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*Special Issue*

*The Life of Longinus*

*Translated from Coptic by Tim Vivian*



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## ***Acknowledgement***

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# ***HUMILITY AND RESISTANCE IN LATE ANTIQUE EGYPT:***

## ***THE LIFE OF LONGINUS***

*Translated, with an Introduction,  
by Tim Vivian\**

### ***INTRODUCTION***

#### ***I. A Theology and Spirituality of Humility***

The *Life of Longinus*, in the judgement of its modern editor, may have only one historical event in it.<sup>1</sup> Thus the *Life*, by modern standards, is hagiography, which too often is treated by historians as the illegitimate offspring of history, deserving little attention and no inheritance. Even when hagiography is begrudged insight into the minds and feelings of its ancient audience (one of the historian's chief duties), it is still too often accorded third-cousin status: "this is what they thought, but we will tell you what really happened." But what ancient Christians thought, felt, and believed matters, both within history's large, but finite, circumference, and even more so within the illimitable community of saints. Within both compasses past is prologue, but within the communion of saints past is also eternal present, as the saints in heaven and the saints on earth combine in one chorus of unceasing praise. This is a spiritual reality understood very well by the author of the *Life* (pars. 34-36).

The *Life of Longinus*, therefore, contains several realities, and thus possesses diverse gifts. It may be read profitably as history for the insights it offers into a particular time and place and situation, in this case monastic Egypt in the fifth and sixth centuries, shortly after the Council of Chalcedon (451). It may be read as historical theology for what it tells us about the beliefs of Egyptian monks vis-à-vis the Tome of Leo and its christological definitions. It may also be read spiritually. I

\* I wish to thank Maged Mikhail for his bibliographical assistance. Biblical quotations are translated from the Revised Standard Version, adapted to fit the Coptic text.

<sup>1</sup> The anti-Chalcedonian story in pars. 29-37; see Tito Orlandi, ed., *Vite dei Monaci Phif e Longino* (Milan: Cisalpino-Goliardica, 1975), 44.

believe the last is the way its original author intended it to be heard, as a sustained parable on humility: humility that glorifies God, not itself; humility so profound that it is capable, when God works through “the truly humble,” of effecting miraculous signs and wonders. Apa Longinus, the hero of the *Life*, is firmly grounded in the monastic milieu of late antique Egypt; the scene that has him (incognito, like a Shakespearian hero) suffering reproof, patiently sitting outside the gate of the monastery and doing menial chores, is wonderfully vivid (pars. 14-16). Yet for the author of the *Life*, what truly matters here is not the hero *as* hero, like some monastic John Wayne, but the virtues of patience and humility that he embodies, indeed incarnates. Longinus is like the saints painted on the walls in Coptic monastic churches who are seemingly indistinguishable from one another: we are not being invited to look at them as individuals but as representatives of holiness. For the author of the *Life of Longinus*, Apa Longinus represents what it means to be holy.

Holiness, for the author of the *Life*, is found not in miracle but in humility: as Apa Longinus says in one apophthegm (not in the *Life*), “Humility is stronger than any power or authority.”<sup>2</sup> He may, in fact, be writing both an encomium on humility and a cautionary tale about the dangers of miracles. Miracles cause glory to be misdirected: people see wonderworkers and give glory to them rather than to God. Such misplaced adulation, the *Life* cautions, is merely “the empty praises of men” (“vainglory,” par. 13). Apa Longinus twice flees its clutches. Vainglory, therefore, is a form of idolatry, honors given to the creature rather than to the Creator. In a parallel situation, probably added later (par. 31), Apa Longinus proclaims to the emperor’s servants that he and his monks will honor the Almighty (*pantôkratôr*) rather than the Almighty’s image, the emperor, the supreme ruler (*autokratôr*). Another caution sounded by the author of the *Life* is that humility, one of the chief monastic virtues, may be one of the shortest and surest paths to vainglory; crowds come and heap honors and glory on Apa Lucius and Apa Longinus (par. 12), and who would not be tempted to bask, at least for a moment, in that false sunlight?

The struggle between humility and vainglory takes place both on a large theological field and within each person, spiritually. Theologically, vainglory is idolatry; spiritually, it is “the rule of all the passions”: it obscenely begets the love of money, anger, vanity, and envy, “the evil wild beast” (par. 38). For the author of the *Life*, the antidote to the empty praise of men is “great and godly silence” (par. 13). The most valued adjectives in the *Life of Longinus* are “peace” and “quiet” (pars. 8, 14, 19), while idolatrous vainglory comes with the clamor of crowds; mob rule, even in a monastery (par. 18), is bad, both theologically and spiritually. The *Life* quietly assumes the symbiotic monastic practices of work and prayer (pars. 20-21),

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<sup>2</sup> Apophthegmata Systematica XV.114; Jean-Claude Guy, *Recherches sur la tradition grecque des Apophthegmata Patrum* (Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1962), 241. Whoever the author of the *Life* was, he correctly understood the monastic tradition linking Longinus with humility; see also Apophthegmata Systematica XV.113 (Guy, 241).

which come from and create silence. But silence is not solipsism. After fleeing two monasteries, Apa Longinus finally arrives at his spiritual home, a small cell near the sea—where he immediately begins to help others (par. 19):

He was at peace in the cell, making rope, and he labored with his handiwork so he could find a way to give to those in need by means of his handiwork, making himself in this regard like the holy apostle Paul, who says, “My hands served my own needs and the needs of my companions,” and “It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:34-35).

The peace Longinus finds is soon broken: shipowners come to him for the rope he makes so they can use it on their vessels as benediction and protection; three monks come to be his disciples; and, as before, the sick and diseased seek out the saint for healing. But a profound change has taken place: the spiritual peace that Apa Longinus has found not only cures physical ailments, it also seems to heal the great theological and spiritual defect of vainglory and idolatry. Now when people are healed, instead of mistakenly glorifying Longinus, as had occurred earlier (pars. 12, 18), they give glory to God (pars. 22-25). The words of God are true: God does glorify those who give glory to him and he does exalt the humble (par. 16; 1 Kings 2:30, Job 5:11). At Apa Longinus’ death, the poor, the young, the ill, the married, and the monastic lament his passing with tears; his only concern “for all of them, whether monk or lay person, was to bring them to salvation, presenting all of them as saints for the Lord Jesus Christ” (par. 39). Whatever our historical judgement concerning the “facts” of Apa Longinus’ life, it is clear that the author of that *Life* saw in the example of “this truly humble one” deep and abiding values for the salvation of the human person.

## II. *Fragments of a History*

Reading the *Life of Longinus* historically is like looking at the wall painting mentioned earlier, a badly damaged image from the eighth or ninth century found at a long-abandoned Coptic monastery. The painting has several figures, one or two of whom may be identified, but most of the inscriptions have been effaced, and the damage is so extensive that the action or scene being depicted cannot be determined with certainty.<sup>3</sup> There is no doubt that Longinus, like the painting, existed. The *Apophthegmata Patrum*, or *Sayings of the Fathers*, include eighteen sayings attributed to the saint, six of which appear in his *Vita* (pars. 22, 25a, 25b, 26, 27b, and 28).<sup>4</sup> It seems that the individual sayings attributed to Longinus circulated sep-

<sup>3</sup> For an example of such a painting, which conveys a sad sense of loss, see J.E. Quibell, *Excavations at Saqqara*, vol. 4, *The Monastery of Apa Jeremias* (Cairo: IFAO, 1912), Plate VII.

<sup>4</sup> The alphabetical apophthegms may be found in Longinus 1-5, of which 3 and 4 occur in the *Life*; for an English translation, see Benedicta Ward, trans., *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers* (rev. ed.; Kalamazoo: Cistercian, 1984), 122-23. According to Jean-Claude Guy, the systematic collection attributes seven apophthegms to Longinus; see Guy, *Recherches*, 241. Lucien Regnault lists five sayings in the alphabetical collection, ten in the anonymous series, and three in the systematic collection; see Lucien Regnault, *Les Sentences des pères du désert* (Sablé-sur-Sarthe: Solesmes, 1976), 327.

arately before being included in the *Life* and that the *Apophthegmata Patrum* and the *Life of Longinus* are independent of one another.<sup>5</sup>

The *Life* contains further connections with the *Apophthegmata*: in the latter, Lucius teaches the Euchites (ascetics who eschewed work for constant prayer) about the necessity of both work and prayer, and in one saying Apa Longinus asks Apa Lucius about three thoughts.<sup>6</sup> One apophthegm also connects Lucius with Apa Theodore of Enaton, who comes on stage in the *Life* when he visits Apa Longinus with regard to a wayward brother (27c).<sup>7</sup> This Theodore may have been a companion of Apa Or and a disciple of Amoun; he went to Enaton in 308 and was still alive in 364.<sup>8</sup> Thus the *Apophthegmata* clearly associate Longinus, Lucius, and Theodore, and connect the latter two with the monastery of Enaton (so-named because it lay at the ninth milestone west of Alexandria).<sup>9</sup> It is interesting to note that the superscription to the *Life* says that Longinus “was from the Laura of the Enaton of Alexandria” but that the *Apophthegmata* are silent on this matter. The *Life* clearly shows that Longinus left Enaton and lived in a cell by the sea (par. 19); therefore the silence of the *Apophthegmata* on his relationship with the laura may reflect the real historical situation. The desire of the monks in the *Life* to make Longinus *hégoumenos*, or superior, of Enaton (par. 29) at first appears to be pious fiction; however, it might also accurately portray the crisis brought about by the imposition of the Tome of Leo on the monks by the prefect of Alexandria and the monks’ turning to Longinus for a trusted leader. The *Life* says that after the Chalcedonian crisis, Longinus “spent another twenty years as head of the monastery of the laura” (par. 38). So he may, in fact, as the *Life* represents, have come to Enaton, stayed briefly, left, founded his own community, returned to Enaton during crisis, and stayed on as its superior. The silence of the *Apophthegmata* on his provenance, however, does not allow confirmation for his connection with Enaton.

Most of the *Life of Longinus*, as outlined in Part I above, consists of theological and spiritual reflection on the themes of humility and vainglory; in all probability this material makes up the earliest stratum of the work. At some point, a later editor added the anti-Chalcedonian section that so strongly shapes the end of the

<sup>5</sup> Orlandi, 44.

<sup>6</sup> Lucius 1 (Ward, 120-21) and Longinus 1 (Ward, 122).

<sup>7</sup> Theodore of Enaton 2 (Ward, 79).

