

**Embodying the Virgin:
The Physical Materialization of the Cult of Mary in Late Antique Egypt
(Fifth-Ninth Centuries CE)**

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Abstract

This is a study of the physical manifestation of the cult of the Virgin Mary in Late Antique Egypt, that is, of the point at which Marian veneration, which scholars generally agree coalesced in the fifth century, spilled over into the physical sphere. Three diverging source materials (papyri/inscriptions, archaeology and iconography) are explored in order to answer the central question, which asks: to what extent does the evidence for the physical materialization of the cult of Mary reflect its geographical and chronological diffusion in Late Antique Egypt?

Each of the sources materials are collected and analyzed in an independent chapter. The study begins with the papyrological/epigraphical evidence, as it represents the largest body of materials and offers the most substantial datable evidence. Although the papyri and inscriptions are not themselves tangible manifestations of the cult of Mary, they nevertheless mention at least 23 churches or monasteries that were dedicated to her. In Chapter 2, the extant archaeological evidence supplements the data collected in the textual materials by providing an analysis of the layout and iconographical programmes of the few churches of Mary that are actually preserved. Chapter 3 collects 43 wall paintings that depict Mary and analyzes their varying iconographic patterns and immediate spatial contexts. The individual source materials are then brought together for a broader geographical and chronological investigation, which demonstrates that despite the assumed presence of a cult of Mary by the fifth century, this was only the starting point for the consolidation and diffusion of her cult, which reached its peak in the sixth and, especially, the seventh century.

This study is the first synthesis of the physical output of the cult of Mary in Late Antique Egypt and thus advances our knowledge of her integration into the society of Christian Egypt on both the chronological and topographical axes. As such, it is also of importance to studies of her cult elsewhere in the Late Antique world, where sources may not be as plentiful and varied.

Preface

This study centers on the physical materialization of the cult of the Virgin Mary in Egypt – that is, the point at which Marian veneration spills over into the physical sphere. The inspiration for this dissertation stems from a graduate seminar that I took with Theodore de Bruyn in the first semester of my doctoral programme. The subject of my final paper centered on a study of the archaeological evidence for early churches dedicated to Mary, although throughout the course of this research I noted that there was a lacuna in the scholarship, especially with regards to a comprehensive synthesis of the extant material culture relating to the cult of Mary. It was after this discovery that I was encouraged to pursue this topic for my doctoral thesis.

As a result, I initiated a project that would bring the major source materials together into a single study, which could then analyze the diffusion of the physical cult of Mary across both the geographical and chronological axes. Such a pursuit led me to a study of three vastly different subjects – that is, papyrology/epigraphy, archaeology, and art history – which would become intimately familiar to me over the course of the next five years. During this time, I benefitted from the opportunity to study Coptic with my thesis-supervisor Jitse Dijkstra, which greatly broadened the amount of papyrological/epigraphical materials that I could include in this study.

Throughout the course of my doctorate I was also afforded the occasion to participate as a supervisor on various archaeological projects, most notably the excavation of the Late Antique church at Golemo Gradište, in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in the summer of 2011 and 2012. This project, led by Carolyn Snively of the University of Gettysburg, not only allowed me to familiarize myself with the excavation of an ecclesiastical site, but it also gave me the occasion to publish a relief stela from the excavations. During this time I profited immensely from her knowledge of Late Antique Christianity and I thank her for our many fruitful discussions at the edge of our trenches and back at the dig house over a glass of rakia.

The completion of this study would not have been possible without the generous scholarship I received from the committee of the Elise and Annemarie Jacobi Scholarship and Kommission für Alte Geschichte und Epigraphik des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, which allowed me to live and conduct research in Munich from January to March 2013. I benefitted immensely from my two months in residence at the Kommission, during which time I

had unparalleled access to papyrological and epigraphical resources that were otherwise unavailable to me. I especially thank Christof Schuler and Rudolf Haensch for their kindness and scholarly expertise. I extend my gratitude also to the graduate and post-graduate students at the Kommission for the kindness that they showed me upon arrival and the many engaging conversations we had during my stay.

After my time in Munich, I was invited by Jitse Dijkstra to participate on his new graffiti project in the Khnum temple on the island of Elephantine in March of 2013. As my dissertation focuses entirely on Egypt, this was not an opportunity that I could pass up. I arranged to spend the first two weeks in Cairo visiting the museums and sites related to my dissertation. I was graciously hosted by Cornelius von Pilgrim at the Swiss Institute of Architectural and Archaeological Research on Ancient Egypt, who generously provided me with access to their incredible library. These two weeks were followed by a research trip to Aswan, where I was able to study two of the sites that feature prominently in my study (the church in the Isis temple, and the churches of Philae). I would like to thank Wolfgang Müller, Assistant Director of the Swiss Institute of Architectural and Archaeological Research on Ancient Egypt and Holger Kockelmann of Tübingen University for kindly showing me around their current projects in Aswan and Philae respectively, as well as a University of Ottawa for the Research Travel Grant that funded this trip.

Throughout this process I encountered many individuals who guided my research, offered helpful advice or read parts of this dissertation, all whom I am indebted to for the realization of this thesis. Firstly, to my colleagues in the Department of Classics and Religious Studies, I thank you for fostering an incredible environment in which to complete this degree. A special thank you is offered to Pierluigi Piovanelli, Geoffrey Greatrex and Richard Burgess for offering your scholarly expertise and kind words of encouragement, Antonia Holden and Heather Loube, who were a constant source of support and enthusiasm throughout this whole process and Heather Barkman for being a continuous source of motivation and wonderful friend. Secondly, I am grateful to the many scholars who offered comments on parts of this thesis that were presented at various conferences in Ottawa, Toronto (twice), Munich, and Syracuse. I benefitted greatly from our fruitful discussions. Thirdly, I give thanks to the numerous scholars who responded to requests for permission to use their illustrations and/or plans, and the kind words of encouragement that often followed, especially Peter Grossmann, Edda Bresciani, Marguerite

Rassart-Debergh, Mieczysław Rodziewicz, and Dominique Bénazeth. A special thanks is owed to Karel Innemée of Leiden University for providing me with high resolution images from his conservation project at Deir el-Surian. For their helpful discussions of various elements in this dissertation, I am indebted to Jacques van der Vliet, Jan Bremmer and Gertrud van Loon. A thank you is also owed to the University of Ottawa, who offered me a generous Admission Scholarship, as well as the Ontario Ministry of Colleges and Universities for the Ontario Graduate Scholarship, which provided significant financial aid from 2012-2014.

A special thank you is reserved for my supervisor, Jitse Dijkstra, for his constant guidance, encouragement and patience. I am grateful for the countless opportunities you provided me during my degree towards both my academic and professional development. I thank you for instilling in me a love of Egypt and for making sure that I got to experience it firsthand, but most importantly, for being an example to which I can aspire. It has been a pleasure working alongside you these last five years and I look forward to many more years of collaboration.

I am grateful for the incredible support and encouragement that I received from my partner Graham throughout this process. I am so thankful to have someone who inspires and motivates me every day. An immeasurable debt of gratitude is finally owed to my parents Linda and Wayne, and my brother Michael, without whom I would never be where I am today. The love and support that you have shown me cannot be put into words. You have always been my biggest champions, and I am forever grateful for your help during every step of this journey.

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Abbreviations

The Patristic texts that appear in this study are abbreviated according to G.W.H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford, 1968) = Lampe, *PGL*. Papyrological abbreviations follow J.F. Oates et al. (eds), *A Checklist of Editions of Greek and Latin Papyri, Ostraca and Tablets* (Atlanta, 2001⁵), an updated version of which is available online at http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/scriptorium/papyrus/texts/clist_papyri.html. Epigraphical abbreviations are according to *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum* (Leiden and Amsterdam, 1923-) = *SEG*.

References to scholarly works are quoted in full the first time they appear in text and thereafter in abbreviated form. The Select Bibliography at the end of this study includes those titles which are referenced more than once. Journal titles are abbreviated according to J. Marouzeau (ed.), *L'année philologique. Bibliographie critique et analytique de l'antiquité gréco-latine* (Paris, 1924-), except when different abbreviations are preferred in Egyptology, for which, see W. Helck, E. Otto and H. Westendorf (eds), *Lexikon der Ägyptologie*, 7 vols (Wiesbaden, 1975-1992) = *LÄ*. Reference works follow S. Hornblower et al. (eds), *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* (Oxford, 2012⁴) = *OCD*⁴. Other abbreviations used in this study are:

<i>BMGS</i>	<i>Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies</i>
<i>Copt.Enc.</i>	A.S. Atiya (ed.), <i>The Coptic Encyclopedia</i> , 8 vols (New York, 1991)
<i>Crum, Dict.</i>	W.E. Crum (ed.), <i>Coptic Dictionary</i> (Oxford, 1939)
<i>ECA</i>	<i>Eastern Christian Art</i>
<i>FHN III</i>	T. Eide et al. (eds), <i>Fontes Historiae Nubiorum. Vol. III: From the First to the Sixth Century AD</i> (Bergen, 1998)
<i>Förster, WB</i>	H. Förster, <i>Wörterbuch der griechischen Wörter in den koptischen dokumentarischen Texten</i> (Berlin, 2002)
<i>JCSCS</i>	<i>Journal of the Canadian Society for Coptic Studies</i>
<i>REAC</i>	<i>Ricerche di Egittologia e di Antichità Copte</i>
<i>Timm, Christlich-koptische Ägypten</i>	S. Timm, <i>Das christlich-koptische Ägypten in arabischer Zeit</i> , 6 vols (Wiesbaden, 1984-1992)

WB

F. Preisigke, E. Kiessling et al. (eds), *Wörterbuch der griechischen Papyrusurkunden usw. aus Ägypten* (Berlin, 1925-)

General Introduction

Setting the Scene: The Debate on the Origins of the Cult of Mary

[...] popular devotion does not lend itself to objective analysis, especially after a lapse of fifteen centuries. There are, however, certain tangible manifestations that are susceptible to study: the construction of Marian churches, the presence or absence of relics and renowned icons, the institution of feasts and processions, the composition of sermons and hymns, the incidence of reported miracles.¹

This all-encompassing definition by C. Mango provides an essential point of reference against which we can evaluate the notion of ‘cult’ and its application to the developing veneration of the Virgin Mary in early Christianity. Here, he reflects on the dichotomy of early fifth-century Constantinople; a city that was embroiled in the theological controversies about the Theotokos, but lacked a church specifically dedicated in her honour. Thus, his focus on the ‘tangible manifestations’ of her cult marked a turning point in Marian scholarship, providing a clear standard for indicating the existence of a fully functioning cult of Mary.² There remains a certain ambiguity in this definition, however, which has divided scholarship, namely the volume of evidence required in order to ascertain the existence of a well-established Marian cult. As such, this characterization of ‘cult’ has sparked one of the most important debates in the field of Marian studies, one which questions whether we can acknowledge the existence of a cult of the Virgin Mary before the Council of Ephesus in 431 CE.³

The debate has led to two diverging approaches to the study of the development of the cult of Mary. The first approach is largely centred on Mango’s definition of ‘cult’ and argues that there is little proof that anything like a fully-formed cult existed prior to 431. One of the main proponents of this position is A. Cameron, who argues that the fifth century represents the

¹ C. Mango, ‘Constantinople as Theotokos’, in M. Vassilaki (ed.), *Mother of God: Representations of the Virgin in Byzantine Art* (Milan, 2000) 17-25 at 17.

² For the initial debate concerning the establishment of a cult of Mary see e.g. G. Giamberardini, *Il culto Mariano in Egitto*, 3 vols (Jerusalem, 1975), esp. vol. 1, which deals with all of the evidence for the manifestation of the cult from the first to sixth centuries in Egypt; K.G. Holum, *Theodosian Empresses: Women and Imperial Dominion in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley, 1982) 130-74; V. Limberis, *Divine Heiress: The Virgin Mary and the Creation of Christian Constantinople* (London and New York, 1994).

³ All dates in this dissertation are CE, unless otherwise indicated.

formative period in the growth of the cult of Mary, which continues to develop well into the eighth century. While she recognizes that the impetus for the cult begins to appear in the late fourth century, which arises out of the debate concerning Mary's virginity, Christology and the self-definition of the Church after the Council of Nicaea in 325, she measures its manifestation against other cults of the same period which are more clearly and conventionally visible, such as the cult of St Thecla in Asia Minor.⁴ B.V. Pentcheva, on the other hand, analyzes the material from a top-down perspective, arguing that imperial sponsorship of the cult of the Virgin is not apparent until the fifth century, especially in relation to the construction of churches and the establishment of Marian festivals.⁵ Although both scholars acknowledge some substantiation for Marian devotion (that is, deep respect or reverence) before 431, they are skeptical as to whether we can assert that a full-blown cult of Mary actually existed before this date.

The second approach is marked especially by the work of S. Shoemaker, who has argued on several occasions that both individual and collective veneration of Mary occurred prior to the Council of Ephesus.⁶ He posits that Marian veneration was not a by-product of the Nestorian controversy and the ensuing Council of Ephesus, but rather that the acknowledged existence of such a 'cult' formed the crux of these debates. In this way, Shoemaker takes up the arguments of K. Holum, who states that Nestorius was scandalized by the near deification of Mary in Constantinople, and that, therefore, her veneration must have pre-dated the Nestorian controversy.⁷ Thus, Shoemaker contextualizes his arguments within the theological debates coming out of the fourth-century Church Fathers, who according to him, bear witness to an increasing cultic devotion to the Virgin Mary, while also highlighting the broader aspects of her nascent 'cult'.

