monasticism, monastic economy, household.

Ewa WIPSZYCKA

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Keywords: Athanasius, bishops of Philae, ceremonies of episcopal ordinations, end of paganism, Nubians.

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How to become a monastic superior? Legal and mundane sine qua nonis 119

Abstract: The literary portrayal of the charismatic founders of monastic communities, and of their successors, abounds in descriptions of ascetic

practices and devotion. However, the *begoumenoi* also needed to be individuals of the right standing and competence, as it was only such people who could properly represent the communities in relations with both lay and ecclesiastical authorities, secure the obedience of all the brethren, as well as efficiently manage the community and its assets. The nature and the exact procedure of superior's appointment became increasingly relevant and began to interest both the church and the secular authorities once the monastic movement reached such a magnitude that it could no longer be left without proper institutional surveillance. In parallel, there was a growing awareness among monks themselves of the need to standardise the existing practices and experience.

In this article I focus on the legal conditions delimiting the transfer of headship over monastic communities and their reflection in mundane reality. My aim is to see how documents of legal practice relate to the imperial legislation dealing with the appointment of the people in charge of the monasteries. The analysis of the superior selection process will allow for commenting on both the legal framework within which the monastic communities functioned, and the much broader issue of imperial policy towards the emerging holy houses. It should also enable some conclusions on the legal status of monastic communities and how it may have influenced the realities of appointing their administrative and spiritual heads.

Keywords: monks, monasteries, Late Antiquity, papyri, legal practice, *proestos*, abbot, *begoumenos*, monastic legal capacity, Justinian, imperial legislation.

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Olim tradita fuerunt?

On the obsolescence of the sollemnia verba in Inst. 3.15pr.

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Abstract: According to the classical dogma, the act of *stipulatio* was performed through the exchange of *sollemnia verba*, which were, according to my working hypothesis, verbs introducing the duty to perform a future act, a concept lucidly displayed by Pomponian (*Dig.* 45.1.5.1), hence the 'Pomponian tenet'. Documents preserved on papyrus, composed by 'new-Romans' after the *Constitutio Antoniniana*, exhibit a completely different concept: a stipulation-clause confirming a past, contractually significant activity. It is asked (but not conclusively answered) to what extent this alternative formulation has paved the way to the abandonment of the 'Pomponian tenet' by the emperor Leo in 472 CE (*CJ* 8.37.10). As we draw from Justinian's interpretation of *CJ* 8.37.10 in *Inst.* 3.15.1, the *sollemnia verba*, the use of which became outdated after Leo, was not the language of the stipulation-clause as incorporated in the written documentation of the contract, but that of the act of *stipulatio*, which, as before, was meant in the keep verbal.

Keywords: Greco-Roman Egypt, *homologia*, Justinian, Leo, stipulation.