<sup>8</sup> See H.G. Evelyn White, *The Monasteries of the Wadi ‘N Natrun*, vol. II, *The History of the Monasteries of Nitria and of Scetis* (1932; repr., New York: Arno, 1973), 50, 52. Ward, 79, makes the identification and supplies the dates, but I have not found confirmation for the latter. See Or 1 (Ward, 246) and 8 (Ward, 247).

<sup>9</sup> On this monastery, see Jean Gascoü, “Enaton, The,” *The Coptic Encyclopedia*, ed. Aziz S. Atiya (New York: Macmillan, 1990), 3.954-58.

*Life* (pars. 29-37).<sup>10</sup> Whatever its editorial history, this section provides a fascinating glimpse into events and, importantly, feelings that occurred in Egypt after 451 when the Council of Chalcedon accepted the Tome of Leo, with its definition of the two natures of Christ, and the subsequent decision by the emperor to impose that decision on the Christians of Egypt.<sup>11</sup> The reaction of Egyptian monks to these episcopal and imperial decisions makes up pars. 29-37 of the *Life of Longinus*, the lone section of the *Life* that its editor believes has historical basis.<sup>12</sup>

The events took place in 457.<sup>13</sup> Emperor Marcian died on January 26 of that year; in the eyes of those opposed to Chalcedon, he had forced “the bishops to affirm in writing that he who was crucified was not God,” thereby ushering in the time of Anti-Christ.<sup>14</sup> Dioscorus, anti-Chalcedonian patriarch of Alexandria, had died in 454, and Proterius, a Chalcedonian, had succeeded him. From this point on, ancient Church historians, not known for their disinterest and objectivity, disagree. A pro-Chalcedonian, Evagrius Scholasticus, reports that at Marcian’s death, the people of Alexandria, “an obscure and promiscuous rabble,” “renewed their feud against Proterius with still greater exasperation and excessive heat.”<sup>15</sup> Although Alexandria had a (Chalcedonian) bishop, another (anti-Chalcedonian) was now consecrated. Timothy Aelurus (“the Cat”), who had been a monk, then a priest under Dioscorus, was seized on March 16 by the people, clergy, and monks of

<sup>10</sup> This can be seen from the Ethiopic version, which includes only the equivalent of pars. 29-37; see Sylvain Grébaud, “La Prière de Langinos,” *Revue de l’orient chrétien* 15 (1910): 42-52. References here are to Grébaud’s French translation. See Orlandi, 45, for a discussion. As Orlandi points out, 42, what we have is the last stage of redaction, what he considers the union of many, originally independent, episodes. At some stage there was a “Life” (pars. 5-39), with its own title, to which was added a homiletical prologue (pars. 1-4). The original “Life” may itself be a composite of ascetic teaching on humility and vainglory combined with the anti-Chalcedonian material. The *Synaxarium Alexandrinum* (2 Amsir) summarizes the *Life*; see Iacobus Forget, trans., *Synaxarium Alexandrinum* (repr. Louvain: Imprimerie Orientaliste L. Durbecq, 1953 [1922]), 1.455-56.

<sup>11</sup> For a general discussion of the Council and its aftermath in Church History, see W.H.C. Frend, *The Rise of Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), chs. 21, 23, and 24.

<sup>12</sup> See n. 1 above.

<sup>13</sup> For the context, see Frend, *The Rise of the Monophysite Movement* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 143-83, and, for details on the story reported in the *Life*, 155. See also Orlandi, 44. On Alexandria and its propensity for turmoil, see Christopher Haas, *Alexandria in Late Antiquity: Topography and Social Conflict* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1997).

<sup>14</sup> John Rufus, *Plerophoriae* 7; F. Nau, ed., *Jean Rufus, Évêque de Maïouma, Plérophories, Patrologia Orientalis* 8.1 (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1912), 18-20. John goes on to say (10; Nau, 25) that “the day that the impious Marcian was proclaimed emperor and put on the crown, thick darkness suddenly covered the whole earth and sand came from on high; the darkness was like that which covered Egypt [see Ex 10:21-23].”

<sup>15</sup> Evagrius Scholasticus, *Ecclesiastical History* 2.8; *The Ecclesiastical History of Evagrius*, ed. J. Bidez and L. Parmentier (Amsterdam: Hakkert, 1964), 55. The wonderfully worded translation is from *A History of the Church by Evagrius* (London: Samuel Bagster, 1846), 69-70.

Alexandria; John Rufus, an anti-Chalcedonian historian, reports that “the blessed ascetic and great prophet Longinus, abbot of the monks,” was their “head and chief, waking and rousing them according to the will of God.” According to John, “multitudes of the holy monks gathered,” both those from Alexandria and those living in monasteries outside the city.<sup>16</sup> In the words of Zacharius of Mytilene, an anti-Chalcedonian chronicler, these monks and people set Timothy “on the throne of Mark.”<sup>17</sup> Evagrius, by contrast, says that the people of Alexandria took “advantage of the prolonged absence of Dionysius, commander of the legions, in Upper Egypt,” and elected Timothy bishop, “though Proterius was still bishop and discharged the functions of his office.”<sup>18</sup> Timothy, Evagrius charges, was “guilty of an adulterous outrage on the church” because she already had “her rightful spouse,” Proterius, “who was performing the divine offices in her, and canonically occupied his proper throne.”<sup>19</sup> Theodore Lector, another Chalcedonian historian, actually charges Timothy with killing Proterius.<sup>20</sup>

Not surprisingly, matters soon turned violent. According to Zacharius, Timothy organized opposition to the Council of Chalcedon. General Dionysius then imprisoned Timothy, and “many were killed.” Timothy was then removed from the city, “and there was a great tumult, and slaughters were matters of daily occurrence.” Here Longinus enters the story: after “confusion . . . had prevailed in the city for many days,” Dionysius “brought a certain monk Longinus, celebrated for chastity and virtue, and he entrusted Timothy to him; that he might restore the bishop to the city and to his church, upon the condition that the fighting should cease, and that there should be no more slaughter.” Timothy returned to his church and Proterius to his. When Easter came, “children without number were brought to Timothy to be baptized . . . but only five were brought to Proterius. And the people were so devotedly attached to Timothy that they drove Proterius out . . . and slaughter ensued.”<sup>21</sup> Evagrius, as might be expected, has a different version:

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<sup>16</sup> He specifically lists Enaton, Oktodekaton, and Eikoston, that is, monasteries that lay nine, eighteen, and twenty miles outside the city. John Rufus, *Peter the Iberian*, ed. R. Raabe, *Petrus der Iberer: Ein Charakterbild zur Kirchen- und Sittengeschichte des fünften Jahrhunderts* (Leipzig, 1895), 64. I wish to express my gratitude to Jennifer Hevelone-Harper for translating this section from Syriac.

<sup>17</sup> Zacharius of Mytilene, *Syriac Chronicle* 4.1; F.J. Hamilton and E.W. Brooks, trans., *The Syriac Chronicle Known as that of Zachariah of Mytilene* (London: Methuen, 1899; repr. New York: AMS, 1979), 64-66. Peter the Iberian and two other bishops laid hands on Timothy; see Frend, *Monophysite*, 155.

<sup>18</sup> Evagrius, ed. Bidez and Parmentier, 56; *A History*, 70.

<sup>19</sup> Evagrius, ed. Bidez and Parmentier, 58; *A History*, 73.

<sup>20</sup> Theodore Lector, *Ecclesiastical History* 1.8; *Patrologia Graeca* 86.1: 169B. John Rufus, an anti-Chalcedonian, has, as one would expect, a different view, charging that the Council of Chalcedon was “assembled and directed by the Devil, and is the precursor of the Antichrist.” John Rufus, *Plerophoriae* 26 (Nau, ed., 67).

<sup>21</sup> Zacharius, *Syriac Chronicle* 4.1 (cited above).

Dionysius “had occupied the city with the utmost dispatch, and was taking prompt measures to quench the towering conflagration of the sedition,” when “some of the Alexandrians, at the instigation” of Timothy, killed Proterius “by thrusting a sword through his bowels.”<sup>22</sup>

According to Zacharius, Longinus was something of a mediator, and Proterius, the Chalcedonian bishop, suffered nothing worse than exile. (Evagrius does not mention Longinus, although he had access to Zacharius’ account).<sup>23</sup> Longinus, however, may have played a more substantive role, one certainly accorded him by the *Life* and seconded by John Rufus. Poor Proterius, it seems, was lynched and burned in the Hippodrome on March 28, a fact recorded in gruesome detail by Evagrius.<sup>24</sup> According to the *Life of Longinus*, it was Acacius, the prefect of Egypt, who tried to force the monks of Enaton to subscribe to the *Tome of Leo* and it was Longinus who led the opposition to “that abominable ordinance” (pars. 29-30).<sup>25</sup> After the monks, led by Longinus, defeated the emperor’s soldiers without bloodshed (pars. 33-34), Longinus led monks and soldiers together to the tombs where the holy fathers of Enaton lay buried and asked them (par. 36),

“My holy fathers, is it truly the wish of God that we accept the Tome of Leo and subscribe to it?” Immediately a voice arose from the tombs where the bodies of the saints lay, three times saying “Anathema to ungodly Leo’s Tome! Do not speak his name nor be in communion with anyone who accepts that ordinance! Anathema to those who subscribe to the Tome of Leo! Anathema to Leo’s blasphemous act, for it is full of blasphemy against the divinity of Christ because it divides Christ into two natures instead of maintaining the unity of Christ!”

A number of soldiers immediately laid down their weapons and became monks; the other soldiers returned to Alexandria, “proclaiming the wonders they had seen.” The citizens of the city went to the praetorium, seized Acacius, “and burned him in the middle of the city.” When Proterius (unnamed), “the bishop of that false teaching, saw the uproar taking place, he took off his ecclesiastical garments and put on layman’s clothing and left the city. He fled on account of the fear that had seized him and he has not been found to this day” (par. 37).

The accounts agree that someone, either the prefect Acacius or the patriarch

<sup>22</sup> Evagrius, ed. Bidez and Parmentier, 56; *A History*, 71

<sup>23</sup> It must be said that Evagrius is surprisingly fair here, citing Zacharius as corroboration “that the greater part of the circumstances thus detailed actually occurred,” but that the latter historian believed that events came about “through the fault of Proterius” (ed. Bidez and Parmentier, 59; *A History*, 74).

<sup>24</sup> Evagrius, ed. Bidez and Parmentier, 56; *A History*, 71. See Friend, *Monophysite*, 155.