⁴ A. Cameron, 'The Cult of the Virgin in Late Antiquity: Religious Development and Myth-Making', in R.N. Swanson (ed.), *The Church and Mary* (Suffolk, 2004) 1-21. See also her earlier studies, 'The Theotokos in Sixth-Century Constantinople: A City Finds its Symbol', *JThS* (1978) 79-108, and 'The Early Cult of the Virgin', in Vassilaki, *Mother of God*, 3-15, in which she advocates a later date for the establishment of a fully-formed Marian cult.

⁵ B.V. Pentcheva, *Icons and Power: The Mother of God in Byzantium* (University Park, PA, 2006) 11-6.

⁶ S. Shoemaker, 'Marian Liturgies and Devotion in Early Christianity', in S.J. Boss (ed.), *Mary: The Complete Resource* (London, 2007) 130-45, 'Epiphanius of Salamis, the Kollyridians, and the Early Dormition Narratives: The Cult of the Virgin in the Fourth Century', *J ECS* 16 (2008) 371-401, and 'The Cult of the Virgin in the Fourth Century: A Fresh Look at Some Old and New Sources', in C. Maunder (ed.), *The Origins of the Cult of the Virgin Mary* (London and New York, 2008) 71-87. Cf. e.g. R.M. Price, 'Marian Piety and the Nestorian Controversy', in Swanson, *Church*, 31-8, who argues that the conception of Mary as Theotokos was not a major issue in the Nestorian controversy.

⁷ Shoemaker, 'Cult', 71, referring to Holum, *Theodosian Empresses*, 154. This theme is taken up by Limberis, *Divine Heiress*, who highlights the role of the Theodosian empresses, especially Pulcheria, in fostering the cult of Mary, and her role in the Nestorian controversy.

The polarization of the aforementioned approaches is mitigated by the work of J. McGuckin, whose nuanced study of the early cult of Mary attempts to reconcile both opposing camps. First of all, he uses the pre-fourth century evidence to illustrate the presence of a ‘community of interest’, which originates in Mary’s inclusion, however minor, in the Gospel traditions. He suggests that the development of her ‘cult’, moreover, was not linear, but instead largely depended upon the dynamics of ‘preservation and extension’ of the available evidence from which we can distinguish a ‘cult’. Such material is found abundantly in the texts, but considerably less so in the material evidence. He thus questions whether a paucity of ‘cult’ is reliably discerned from a paucity of physical evidence, and asserts that our present hermeneutical tension stems from external notions of how Mary functioned within the wider contexts of Christian communities. In taking such a position, McGuckin places himself outside of the polarizing debate, in which scholars see the origins of the cult of Mary either before or after 431. At the same time, he admits that by the fifth century there is no question that the cult had achieved its developed form.⁸

The common thread throughout this debate is the problematic notion of ‘cult’. As is the case with terms such as ‘religion’ and ‘magic’,⁹ ‘cult’ is an etic concept, with which we impose modern, external notions of the term on early Christian rituals and practices, whereas the distinction between what is and what is not a ‘cult’ would not have been perceived so clearly in Antiquity. It seems appropriate, then, to adopt a wider definition of cult, such as the one given by J.B. Rives, who equates it more generally with worship, ‘specifically the various practices and rituals employed in worship’.¹⁰ Such a definition avoids Mango’s strictly outlined characterization of cult, and recognizes our conscious choice to use the word broadly as an umbrella term for various aspects of worship. In this manner, the present study follows in the footsteps of McGuckin and contends that the idea of ‘cult’ is a loose concept and that the appearance of a fully-fledged Marian cult cannot be reduced to a precise date. Although many of the aspects we commonly associate with ‘cult’ are certainly present in the fifth century, such as

⁸ J. McGuckin, ‘The Early Cult of Mary and Inter-Religious Contexts in the Fifth Century Church’, in Maunder, *Origins*, 1-22.

⁹ H.S. Versnel, *Coping with the Gods: Wayward Readings in Greek Theology* (Leiden, 2011) 551, remarks about these terms: ‘In scholarly discourse we have no other choice than using etic terminology, which of course we must define before launching it’. The same idea can be applied to the term ‘cult’. The author would like to thank J.N. Bremmer for his helpful discussion on this matter.

¹⁰ J.B. Rives, *Religion in the Roman Empire* (Malden, MA, 2007) 23.

churches, liturgy and intercessory prayers, we cannot exclude that there was a 'community of interest' in the preceding century.

With these considerations in mind, let us now trace the development of the cult of Mary from its earliest forms, leading up to its eventual physical materialization. While this overview must necessarily remain concise, it nevertheless demonstrates the complexity and relative slowness with which the cult developed, especially in comparison with the linear developments of other Christian cults (such as that of Thecla), and that its protracted development is intrinsically linked to the Christological debates of the late fourth and early fifth centuries.¹¹ Before this time, Mary only appears sporadically in early Christian discourse and its ensuing liturgy.

As is well-known, Mary first appears in the canonical gospels, although few details of her life can be discerned from them. In fact, she functions principally as a character within the larger biblical narrative. Modern scholarship has approached this subject from both a theological and a historical perspective.¹² The 1980s and 1990s also saw a rise in feminist interpretations of the gospels, in which Mary was presented as an exemplar, whose existence in the narratives, even if shaped by patriarchal concerns, does not wholly suppress the feminine.¹³ Recent studies, however, refute the notion that Marian devotion exists within the gospel traditions, and argue that specific women in the New Testament merely function as literary devices (role models, idealized figures), designed to serve the patriarchal interests of the narrative.¹⁴

The paucity of information about Mary in the canonical gospels has made a historical reconstruction of her life difficult. As a result, ancient writers and modern historians alike have turned to non-canonical writings (apocrypha) to fill in the perceived gaps in the biblical

¹¹ Cameron, 'Cult', 5-6 and 21. See, generally, S.J. Davis, *The Cult of St. Thecla* (Oxford, 2001), for a collection of the materials associated with the cult of Thecla, which strikingly contrasts with the available evidence for the early cult of Mary.

¹² On the theological study of this material, see generally, the treatment of J. McHugh, *The Mother of Jesus in the New Testament* (London, 1975); and R.E. Brown et al. (eds), *Mary in the New Testament: A Collaborative Assessment by Protestant and Roman Catholic Scholars* (New York and Mahwah, 1978), who look for a pre-Gospel history of distinct themes that are also applied to Mary (i.e. female virginity). See also, M.A. Getty-Sullivan, *Women in the New Testament* (Collegeville, MN, 2001) 19-35. For a historical perspective on Mary's role in the Gospels, see e.g. M. Clayton, *The Apocryphal Gospels of Mary in Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge, 1998); C. Maunder, 'Mary in the New Testament and the Apocrypha', in Boss, *Mary*, 11-46.

¹³ E.g. M. Daly, *Beyond God the Father* (Boston, 1985²); E. Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York, 1994²).

¹⁴ C. Maunder, 'Origins of the Cult of Mary in the New Testament', in Maunder, *Origins*, 23-39 at 24-5.

narratives to discern her possible role within the early Christian Church.¹⁵ A substantial portion of our knowledge of Mary's life stems from the apocryphal *Protoevangelium of James*, which has provided the basis for much of her later doctrine and particular aspects of her iconography. The *Protoevangelium* has been dated to the second century, at the latest, and incorporates elements from the infancy stories of Jesus in the canonical gospels, which in turn draw on narratives from the Old Testament and earlier texts and oral traditions.¹⁶ It has also been suggested that the narrative altered and/or added information to texts concerning the life of Mary that were circulating at the same time.¹⁷ In this sense, the *Protoevangelium* serves as an intertext, which absorbs and transforms pre-existing texts and traditions, in order to create a retelling of the narrative, which shifts the focus to the religious life of Mary.¹⁸

By the fourth century, there is a developed literary tradition for Mary, and it is at this time that we encounter the oldest extant liturgical material associated with her cult. The first evidence which is often cited is an intercessory prayer to the Virgin that is preserved on a small, fragmentary papyrus from Egypt.¹⁹ It has been considered as a prototype of the *sub tuum praesidium* (the oldest extant hymn to the Theotokos), and a date of as early as the third century has been proposed.²⁰ Two more recent studies by H. Förster, however, have provided convincing evidence for a date after the sixth century, based on the use of brown ink, which is uncommon before the sixth century, and paleographical parallels.²¹ Later commentators on this prayer have

¹⁵ See, generally, Clayton, *Apocryphal Gospels*; J.K. Elliott, 'Mary in the Apocryphal New Testament', in Maunder, *Origins*, 57-70; E. Norelli, *Marie des apocryphes. Enquête sur la mère de Jésus dans le christianisme antique* (Geneva, 2009).

¹⁶ É. Cothenet, 'Le Protévangile de Jacques: origine, genre et signification d'un premier midrash chrétien sur la nativité de Marie', in ANRW II.25.6 (1988) 4252-69; W.S. Vorster, 'The Protoevangelium of James and Intertextuality', in T. Baarda et al. (eds), *Text and Testimony: Essays on New Testament and Apocryphal Literature in Honour of A.F.J. Klijn* (Kampen, 1988) 262-75; Maunder, 'Mary in the New Testament', 39-40; Elliott, 'Mary', 59-60; L.C. Vuong, *Gender and Purity in the Protevangelium of James* (Tübingen, 2013).

¹⁷ J.K. Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament: A Collection of Apocryphal Christian Literature in an English Translation* (Oxford, 1993) 46-50.

¹⁸ See, generally, H.R. Smid, *Protoevangelium Jacobi: A Commentary* (Assen, 1965), who compiles a list of references to possible sources for the *Protoevangelium*; Vorster, 'Protoevangelium', 268-75. Cf. R. Hock, *The Infancy Gospel of Jesus* (Santa Rosa, CA, 1995), who sees the text as an encomium to Mary.

¹⁹ P.Ryl. III 470.

²⁰ E. Lobel in P.Ryl. III 470 intro, dates the papyrus to the fourth (?) century, G. Giamberardini, 'Il "Sub tuum praesidium" e il titolo "Theotokos" nella tradizione egiziana', *Marianum* 31 (1969) 324-62 at 348-62, to the third century, and O. Stegmüller, 'Sub tuum praesidium: Bemerkungen zur ältesten Überlieferung', *ZKTh* 74 (1952) 76-82 at 78 and 82, to the fourth to sixth centuries.

²¹ H. Förster, 'Zur ältesten Überlieferung der marianischen Antiphon "Sub tuum praesidium"', *Biblos* 44 (1995) 183-92, dates the papyrus to the sixth or seventh century, but in 'Die älteste marianische Antiphon ein Fehldatierung? Überlegungen zum "ältesten Beleg" des Sub tuum praesidium', *Journal of Coptic Studies* 7 (2005) 99-109, suggests an even later date between the seventh and ninth centuries. For an overview of the scholarship on this papyrus, see

overlooked the studies conducted by Förster, and suggest that the palaeography of the document indicates a date closer to 400.²² Even if the date of this particular prayer is later, we know that prayers addressed to the Virgin Mary were certainly circulating as early as the second half of the fourth century. In fact, Gregory of Nazianzus provides one of the earliest witnesses to such a prayer in his *Oration* 24, which has been dated to 379.²³ The attestation of this prayer in Constantinople in the late fourth century suggests that similar prayers were probably circulating widely at this time.²⁴

The last quarter of the fourth century marks the first instance in which the developing liturgy is discussed in relation to a group of individuals actively venerating the Virgin. The earliest such attestation is recorded in Epiphanius of Salamis' *Panarion* (59), which was written c. 374-377 and describes the heresies of the Church.²⁵ In particular, he discusses the Kollyridians, a group that observed regular liturgical celebrations of Mary. The existence of a historical group called 'Kollyridians' has been contested, but an argument has been made to associate them with a similar group mentioned in a fourth-century Greek apocryphal text called the *Six Books*.²⁶ The group habitually venerated Mary and employed rituals similar to the ones attributed to the Kollyridians by Epiphanius.²⁷ Similar practices are recorded in the *Jerusalem Armenian Lectionary*, which is dated to c. 417-439 and outlines the annual liturgical festivals of Jerusalem. This lectionary refers to a feast of the 'memory of Mary' which took place at the church of the *kathisma* of the Theotokos, midway between the Holy City and Bethlehem, on 15

T.S. de Bruyn and J.H.F. Dijkstra, 'Greek Amulets and Formularies from Egypt Containing Christian Elements: A Checklist of Papyri, Parchments, Ostraka, and Tablets', *BASP* 48 (2011) 163-216 at 212-3 (no. 176); and T.S. de Bruyn, 'Greek Amulets from Egypt Invoking Mary as Expressions of "Lived Religion"', *JCSCS* 3-4 (2012) 55-69 at 56.

²² E.g. Shoemaker, 'Cult', 72-3.

²³ On the date see e.g. J. Mossey (ed.), *Grégoire de Nazianze: Discours 24-26* (Paris, 1981) 27-8; M. Vinson, *St Gregory of Nazianzus' 'Select Orations': Text in Translation* (Washington, 2003) 142-56.

²⁴ L.M. Peltomaa, *The Image of the Virgin Mary in the Akathistos Hymn* (Leiden, 2001) 36-9, 62-77; Shoemaker, 'Cult', 73-4.

²⁵ K. Holl and J. Dummer, *Epiphanius* (Berlin, 1985³); F. Williams, *The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis* (Leiden, 1993).

²⁶ Shoemaker, 'Cult', 76-83, questions the actual existence of such a group, but believes that Epiphanius was writing in response to real religious phenomena of the late fourth century. Cf. Cameron, 'Cult', 6-7, who argues that Epiphanius is the only early heresiologist to mention the Kollyridians, and later references to this group all derive from him. Thus, we must question the validity of this claim.

²⁷ The rituals of both groups are similar, except that those described in the *Six Books* apocryphon make no mention of women as priests, which is one of the central problems that Epiphanius addresses in his discussion of the Kollyridians.

August.²⁸ Many of these festivals have been linked to the Dormition narratives, the earliest surviving of which, the Ethiopic *Liber Requitei*, is dated as early as the fourth century. Current scholarship finds a correlation between the increasing interest in her Dormition/Assumption with the institution of festivals and the building of Marian churches.²⁹

These disparate elements of Marian veneration come to a head in the early fifth century during the Theotokos/Christotokos debate between Cyril of Alexandria and Nestorius, and many scholars have marked this debate as the impetus for the wider dissemination of the cult of the Virgin across the Mediterranean.³⁰ This debate denoted the first attempt to systematically stress the interdependence of Christ and Mary in theological discourse, through the definition of the true nature of Christ.³¹ The Christology that emerged from the self-definition of the Church at Ephesus ultimately led to the formulation of a complimentary Marian narrative, which was entirely dependent on her acclamation as Theotokos ('God-Bearer').³² Several scholars have proposed that Pulcheria played a role in the promulgation of the term 'Theotokos', highlighting her contribution to the eventual demise of Nestorius and the extent to which she was able to influence the Council at Ephesus.³³ Recent scholarship, however, has concentrated on the work of the contemporary Church historian Socrates (7.29-34), and demonstrates that the conflict between Nestorius and Pulcheria more likely arose from his challenge to Pulcheria's prestige and

²⁸ For the text, see A. Renoux, *Le Codex Arménien Jérusalem 121* (Turnhout, 1971). For a discussion of the date, see e.g. Shoemaker, 'Cult', 74-6.

²⁹ S.C. Mimouni, *Dormition et Assomption de Marie: histoires des traditions anciennes* (Paris, 1995) 33-6; Clayton, *Apocryphal Gospels*, 24-6; S. Shoemaker, 'The (Re?)Discovery of the Kathisma Church and the Cult of the Virgin in Late Antique Palestine', *Maria: A Journal of Marian Studies* 2 (2001) 21-72 at 51-65, and *Ancient Traditions of the Virgin Mary's Dormition and Assumption* (Oxford, 2002) 78-80.

³⁰ J. McGuckin, *St. Cyril of Alexandria: The Christological Controversy, Its History, Theology, and Texts* (Leiden, 1994); N. Constatas, 'Weaving the Body of God: Proclus of Constantinople, the Theotokos, and the Loom of the Flesh', *JECS* 3 (1995) 169-94, and *Proclus of Constantinople and the Cult of the Virgin in Late Antiquity: Homilies 1-5* (Leiden, 2003); R.M. Price, 'The Theotokos and the Council of Ephesus', in Maunder, *Origins*, 89-103.

³¹ See, generally, R.A. Norris, *The Christological Controversy* (Philadelphia, 1980); S. Wessel 'Nestorius, Mary and Controversy in Cyril of Alexandria's Homily IV (*De Maria deipara in Nestorium*, CPG 5248)', *AHC* 31 (1999) 1-49; J. McGuckin, *St Cyril of Alexandria: The Christological Controversy: Its History, Theology and Texts* (Crestwood, NY, 2004); S. Wessel, *Cyril of Alexandria and the Nestorian Controversy: The Making of a Saint and of a Heretic* (Oxford, 2004); N. Russell, 'Cyril of Alexandria', in A. Casiday (ed.), *The Orthodox Christian World* (London, 2012) 218-25.

³² A. Atanassova, 'Did Cyril of Alexandria Invent Mariology?', in Maunder, *Origins*, 105-25.

³³ These studies draw especially on the *Letter of Cosmas* (PO 13 (1919) 275-86 at 279) probably written after 451, in which Pulcheria is refused entry into the sanctuary and asks 'Why? Have I not given birth to God', to which Nestorius answers: 'You? You have given birth to Satan!', and she is driven from the sanctuary (holiest of holies, reserved for the priests and emperor). On the letter and its date, see PO 13 (1919) 273-4. For a discussion of the implication of this text in the dispute between Pulcheria and Nestorius, see Holum, *Theodosian Emperresses*, 147-74; and Limberis, *Divine Heiress*, 53-61, who use this passage to suggest that Pulcheria likened herself to the Virgin Mary, derived her earthly authority from her, and thus, served as her representative on earth.

power, and that the Theotokos debate should be seen in the context of a power struggle between the sees of Constantinople and Alexandria.³⁴

In addition to the textual evidence, the complexity of the origins of the cult of Mary is further illustrated through a discussion of the early material evidence. The surviving evidence for any physical manifestations before the fifth century are sparse, and Mary's initial presence is largely (though not exclusively) limited to representations in funerary contexts, such as the catacomb paintings of Rome and Alexandria. These scenes draw exclusively on the New Testament (for example, the Adoration of the Magi and Wedding at Cana), and Mary only appears in paintings that reflect the biblical narrative, so we must question the extent to which these early representations are, in fact, indicative of a Marian 'cult'.³⁵ The construction of Marian churches represents a more tangible manifestation of her cult, but only two such structures are attested archaeologically in the first half of the fifth century. The first is the aforementioned church of the *kathisma* of the Theotokos between Jerusalem and Bethlehem, which is generally dated to 420-450,³⁶ while the second is the church of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome, which is more precisely dated to the reign of Pope Sixtus III (432-440).³⁷

³⁴ P. Périchon and P. Maraval, *Socrate, Histoire ecclésiastique: livre VII, texte et traduction* (Paris, 2007) 107-27. For a discussion of Pulcheria's presumed association with the Virgin, see, generally, K. Cooper, 'Empresses and Theotokos: Gender and Patronage in the Christological Controversy', in Swanson, *Church*, 39-51; L. James, 'The Empress and the Virgin in Early Byzantium: Piety, Authority, and Devotion', in M. Vassilaki (ed.), *Images of the Mother of God: Perceptions of the Theotokos in Byzantium* (Aldershot, 2005) 145-52 at 145-7, who argue that emphasis should be laid on Pulcheria's claim to be the 'bride of Christ', which would have served as a way to align herself with Christ, rather than Mary, since the emperor was seen as Christ's regent on earth. In this manner, she tied her imperial authority to her husband, 'Christ'. By shifting the focus, we see that Mary likely had little to do with the conflict between Pulcheria and Nestorius.

³⁵ C. Wescher, 'Notice sur une catacombe chrétienne à Alexandrie (Égypte)', *Bullettino di Archeologia Cristiana* 3 (1865) 57-64 at 57-9 records perhaps the earliest known representation of Mary, which stems from a third-century depiction of the Wedding at Cana in the catacombs of Karmuz (Alexandria). For a more detailed reference to scholarship of this painting see n. 495. A complete discussion of Marian art in Egypt is found in Chapter 3 of this study. See also, G. Parlbay, 'The Origins of Marian Art in the Catacombs and the Problems of Identification', in Maunder, *Origins*, 41-56, who discusses the female figures in the catacombs of Rome that are wrongly identified as Mary, and argues that the earliest indisputable representations of Mary occur in scenes of the Adoration of the Magi in fourth-century catacomb paintings and sarcophagi reliefs. See Chapter 3 on the *Galaktotrophousa* for a more detailed discussion of the misattribution of several female figures in the catacombs as Mary. For other examples of Marian depictions prior to the fifth century, see J. Beckwith, *Early Christian and Byzantine Art* (New York, 1979) 68-70 (late fourth- to sixth-century representations of Mary on wooden lintels from the church of al-Mo'allāqa, Old Cairo).

³⁶ There are, in fact, archaeological remains of two churches at the proposed site of the *kathisma* church, both of which date to the fifth century, and are referred to as the 'Old' and 'New' church of the *kathisma* based on a passage from the sixth-century *Vitae* of Theodosius the Coenobite, in which the saint's superior sends him to live at the old *kathisma* and monastery, thus implying that there was a 'new' *kathisma* at that time. See, Shoemaker, 'Rediscovery', 21-72, *Ancient Traditions*, 82-96, and 'Cult', 74-5.

³⁷ See, generally, S. Spain, 'The Promised Blessing: The Iconography of the Mosaics of Santa Maria Maggiore', *ABull* 61 (1979) 518-40 at 518; C. Pietrangeli, *Santa Maria Maggiore a Roma* (Rome, 1988); E. Rubery, 'Pope John

This brief survey of the materials demonstrates that there are significantly fewer physical manifestations of Marian veneration in comparison to her textual presence before the fifth century. There may well have been such material evidence before this time, but the limited evidence, based on the available materials, suggests that the theological developments shaped the physical materialization, which only really began to lift off in the fifth century. We cannot exclude, however, the possibility of earlier manifestations, given the bias of the archaeological materials.³⁸

In our discussion of the evidence for the developing veneration of Mary, we have seen the complexity of speaking in terms of her fully-formed ‘cult’, and the different perspectives with which we can approach this question. The present study acknowledges the difficulty in applying the modern notion of ‘cult’ to early Christian rituals and practices, especially in regards to the Virgin Mary, as there is no linear development to her ‘cult’. Instead, we should speak of ‘communities of interest’ in the fourth century, the presence of which is felt in the disparate set of ideas, prayers and devotional practices which – after having been systematized in the debate between Cyril and Nestorius – only obtained a sense of unity after 431. Thus, the manifestation of a physical cult of Mary is intrinsically tied to the theological developments of the fifth century, as the former appears congruently with the latter. Since a wealth of studies have been conducted on the theological and liturgical developments of the cult of Mary, we shall focus here strictly on the physical materializations – that is, the tangible evidence – of her cult beginning in the fifth century, the time at which these physical materializations begin to play a role in our sources.

Filling the Gap: The Physical Materialization of the Cult of Mary in Late Antique Egypt

Before we examine the physical remains for the cult of Mary in Egypt, we must first briefly contextualize the state of such evidence across the wider *milieu* of the Mediterranean in the fifth century. In doing so, we can compare the volume of material evidence available for her cult in the larger Christian centers (specifically, Rome, Constantinople and Jerusalem) with the manner and extent to which these materials have been studied in Egypt. Typically, previous studies that

VII’s Devotion to Mary: Papal Images of Mary from the Fifth to the Early Eighth Century’, in Maunder, *Origins*, 155-99 at 155-67.

³⁸ See Chapter 2 for a discussion of the inherent biases in the archaeological evidence from Egypt, and the difficulty of connecting archaeological remains to the cult of Mary.

have focused on Marian themes are concerned with the literary (theological) sources, while large-scale investigations of Mary's physical cult are found across wider studies of early Christian art and architecture.³⁹

In the instances in which the physical material is studied more in depth, they are generally concerned with specific Marian artistic themes or churches and monasteries that are dedicated to her. We also encounter discrepancies between types of source materials that are studied and the extent to which they are published, from one major Christian center to the next. In Rome, for example, numerous studies have been carried out on the earliest churches dedicated to Mary in the city,⁴⁰ as well as her general representation in Christian ecclesiastical art after the Council of Ephesus.⁴¹ In Constantinople, on the other hand, considerable research has been carried out on the artistic representations of Mary across a variety of media, and represents one of the best studied groups of Marian materials.⁴² The remains of early Constantinopolitan churches dedicated to the Virgin have also received considerable attention, although they are usually dated to a later time and are considerably more modest than their Roman counterparts.⁴³ Finally, the

³⁹ See e.g. the general treatments of Marian art across the Mediterranean by K. Belan, *Madonnas from Medieval to Modern* (New York, 2001), and M.R. Katz and R.A. Orsi (eds), *Divine Mirrors: The Virgin Mary in the Visual Arts* (Oxford, 2001).

⁴⁰ On the archaeological evidence of Marian churches, see e.g. P. Romanelli and P.J. Nordhagen, *Santa Maria Antiqua* (Rome, 1964); Pietrangeli, *Santa Maria Maggiore*; J. Osborne, J.R. Branch and G. Morganti (eds), *Santa Maria Antiqua al Foro Romano cento anni dopo* (Rome, 2004).

⁴¹ For Marian art in Rome, see C. Cecchelli, *I mosaici della Basilica di S Maria Maggiore* (Torino, 1956); C. Bertelli, *La Madonna di Sta Maria in Trastevere: storia – iconografia – stile – di un dipinto Romano dell'ottavo secolo* (Rome, 1961); P.J. Nordhagen, 'The Earliest Decorations in Sta Maria Antiqua and Their Date', *Acta Institutum Romanae Norvegiae* 1 (1962) 53-72; Spain, 'Promised Blessing', 518-40; Rubery, 'Pope John VII', 155-92.