<sup>25</sup> Orlandi, 44, believes that Longinus was head of a group of monks who consecrated Timothy, while Friend, *Monophysite*, 155, says that there was “a small committee of monks and dissident clerics led by Longinus.” Neither the *Life* nor Zacharius supports these conclusions.

Proterius, died for Leo's sin, burned to death for the blasphemous act of compelling support for the Council of Chalcedon.<sup>26</sup> According to the *Life of Longinus*, this horrible death was a judgement from God (the author of the *Life* seems compelled to justify it) and thereafter "the Church boldly proclaimed the doctrines of the orthodox faith and advanced through the encouragement and intercessions of the Holy Spirit" (par. 37). In reality, however, the conclusion was neither so simple nor salutary for the (anti-Chalcedonian) Orthodox of Egypt: Emperor Leo I expelled Timothy from Alexandria in 458.<sup>27</sup> If Longinus did in fact lead the monks of Enaton for another twenty years, as his *Life* says, he did so within sight of a hostile, Chalcedonian, governor and patriarch in Alexandria, a mere nine miles away.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> It is not surprising that the anti-Chalcedonian accounts—Zacharius of Mytilene and the *Life of Longinus*—agree that Proterius was not murdered; such a crime does not do their side honor. It is much better to have a miscreant government official die. The *Life of Peter the Iberian* makes Proterius and the "commander" Dionysius the villains; it terms the latter "a deadly and fiercely raging man."

<sup>27</sup> Orlandi, 44; Timothy did not return until 475 and died in 477.

<sup>28</sup> As Evagrius laconically concludes (ed. Bidez and Parmentier, 59; *A History*, 74): "In consequence, however, of these proceedings, Stilas is sent out by the emperor to chastise them [that is, the Alexandrians]."

### *Special Notice*

## *Archaeology and Egyptian Monasticism*

We apologize for failing to write a notice about Professor Ewa Wipszycka, the author of the leading article in the previous issue (Winter, 1998) 'Contributions of Archaeology to the History of Egyptian Monasticism.' She is professor of ancient history at Warsaw University.

# ***THE LIFE OF LONGINUS***<sup>29</sup>

The Life and Ascetic Practice of Our Holy Fathers and Glorious Ascetics  
Apa Longinus and His Spiritual Father Apa Lucius.  
They Completed Their Glorious Lives on the Second of Mshir.  
In the Peace of God. Amen.

## ***Prologue***

1. It belongs to us with tongues of flesh to sing the praises of those who bear flesh who have completed their earthly way of life. Through their way of life they have reached the heights of human achievement and through their accomplishments they have attained the greatest heights possible for those burdened with flesh, almost as if they bore no flesh. What tongue of flesh will be able to do them honor? Men such as these have need of an incorporeal tongue to sing their praises, just as they also completed their angelic ways of life. Fleshly burden hindered none of those heavenly beings who were on earth from completing their way of life and becoming the equal of angels, as the holy apostle said: “But our citizenship is in heaven, from where we expect our savior and lord, who will transform our humility to be like the body of his glory.”<sup>30</sup>

2. Therefore, when I wanted to set forth the history<sup>31</sup> of Saint Apa Longinus and his spiritual father Apa Lucius, who completed their ways of life (not to speak of their contests and struggles),<sup>32</sup> I was at a loss since I knew my own weakness

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<sup>29</sup> Translated from the text edited by Orlandi, 46-92. Paragraph divisions follow those of Orlandi, except for pars. 24, 25, and 27, which I have subdivided to better indicate individual pericopes. Section titles are my own and differ slightly from Orlandi’s table of contents, 43.

<sup>30</sup> Phil 3:20-21. “Citizenship” translates *politeuma*, whereas “way of life” renders *polêtia*. In the superscription, *polêtia*, “ascetic practice,” is paired with *bios*, “life.”

<sup>31</sup> Coptic *histôria* = Gk *historia*.

<sup>32</sup> “Contests and struggles”: *-athlôn* and *-agôn*, key Greek terms in monastic spirituality, borrowed from athletic and military imagery, that depict the monastic undertaking.

and the lofty virtues of those saints; like someone standing under a very high rock who attempts to lift that rock or climb on top of it, I am completely at a loss as to how I shall be able to climb on top of that rock.<sup>33</sup> Indulge me when I say that the rock is Christ, for the place where the saints dwelled was in fact the saints' Lord. For he who did not refrain from going up the mountain with Peter and John also did not refrain from living with Apa Longinus and his father Apa Lucius where they lived.<sup>34</sup> And indeed just as that vision [of Christ's transfiguration] showed Peter and John who it was that had ascended that rock, thus it also showed Apa Lucius and Apa Longinus the upright faith, which many attained through them, as I will reveal as we proceed.

3. But since I know my own inferiority, I wish to be silent about the history of those saints on account of their exalted nature and my own inferiority. But then judgement stares me in the face and threatens me thus: "Is not such fearfulness pleasing to God? If, as you so thoroughly declare, they were saints and counsellors and their entire way of life was as completely exalted as you say and their life has the power to edify those who listen to it, why do you choose to be silent and not speak to us about the life of those saints? Even if you are unable to tell us about the way of life of those saints filled with every virtue, at least tell us what you can in humility lest you seem envious of those whose souls will profit from listening to the life of those holy counsellors and who will in some small measure follow them."

4. The herald of truth, Paul the teacher, especially enjoins, "Remember your leaders, those who spoke the word of God to you; consider the greatness of their way of life, and imitate their faith."<sup>35</sup> Since God knows that the saints will profit everyone who listens to the life of those who conducted their lives according to the will of God, he wrote to us through the Holy Spirit of the life of the patriarchs and the other saints, those in the Old Testament and the New, so that we might not only listen to them but also imitate their character and ourselves inherit the promises that God made to those who love him. Thinking therefore on these things, I realized that it was encumbent on me to begin the history of the saints and call to mind for us their ways of life, knowing with certainty that "the memory of the righteous is a good memory," and that "good renown delights the heart,"<sup>36</sup> and especially that "the people delight in speaking of the righteous," as the wise Solomon says.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>33</sup> The rock is "high" (*jose*) just as the virtues of the saints are "lofty" (*jise*).

<sup>34</sup> The author of the *Life* is speaking of Mt. Tabor and the Transfiguration; see Mt 17:1-3, Mk 9:2-13, Lk 9: 28-36.

<sup>35</sup> Heb 13:7. The attribution of Hebrews to Paul in late antiquity was nearly universal. "Greatness" translates *jise*, as seen above.

<sup>36</sup> Prov 10:7 and 15:30.

<sup>37</sup> Prov 29:2. This attribution of Proverbs to Solomon was also almost universal.

## ***The Life and Ascetic Practice of Our Holy Father Apa Longinus who was from the Laura of the Enaton of Alexandria***

### *Longinus' Origins; He Becomes a Disciple of Apa Lucius*

5. His story is as follows: He was from a city of Lycia, as one reckons earthly birth,<sup>38</sup> but he was a citizen of the heavenly Jerusalem since his citizenship was in heaven,<sup>39</sup> according to the word of the wise Paul.<sup>40</sup> From his youth he loved the philosophy of the monastic life.<sup>41</sup> He went to a monastery in his native region of Lycia called the monastery of Apa Hieronikos. When he was worthy of the holy monastic habit at that monastery, he put himself in the hands of a great ascetic by the name of Apa Lucius, who was adorned with the word of the holy scriptures and discernment, the mother of all virtues.<sup>42</sup> Apa Lucius instructed Longinus in all faith and discipleship befitting the monastic life.

### *Apa Lucius Decides to Leave the Monastery*

6. After he had spent some time in the monastery living the monastic life<sup>43</sup> and practicing the virtues of Christ (which are humility and gentleness and renunciation and other virtues like these), the superior of that monastery, a tranquil and peaceful man, went to his rest and another had to be appointed in his place. As a result, a disturbance broke out in the monastery church, and this was its cause: all the monks knew Apa Lucius and everyone looked to him to be their superior to replace the one who had gone to his rest. When the holy one understood that he was the cause of the disturbance, he chose to leave them; that is, he left the monastery so it might have peace. He especially did this because, like his Savior, he never ceased pursuing humility.

7. Thinking these things, he called his disciple Apa Longinus and said to him, "My son, we know that it is a weighty matter to leave our monastery while we are alive, but so I am not the cause of a disturbance of this sort so that judgement come upon me, I think it is good that we withdraw someplace by ourselves, as it is written in Proverbs: 'It is better to live in a corner of the rooftop than to live in a new house or a place plastered over with fighting.'<sup>44</sup> It is more profitable for us, therefore, to withdraw someplace by ourselves so we can be occupied with the salvation

<sup>38</sup> Lycia was a mountainous country in southwest Asia Minor.

<sup>39</sup> "Citizen": *politês*; "citizenship": *politeuma*.

<sup>40</sup> See Heb 12:22.

<sup>41</sup> The use of "philosophy" for Christianity and then monasticism is a common patristic use.

<sup>42</sup> The Synaxarium Alexandrinum (Forget, 1.455) aptly summarizes: "he loved Christ and fled human glory."

<sup>43</sup> Coptic/Gk *politeue*.

<sup>44</sup> Prv 21:9 (LXX).

of our souls, on account of which we have renounced the world and everything in it, than to remain here and watch our monastery fall into ruinous error.” This was the reason they left their monastery; or rather, it was the divine plan of God that arranged things so he might reveal the good gifts of his goodness that steward our bodies and souls through his elect and so many might be saved through them.

### *Lucius and Longinus Perform Miracles at the Shrine of Saint Theoctistus*

8. After they left their monastery, they came to a quiet village in that region of Lycia and lived in a church in that village named after the honored saint and martyr Theoctistus.<sup>45</sup> This did not come about merely by chance but so the wonders of God might be manifested, just as they are manifested through the interpretation of the honored name of the martyr Theoctistus, which indicates what is going to take place in his oratory through these saints. For Theoctistus is translated “that which is built through God,” in that he caused these saints, through their ascetic practices and many contests, to be edified in the name of the martyr.<sup>46</sup> They edified numerous souls through the wonders and healings that God worked there through them. While they were living there, many came from the surrounding countryside bringing those who were sick, especially those possessed by unclean spirits,<sup>47</sup> laying them in the cemetery there. And they obtained healing through the prayers of those saints.