⁴² See the studies by Vassilaki, *Mother of God*, and *Images of the Mother*, as well as, Pentcheva, *Icons and Power*, which collect many of the Marian materials from Constantinople, and most recently the edited volume by L. Brubaker and M. Cunningham (eds), *The Cult of the Mother of God in Byzantium: Texts and Images* (Farnham, 2011), in which several articles examine aspects of Marian art in Byzantium. Cf. L. Brubaker and M. Cunningham, 'Byzantine Veneration of the Theotokos: Icons, Relics, and Eighth-Century Homilies', in H. Amirav and B. ter Haar Romeny (eds), *From Rome to Constantinople, Studies in Honour of Averil Cameron* (Leuven, 2007) 235-50 at 235-6, who note that the focus of previous studies on Mary largely centered on her cult in Western Europe, and that scholars have only recently shifted their focus to Byzantium. They add, however, that an 'analysis of the veneration of the Theotokos in the eastern orthodox Christian tradition remains sketchy, especially for the period between the end of the sixth century and the ninth'.

⁴³ On the two oldest known churches of Mary in Constantinople, the church of the Blachernae (before c. 475) and the church of the Chalkoprateia (after c. 474), see W. Kleiss 'Neue Befunde zur Chalkoprateienkirche in Istanbul', in *Akten des VII. Internationalen Kongresses für christliche Archäologie* (Berlin, 1965) 587-94; W. Lackner, 'Ein byzantinisches Marienmirakel', *Byzantina* 13 (1985) 833-60 at 850; C. Mango, 'The Origins of the Blachernae Shrine at Constantinople', in N. Cambi and E. Marin (eds), *Acta XIII Congressus Internationalis Archaeologiae Christianae*, 3 vols (Rome and Split, 1998) 2.61-76, and 'Constantinople', 19-22; A. Tantsis, 'The So-Called "Athonite" Type of Church and Two Shrines of the Theotokos in Constantinople', *Zograf* 34 (2010) 3-11 at 7-9; D. Krausmüller, 'Making the Most of Mary: The Cult of the Virgin in the Chalkoprateia from Late Antiquity to the

evidence for the physical materialization of the early cult of Mary in Jerusalem largely centers on the aforementioned church of the *kathisma*,⁴⁴ and there is a scarcity of wall paintings in Palestine as a whole at this time, which is reflected in the small amount of literature on the subject.⁴⁵ Instead, discussions of her appearance in the early Christian art of Palestine appear piecemeal in wider studies of Christian art across the Mediterranean.⁴⁶

Whereas the physical manifestation of the early cult of Mary is amply studied in the larger Christian centres, especially Rome and Constantinople, the material evidence from Egypt has not yet received the same kind of attention, despite the richness of its sources. Instead, we find several highly specialized studies of specific aspects of the material evidence, none of which have yet been brought together in a comprehensive study. The focus of these studies has thus far mostly centered on two aspects of the physical materialization of the cult of Mary. Firstly, there are studies of specific churches and monasteries dedicated to the Virgin, such as is the case with the church built in the Isis temple at Aswan, which has been ascribed to Mary.⁴⁷ The other focal point of modern scholarship has been on isolated Marian iconographic themes, most notably, the assumed relationship between Isis and Mary, especially in regards to similarities between images of Isis *lactans* and the *galaktotrophousa*.⁴⁸

A brief introduction to the current scholarship demonstrates that there is a lacuna in the study of the physical materialization of the cult of the Virgin Mary in Egypt, one which provides an exhaustive analysis of these outward manifestations. Thus, the present study aims to fill this

Tenth Century', in Brubaker and Cunningham, *Cult*, 219-46. Cf. Shoemaker, 'Cult', 72, who advocates for an earlier construction date, at the time of Pulcheria, for both the Blachernae and Chalkoprateia churches.

⁴⁴ Shoemaker, '(Re?) Discovery', 21-72, and *Ancient Traditions*, 82-96; R. Avner, 'The Rediscovery of the Kathisma Church and Its Influence on Octagonal Buildings', in G.C. Bottini, L.D. Segni and D. Chrupcala (eds), *One Land – Many Cultures: Archaeological Studies in Honor of Stanislaw Loffreda* (Jerusalem, 2003) 173-88; Shoemaker, 'Cult', 74-5; and R. Avner, 'The Initial Tradition of the Theotokos at the Kathisma: Earliest Celebrations and the Calendar', in Brubaker and Cunningham, *Cult*, 9-29.

⁴⁵ E.S. Bolman, 'Depicting the Kingdom of Heaven: Paintings and Monastic Practice in Early Byzantine Egypt', in R.S. Bagnall (ed.), *Egypt in the Byzantine World, 300-700* (Cambridge, 2007) 408-33 at 409. Note especially her discussion of the scarcity of paintings in monastic cells in the Holy Land in comparison with Egypt at the same time, where these materials form the bulk of our evidence for Egyptian wall paintings.

⁴⁶ See e.g. B. Kühnel, 'The Holy Land as a Factor in Christian Art', in O. Limor and G.G. Stroumsa (eds), *Christians and Christianity in the Holy Land, from the Origins to the Latin Kingdoms* (Turnhout, 2006) 463-504 at 479-82.

⁴⁷ J.H.F. Dijkstra and G.J.M. van Loon, 'A Church Dedicated to Mary in the Temple of Isis at Aswan?', *ECA* 7 (2010) 1-16, reiterated in 'The Christian Wall Paintings in the Temple of Isis at Aswan Revisited', in G. Gabra and H.N. Takla (eds), *Christianity and Monasticism in Aswan and Nubia* (Cairo, 2013) 137-56.

⁴⁸ See especially V. Tran Tam Tinh, *Isis lactans. Corpus des monuments gréco-romains d'Isis allaitant Harpocrate* (Leiden, 1973), and L. Langener, *Isis Lactans – Maria Lactans. Untersuchungen zur koptischen Ikonographie* (Altenberge, 1996). For a comprehensive examination of the scholarship concerning this debate, see Chapter 3 – *Galaktotrophousa*, in the present study.

void in the scholarship by bringing all of the materials together in a single study, through which we can trace the physical presence of a cult of Mary on both a chronological and regional axis. The diffusion of these materials is then weighed against the theological aspects of her cult, by studying the facets of Marian theology that are expressed in these physical materializations, such as her titulature and iconographic themes. In highlighting the importance of the material evidence, the present study thus asks: to what extent does the evidence for the physical materialization of the cult of Mary reflect its geographical and chronological diffusion in Late Antique Egypt?

As we shall see, this study contributes to the existing research on the development of the early cult of Mary by presenting detailed information concerning the diffusion of her cult throughout Egypt from the fifth century onwards. In doing so, we demonstrate the importance of tracing her cult across the *longue durée*, as the material evidence for the cult arguably reached its developed form at a later time than its corresponding theological components, which scholars generally agree coalesced in the fifth century. Thus, this study addresses from an entirely Egyptian perspective the point at which Marian veneration spilled over into the physical sphere. Moreover, a detailed examination of the material evidence demonstrates that the features of her ‘cult’ continued to develop well beyond the fifth century, especially with regards to Marian iconography. Thus, we argue that despite the assumed presence of a cult of Mary by the fifth century, the wider process of its diffusion and consolidation was only just beginning.

Setting the Boundaries: The Scope and Limitations of the Sources

The material remains associated with the cult of the Virgin Mary are vast, and an exhaustive study of every single expression through different media is beyond the scope of this study. As such, we deliberately exclude the smaller subsets of Egyptian materials, including book illuminations, colophons, stelae and the small arts, although these materials deserve to be studied in their own right.⁴⁹ The present analysis thereby opts for a more detailed study of the larger

⁴⁹ Book illuminations: e.g. J. Leroy, *Les manuscrits coptes et coptes-arabes illustrés* (Paris, 1974) M 612 (Pl. 31, dated to 892/893) and M 574 (Pl. 34, dated to 897/898). Colophons: e.g. A. Van Lantschoot, *Recueil des colophons des manuscrits chrétiens d’Égypte* 2 vols (Leuven, 1929) 1.35-7, no. 19, which mentions a topos of the Holy Virgin (year 892-3). Stelae: e.g. G. Nachtergaele, ‘Dédicace d’un monument à la Vierge Marie’, *REAC* 8 (2006) 11-4, repr. in *REAC* 13 (2013) 59-62, a relief stela with a central Virgin flanked by two angels that dates to the sixth to eighth centuries. See also P. Grossmann, T. Derda and J. van der Vliet, ‘Monuments of Christian Sinnuris (Fayyum, Egypt)’, *ECA* 8 (2011) 29-48 at 35-43 (Pls 2 and 3), who compare the relief to a similar stela (central Mary with

groups of material remains, rather than the production of a catalogue enumerating every instance of Mary's materialization in the physical evidence. Thus, this study limits itself to the three major groups of evidence: papyri/inscriptions mentioning churches and monasteries, archaeological evidence of churches and monasteries, and wall paintings.

The papyrological and epigraphical sources form the foundation of the present study as they represent the largest body of materials and provide the most substantial datable evidence for the cult of Mary in Egypt. Although these sources are not, in themselves, physical manifestations of the cult of Mary, they nevertheless frequently refer to churches and monasteries dedicated to the Virgin that no longer survive in the archaeological record. Moreover, these sources provide a convenient starting point for an examination of the archaeological materials, as they establish a detailed picture of the chronological and geographical distribution of the cult. The study then shifts to an analysis of the wall paintings, which highlights the distribution and use of specific Marian themes throughout both secular and religious buildings. Thus, each of these sources forms the basis of an independent chapter (Chapters 1-3), which interrogates the evidence of Marian veneration against the available material in that data set. All of the aforementioned sources are then brought together in the General Conclusion for an analysis of the implications of the patterns in the data for our knowledge of the cult of Mary in Egypt.

The nature of the diverging materials employed in this study necessitates that each source requires a different methodology, which is systematically described at the beginning of every chapter. The study, however, is governed by several overarching parameters, which situate this research in both space and time. Firstly, the material remains analyzed in this study are limited to Upper and Lower Egypt, and deliberately excludes all material from the Sinai. While there is evidence for Marian veneration in this area, the material culture finds closer resonance with Constantinople (and Palestine) than with the rest of Egypt.⁵⁰ We also note that most of the

Child, flanked by angels) from Sinnuris, which is dated to the sixth to eighth centuries. Small arts: R.G. Coquin, J. Leroy and P. van Moorsel, 'La croix, dite de Théodote, du musée de Berlin-Est', *BIFAO* 89 (1989) 73-80 (Pls 8 and 9), a sixth- or seventh-century silver votive cross with a depiction of Mary in a medallion.

⁵⁰ K. Weitzmann, *The Monastery of Saint Catherine at Mount Sinai: The Icons, Volume I: From the Sixth to the Tenth Century* (Princeton, 1976) 18-21 (no. B.3); C. Barber, 'Early Representations of the Mother of God', in Vassilaki, *Mother of God*, 253-75 at 262-3 (Pl. 1). See also Brubaker and Cunningham, 'Byzantine Veneration', 248-50, who discuss this icon in the context of Byzantine art.

material comes from Upper Egypt, which is generally accounted for by a poorer state of preservation in the Nile Delta.⁵¹

Secondly, the study is temporally limited to the fifth to ninth centuries. In this sense, we analyze the materials across the *longue durée* of Late Antique Egypt, and look beyond the Arab conquest of 641/642, the terminal point usually applied for this period.⁵² The physical materialization of the cult of Mary extends beyond the Arab conquest, thus it is logical to continue our study beyond this date, which is also in line with recent developments in the field, especially amongst papyrologists.⁵³ The specific chronological parameters (fifth to ninth centuries), however, are necessitated by two different factors. The point of departure in the fifth century marks the time at which the physical materialization of the cult of Mary appears in a variety of media across a wider geographical context.⁵⁴ The ninth century, on the other hand, denotes the chronological limit of the analysis, primarily on account of the textual material. At this point in time, Greek and Coptic are largely abandoned in favour of Arabic as the principal scribal language of Egypt, thus exhausting the available papyrological and epigraphical sources that mention the existence of Marian churches and monasteries.⁵⁵ The relative scarcity of the archaeological evidence and our notable dependence on the textual materials for references to ecclesiastical buildings dedicated to Mary greatly limits any discussion of the material evidence beyond the ninth century. Thus, in keeping with the chronological limitations of the textual materials, the same parameters are given to the material evidence.

⁵¹ R.S. Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity* (Princeton, 1993) 6-7, 15-6, and R.S. Bagnall and D.W. Rathbone (eds), *Egypt: From Alexander to the Early Christians* (Los Angeles, 2004) 78-9.

⁵² The periodisation of Late Antique Egypt is usually given as 284-641/642, that is, from the beginning of Diocletian's reign until the Arab conquest, although several variations to this periodisation have been adopted by different scholars: e.g. A.K. Bowman, *Egypt after the Pharaohs 332 BC-AD 642: From Alexander to the Arab Conquest* (Berkeley, 1996²), offers a date of 312 as the beginning of Late Antiquity, and Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity*, ix, takes the period to end in the middle of the fifth century, and suggests that the term Byzantine is more appropriate for the subsequent period in Egypt. He re-visits this term in his 'Introduction', in Bagnall, *Egypt in the Byzantine World*, 1-17 at 5.

⁵³ For recent examples of papyrological studies that emphasize continuity in both language and administration after 641/642, see P.M. Sijpesteijn, 'The Arab Conquest of Egypt and the Beginning of Muslim Rule', in Bagnall, *Egypt in the Byzantine World*, 437-59; T.S. Richter, 'Greek, Coptic and the "Language of the Hijra": The Rise and Decline of the Coptic Language in Late Antique and Medieval Egypt', in H. Cotton et al. (eds), *From Hellenism to Islam: Cultural and Linguistic Change in the Roman Near East* (Cambridge 2009) 401-46; A. Papaconstantinou, "'What Remains behind': Hellenism and Romanitas in Christian Egypt after the Arab Conquest', in Cotton et al., *From Hellenism to Islam*, 447-66. Thus, the present study leaves the term Late Antiquity deliberately ambiguous.

⁵⁴ The physical materialization of her cult does not appear with any frequency before the fifth century in Egypt, with the exception of the wall painting from the catacombs at Karmuz (see n. 35 above).

⁵⁵ A. Papaconstantinou, "'They Shall Speak the Arabic Language and Take Pride in it': Reconsidering the Fate of Coptic after the Arab Conquest', *Muséon* 120 (2007) 273-99 at 273.

Plan of the Dissertation

The nature of the sources dictates the overall structure of the study, both in terms of the general order of the chapters and the way in which each individual chapter is organized. The study is divided into three chapters, all of which inform and/or complement one another. As we have seen, the materials are ordered to present the largest dataset first, which also dictates the chronological parameters of this study.

Chapter 1 collects and analyzes the Greek and Coptic papyri and inscriptions that refer either directly or indirectly to a Marian church or monastery, and represents the largest body of evidence for the physical materialization of the cult Mary. Although these sources themselves – as said before – are not physical manifestations of her cult, they nevertheless supplement the limited evidence for churches and monasteries that we can securely attribute to Mary in the archaeological record. As such, the papyri/inscriptions provide a fuller picture of the spatial and chronological distribution of her cult in the fifth to ninth centuries – aspects that are emphasized in the presentation of the source material. The basis of Chapter 1 is a catalogue (Appendix 1), which groups all of the attestations for a particular church or monastery into a single entry. The entries as a whole are ordered topographically (north to south), and each individual entry is subsequently arranged chronologically. The organization of the catalogue thus lends itself to the structure of the in-text discussion, whereby all of the papyrological/ epigraphical attestations for the buildings are ordered first by location and subsequently analyzed in chronological order.

Chapter 2 presents the archaeological evidence of churches and monasteries that are ascribed to the Virgin Mary. As there is a paucity of physical remains that can be attributed to her, this chapter supplements and provides tangible examples of the evidence derived from the papyrological/epigraphical analysis in Chapter 1. Specifically, the archaeological remains of four buildings are discussed, each analyzed as a distinct case study. Particular attention is paid to the means by which each building has been (or should not have been) attributed to Mary, through a collection of all the available evidence, including inscriptions, iconographic evidence, and medieval traveller's accounts. There is only one instance of overlap with Chapter 1, whereby an inscription refers to a church that is preserved in the archaeological record. Otherwise, the buildings discussed in the chapter represent new additions to the corpus of known Marian churches and monasteries in Egypt. A study of these buildings also offers a glimpse into the variety of different forms that a Marian building could take and the vastly different decorative

schemes found within them. There are distinct limitations, however, to the analysis of the archaeological materials, as each structure has a different state of preservation, and has been studied with varying degrees of publication.

Chapter 3 collects and examines every published wall painting in which the Virgin Mary is depicted. There has been a focus in scholarship on the examination of individual aspects of Marian iconography (such as Ascension and Annunciation scenes), especially the artistic similarities between Isis and Mary. This chapter, however, brings these disparate studies together and enumerates and exhaustively analyzes the types of scenes in which Mary appears. Each discussion of the themes is then contextualized within the broader diachronic and geographic discussions, while also including an analysis of their more immediate contexts – that is, the placement of each image within a particular building and/or space – and her positions within the larger iconographic programme. As such, this study interrogates the spatial design of each structure, and the importance or meaning that is derived from the placement of individual images. The thematic analyses are accompanied by a second catalogue (Appendix 2), which enumerates and provides a brief description of all the paintings discussed in the text.

The General Conclusion integrates the collected material evidence for the physical materialization of the cult of Mary for discussion on a wider plane. This allows for a contextualization of the geographical and temporal distribution of her cult throughout Egypt, while it also addresses the wider implications of interweaving the papyrological/epigraphical, archaeological and pictorial evidence, and what such a study can tell us about the physical materialization of the cult of Mary in Egypt.

Chapter 1:

References to Churches and Monasteries of the Virgin Mary in Inscriptions and Papyri

Introduction

Papyrological and epigraphical texts represent a substantial portion of the evidence for the cult of the Virgin Mary in Egypt.⁵⁶ Although they do not constitute genuine physical remains of her cult, these sources are still important for their references to churches and monasteries of Mary contained within the texts. Moreover, since there are abundant references to buildings relating to the cult of Mary in the documentary papyri and inscriptions from the fifth to ninth centuries, they allow us to situate Marian churches and monasteries within a particular region and across a specific period of time. Furthermore, they are essential for laying the groundwork for an examination of the archaeological and art historical evidence from this same period (discussed in Chapters 2 and 3). It is with these materials, therefore, that we begin our analysis of the cult of the Virgin Mary in Egypt.

The first study to systematically collect references to Marian churches in the papyri is an article published in 1940 by L. Antonini, in which she enumerates all the churches in Egypt known to her from the Greek papyri.⁵⁷ In her study, Antonini mentions eleven churches dedicated to the Virgin, which bear the names ἁγία Μαρία and θεοτόκος. For sixty years, this list mostly remained intact, until A. Papaconstantinou re-evaluated the references to churches of Mary in the context of her larger study of the cult of Egyptian saints, on the basis of papyri and inscriptions.⁵⁸ Since she regarded Mary as a special case compared with other Egyptian saints,

⁵⁶ In this chapter, the term ‘documentary sources’ as an umbrella term for papyri and inscriptions is avoided, as recent scholarship has questioned whether inscriptions can in fact be considered documents. See J. van der Vliet, ‘“What Is Man?”: The Nubian Tradition of Coptic Funerary Inscriptions’, in A. Łajtar and J. van der Vliet (eds), *Nubian Voices: Studies in Nubian Culture* (Warsaw, 2011) 171-224 at 171-2, where he discusses the importance of treating funerary inscriptions as distinct from documentary papyri.

⁵⁷ See L. Antonini, ‘Le chiese cristiane nell’Egitto dal IV al IX secolo secondo i documenti dei papiri greci’, *Aegyptus* 20 (1940) 129-208 summarized at 139, no. 31, where she lists the known Marian churches, each of which is later discussed under the heading of the city or village from where they came.

⁵⁸ A. Papaconstantinou, ‘Les sanctuaires de la Vierge dans l’Égypte Byzantine et Omeyyade’, *JJP* 30 (2000) 81-94, especially p. 82 (n. 4), which indicates that in fact only seven Marian churches can be distinguished from Antonini’s list, as the two churches in Alexandria are only mentioned in literary works, the two churches from Aphrodite actually refer to one church, and a final papyrus with an unknown provenance does not refer to a church after all.

such as Victor and Menas, she decided to publish her findings on Mary in a separate article, which appeared in 2000, whereas her larger study of the cult of the saints appeared in 2001.⁵⁹

Building on the attestations collected by Antonini and expanding the scope of the study to include not only papyri but also inscriptions and Greek as well as Coptic texts, Papaconstantinou arrives at a new list, in which she identifies at least 21 and at most 26 buildings dedicated to the cult of Mary, and provides a list of attestations for each of these structures.⁶⁰ These buildings are presented in the form of a catalogue that enumerates all of the attestations, which have been ordered and analyzed with respect to the location in which they appear, beginning with Arsinoe in the north and concluding with Philae in the south (for a map of Egypt, see Fig. 1).⁶¹ After the presentation of her list of Marian churches, Papaconstantinou concludes with some remarks on the data that she has collected.

Papaconstantinou begins the analytic section of her article by pointing out the types of buildings in which we find a Marian presence in the inscriptions and papyri. She notes that only six towns or locations have produced documents that refer to an actual building dedicated to Mary.⁶² The term ἐκκλησία appears most frequently in the papyri and inscriptions that Papaconstantinou enumerates, occurring in five separate instances, three times in association with the title θεοτόκος and twice with ἁγία Μαρία. One monastery at Aphrodite is denoted in the papyrological record by the term ὄρος.⁶³ In general, Papaconstantinou notes that the manner in which the locality or structures dedicated to Mary are named does not differ significantly from those of other saints. The majority of the documents, however, do not refer to an actual church of

⁵⁹ A. Papaconstantinou, *Le culte des saints en Égypte des Byzantins aux Abbassides. L'apport des inscriptions et des papyrus grecs et coptes* (Paris, 2001).

⁶⁰ Papaconstantinou, 'Sanctuaires', 81-2, notes that there are five additional churches that are assigned the term *bis* and represent possible additions to the 21 definitive Marian churches and monasteries. These references all come from locations with existing Marian churches, but are distinguished by different epithets (i.e. 'holy Mary' and 'Theotokos'), for which it is often difficult to demonstrate whether they are referring to the same building.

⁶¹ The spelling of the ancient and modern place names in this study correspond to the one given in J. Baines and J. Málek, *Cultural Atlas of Ancient Egypt* (Oxford, 2000²).

⁶² In Papaconstantinou's inventory, direct references to buildings (churches or monasteries) dedicated to Mary in the papyri and inscriptions are attested at Arsinoe, Aphrodite (three occasions), Hermonthites and Piohe. One inscription from Philae mentions the term τοπος and several papyri from Hermopolis an εὐκτήριον. For a discussion of the use of the terms τόπος and εὐκτήριον, see Papaconstantinou, *Culte des saints*, 272-3.

⁶³ The term ὄρος can be translated as 'monastery' or 'desert'/'mountain'. In this case, the ὄρος is referring to a monastery. For a discussion of this term see H. Cadell and R. Rémondon, 'Sens et emplois de τὸ ὄρος dans les documents papyrologiques', *REG* 80 (1967) 343-9 at 344.

the holy Mary, but rather to a priest or other person who is mentioned in association with the church or monastery, in which their association with a Marian building is implied.⁶⁴

The strength of Papaconstantinou's article, moreover, lies in her discussion of Marian titlature, whereby she investigates the usage of the three titles attributed to Mary, ἁγία 'holy', θεοτόκος 'God-bearer' and παρθένος 'Virgin', and demonstrates that they were used with specific frequency, at varying times and in different regions. The term ἁγία Μαρία occurs most frequently and appears earliest in the papyrological and epigraphical record (fifth century), whereas θεοτόκος and παρθένος are used sparingly to name churches and monasteries of Mary and appear relatively late in the texts (sixth and seventh centuries respectively).⁶⁵ Papaconstantinou specifically highlights the regularity with which the epithet θεοτόκος is used in literary works, and regards its apparent paucity in the naming of churches and monasteries as a reflection of Mary's status as a common saint. Thus, Papaconstantinou concludes that Mary was treated like any other saint, though she was surely one of the most popular among them.⁶⁶

Since Papaconstantinou's article, several new papyri and inscriptions have been published that supplement and update her list. Moreover, in some cases Papaconstantinou has omitted texts that were already published prior to her study, or has included texts that can be interpreted differently. For these reasons, a new catalogue has been compiled, which offers a complete and up-to-date list of all papyri and inscriptions that make reference to Marian churches or monasteries (Appendix 1). The updated checklist serves as the basis for the current analysis, which reviews the observations that were made by Papaconstantinou and re-analyzes the data.

Methodology

Before we analyze the patterns in our new catalogue, it is first necessary to discuss the methodology employed in creating the list. Since the catalogue provides an update of Papaconstantinou's inventory, we have maintained her regional organization, which begins in Lower Egypt and concludes in Upper Egypt, and is also useful for an overview of the chronological developments of Egypt at large. In addition to enumerating all of the known

⁶⁴ Papaconstantinou, 'Sanctuaires', 91. Among these people, the following functions are found: νοτάριος, ἀρχιδιάκονος, οἰκονόμος, πρεσβύτερος and διάκονος. Other references mention more abstract figures that are associated to a church of Mary, such as δοῦλος or ἄνθρωποι.

⁶⁵ For a table of the direct references to Marian buildings, see Papaconstantinou, 'Sanctuaires', 91.

⁶⁶ Papaconstantinou, 'Sanctuaires', 92-4.

churches and monasteries of Mary, Papaconstantinou emphasizes the development of Marian epithets over time, whereby she discusses the introduction of the titlature into the vocabulary of Marian buildings, and the subsequent frequency with which it appears. This study thus also upholds a focus on these epithets, and weighs Papaconstantinou's observations against the new evidence.

The division of the epithets used in Papaconstantinou's study is also maintained here, in which the presence of two different epithets in a single location, for instance ἁγία Μαρία and θεοτόκος, are treated as attestations of potentially separate Marian buildings. In the cases where a separate building is clearly attested in the text, as appears from the use of a different toponym or type of building, a separate number is assigned to that establishment, but in cases where the two buildings are indistinguishable apart from their epithets, the same number is assigned, but its problematic status is indicated by the use of the term 'bis'. For example, in Arsinoe there are several references to a church of the θεοτόκος, which is then assigned the number 1. There is one papyrus, however, that refers to a church of ἁγία Μαρία, and there is no discernible evidence to decide whether this papyrus indeed also refers to the church of the θεοτόκος, or whether it indicates another structure. Hence, the papyrus is given the number 1^{bis} to signal that there is a discrepancy in the evidence and that we may or may not have an attestation of an additional Marian church in this particular location.