### *The Healing of a Possessed Woman*

9. One woman was possessed by an unclean spirit that was very powerful. This woman was creating a great disturbance and disorder on account of the demon inside her; as a result, she ripped the clothing of everyone who approached her and also tore at their bodies. When they brought her to the servants of God and begged them to pray over her so she might obtain healing through their entreaty, she began to tear at and attack those around her. Then she fell at their feet and continued to be convulsed by the evil spirit inside her and was foaming at the mouth. Then she cried out with a loud voice and appeared to be dead. Then blessed Lucius had compassion for her. He began to pray, and laid hands on her. He ordered his disciple Longinus to pray also and lay hands on her and seal her with the sign of the cross. When they did this, the demon immediately left her and she got up as someone gets up from sleep, cleansed of the scourge that possessed her. And so from that day until her death she ministered to those who were sick at the *martyri-*

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<sup>45</sup> The Synaxarium Alexanandrinum (Forget, I.455) says they went to Syria.

<sup>46</sup> “Theoctistus” is a compound of *theos*, “God,” and *ktistos*, from Gk *ktizein*, “to build.” “Edify” in English retains the etymological remembrance of building: “to build up.” In Coptic, “built,” in “that which is built,” is *kot-*, while “edified” is *kôt*.

<sup>47</sup> See Mk 1:32, Mt 8:16.

on. This, then, was the first sign<sup>48</sup> that God worked through them after they left their monastery and came to live in that church.

### *Luicius and Longinus Raise a Dead Youth*

10. I will also recount another wonder that God did through his servants. There was a man from the surrounding countryside there who had a noble son whom he had raised to adulthood from a child. There was a woman named Flavia who entrusted a document to the parents of that youth, which they gave to their son to protect. When the youth died suddenly, his parents did not know where the document was. That woman, Flaviana, went to recover her deposit, that is, the document that she had entrusted to them. When they were at a loss regarding it and could not find it because they did not know where the young man had put it, with great anger she threatened that she would make them her slaves if they did not restore her document to her. Then the parents of the youth, when they continued to be hounded by that woman, left their beloved child unburied and hurried to where the saints were living, with a great crowd following them, that is, their relatives and neighbors. They prostrated themselves at the feet of Apa Lucius and Apa Longinus, imploring them, "Ask the Lord Christ, whose servants you are, to reveal the soul of our child who has died so we might learn from him where he placed the document that the wife of the rich man entrusted to us, because she is now threatening to make us slaves if we do not find the document and give it to her!"

11. When the blessed ones heard this story from the young man's parents, they felt pity for them on account of the love and compassion of Christ that was in them; they immediately arose and followed them without hesitation or being bothered at all. When they reached the house where the dead youth was, they went inside to where the deceased lay and knelt down and prayed that God might wish to manifest a miracle through blessed Apa Longinus who was filled with virtues. Suddenly he was filled with the Holy Spirit. He seized the child's hand in front of the crowd and spoke thus: "God, who raised Lazarus,<sup>49</sup> will also on this occasion now restore your spirit to you so you may tell us where you put the document belonging to the rich man's wife so she will not take your parents as slaves." And immediately the spirit returned to the young man; he rose up and sat and opened his mouth. With everyone standing there listening, he told them where the document had been placed in the house. And his parents asked him other things that they did not know and he gave them an account of everything they asked him, and so he immediately lay down again. When the people of Lycia saw this miracle that had taken place through the saints, they glorified God, who alone works such wonders.

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<sup>48</sup> See Jn 2:11.

<sup>49</sup> See Jn 11:1-12:19.

*Because of their Renown, Lucius and Longinus Decide to Flee*

12. When the news of their fame spread through that region, whole crowds brought to them their sick who were afflicted with every kind of illness in order to have them pray over them and heal them, and they bestowed great honors on them. When the saints were surrounded by excessive crowds that bothered them and the glory that they gave them, on account of their great humility they did not esteem it. Finally, they decided to secretly flee and get away from the crowds there. When those living around the saints found out, they kept constant watch so they would not be deprived of their blessing and their presence among them. For the saints were the pride of that whole region on account of the multitude of miracles that took place through them.

*Lucius Sends Longinus to Enaton*

13. Then blessed Lucius took his disciple aside and said to him, "We can not continue enduring the empty praises<sup>50</sup> of men like this, nor is it good for our souls. Therefore, my son, listen to me. Arise and secretly go to Alexandria. I hear that there is a monastery in the western part of that city called Enaton that possesses great and godly silence.<sup>51</sup> Seek out a man from Corinth whose name is Gaius; he is the superior of the cenobium that he himself founded there. Remain in that monastery with him and I have faith in the Lord God our Savior that, wherever you are, he will not deprive me of the opportunity of physically being there with you. And even if I have to go a long time without you, I have faith in the Lord that I will no doubt come to you so we can complete our course together somewhere that the Lord determines for us as he wishes. Wherever you are, my son, flee the empty praises of men, and go to the *martyrium* of Saint Menas and first pray, then go to Enaton and stay in the monastery of Apa Gaius."<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Literally: vainglory, as it will be translated below.

<sup>51</sup> "Silence": Coptic *ezechia* = Gk *hēsuchia*.

<sup>52</sup> Orlandi believes, 59 n. 13, that the command to pray at the *martyrium* of Saint Menas is an interpolation by the last redactor (see par. 17 below). The monastery of Saint Menas was in the western desert of Mareotis (Maryut), near Alexandria. In 1960 Pope Cyril VI refounded Dayr Abu Mina near there; one can today see the two sites from each other. See Mounir Shoucri, "Dayr Abu Mina," *The Coptic Encyclopedia*, ed. Aziz S. Atiya (New York: Macmillan, 1990), 3.706-7. On Menas himself, see Martin Krause, "Menas the Miracle Worker, Saint," *The Coptic Encyclopedia* 5.1589-90. With regard to the *martyrium*, Peter Grossmann believes that "the crypt below the Martyr-church contained the grave of St. Menas and was the focus of his cult. According to the historical sources (written centuries after the saint's death whose facts are not always confirmed by archaeological evidence), the remains of St. Menas were contained in a shrine above ground, a tetrapylon styled mausoleum (encomium, eighth century, fol. 63-65). Only later, according to the sources, was he buried in a crypt. Archaeologists have found a later fourth century brick superstructure above the crypt, although it is not yet clear that this was in fact the tetrapylon, a building which rested on four pillars and was open from all sides." See Peter Grossmann, *Abu Mina: A Guide to the Ancient Pilgrimage Center* (Cairo: Fotiadis & Co. Press-Cairo, 1986), 16. I wish to thank Maged S. Mikhail for supplying this source.

### *Apa Longinus Comes to Enaton*

14. When he had said these things, they prayed, then embraced one another, and in this way Apa Longinus left Apa Lucius. When blessed Apa Longinus came to Alexandria, he sought out at the ninth milestone<sup>53</sup> the monastery of Apa Gaius and some religious<sup>54</sup> gave him directions. When he came to the monastery, he quietly knocked at the door.<sup>55</sup> When the gatekeeper opened the door, he asked Apa Longinus, “Where are you from, and what is the reason for your coming here?” The truly humble one, Apa Longinus, answered, “I am from the region of Lycia and I have come here to be a monk,” for on account of his great humility he did not claim to call himself a monk. He wore no cowl or scapular<sup>56</sup> nor a habit<sup>57</sup> such as foreign monks wear, but only a *kolobion* and *pallium* and belt: these were the only things that he was wearing when he entered the monastery.<sup>58</sup> His hair had grown a little long on account of the many days he had spent traveling on the road. As a result, they did not immediately recognize him as a monk. The gatekeeper said to him, “How can you be a monk here? Truly, the canon of our psalmody is long and our customs regarding eating and sleeping and the other requirements entail great pain and suffering.<sup>59</sup> There is no comfort in them. Here, take some bread as a blessing.<sup>60</sup> The Lord be with you.”

15. But noble Longinus did not gainsay what the gatekeeper had said with a single word to him but when he heard the word “blessing,” which means bread that has been blessed, he patiently waited at the door a number of days, making himself like that other saint, Antony the Great, who went to the anchorite Paul the Great after patiently enduring great suffering on the desert road. That great one did not accept him right away, but blessed Antony patiently waited at the door, saying, “I

<sup>53</sup> Coptic/Gk: *henaton*, the ninth mile marker, which was also the name of the monastery. Other monasteries were at the eighteenth (*oktôdekaton*) and twentieth (*eikoston*) milestones.

<sup>54</sup> Coptic/Gk: *eulabês*, which might also mean devout or pious men. But *eulabês* can suggest clergy or monastics as opposed to seculars; see Lampe 567B(2).

<sup>55</sup> Quiet, *screeht*, is almost an epithet attributed to Longinus; in par. 8 the village to which the saints flee is quiet.

<sup>56</sup> Coptic *anabolos* = Gk *analabos*.

<sup>57</sup> Coptic *hethos* = Gk *ethos*, which is interesting etymologically. *Ethos* means “custom or habit,” and seems to mean a monastic habit here, as in Latin (*habitus*) and English usage, but Lampe (407AB) does not cite its use to designate a monastic habit. On monastic clothing see Paul van Moorsel, *Les Peintures du Monastère de Saint-Antoine près de la Mer Rouge* (La peinture murale chez les Coptes, Mémoires publiés par les membres de l’institut français d’archéologie orientale du Caire CXII; Cairo: IFAO, 1998), Chap. 6.2.B, “Le vêtement monastique,” 64-72.

<sup>58</sup> Thus Longinus was wearing a short-sleeve shirt (*kolobion*) and cloak (*pallion*).

<sup>59</sup> The Coptic *mmokhs mn ouhise* might mean “toil and labor,” but they equally suggest “pain and suffering.”

<sup>60</sup> Gk: *eulogia*, which can mean “benediction or blessing,” and can refer to the consecration of the bread at the eucharist or the consecrated elements themselves, then a gift of bread that has been blessed (see Lampe 570A); see par. 15.

sought and I found, and I believe that it will be opened to me.”<sup>61</sup> Longinus, too, since this same Spirit dwelled in him and he believed these things in his heart, patiently waited at the door until he attained that which he believed in his heart would come with great patience. When the gatekeeper continued to come outside each day to do his assigned duties and found Apa Longinus sitting by the door with great patience, he reported it to the *hégoumenos*<sup>62</sup> of the monastery, saying, “There’s a young man, a foreigner, at the door of the monastery; he’s been there a number of days, saying, ‘I want to become a monk.’ I rebuffed him numerous times, but he’s been patiently waiting there all this time.” The superior answered, saying, “Since you have seen his patience, bring him in with you inside the gates so he might help you with your duties, performing all the tasks you give him.”