An initial search was conducted to locate all of the papyri and inscriptions that Papaconstantinou examined in her article, whereby the first edition of each text was consulted along with eventual later additions, corrections or re-editions. After this initial collection of material, a systematic search was undertaken of the Duke Databank of Documentary Papyri (DDBDP) using the Papyrological Navigator as well as the Packard Humanities Institute's (PHI) database of searchable Greek inscriptions, to retrieve any additional texts that were not included in her catalogue.⁶⁷ A variety of search terms were employed to ensure that the variations in the spelling of particular Marian titles were accounted for. Specifically, searches were conducted of the terms: Μαρία-, θεοτοκ-, θειοτοκ-, θεωδοκ-, θευδοκ, παρθεν-, and ἀειπαρθεν-. This search

⁶⁷ The Papyrological Navigator is available at <http://www.papyri.info>. The PHI inscriptions database is available at <http://epigraphy.packhum.org/inscriptions/>.

yielded an additional 32 papyri, ostraka and inscriptions to supplement the original inventory collected by Papaconstantinou.⁶⁸

Of these additional texts, seven were published after Papaconstantinou's article appeared in 2000,⁶⁹ and 25 were published prior to this date, but were not included in her original list.⁷⁰ Each of these 32 papyri was carefully examined to determine if a distinct manifestation of the cult of Mary could be inferred from the document. If the papyrus did in fact refer to a Marian establishment, the first edition and any further studies of the papyrus were collected to verify each attestation and study its context.⁷¹ Finally, a search of the *Berichtigungsliste* (BL) was conducted to check if any new or supplementary information had been added to the individual papyri, which was missed in the previous stages. Thus, after a thorough search of all the sources, the number of papyri and inscriptions that refer to a Marian church or monastery now totals 99.

Following the queries of the databases, all of the papyri collected from both Papaconstantinou's study and our current project were re-analyzed and ordered into a new catalogue (Appendix 1). In some cases, this warranted minor corrections to Papaconstantinou's original catalogue,⁷² and in others, the attestations were updated and re-interpreted with the new information. Besides the number, location, epithet, and attestation, the current analysis also provides the immediate context of the name and/or epithet, the number assigned by Papaconstantinou (for comparison), the date and the language (Greek or Coptic). Accordingly, in Appendix 1 an overview can be gained of the development of the churches and monasteries of Mary across both its regional and temporal dimensions. This catalogue thus maintains the format

⁶⁸ With regard to these 32 additional texts, 30 were found using the Navigator search, while two texts only recently came to light: Nachtergaele, 'Dédicace' (1), which re-interprets a stela as a dedication of some monument to Mary, and the Greek papyrus edited by T.M. Hickey and B.J. Haug, 'The Dossier of Flavia Anastasia', *BASP* 48 (2011) 99-112 at 103-6 (no. 2) (3^{bis}). Note that the bold numbers in parentheses represent the internal reference to the Marian churches discussed in this study, e.g. (1) refers to the church of the Theotokos in Arsinoe. When a series of papyri and/or inscriptions refer to the same building, the bolded number is placed at the end of the series.

⁶⁹ *SB* XXVI 16623.1-2 (1); *P.Oxy.* LXXI 4833.3-4 (3); Hickey and Haug, 'Dossier', 103-6 (no. 2), lines 17-8, v^o 1 (3^{bis}); *P.Oxy.* LXVII 4620.27-8 (4); *BGU* XIX 2815.8 (7); *P.Paramone* 18.16 (7); *CPR* XXII 59.3 (15).

⁷⁰ Nachtergaele, 'Dédicace' (1); *CPR* X 1.1, 3.1, 4.1, 15.1 (1); *SB* XX 14686.5 (1); *P.Lond.* IV 1420.iii 31, 35 (14); *P.Lond.* IV 1474 (14); *P.Cair.Masp.* II 67141.v r^o 12 (15); *P.Lond.* IV 1413.iv v^o 106, vii v^o 219, x v^o 327, xiii 434, xv 547, xix 653 (15); *P.Lond.* IV 1414.xi v^o 275 (15); *SB* I 5177 = *P.Lond.* IV 1431.ii v^o 36 (15); *P.Lond.* IV 1432.iv v^o 120 (15); *P.Lond.* IV 1434.v 58, v v^o 76, vii 137, viii 191, v^o 195, ix 211, ix 220, v^o 222, x v^o 295 (15); *P.Lond.* IV 1436.ii 25, v 80, vi v^o 104, ix 137 (15); *P.Lond.* IV 1442 A7, 20, B30, C34, 40, G73, 77 (15); *P.Lond.* IV 1445.2, 4, 11 (15); *CPR* III 88 = *P.Lond.* IV 1451.viii+ix 78 (15); *P.Lond.* IV 1453.ii 10 (15); *P.Lond.* IV 1491 A (15); *P.Ross.Georg.* IV 19.6 (15); *P.Ross.Georg.* IV 20.7, v^o 6 (15); *SB* I 5650.1, 9 (15); *SB* I 5652.1, 9 (15); *P.KRU* 94.62-3 (18).

⁷¹ A search of Trismegistos (TM) (available at www.trismegistos.org) was conducted to identify if any changes had been made to the *ed. princ.*

⁷² E.g. *SPP* XX 213 has been corrected to *SPP* X 213 (1).

presented in Papaconstantinou's article, so as to allow the new texts to be studied directly against her original list. On the other hand, the organization of the material in this manner permits a comprehensive and more extensive examination of the cult within a particular region, through which we can determine the number of churches attributed to a particular village, town or city, the volume of papyri coming from the region as well as the longevity of the cult within each of the locations.

Following this regional catalogue, the chapter moves beyond the collection of papyri and inscriptions to an examination of the chronological implications of the evidence. While Papaconstantinou provides an analysis of the development and use of particular Marian epithets over time, this chapter not only builds on her study by re-visiting her conclusions with the added 32 papyri, but also takes the chronological discussion further. It aims to trace the trajectory of the cult of Mary from the fifth to the ninth centuries, while also highlighting the volume of papyrological and inscriptional evidence for churches and monasteries in each period. The textual output is presented both in an in-text discussion as well as in graph-form, which clearly enumerates the output of texts in each century. In several cases, however, there are papyri that have not been definitively dated to one particular century or another, but rather list a range of dates to which the papyrus might belong. In these instances, the papyri are discussed only in the regional analysis of the material, where the dates of the material are subsidiary to the content and location of each papyrus. Here the date ranges are noted in-text for the purpose of having a nuanced understanding of the material, which highlights the volume of papyri from Egypt in the fifth to ninth centuries. In the chronological analysis, moreover, these texts are omitted from the investigation of the emergence of Marian churches and monasteries over time, since only papyri or inscriptions with definitive dates are employed in the discussion and subsequent graph.⁷³

Regional Analysis of the Distribution of Marian Churches and Monasteries

The presentation of the evidence for Marian churches and monasteries in Egypt through a regional framework allows for the interpretation of the material on a micro-level. The ability to spatially trace the development of the cult in a particular location (village, city or nome) not only

⁷³ In all cases where the research indicates the possibility of a variation in the date, a footnote will be provided which enumerates the date provided in the first edition, the research that calls for an alternate date, as well as the author's rationale for adopting one date over the other.

provides the groundwork for establishing the reach and influence of Marian veneration across several regions, but also sets the foundation for a larger examination of the spread of her cult along the chronological axis. As in the catalogue, the sources are discussed within a regional framework going from north to south, and follow the numbers as they appear in the catalogue (Appendix 1).

1. Arsinoe, church of the Theotokos

There are 22 papyri that refer directly or indirectly to a church of the Theotokos (ἐκκλησία/τόπος τῆς θεοτόκου) in or around Arsinoe, but only two of these documents were actually found in Arsinoe itself. The remainder stem from the Arsinoite nome, but given the similarity of their epithets and that there is no way to distinguish them from the one at Arsinoe, they are grouped here together. This does not exclude the possibility, however, that one or several of these papyri could refer to a separate Marian church within the Arsinoite nome (for example at Ptolemais Hormos), but that the evidence at present is insufficient to make a distinction from the church attested in Arsinoe.⁷⁴ As such, they are discussed under the same heading.

Of the two papyri from Arsinoe, the first attestation stems from a seventh-century, bilingual document written in Coptic, but with the signatures in Greek. In this case, Peter, the ‘deacon and *collectarius* in the quarter of the holy Theotokos’ (διάκονος καὶ κολλεκτάριος ἀπὸ λαύρας τῆς ἁγίας θεοτόκου), witnesses the signing of a tax receipt.⁷⁵ The second document also refers to a λαύρα τῆς θεοτόκου, in a tax receipt of the seventh or eighth century.⁷⁶

The remaining twenty papyri are from the Arsinoite nome. The first document is assigned to sometime between the fourth and seventh centuries, and records the existence of a church of the holy Theotokos (ἐκκλησία τῆς ἁγίας θεωδόκου) as part of a list of institutions in a fiscal document.⁷⁷ The second document contains a reference to a *topos* of the holy Theotokos (τόπος

⁷⁴ See, e.g. Nachtergaele, ‘Dédicace’. The papyrus was found in Ptolemais Hormos, but the editors note that the location of church cannot be definitively placed in either Ptolemais Hormos or Arsinoe.

⁷⁵ CPR II 158 = CPR IV 192.8. For an overview of the papyri referring to the quarter (of the church) of the Theotokos, see C. Wessely, *Die Stadt Arsinoë (Krokodilopolis) in griechischer Zeit* (Milan, 1975) 27, 29, 49. For the term λαύρα in the sense of a ‘quarter’, see K.A. Worp, ‘Town Quarters in Greek, Roman, Byzantine, and Early Arab Egypt’, in P. Sijpesteijn and L. Sundelin (eds), *Papyrology and the History of Early Islamic Egypt* (Leiden, 2004) 227-49 at 228-9, with references.

⁷⁶ BGU II 676 = SPP VIII 738.2.

⁷⁷ SB I 5129.2. Read θεοτόκου.

τῆς ἁγίας θεοτόκου) in a rental receipt, and is assigned a date range of the fourth to eighth centuries.⁷⁸ A third reference stems from a relief stela from the sixth or seventh century, which records that some work was undertaken by Elias the *oikonomos* of the Theotokos (προνοία τῆς δεσπ(οίνης) ἡμῶν θεοτόκου ἐγένετο τοῦτο τὸ ἔργον ἐπινοία δούλου κ(αὶ) οἰκον(όμου) αὐτῆς).⁷⁹ Among the more precisely dated documents, however, are seven texts that date to the beginning of the seventh century, which belong to the dossier of Stephanos.⁸⁰ Stephanos is described as the servant of the Theotokos (δοῦλος τῆς θεοτόκου) in these papyri, which often chronicle his distribution of funds to various persons.⁸¹

In the middle of the seventh century, the church is mentioned in a rental receipt, which refers to a commodity that ‘Theodoros provided on behalf of the dwelling of the Holy Theotokos’ (παρ(έσ)χ(ε) Θεωτώρου (ὑπὲρ) ἐνοικ(ίου) τῆς(ς) ἁγί(ας) θειοτόκ(ου)).⁸² Another document from the same period provides a direct reference to a church of the Theotokos. In this instance, an individual files a petition against Victor, the ‘treasurer of the holy church of Our Lady the Theotokos and eternal Virgin Mary’ ([οἰ]κονόμον τῆς ἁγίας ἐκκλησίας τῆς [δεσ]ποίνης ἡμῶν τῆς θεοτόκου καὶ ἀειπαρθένου Μαρίας).⁸³ The reference to the church of Mary in this case is quite formulaic and significantly more developed in terms of the titlature applied to Mary, which occurs rarely in the papyri and inscriptions. We see the same formula reoccur in another seventh-century papyrus, which mentions Apa Serenos, a ‘priest and archimandrite of Our Lady the Theotokos and eternal Virgin Mary’ (πρεσβυτέρου καὶ ἀρχιμαντρίδρου τῆς δεσποίνης ἡμῶν τῆς θεοτόκο(υ) καὶ ἀειπαρθένου Μαρίας) in a receipt for payment of taxes on property.⁸⁴

⁷⁸ *SPP* VIII 782 = *BGU* II 680.2, 5-6.

⁷⁹ Nachtergaele, ‘Dédicace’. This stela was first edited by G. Giamberardini, ‘La preghiera nella chiesa copta’, *Studia Orientalia Christiana* 8 (1963) 3-77 at 66-7 (no. 15; Pl. 8). For the re-edition of this papyrus, see Nachtergaele, ‘Dédicace’, 11-4, who convincingly demonstrates that ἔργον should be interpreted as a work or initiative dedicated to Mary by the οἰκον(όμου) αὐτῆς, the *oikonomos* of Mary.

⁸⁰ *SPP* VIII 1134 = *CPR* X 15.1; *CPR* X 3.1, 4.1, 1.1; *CPR* VI 11 = *SPP* III 484 = *CPR* X 7.1; *CPR* X 8.1; *SPP* VIII 1137 = *CPR* X 9.1. For the correction of the date of *CPR* X 1 from 608 to 609, see P.J. Sijpesteijn, ‘The Monastery of Abbas Andreas’, *ZPE* 70 (1987) 54-6 at 54 (n. 4).