16. So the gatekeeper brought him inside the gates, as the father of the monastery had commanded. Not only did Longinus do everything that the gatekeeper ordered, but everything that the brothers would order he did with great enthusiasm<sup>63</sup> and perfect obedience. And he remained patient like this, doing things of this sort, for two years or more, and he did not tell the brothers in any way that he was a monk. But God, who always glorifies those who give glory to him,<sup>64</sup> and reveals the things that are hidden,<sup>65</sup> and exalts the humble,<sup>66</sup> spoke with a mouth that is true, saying, “A lamp will not burn when it is placed under a basket, but when it is placed on a lampstand, it gives light to everyone in the house.”<sup>67</sup> He did not want his chosen one to remain hidden but revealed him as one who truly shines: he placed him on a spiritual lampstand so he would give light not only to those around him but also to those far away from him. He gave light to them through his abundant fruits and his achievements, as the narrative will make clear for us as the discourse proceeds.

### *A Merchant from Lycia Recognizes Apa Longinus*

17. A merchant from Lycia, Apa Longinus’ homeland, who knew him well when he was living at his monastery, happened to come to Alexandria on business. When he came to the monastery of Saint Menas, he prayed and then desired to go to the monastery of blessed Gaius the priest, as was his custom, since the monastery was known for its great faith. When he arrived at the monastery, he received a blessing from from Apa Gaius and asked him to pray for him. While he

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<sup>61</sup> See Mt 7:7; Lk 11:9. According to the Saint Jerome’s *Life of Paul* 9, Antony remained outside Paul’s door from nighttime until noon “and even longer,” but the words attributed to him from scripture by the author of the *Life of Longinus* are not in Jerome’s account.

<sup>62</sup> *Hégoumenos*, like *proestês*, means the superior of the monastery.

<sup>63</sup> *Spoudê* is a monastic virtue as early as the *Life of Antony* 4.1.

<sup>64</sup> 1 Kings 2:30.

<sup>65</sup> Dan 2:22.

<sup>66</sup> Job 5:11.

<sup>67</sup> Mt 5:15.

was sitting at the door of the church, Saint Gaius spoke to him at length concerning teachings from the holy scriptures for the salvation of his soul. The merchant stared: he saw Apa Longinus, who had raised the dead youth and performed numerous miracles in Lycia. But now he doubted whether it was really Longinus, or was someone who resembled him. In fact, Longinus' hair had grown so long over time and was so unkempt that the merchant did not recognize him with certainty. But from the time he was little Apa Longinus had had a mark on his face and the merchant observed with certainty now the mark on his face. He said to Saint Gaius, "You have a great man in this monastery who has done many powerful things."

18. The superior said to him, "Whom among the brothers are you talking about?" The merchant said to him, "I'm talking about the one sweeping in front of the gate, for he is Apa Longinus, who is famous in Lycia, he and his spiritual father, Apa Lucius. He raised the dead and cast out many demons from people and did numerous other healings that God worked through him in that country. As a result, when his fame spread through that land and he was being glorified by everyone, he left his spiritual father and fled and secretly came here, fleeing from the empty praise of men." When he finished saying these things about Saint Apa Longinus, the latter was still sweeping the area in front of the gate. Then the *hêgoumenos* called him and said to him, "Why did you hide from us? You didn't tell us that you're a monk." Immediately Apa Longinus, whose heart was truly humble, prostrated himself at the feet of Gaius the priest and asked his forgiveness, "Forgive me, my father." And immediately the superior ordered them to shave from his head the hair that had grown so long. He prayed over him and clothed him in the cowl and scapular in accordance with the monastic habit of Alexandria. When the brothers in the monastery heard all these words concerning Apa Longinus, they gathered around him as around a great and perfect saint and began to glorify him exceedingly.<sup>68</sup> But when Saint Apa Longinus saw that he was being glorified by men, his heart was grieved, especially when he remembered the instructions his spiritual father had given him to flee from the empty praises of men.

### *Apa Longinus Leaves the Monastery*

19. Then he took counsel within, saying, "I renounced my homeland on account of human glory and separated from my father. So how can I stay here where crowds of this sort glorify me?" Therefore, he left that monastery; some God-loving men built a small cell for him near the monastery by the sea. He was at

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<sup>68</sup> Coptic *ephehou*. *Houo* also suggests "excessively," which our author undoubtedly intends. In the next sentence *houo*, "especially," signals the instructions of Apa Lucius to flee such praise.

peace in the cell, making rope,<sup>69</sup> and he labored with his handiwork so he could find a way to give to those in need by means of his handiwork, making himself in this regard like the holy apostle Paul, who says, “My hands served my own needs and the needs of my companions,” and “It is more blessed to give than to receive.”<sup>70</sup> Many came to him from among the great shipowners and bought the ropes that he made with his holy hands; they used them as crosses in the midst of their sails as blessing, believing that by doing this his prayers would be with them as protectors and that the Lord would save their ships wherever they went. After a few days, three monks came to him and became his disciples.<sup>71</sup>

### *Apa Lucius Rejoins Apa Longinus*

20. One night while he was sitting with his disciples meditating on the word of God and working with his hands,<sup>72</sup> he fell asleep on his seat where he was working, thinking of David, the holy singer of psalms, who says, “I will not give sleep to my eyes, slumber to my eyelids, rest to my brows, until I find a place for the Lord, a dwelling place for the God of Jacob.”<sup>73</sup> While he was sitting at night, sleep weighed him down, and he went into a trance, as if a man stood before him speaking to him, “Hurry, get up, and go to the seashore! There you will find your father, Apa Lucius. He has come to you from his homeland.” And so he immediately got up; without speaking to any of his disciples, he went to the harbor, the place that he had been told about in the revelation. He found Saint Apa Lucius and immediately

<sup>69</sup> Coptic/Gk *scholakin*, which occurs six times in the *Life*. The word, though certainly Gk in origin, is unattested. Its closest sources appear to be *scholê*, “leisure, rest,” and then “study, attention,” and *scholazein*, “have leisure,” then “devote one’s time to something, be intent on something” (see Lampe, 1360-61). Its meaning, therefore, seems to be “a little [-kin] something to pass the time,” analogous to Italian *passatempo* and M.Gk. *kombolion*, the rope and beads (“worry beads”) used to pass the time. Campagnano’s translation of *gomena*, “hawser,” given the context, seems reasonable. Because of the uncertainty of the word’s meaning, however, I will use the more generic term “rope.”

<sup>70</sup> See Acts 20:34-35; the latter quotation Paul attributes to Jesus.

<sup>71</sup> The Synaxarium Alexanandrinum (Forget, I.455) omits virtually all of the events related above about Longinus at Enaton, saying only that he stayed there until, on the death of the abbot, he was made archpriest of the monastery because of his outstanding way of life.

<sup>72</sup> “Meditating,” *meletan*, usually means quietly reciting the scriptures, most often the psalms. As Douglas Burton-Christie has memorably put it, “And there is the slow, gentle hum—a kind of white noise in the desert—of words being ruminated, repeated ceaselessly, leading toward what Cassian described as a simplification of the mind and heart.” See his “Oral Culture and Biblical Interpretation in Early Egyptian Monasticism,” *Studia Patristica* 30, ed. Elizabeth A. Livingstone (Leuven: Peeters, 1997), 144-50: 148. While practicing this discipline of psalmody, the anchorites may have alternated work, standing prayer, and prostrations; see Luke Dysinger, OSB, “The Significance of Psalmody in the Mystical Theology of Evagrius of Pontus,” *Studia Patristica* 30, ed. Livingstone, 177, and his references to Cassian, *Institutes* II.11-12 and Palladius, *Lausiac History* 22:5-8 and 43:2-3.

<sup>73</sup> Ps 131:4-5 (132:4-5).

climbed up into the boat. After they greeted one another, the old man said to Apa Longinus, “Did I not tell you, my son, that I trusted in Christ that wherever you would go, I would come to you?” Then they glorified God because he had allowed them to see one another again and because the scripture was fulfilled: “The deer met and saw one another’s face; they came forth in a group and not one of them perished, for the Lord was the one who commanded them and his spirit was the one bringing them together.”<sup>74</sup> Rightly indeed the great trumpets of the prophets called men of this sort “deer” since deer are lovers of the desert and track down the race of snakes as enemies. So it also is with these saints who flee the disturbances of cities and who are hidden in desert places and who at all times track down spiritual serpents, that is, the spirits of evil.

21. The two of them walked and together went inside. His disciples were sitting while they meditated and worked. When they saw Saint Apa Longinus walking with his father, they were amazed and got up with great joy. They greeted one another and after they prayed, sat down. Apa Longinus said to them, “This is your father from this day on.” Then he told them what he had seen in the vision concerning Apa Lucius. Saint Apa Lucius had Apa Longinus teach him how to make the ropes. So they continued to serve God with great zeal, living together in great peace, each one keeping to every aspect of his regimen. As a result, the news of their monastic practices and sober life filled the great city of Alexandria and all the surrounding countryside.

### *Apa Longinus Heals a Woman with Cancer*<sup>75</sup>

22. For example, a woman who had a disease in her breast called “cancer” by physicians heard about Apa Longinus the Great, that the Lord worked cures through him. She arose in faith and went to him. (She had told the doctors all her symptoms and none of them had cured her.)<sup>76</sup> When she went to the seashore, she came upon Saint Apa Longinus gathering wood on the shore of the sea as was his custom. She asked him, “Where is the servant of God, Apa Longinus?” He said, “What do you want with him?” She told him about her illness. But he said to her, “What do you want with that guy? He is nothing.” Then he made the sign of the cross where she was ill, saying, “My Lord Jesus Christ do with you according to your faith.”<sup>77</sup> The woman believed and turned to go home. When she had gone just a little ways, she was healed of her illness. When she entered the city, she told

<sup>74</sup> Is 34:15-16 (LXX). The LXX has *ejci'nc'* (*echinos*), “hedghog,” instead of “deer.” Since our author says deer track down snakes, perhaps he associated *echinos*, “hedghog,” with *echidna*, “adder, viper.”

<sup>75</sup> See *Apophthegmata Longinus* 3 (Ward, 123) for another version of this story

<sup>76</sup> This parenthesis, added by the editor of the *Life* (it is not in the saying represented by the *Apophthegmata*), is reminiscent of Mk 5:26.

<sup>77</sup> See Lk 7:50, 8:48.

everyone about the cure that had happened to her through the saint. They asked her, “What sort of person was this man?” She told them about the mark on his blessed face.<sup>78</sup> When they told her it was Apa Longinus who had healed her, the woman gave glory to God.

23. Who would be able to relate all the healings and miracles that God did through Apa Longinus! If I wished to relate each of the healings, I would not have the time. But I will speak of a few of them so I may satisfactorily complete the discourse up to this point, being selective because some are unbelieving concerning the large number of miracles.<sup>79</sup> For many came to him from the city of Alexandria and its environs, wishing to know where he was, and people came to him ill with every kind of illness and he healed every one of them.

### *Apa Longinus Heals a Démoniac*

24a. One day a woman came to him with her child who was possessed by a demon; his face was contorted on account of the workings of the demon and it convulsed him every day, afflicting him. His mother implored the saint to pray over him. He held out his hands and prayed, saying, “Lord Jesus Christ, who works our health and salvation, if you so wish, bestow healing on this child.” And so he blew into the face of the child.<sup>80</sup> Immediately the demon left the child and his face returned to normal. They ran to their house, glorifying God.

### *The Miracle of the Rainstorm*

24b. When they saw so many coming to them, the need arose to supply some bread on account of the needs of the visitors and those coming to see them. When the bread was laid out in the sun, a great rainstorm suddenly poured down. Immediately Saint Apa Longinus stood and prayed, saying, “God of all and creator<sup>81</sup> of creation, command this rainstorm to pass us by!” And immediately the clouds dispersed from where the bread lay, and not a drop of rain fell on it. His prayers had acted as protection<sup>82</sup> over where the bread lay, and not a drop of rain fell on it.

### *Apa Longinus Heals a Woman with a Diseased Hand*<sup>83</sup>

25a. Again one time when he was sitting in his cell making ropes and meditating on the word of God, a woman came to him with an illness in her hand that the doctors call *aniatos*, that is, incurable. She came up behind his cell and implored

<sup>78</sup> See par. 17.

<sup>79</sup> See *Life of Antony* Preface 3.

<sup>80</sup> See Jn 20:22.

<sup>81</sup> Coptic *dumiourgos* = Gk *dêmiourgos*, “Demiurge.”

<sup>82</sup> On Longinus’ “protection,” see par. 19 above.

<sup>83</sup> See *Apophthegmata Systematica* 19.7 (Guy, 241; Regnault, 106).

him, saying, "Please pray for me!" but he threatened her so she would go away from his cell. She remained at the door of his cell, however, afraid to speak. When he understood in the Spirit the great suffering that she endured, he got up and closed the shutters of the window she was looking through and said to her, "Go in peace. May the Lord grant you healing." And the woman was healed from then on.

### *Apa Longinus' Cowl Heals a Demoniac*<sup>84</sup>

25b. One day a man came to him to receive his blessing and begged him to give him his cowl so it might be protection for him. When he got it, he left him. When he returned home, there was a man there possessed by a demon, and when the demoniac saw the man coming with the cowl of Apa Longinus, the demon threw the demoniac to the ground and cried out, saying, "Why have you brought Apa Longinus here to persecute people?"<sup>85</sup> Those in the house were astounded at what the demon said and the man carrying the cowl was also amazed and perceived that this was happening on account of Apa Longinus' cowl. And immediately he took it and placed it on the man possessed by the demon, saying, "In the name of God and with the prayers of my father Apa Longinus, come out from him!" And immediately the demon came out of him. When the people saw what had taken place, they glorified God, who works miracles like these through his saints.

### *An Elder Comes to Apa Longinus to Die*<sup>86</sup>

26. Again one day while he was sitting in his cell, there was sitting beside him an elder from the laura who had come to visit him. While they were talking about the heart of their souls, Apa Longinus suddenly got up as though someone had called him, left the cell, and went to the seashore. He found a boat that had come from Upper Egypt in which a saintly elder had ridden. When the elder saw him, he greeted him with a holy kiss. The elder raised his eyes to heaven, saying, "Lord, did I not implore you to not let this saint know that I was coming to him because he would be bothered and would come outside?" The elder turned to Apa Longinus and said to him, "My time is coming to leave this life. Therefore, the Lord sent me to you for you to lay your hands on my eyes."<sup>87</sup> And so the two of them walked and went inside Apa Longinus' cell and after three days the elder went to his rest in good old age. Saint Apa Longinus laid hands on his eyes and he finished his life in good old age.

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<sup>84</sup> See Apophthegmata Systematica 19.9 (Guy, 241; Regnault, 106).

<sup>85</sup> See Mk 1:24.

<sup>86</sup> See Apophthegmata Systematica 18.12 (Guy, 241).

<sup>87</sup> On laying hands on the eyes, see par. 38.

*Apa Longinus Foresees the Death of His Disciple Arcadius*

27a. Again one time when Apa Longinus was going into his cell with a disciple whose name was Arcadius (Arcadius was making a rope that Apa Longinus had told him to cut), Apa Longinus said to him, “Arcadius, my son, hurry and finish, for God will be sending for you now.” When Arcadius had finished the rope, Apa Longinus took him by the hand, rolled up his mat, and turned his face toward the east, and immediately the disciple gave his spirit into the hands of God in peace.

*The Prayers of Apa Longinus Drive Out a Demon*<sup>88</sup>

27b. Again one day a demoniac was brought to Apa Longinus and he was implored to cast out the demon from him. Apa Longinus said to him in humility of heart, “I do not know what I can do for him, but go to Apa Zênôn and I believe that God will grant him healing.” When they went to Apa Zênôn, they implored him to pray over the demoniac, and as Apa Zênôn began to pray, the demon cried out, “Do you think I’m going to leave because of you? But look! Apa Longinus is nearby, praying, and since I’m afraid of his prayers, I’ll leave. But I am not going to answer to you!” When the unclean spirit had said these things, he left the man.

*Apa Longinus Teaches about Passing Judgement*<sup>89</sup>

27c. Again, there was one of his disciples who had done some inappropriate things. When Apa Theodore of Enaton found out, he came to Apa Longinus with another elder.<sup>90</sup> They implored him to expel the disciple. But Apa Longinus did not listen to them, thinking that perhaps his disciple would repent and God would forgive him; he did not desire the death of the sinner but hoped he would repent and live.<sup>91</sup> He said to them just these words: “Woe to us because we renounce the world and have entered into the monastic life saying, ‘We are like angels,’ but in reality we are more evil than unclean spirits!”

*Apa Longinus Instructs a Shipowner to Help a Debtor*<sup>92</sup>

28. Again one day a great shipowner came to Apa Longinus and brought a large amount of money to give him. But Apa Longinus accepted nothing from him, saying, “We do not need things of this sort. What we make with our hands is sufficient. But please, get on your donkey and hurry and go to the steps of Saint

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<sup>88</sup> See *Apophthegmata Longinus* 4 (Ward, 123).

<sup>89</sup> This is a common theme in the *Apophthegmata*; see the index in Ward, 261, under “Judgement.”

<sup>90</sup> This Apa Theodore has three sayings attributed to him in the *Apophthegmata* under Theodore of Enaton (Ward, 79).

<sup>91</sup> See Ezek 33:11, Jas 5:20

<sup>92</sup> See *Apophthegmata Systematica* 18.11 (Guy, 241).

Peter's<sup>93</sup> and you will find a man there wearing such and such clothing and also having a certain mark on his face (these things God just now revealed to me). Ask him, 'Where are you from?' and 'What is that in your hand?'"

The shipowner hurried and went, as the old man had ordered. When he came to the steps, he found the man whom Apa Longinus had told him about. He went up to him and spoke to him. But that man did not answer at all on account of his misery, but hastened to leave the city to do what he had resolved to do. When the shipowner saw the man's distress and how upset he was, he said to him, "I have just now come from Enaton, from my father Apa Longinus. He's the one who sent me to you." When the man heard the name of Apa Longinus, he stood up. The shipowner gave him the money. The man took it in his misery, saying, "I am badly in debt and the moneylenders are dunning me for repayment. I haven't found any way to pay them. I decided to flee the city and strangle myself because of the numerous troubles hanging over me. So you'll know I'm telling the truth, look, here's the rope in my hand that I'm going to hang myself with." And he showed him the rope in his hand. The shipowner was amazed at what Apa Longinus had said. He gave the gold to the man. The man went home.

The shipowner returned to Apa Longinus and told him everything that had happened. The old man said to him, "Believe me, my son: whatever we have been careless about, even a little, God judges the two of us for the sake of that soul."

### *Apa Longinus Defends the Orthodox Faith Against the Council of Chalcedon*<sup>94</sup>

#### *Apa Longinus Foresees the Imposition of the Tome of Leo*

29. At that time when the emperor Marcian wanted to send a court official<sup>95</sup> to Alexandria with the Tome of the ungodly Leo,<sup>96</sup> he ordered the city of Alexandria,

<sup>93</sup> John Moschus, *Pratum spirituale* 73, says that a soldier in Alexandria lived at a monastery near the steps of Saint Peter's. This presumably refers to the Church of Saint Peter in the western part of the city, dedicated to Bishop Peter I (d. 311). Peter had apparently had a cemetery built there and a church dedicated to the Virgin. According to Peter's *Passio*, he was brought there and buried after his martyrdom, and thus the church came to be called Saint Peter's; see Tim Vivian, *Saint Peter of Alexandria: Bishop and Martyr* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988), 77. On the site, see Henri Leclercq, "Alexandrie, Archéologie," in Fernand Cabrol and Henri Leclercq, eds., *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne* (Paris: Letouzet et Ané, 1907-53), I.1118 and 1142.

<sup>94</sup> Another version of this story appears in an encomium of Macarius of Tkow, which is falsely attributed to Dioscurus of Alexandria; in it, the protagonist is Longinus, but the episode takes place not at Enaton but in an unnamed monastery in Lycia. Enaton seems to be the original locale of the story, not Lycia; see Orlandi, 44, for a discussion. The Ethiopic version begins here; see Grébaut, "La Prière de Langinos."

<sup>95</sup> Gk: *magistrianos*, an official of the staff of the *magister officiorum*.

<sup>96</sup> Leo, in our author's view, is *asebês*, "ungodly, impious," the opposite of *eusebês*, "pious, godly," which has the added connotation of "orthodox."

and especially the monks of Enaton, to subscribe to it.<sup>97</sup> But the Lord revealed this matter to Saint Apa Longinus three months beforehand; the Lord ordered Apa Longinus, through the revelation that was shown to him, to assemble together all the monks of Enaton and tell them what had happened. And he commanded him not to accept that ordinance<sup>98</sup> at all nor to subscribe to it. Apa Longinus gathered together everyone who was at the laura and told them what the Lord had revealed to him in the vision and ordered them to firmly adhere to the righteous ordinance<sup>99</sup> of the Lord and to fight to the death for the orthodox faith.