⁸¹ There is an eighth text (*CPR* X 5.4) that might refer to a church of the Virgin Mary in the dossier of Stephanos, but too little of the context has been preserved to include this attestation with any certainty. See *CPR* X 5.4, which reads: παράσχον ἀββᾶ Ἰσαὰκ μ[ε]ταφορ(εῖ) εἰς μεταφορ(άν) ὕδατος εἰ[ς] [...] [.] ἁγί(ου) Μ.ρ(); Cf. *BL* IX, p. 71, which resolves ἁγί(ου) Μ.ρ() to ἁγί(ας) Μαρ(ίας). See also J. Keenan, review of *CPR* X, in *BASP* 24 (1987) 93-5 at 94, who thinks that this is a likely resolution, but adds that it is difficult to be certain.

⁸² *SB* XXVI 16623.1-2. Read θειοτόκ(ου) as θεοτόκ(ου) and Θεωτώρου as Θεοδώρου.

⁸³ *SB* I 5278 = *SPP* XX 243.14-6. Papaconstantinou dates this papyrus to the eighth century, although the first edition dates it to either 633 or 648.

⁸⁴ *P.Prag.* I 65.2-3.

There are several papyri from Arsinoe that have been dated generally to the seventh century. The first of these are three references to a holy Theotokos (ἁγία θεοτόκος) in a list of taxes.⁸⁵ Four papyri from this period refer to a quarter of the Theotokos (λαύρα τῆς θεοτόκου), whereby the church is used as a point of reference in several tax receipts.⁸⁶ Finally, there are three documents from the seventh or eighth century that mention the church. The first of these refers to the rent collected on property owned by the church of the Theotokos (ἀπὸ μέρους ἐνοικίου τῆς ἁγίας θεοτόκου),⁸⁷ and the second is a fiscal document that refers to a church of the Theotokos (ἐκκλησία τῆς θεοτόκου).⁸⁸ The third of these churches mentions the south church of the Theotokos (νότος ἐκκλησία τῆς θεοτόκου).⁸⁹ This particular papyrus records a number of different names and probably served as a record of individuals and/or organizations that paid their taxes and were given a receipt. It is interesting to note that the church is described as the ‘south church’ of the Theotokos, which seems to suggest that it is a building distinct from the other church of the Theotokos. There is not enough information about this church, however, to separate this papyrus from the previously discussed church of the Theotokos at Arsinoe.

1^{bis} Arsinoites, holy Mary

A second possible church in Arsinoe is discerned in a seventh-century papyrus, in which a receipt is delivered by John ‘worker in tow of the holy Mary’ (στιππ(ουργός) ἁγίας Μαρίας).⁹⁰ This papyrus is of unknown provenance, but as Papaconstantinou suggests, it may refer to Arsinoe.⁹¹

2. Herakleopolis, Theotokos

The church of the Theotokos at Herakleopolis is mentioned in two papyri. The first papyrus dates to c. 657 and refers to a building which was leased ‘in the quarter of Our Lady the Theotokos

⁸⁵ SB I 5127.20, 22, 28. A seventh-century date is also offered by Worp, ‘Town Quarters’, 239, who demonstrates through the collection of toponyms that it dates securely to the Byzantine/Arabic period and probably more narrowly to the seventh century.

⁸⁶ SPP III 685.2-3, VIII 738.2, VIII 712 = XX 175.2, VIII 744.3.

⁸⁷ SPP III 266.1-2, 6-7.

⁸⁸ SPP X 216.2-3.

⁸⁹ SB XX 14686.5.

⁹⁰ P.Lond. II 450.1-2.

⁹¹ See P.Lond. II, p. 334, in which it is suggested that στιππ(ουργός) likely refers to the name of a street. The same name appears in a papyrus from the Arsinoite nome (P. Lond. II 387.20), and suggests that P.Lond. II 450 may also refer to Arsinoites.

Mary Basileios' (ἐν λ[α]ύρᾳ τῆς δεσποίνης ἡμῶν τῆς θεοτόκου Μαρίας τῆς Βασιλείου).⁹² The second papyrus, dating to the sixth century, relates that Kosmas, the deacon of the Theotokos (διάκονος τῆς θεωτόκου), witnesses the signing of a contract.⁹³

2^{bis} Herakleopolis, holy Mary

A church of the holy Mary at Herakleopolis is mentioned in a fifth-century papyrus, which appears to list several individuals and their professions. A man by the name of Kallinikos is referred to as the 'wood cutter of holy Mary' (ὕλοκόπος τῆς ἁγίας Μαρίας).⁹⁴ Papaconstantinou notes that while the papyrus, which was found in the Faiyum, is attributed to Herakleopolis based on its palaeography, it could also potentially come from Arsinoe and refer to 1^{bis}. However, based on the discrepancies in the provenance of the church as well as between the two dates (*SB* XXIV 16208 is dated to the fifth and *P.Lond.* II 450 [1^{bis}] to the seventh century), it is more likely that we are dealing here with two distinct buildings.

3. Oxyrhynchus, church of the holy Mary

There are four documents that refer to a church of the holy Mary at Oxyrhynchus; one of these explicitly mentions the existence of a 'holy church called the holy Mary' in 516 (τῇ ἁγίᾳ ἐκκλησίᾳ καλουμένη τῆς ἁγίας Μαρίας),⁹⁵ while another refers to a receipt for a rope or coil provided by the monks for 'the machine of the garden of the holy Mary' (εἰς τὴν μηχανὴν τοῦ κηπίου τῆς ἁγίας Μαρίας), and dates to 556.⁹⁶ A third document refers to four stational liturgies celebrated in 535-536 'at the holy Mary' (εἰς τὴν ἁγίαν Μαρίαν); three of these festivals celebrate the Nativity (γέννη τοῦ Χριστοῦ) and one the Dormition (ἡμέρα αὐτοῦ).⁹⁷ The final papyrus is a sixth-century account which pertains to the delivery of bricks to the holy Mary ([εἰς] χρεῖαν τῇ(ς) ἁγί(ας) Μαρίας).⁹⁸

There are two additional papyri that may refer to this church. The first is an explicit mention of a late sixth- or early seventh-century church at Oxyrhynchus entitled the holy church

⁹² *SB* I 5295 = *SB* VI 9462.3-4.

⁹³ *SPP* III 54.2.

⁹⁴ *SB* XXIV 16208.4.

⁹⁵ *P.Oxy.* LXXI 4833.3-4.

⁹⁶ *P.Oxy.* I 147.1. For κῆπος 'garden' see Preisigke, *WB* s.v. (p. 793).

⁹⁷ *P.Oxy.* XI 1357.30-32, 45, on which see A. Papaconstantinou, 'La liturgie stationale à Oxyrhynchus dans la première moitié du 6^e siècle. Réédition et commentaire du *POxy* XI 1357', *REByz* 54 (1996) 135-59.

⁹⁸ *P.Oxy.* XVIII 2197.11.

of Ama Mary (ἁγία ἐκκλησία τῆς ἅμα Μαρίας).⁹⁹ In this case, an individual was arrested at a place opposite the holy church of ἅμα Μαρία.¹⁰⁰ The second text is an ostrakon that dates to the fifth or sixth century and mentions Menas, the administrator of the blessed Mary (Μηνᾶς πρ(ονοητοῦ) τῆς μακαρίας Μαρίας).¹⁰¹ In the first edition πρ is taken as an abbreviation for πρ(εσβυτέρου), but a recent study corrects the resolution to πρ(ονοητοῦ). It seems more likely, however, that the ostrakon should refer to a priest, as there is no parallel in the papyrological evidence for an ‘administrator of Mary’.¹⁰² Thus, there is sufficient evidence to warrant the inclusion of both of these texts into the body of literature associated with the church of holy Mary at Oxyrhynchus, since ἅμα Μαρία is used interchangeably with ἁγία Μαρία, as at Aphrodite (14), and μακαρία Μαρία is used, in this case, in reference to the title of a priest of Mary.¹⁰³

3^{bis} Oxyrhynchus, Theotokos Mary

A recent issue of *BASP* has added a new papyrus referring to a church of Mary in Oxyrhynchus. This papyrus, which dates to 587-588, twice mentions Phib the treasurer of the Theotokos Mary (οἰκονόμος θευδόκος Μαρία), once within the body of the text and a second time on the *verso* of

⁹⁹ *P.Wash.Univ.* I 6.5. For ἅμα see Förster, *WB* s.v. (p. 39).

¹⁰⁰ The term ‘holy Mary’ appears in two forms in the Greek papyri: ἅμα Μαρία and ἁγία Μαρία, both of which are attested in the documentary evidence collected by Papaconstantinou. Thus, these terms should be viewed as interchangeable in the Greek references to Mary. She appears, however, only as ⲁⲓⲁ ⲙⲁⲣⲓⲁ in the Coptic documents. For the use of both terms in reference to Marian churches, see Antonini, ‘Chiese cristiane’, 131-2 (n. 6). For a comparable discussion on the application of specific titles, see T. Derda and E. Wipszycka, ‘L’emploi des titres Abba, Apa et Papas dans l’Égypte byzantine’, *JJP* 24 (1994) 23-56.

¹⁰¹ *SB* I 1977.1-2. For προνοητής ‘administrator’, see Förster, *WB* s.v. (p. 683); and Preisigke, *WB* s.v. (p. 379).

¹⁰² B.P. Grenfell and A.S. Hunt, ‘Excavations at Oxyrhynchus (1896-1907)’, repr. in A.K. Bowman et al. (eds), *Oxyrhynchus: A City and Its Texts* (London, 2007) 345-68 at 366-7. Corrections to the original are added in the reprint, in this case at n. 2. Note that in *P.Oxy.* LXXI, p. 140 (n. 3-4) it is suggested that this ostrakon no longer contains a reference to a Marian church, but the correction in Bowman et al., *Oxyrhynchus*, still suggests an association with a church of Mary. Moreover the abbreviation πρ(εσβυτέρος) is attested elsewhere, see Förster, *WB* s.v. (p. 666), and G. Schmelz, *Kirchliche Amtsträger im spätantiken Ägypten nach den Aussagen der griechischen und koptischen Papyri und Ostraka* (Leipzig, 2002) 165-7.

¹⁰³ The editors of *P.Oxy.* LXVII 4617 suggest that this papyrus may refer to a church of holy Mary in Oxyrhynchus at line 15, as the papyrus reads τῆς ἁγίας Μ[]. Although a reading of Μαρία is possible in this case, since there are churches attested to the holy Mary in Oxyrhynchus and the only known female saint at Oxyrhynchus is Μαρία, there is not enough clear evidence to support a definitive attribution. Papaconstantinou, *Culte des saints*, 141, notes the existence of a cult of Maria and Sophia at Hermopolis, but there are no other extant attestations of cults or churches dedicated to female saints that bear the first letter M. Given the fragmentary nature of the papyrus, it is mentioned here but not included in the appendix of attested Marian churches.

the papyrus as the endorser.¹⁰⁴ The document comes from the dossier of Flavia Anastasia, a landowner from Oxyrhynchus, who is attested in the sixth century. The papyrus appears to be a receipt, perhaps referring to a charitable donation exchanged between Phib and Flavia Anastasia. The editors of this papyrus comment that the use of the phrase Φεῖβ οἰκονόμος θευδόκου Μαρίας τὴν ὑμετέρα could either refer to Anastasia or her land and indicate the existence of an additional Marian church located in one of Anastasia's settlements within the Oxyrhynchite nome, or it could be an error for the genitive 'of Our Lady', with δεσποίνης in the lacuna (read: τῆς ἡμετέρ(ας) [δεσποίνης]).¹⁰⁵

4. Oxyrhynchus, monastery of Ama Mary

A relatively recently published (2001) Greek papyrus fragment from the late fifth or first half of the sixth century provides us with our first and only indication that a monastery of Ama Mary existed in Oxyrhynchus. The papyrus yields a list of payments in grain that were either due or made for the ninth indiction, and specifically enumerates that these payments were made 'to the monastery of Ama Mary' (εἰς τὸ μοναστήριον ἄμα Μαρίας).¹⁰⁶

5. Akoris, holy Mary

A single document records the existence of a Marian church in Akoris. The papyrus, which dates to the seventh century, mentions ἁγία Μαρία in a receipt for thirty *dipla* of some kind of commodity.¹⁰⁷ The papyrus is problematic, however, as it contains many abbreviations and several key words are missing from the text, which would allow for a more precise interpretation. For example, the document reads, ἁγία Μαρία μ() δ(ιπλᾶ) λ φορ(ά)δ(ος) δευ[τέ-], and the resolution of μ() is unclear. The editors of the papyrus remark that there is no evidence for a monastery of holy Mary in the Hermopolite nome, nor would we expect the Greek to read ἁγία Μαρία μ(οναστήριον) since there are no parallels for this abbreviation and the word μοναστήριον would be expected before the epithet, which would then take the genitive

¹⁰⁴ Hickey and Haug, 'Dossier', 103-6 (no. 2), lines 17-8 and v^o 1. For alternate spellings of names beginning with θεο- see F.T. Gignac, *A Grammar of the Greek Papyri of the Roman and Byzantine Periods*, 2 vols (Milan, 1976) 1.301.

¹⁰⁵ See discussion at Hickey and Haug, 'Dossier', 104 (n. 17-8).

¹⁰⁶ *P.Oxy.* LXVII 4620.27-8.

¹⁰⁷ P. van Minnen and K.A. Worp, 'A New Edition of Ostraka from Akoris', *Tyche* 5 (1998) 95-9 at 98 (no. 5).

form τῆς ἁγίας Μαρίας.¹⁰⁸ Although problems arise with the interpretation of this document, a reading of ἁγία Μαρία as a church, in this case, is most likely since the majority of the other names in the list of this papyrus refer to churches.