When they heard these things from Apa Longinus, they greatly rejoiced and deliberated with one another, saying, “No one will be able to set at naught this abominable ordinance except him to whom the Lord has revealed this mystery and whom the Lord has told of the oppression that is ordained to come!”<sup>100</sup> Then they implored blessed Apa Longinus to be their father and leader and *hêgoumenos* of the monastery of Enaton.

### *The Letter of Acacius Commanding the Monks to Subscribe to Chalcedon*

30. Three months later, the court official and that godless ordinance<sup>101</sup> arrived. The emperor instructed Acacius, the prefect ruling Egypt at that time, to force the monks at the laura to subscribe to the abominable Tome of Leo. The duke, when he read the emperor’s letter, made a copy of it and sent it to the monks of Enaton, written thus: “Acacius, prefect of Egypt, writing to the holy and God-loving monks<sup>102</sup> of the laura of Enaton, sends greetings. Since our lord emperor and supreme ruler<sup>103</sup> has made us worthy to receive his holy letter, which commands everyone to subscribe to the Tome of Leo, Bishop of Rome, and especially you who are righteous, O monks of Enaton, you will now accept the letter from the court official and you will carry out the command of our lord the emperor so that you will enjoy gifts and honors from him, the great benefactor and supreme ruler and fighter for our wise doctrine.”

<sup>97</sup> Marcian was Emperor of the East from 450-57. The Council of Chalcedon, which accepted the Tome of Leo defining the orthodox faith, bestowed on the emperor the title “protector of the true faith.”

<sup>98</sup> Coptic/Gk *dogma*.

<sup>99</sup> Coptic/Gk *dikaiôma*, which may have sounded like a combination of *dikaios*, “just, righteous,” and *dogma*, as opposed to the *dogma* of the emperor.

<sup>100</sup> See *Life of Antony* 82.4-8, where Antony foresees the persecution of the Church by Arians. Such foresight about Chalcedon is a common occurrence in the *Plerophoriae* of John Rufus.

<sup>101</sup> Here the Tome is *atnoute*, the Coptic equivalent of *a-theos*.

<sup>102</sup> The monks are *mainoute*, the opposite of *atnoute*.

<sup>103</sup> “Supreme ruler” is *autokratôr*; see the next note.

### *The Monks of Enaton Refuse to Accept the Tome of Leo*

31. When Saint Apa Longinus received the letter, he gathered together all the brothers and read the copy to them. When they heard it, they cried out as one, “Anathematize that abominable ordinance and everything in it, ungodly Leo too, and everyone in communion with him!” Then they wrote a letter to the prefect, written thusly: “You have submitted to the abominable ordinance of the supreme ruler; we, on the other hand, are obedient to the Almighty who through his providence cares for all of creation.<sup>104</sup> Therefore, let it be clear to Your Authority that there is no one among us, from the least to the greatest, who will allow himself to take part in<sup>105</sup> or in any way obey that abominable ordinance and the lawbreaking and ungodly Leo. Instead, we are prepared, each and every one of us, to fight to the death for the established doctrine and the tradition of the saving faith of our holy and orthodox fathers that has been handed down to us.<sup>106</sup> In order not to write too many words to you, in sum, we think it better, and more profitable for our souls, to obey the ordinance of the Almighty rather than that of the supreme ruler.”

### *The Monks Go Out to Face the Duke's Army*<sup>107</sup>

32. When the duke received the letter, he recognized its power. He and the emperor's official were very angry and outraged at the reply from the saints of Enaton. They together decided for the official to send his army to kill and slaughter the monks of Enaton. But the Lord, who sets aside the designs of rulers,<sup>108</sup> revealed the plan to the holy elders Apa Lucius and Apa Longinus. They gathered together all the brothers and Apa Longinus said to them, “I entreat you, my brothers, let none of you be troubled. Listen to me: each of you take some palm branches from the palm trees and go together to meet the ruler before he comes to us.” These words pleased the brothers and they took palm branches from the palm trees and went to the place called “Lithazomenon” outside the city.<sup>109</sup> The whole chorus of monks waited there; no one dared to go into the city because their father had ordered them not to.

<sup>104</sup>There is a deliberate juxtaposition here and at the end of the paragraph: “Almighty” translates *pantôkratôr*, whereas “supreme ruler” is *autokratôr*; “cares for” renders *-euergetai*, whereas “benefactor” (an appellation of the emperor in par. 31) is *euergetês*.

<sup>105</sup>Coptic/Gk *-koinonei*, translated above as “communion.”

<sup>106</sup>According to Apa Theodore, Pachomius had praised Athanasius, “who struggles for the faith even to the point of death.” See SBo 134; Armand Veilleux, trans., *Pachomian Koinonia* (Kalamazoo: Cistercian, 1980), 1.192.

<sup>107</sup>The Synaxarium Alexanandrinum (Forget, I.456) omits entirely the events of pars. 32-35, resuming with the scene related in par. 36.

<sup>108</sup>Ps 32:10 (33:10). God sets aside the “designs” (*shojne*) that the officials had “decided” on (*ji shojne*); the Lord defeats the plans of the earthly lord.

<sup>109</sup>*Lithazomenon* literally means “stoned”; I have not been able to identify the location.

### *The Miracle on the Battlefield*

33. Then the emperor's officer came to wage war against the monks. When his troops reached the monks, he ordered the army to shoot arrows at the crowd of monks, so the soldiers shot their arrows at them. But what great miracle took place! The soldiers stood and shot their arrows at the chorus of monks and not one of them was harmed! And all of them said this hymn in unison: "My trust is in the Lord; how will you say to our soul, 'Flee to the mountains like a sparrow, for look, the wicked bend their bows, they have fitted their arrows to the string, to shoot their arrows secretly at the upright in heart,'<sup>110</sup> and 'The wicked have drawn their swords, they have bent their bows, in order to attack someone who is poor and wretched, to slay the upright in heart.'<sup>111</sup> Truly their swords entered their own hearts, their arrows broke."<sup>112</sup> That mighty soldier, Apa Longinus, who fought to the death for the truth,<sup>113</sup> who showed that he dwelled under the shadow of the Almighty,<sup>114</sup> was not afraid to face the arrows flying through the air but made his profession of faith like a conscript, saying, "His truth will surround you like these weapons, you shall not fear an arrow that flies by day."<sup>115</sup>

### *Apa Longinus Speaks to the Soldiers*

34. With these words on his lips,<sup>116</sup> the mighty old man approached the army with great courage<sup>117</sup> as the soldiers shot their arrows, and the arrows were flying on this side and that, but none of them reached the noble Apa Longinus. When the court official saw his great courage, he was amazed that none of the arrows touched him, nor were any of the brothers harmed in any way. The soldiers suddenly jumped from their horses, prostrated themselves at the feet of Apa Longinus, and worshipped him and the brothers who were with him, asking their forgiveness for their insolence. When Apa Longinus saw their repentance and their faith, he spoke to the official and the soldiers, saying, "You saw that we fought and were prepared to do battle for the faith of our fathers, even unto death. We beseech you to go to the laura of Enaton, where our fathers are, so we might ask them in the presence of your authorities for satisfaction from you and, as they command us in your presence, we are prepared to follow their words."

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<sup>110</sup>Ps 10:1-2 (11:1-2).

<sup>111</sup>"Poor and wretched" (*-hêke* and *-ebiên*) may well be a conscious self-understanding and self-designation (see Ps 69:6 (LXX = RSV 70:5); see Paul of Tamma, *On the Cell* 5, 9, 13, 69, and 97).

<sup>112</sup>See Ps 37:15-16.

<sup>113</sup>See n. 106 (par. 31) above.

<sup>114</sup>Ps 90:1 (91:1).

<sup>115</sup>Ps 90:6 (91:4-5).

<sup>116</sup>Coptic/Gk *-meleta*, the same word translated as "meditate" earlier.

<sup>117</sup>"Courage" translates *mntjarhêt* while "mighty" renders *jôdre*; *jar* and *jôdre* both come from *jro*, "be strong."

### *The Holy Fathers of Enaton Denounce the Tome of Leo from their Tombs*

35. The brothers were astonished at the words that Apa Longinus was saying in front of the ruler and the army, and they were saying to one another, "But there's no one left in the laura who did not come here, is there?" Then they approached their father Apa Longinus and said, "Father, do you not know that all of us are here and not one of us is missing? How will we give trouble to these men and trouble them to come to the laura?"<sup>118</sup> He, however, did not say a single word to them since he knew what he was going to do. Then all of them followed Apa Longinus, the court official along with all the brothers. He walked in front of them until he brought them to the tombs where their fathers were buried, those who had been the elders before his time, who had preserved the saving faith with firmness until they completed their lives, as it was pleasing to God. Then he stopped in the middle of the tombs. He spread his hands and prayed and commanded them to pray with him. When he had finished his prayer, they all said "Amen" together.

36. Apa Longinus opened his mouth and shouted aloud in front of them, saying, "My holy fathers, is it truly the wish of God that we accept the Tome of Leo and subscribe to it?" Immediately a voice arose from the tombs where the bodies of the saints lay, three times saying "Anathema to ungodly Leo's Tome! Do not speak his name nor be in communion with anyone who accepts that ordinance! Anathema to those who subscribe to the Tome of Leo! Anathema to Leo's blasphemous act, for it is full of blasphemy against the divinity of Christ because it divides Christ into two natures instead of maintaining the unity of Christ!" When the court official and the whole army gathered there heard that voice coming from the midst of the bodies of the saints, they were astonished, and they prostrated themselves at the feet of Apa Longinus and the other monks who were with him, asking them to forgive them and to pray for them so they might come to know the truth. And suddenly many from the army renounced<sup>119</sup> their military status and the empty duties of this way of life and became monks and submitted themselves<sup>120</sup> to the authority of Saint Apa Longinus on account of the fear that had seized them.

### *The Orthodox Faith Triumphs over the Tome of Leo*

37. The court official and the other soldiers returned to the city, proclaiming the wonders they had seen. When the citizens of the city heard about the mighty

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<sup>118</sup>This sentence is a bit awkward in Coptic. "Give trouble" translates -oueh hise, which may be a translation of Gk *kovpon parevcein*; "trouble" renders Coptic/Gk *-skullei (skavllein)*, which is essentially a synonym of the first verb, with the added sense of "annoy." The verbs together are redundant, and it is unlikely that the Gk text used both in such close proximity.

<sup>119</sup>"Renounced," Gk *apotasse*, is often the word used for monastic renunciation of the world; see the last sentence Longinus speaks in par. 27.

<sup>120</sup>Coptic *hupotakê* (= Gk *hupotagê*), playing on *apotasse*; they share the same root TAG.

works and wonders that had taken place through Apa Longinus, strengthened<sup>121</sup> in their faith they went as a group to the praetorium. They brought out the prefect Acacius, who had forced them to be in communion with the Tome of Leo, and burned him in the middle of the city. I am not saying he was condemned to death simply because of these actions, but because it was a judgement of God's justice, pronounced through the mouth of Apa Longinus the Great and the brothers who were with him as a prophecy that our father David spoke in the tenth Psalm, which he sang like this: "Fire and sulfur are the portion of their cup."<sup>122</sup> When the bishop of that false teaching<sup>123</sup> saw the uproar taking place, he took off his ecclesiastical garments and put on layman's clothing and left the city. He fled on account of the fear that had seized him and he has not been found to this day.<sup>124</sup> The Church boldly proclaimed the doctrines<sup>125</sup> of the orthodox faith and advanced through the encouragement and intercessions of the Holy Spirit.

### *Apa Longinus' Nature*

38. After standing his ground in battle, blessed Apa Longinus spent another twenty years as head of the monastery of the laura. He was deemed worthy to place his hands over the eyes of his father Apa Lucius, just as Joseph had placed his hands over the eyes of Jacob.<sup>126</sup> Apa Longinus shepherded the brothers in all knowledge<sup>127</sup> and commanded them to flee vainglory, that is, the rule of all the passions.<sup>128</sup> (From vainglory comes the love of money, which is the root of evil; the love of money begets anger; anger begets vanity; <vanity><sup>129</sup> begets envy, the evil wild beast.)<sup>130</sup> He also taught them to zealously devote themselves to handiwork whenever appropriate and to celebrate the eucharist<sup>131</sup> in the fear of God. He was an example to the monks in everything, nurturing all of them, whether through food for their bodies or through the teaching of the Lord. For he was in their midst

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<sup>121</sup>Coptic *-tajro*; see n. 113 above.

<sup>122</sup>Ps 10:7 (11:6). This is one of the rare instances in monastic literature where the number of the psalm is given.

<sup>123</sup>Gk *haireisis*.

<sup>124</sup>The Ethiopic version ends here.

<sup>125</sup>Coptic/Gk *dogma*, which above has been translated as "ordinance" and "tome."

<sup>126</sup>See Gen 50:1. See par. 26.

<sup>127</sup>Gk *epistēmē*, which might also mean "discipline"; see Lampe 535A(II).

<sup>128</sup>The *Apophthegmata* preserve a striking saying by Apa Longinus on the passions (Ward, 123): "A woman knows she has conceived when she no longer loses any blood. So it is with the soul, she knows she has conceived the Holy Spirit when the passions stop coming out of her. But as long as one is held back in the passions, how can one dare to believe one is sinless? Give blood and receive the Spirit."

<sup>129</sup>Instead of "vanity," which should follow in progression, the Coptic text repeats "anger;" but the scribe probably skipped over "vanity" and saw "anger" and so mistakenly repeated it.

<sup>130</sup>See Eccl 5:10, 1 Tim 6:10

<sup>131</sup>Gk *sumaxis*.

like a bishop, and everyone who wanted to live in accordance with God's law looked to him and modeled their lives according to the virtues he exhibited. For who hated vainglory like that man? Or who reached the heights<sup>132</sup> in daily practice like him, as he kept his thoughts humble? For he was humble in every way: he always looked at the ground as he walked,<sup>133</sup> which was a way of walking in wisdom. For he never bore at this time the false dress of lying and deception,<sup>134</sup> giving the external appearance of being pious while being filled inside with hypocrisy and lawlessness.<sup>135</sup> Who was patient like Apa Longinus, who was patient with those who stumbled in their transgressions until he restored them to their original condition?

### *The Death of Apa Longinus*

39. Living the monastic life this way, he departed this life to be with the Lord whom he loved on the second of Mshir, going to his rest with all his fathers whom he resembled in his perfect and virtuous life, that is, the patriarchs and prophets and apostles and all the saints who did the will of God. How great was the grief on the day he went to his rest! Not only his fellow monks, but also the city and district of Alexandria,<sup>136</sup> especially those living in the surrounding countryside,<sup>137</sup> cried out with loud voices and with tears because such a father as this had left them. And their cries and tears mixed with a hymn that they sang, the old men seeking the staff of their old age, the young men seeking the bridle for their chastity, those who had become novices in monastic obedience seeking the one who would lead them into the kingdom of heaven, those who were married seeking the one who established the law for them, the poor seeking the one who cared for them, those seeking healing for their illnesses, whether of body or soul. In short, his concern for all of them, whether monk or lay person, was to bring them to salvation, presenting all of them as saints for the Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, consubstantial and life-giving, now and forever and ever. Amen.

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<sup>132</sup>There is a sly play on words here: "heights" renders *-jose*, which Apa Longinus reaches through his aversion to vainglory; above, vainglory leads to vanity and arrogance, *jasi nhêt*. *Jose* and *jasi* come from the same root, *jise*, "to elevate, exalt, raise high." Early monastic spirituality often emphasizes "the heights of humility."

<sup>133</sup>Embedded in this clause in Coptic is *paht*, which means "to bend oneself," and can mean "to prostrate oneself" as a sign of humility and deference, which occurs several times in the *Life*.

<sup>134</sup>"Dress" renders *schêma*, which can also suggest the monastic habit.

<sup>135</sup>"Lawlessness," *anomia*, may also suggest "unlawful opinion," therefore "heresy," the opposite of *eusebês*, "pious," which often carries the added connotation of "orthodox" (see n. 94 above), an important virtue to the writer of the *Life*.

<sup>136</sup>Coptic *tosh*, translated as "district" here, may more specifically mean "nome" or "diocese."

<sup>137</sup>Is this a suggestion that the city was strongly Chalcedonian while the outlying areas were anti-Chalcedonian?

# **BOOK REVIEWS**

## ***Ascetic Behavior in Greco-Roman Antiquity***

*Edited by Vincent L Wimbush. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1990. Pp. Xxviii+ 514. \$ 55.00 (hardcover). ISBN 0-8006-3105-b.*

This huge source book on Monasticism and other ascetic movements in the early centuries of Christianity consists of twenty-eight texts translated from Greek, Latin, Coptic, Syriac and Hebrew. A good number of these texts have been previously unavailable in any modern language. Each is introduced and translated by a leading authority in Patristics or Church History. The texts represent different religions and philosophical schools and they come from different geographical locations. The texts are divided into five types according to their literary genres, making the five parts of the book- homily, theological exhortation, ritual and revelation, life and teaching, and documentary evidence. Each part is provided by a scholarly introduction by the translator.

It is enough to give the contents of one part to show the high quality of the material here, that is Part four, *Life and Teachings: St Syncretica*, the founder of monasticism in Alexandria, by Pseudo-Athanasius; *Life of St. Severus* by Zacharias; *Moses the Ethiopian* from collected sources; *St. Theodore* from 'The life of Pachomius'; *Life of Paul the first hermit* by St. Jerome; *'The Story of Mygdonia and Tertia*, from 'The Acts of Thomas'; *Chaeremon the Stoic on Egyptian Temple Askesis*; and *'The Life of Chariton'*.

This book is an indispensable tool for scholars and students of Patristic and Ancient History, and it will definitely fill important gaps in the available references for early monasticism.

## ***Overall Perspectives on the Works of Fr. Matthew the Poor: An Analytical Study of his Spiritual Treasury***

*By Prof. Fayek M. Ishak. Published by Coptologia Publications, (P.O. Box 235, Don Mills Postal Station, Don Mills, Ontario, Canada M3C 2S2), 1998. Pp. 252 (Paper). \$12.00 CDN, \$9.00 US*

Among the God-pleasing ascetics in our era whose dedication and sanctity have illumined the craggy Wilderness of Scete, the name of Father Matta al-Maskîn stands exceptionally striking as a vivid example of the spiritual animation of Coptic monasticism and the profound conviction of the superiority of the world of the spirit and everything that is otherworldly. As a contemporary luminary of the highest order, he bears the everburning torch of desert asceticism, which was initially kindled by the great fourth-century anchorite, St. Antony, the Great.

Most of the major works of Father Matta al-Maskin are still untranslated from Arabic. In writing this extensive overview of more than one hundred books, beside numerous pamphlets, which Father Matta wrote during the last five decades, Professor Ishak has done a great service to the English-speaking readers. After an introductory chapter on Father Matta, emphasizing his pioneering role in the revival of Coptic monasticism, the author introduces his works in 27 chapters. These are arranged into themes since Father Matta has written extensively on nearly every branch of spiritual life and religious scholarship, including Bible Study, prayer life, monasticism, liturgy and Church life, the Theotokos and Church history. Separate chapters deal with each of the major works; examples are The Eucharist, St. Athanasius the Apostolic, and St. Paul the Apostle. Separate chapters also deal with each book of the monumental NT Commentary, which Father Matta has started in 1989; nine volumes have already appeared.

The book is concluded with a bibliography of all the writings of Father Matta, arranged in the chronological order of their publication. Separate lists are also provided for those publications that are available in English, French, and German. Other lists contain the articles of Father Matta that appeared in international journals and publications in English, French, Dutch, Greek, Italian, Russian, Serbian and Spanish.

Professor Ishak should be commended for introducing the work of Father Matta to the English speaking world, including the new generations of Copts in the Diaspora. The translation of this spiritual legacy is now the challenge for a new generation of scholars in a new century.

### ***The Church of Christ: A Biblical Ecclesiology for Today***

*By Everett Ferguson. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996. Pp.xx+443 pp. \$ 35.00 (paperback). ISBN 0-8028-4189-9.*

Professor Ferguson who is a leading authority in both biblical and patristic studies is well equipped to write this exhaustive text on the biblical theology of the Church. He is the editor of '*Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*', and author of the classic '*Backgrounds of Early Christianity*'. Beginning with the Old Testament basis of the NT teaching about the Church, the author then covers the traditional topics of ecclesiology while carefully grounding them in the person of Christ (Christology) and his work (soteriology). All the biblical images of the Church (People of God, Body of Christ, Temple of the Holy Spirit and others) are examined in depth. Since the Church is the Body of Christ, the author emphasizes in the final chapters how Christ does his work in the world now through the Church. These chapters discuss Church assembly and worship, continuing ministry and teaching.

Although the book is a scholarly textbook on the Church, yet it is easy enough to follow by any serious student of the Bible and can be of much help to Sunday school teachers.

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