6. Antinoopolis, holy Mary

A church of ἁγία Μαρία is mentioned indirectly in a document relating to taxation at Antinoopolis, in which ‘men of the holy Mary’ (ἄνθρωποι ἁγίας Μαρίας) are named.¹⁰⁹ This papyrus, which has been dated to 715-716, provides the single attestation of a Marian church in Antinoopolis.

7. Hermopolis, shrine of the holy Mary

Hermopolis and the Hermopolite nome have yielded seven Marian churches, which is the highest concentration of churches dedicated to Mary in a single region. A shrine of the holy Mary (εὐκτηρίον τῆς ἁγίας Μαρίας) is noted in several papyri,¹¹⁰ and first appears in a book of accounts dating to the beginning of the sixth century, in which four resumptions of payments are made ‘to the holy Mary’ (εἰς τὴν ἁγίαν Μαρίαν).¹¹¹ The church disappears from the papyrological record of Hermopolis until the beginning of the seventh century, when it resurfaces as a taxpayer in a fiscal codex. At this time, however, the building is referred to as a ‘small shrine’ (μικρὸν εὐκτήριον).¹¹² A second document from the beginning of the seventh century also refers to the church of the holy Mary in Hermopolis as a shrine (εὐκτηρίον).¹¹³ In

¹⁰⁸ The editors suggest that μ() may be an abbreviation for a product that would be packed in a δ(ιπλᾶ) or that μ() and δ() may be an abbreviation for μ(ο)δ(ίους), although they see this as an unlikely option as it is usually abbreviated as μοδ. The interpretation of this μ() proves to be troublesome, and a clear delineation of its function requires further examination by a papyrologist.

¹⁰⁹ *P.Cair.Masp.* III 67359.vi 3.

¹¹⁰ For the term εὐκτηρίον, see E. Wipszycka, *Études sur le christianisme dans l'Égypte de l'antiquité tardive* (Rome, 1996) 157-75 at 159 and 168 (‘Καθολική et les autres épithètes qualifiant le nom ἐκκλησία: contribution à l'étude de l'ordre hiérarchique des églises dans l'Égypte byzantine’, 1994¹). Here she describes εὐκτηρία as cult places that function primarily to celebrate the feasts of a particular saint.

¹¹¹ *P.Bad.* IV 95.166, 169, 171, 180. For a discussion of the location of this church in Hermopolis see M. Drew-Bear, *Le nome Hermopolite: toponymes et sites* (Ann Arbor, 1979) 165, who suggests that the toponyms found in this papyrus are not explicit enough to distinguish whether this papyrus refers to the known Marian church in Hermopolis or another Marian church entirely.

¹¹² *P.Sorb.* II 69, 45 (fr. 23.C3), 53 (fr. 27.C18), 65 (fr. 33.A12), 81 (fr. 41.C6 and 7), and 91 (fr. 46.C3). The same document also yields two indirect references to a Marian church, *P.Sorb.* II 69, 57 (fr. 29.F8) and 106 (fr. 53.B22) (διὰ τῆς ἁγίας Μαρίας). For the dating of this papyrus to 618/619 or 633/634 see *P.Sorb.* II, p. xii. Cf. L.S.B. MacCoull, ‘Korr. Tyche’, *Tyche* 16 (2001) 279-83 at 279 (no. 373), who dates this papyrus to 618/619.

¹¹³ *BGU XIX* 2815.8.

this case, the papyrus is a contract involving the lease of some land, of which the ‘shrine of the holy Mary’ (εὐκτήριον τῆς ἁγίας Μαρίας) has joint ownership.

Another seventh-century account book on papyrus, likely dealing with local taxation, mentions the church in relation to its deacon (διὰ τῆς ἁγίας Μαρίας διὰ Χριστοδώρου διακόνου).¹¹⁴ A final reference to this church comes from a contract dating to 620, which is partially lost but alludes to oxen and irrigation machines that were possibly lent to the ‘holy church called ‘of the holy Mary’ (ἁγία ἐκκλησία καλουμένη τῆς ἁγίας Μαρίας).¹¹⁵ In this last example, it is important to note that we have the first reference to this building as a church rather than an εὐκτήριον. Despite the distinct use of the term ἐκκλησία, it is likely that this papyrus refers to the same building, given the abundant evidence for a structure dedicated to ἁγία Μάρια at Hermopolis in the sixth and seventh centuries.¹¹⁶ In fact, the other seventh-century reference to a Marian church at Hermopolis occurs in the same fiscal codex but is distinguished from the present church by a toponym (10), and further references to churches of Mary in Hermopolis do not appear in the papyrological evidence until the ninth century.

8. Hermopolis, Virgin of the Tiberium

A list of churches in Hermopolis from the ninth century has yielded five distinct Marian churches, although little is known of these buildings besides their attestation in this list. The first of these churches is entitled ΠΑΡΘΕΝΟΣ ΕΤΒΕΡΙ.¹¹⁷ The ‘Virgin of the Tiberium’ likely refers to a place name or perhaps a former temple dedicated to the imperial cult, in which the church was situated.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁴ *P.Lond.Copt.* I 1077.1. The church is only briefly mentioned in the description of this papyrus, but the relevant text is given in *P.Sorb.* II, p. 73.

¹¹⁵ *P.Paramone* 18.16. The first edition of this text dates the papyrus to 620. For an alternative dating of 641, see N. Gonis, ‘P.Paramone 18: Emperors, Conquerors and Vassals’, *ZPE* 173 (2010) 133-5 at 134-5.

¹¹⁶ The use of the two different terms could imply the presence of a second potential church in seventh-century Hermopolis, since there is a distinction made in the papyri between the two types of buildings. It is more likely, however, that the εὐκτήριον and the ἁγία ἐκκλησία καλουμένη τῆς ἁγίας Μαρίας refer to the same building since the latter is only mentioned once among several attestations of a Marian shrine in the corpus of seventh-century papyri from Hermopolis. Additionally, the term καλουμένη (‘so-called’) could refer back to the εὐκτήριον, by indicating that the building is often referred to as a ‘church’, although it perhaps should be not characterized as such. At present, however, there is not enough information to make a distinction for two separate churches.

¹¹⁷ *P.Lond.Copt.* I 1100.23.

¹¹⁸ I do not know of any other attestation of a ‘Tiberium’ at Hermopolis.

9. Hermopolis, Virgin at the Praetorium

The second building attested in the ninth-century list of churches in Hermopolis is the church of the Virgin ‘at the Praetorium’ (ΠΑΡΘΕΝΟΣ ΕΠΕΠΡΕΤΩΡ).¹¹⁹

10. Hermopolite nome, holy Mary ‘of the *topos* of Victor’¹²⁰

The church ‘of the holy Mary of the *topos* of Victor’ (τῆς ἁγίας Μαρίας τόπου Βίκτορος) is mentioned as a contributor in the same seventh-century fiscal codex as the εὐκτηρίον τῆς ἁγίας Μαρίας.¹²¹ The presence of another church of Mary in the same fiscal codex, distinguished in this case by the toponym Βίκτορος, suggests that this church was not the primary center of Marian veneration in Hermopolis, but that the shrine of the holy Mary (εὐκτηρίον τῆς ἁγίας Μαρίας) held that honour.¹²² Furthermore, this is the only instance from Egypt where a toponym is added to the title ‘holy Mary’, whereby two contemporary churches with the same epithet are distinguished from one another in a particular nome.

11. Hermopolite nome, Virgin ‘of Kako’

The third church attested in the ninth-century list discussed above is the Virgin ‘of Kako’ (ΠΑΡΘΕΝΟΣ ΕΤΚΑΚΟ).¹²³ ‘Kako’ presumably refers here to the location in which the church was situated.

12. Hermopolite nome, Virgin ‘of Plak’

The fourth church attested in the ninth-century list is that of the Virgin ‘of Plak’ (ΠΑΡΘΕΝΟΣ ΕΠΛΑΚ).¹²⁴ The term ‘Plak’ probably refers again to a toponym within the Hermopolite nome.

¹¹⁹ *P.Lond.Copt.* I 1100.26.

¹²⁰ The first edition of the papyrus states that the location of this church is unknown. It is mentioned in a fiscal codex from Hermopolis, but a toponym ‘of Victor’ (Βίκτορος) is yet unaccounted for in Hermopolis. There is a toponym by the same name which is mentioned in Drew-Bear, *Nome*, 82, but it refers to a monastery in the Antinoite nome.

¹²¹ *P.Sorb.* II 69, 13.7.

¹²² The inclusion of both churches in the same fiscal document and the distinction made to *P.Sorb.* II 69, 13.7 as the church of holy Mary ‘of the *topos* of Victor’ (δ(ιὰ) τῆς ἁγί(ας) Μαρίας τόπ(ου) Βίκ[τορος]), further reinforces the identification of *P.Paramone* 18.16 with the shrine of the holy Mary (εὐκτηρίον τῆς ἁγίας Μαρίας) in 7. For the term *topos* see É. Bernard, ‘Τόπος dans les inscriptions grecques d’Égypte’, *ZPE* 98 (1993) 103-10, and Papaconstantinou, *Culte des saints*, 269-70.

¹²³ *P.Lond.Copt.* I 1100.5.

¹²⁴ *P.Lond.Copt.* I 1100.16.

13. Hermopolite nome, Virgin ‘of the Persea’

The church of the Virgin ‘of the Persea’ (ΠΑΡΘΕΝΟΣ ΕΠΕΥΟΥΣΕ) is the fifth and final Marian church mentioned in the ninth-century document from Hermopolis.¹²⁵ Papaconstantinou associates this church with a tradition reported by both Sozomen and Theodore Lector, which refers to a Persea tree at the gates of the city of Hermopolis under which the Holy Family rested during their flight into Egypt, bowing down in worship of the child.¹²⁶ The account of Theodore contends that the tree remained in this position until the time of the writing of his *Epitome*.¹²⁷ The pre-existing accounts of the Persea tree as well as the appearance of a church by the same name at Hermopolis in the ninth century, suggests the possibility of an adaptation of an ancient tradition by a much later church, whose exact location is unknown.¹²⁸

14. Aphrodite,¹²⁹ church of the holy Mary

The church of ἁγία Μαρία in Aphrodite first appears in the papyrological record in 525, when a fiscal document mentions the church of the holy Ama Maria (ἐκκλησία ἡ ἁγία ἄμα Μαρία) and its priest, Paul.¹³⁰ This papyrus demonstrates that the terms ἁγία and ἄμα appear to be interchangeable for Mary with regards to how an individual chooses to refer to this church, as they are commonly used both together and independently.¹³¹ A second papyrus mentioning the church appears in the mid sixth century, and refers to a notary of holy Mary (νοτάριον ἡ πρὸς τὴν μεγάλην ἄμα Μαρίαν).¹³² This account belongs to the Dioscorus archive and uses ἄμα Μαρία as a stand-alone qualifier for the church.¹³³ Another account from the Dioscorus archive refers to a priest of Ama Maria (πρεσβύτερος ἄμα Μαρ[ίας]).¹³⁴ A third document from the

¹²⁵ *P.Lond.Copt.* I 1100.11.

¹²⁶ *Soz. h.e.* 5.21.8 (GCS 50, p. 213).

¹²⁷ Theodore Lector, *Epitome* (GCS Neue Folge 3, pp. 60-1).

¹²⁸ The church could have stood near the gates of the village as the tradition suggests, but it could also refer to a place whose toponym (Περσεῶν) is known from the Greek papyri in the sixth century and neighbours the village of Τερτεμσακή. See Drew-Bear, *Nome*, 203.

¹²⁹ The sixth-century papyri refer to this village as Aphrodite, but it appears as Aphrodito in the papyri from the eighth century. See J.-L. Fournet, ‘Appendice sur le nom d’Αφροδίτης κώμη’, *REG* 105 (1992) 235-6.

¹³⁰ *P.Flor.* III 297.92, 242.

¹³¹ The use of ἁγία and ἄμα together in this papyrus reinforces the idea that the church of Ama Maria and holy Mary at Oxyrhynchus are one and the same. See discussion at 3.

¹³² *P.Cair.Masp.* I 67061.3.

¹³³ For an overview of the scholarship on the Dioscorus archive, see J.H.F. Dijkstra, *Philae and the End of Ancient Egyptian Religion: A Regional Study of Religious Transformation (298-642 CE)* (Leuven, 2008) 2-11, with references. See also generally, J.-L. Fournet (ed.), *Les archives de Dioscore d’Aphrodité cent ans après leurs découverte* (Paris, 2008).

¹³⁴ *P.Cair.Masp.* II 67138, I v^o 8.

archive, addressed to the Empress Theodora, refers to Kallinikos, ‘the humble priest of the holy church of Ama Maria of the village of Aphrodite’ (πρεσβύτερος ἐλεεινὸς τῆς ἁγίας ἐκκλησίας ἅμα Μαρίας κώμης Ἀφροδίτης).¹³⁵ In this document the inhabitants of Aphrodite, including the priest from the church of the holy Mary, have issued a complaint against the actions of the pagarch of Antaeopolis. During the sixth century, we also find the first reference to the church as simply ἁγία Μαρία in a letter from the Dioscorus archive, which outlines an act of *antimisthosis* (a lease written by the lessor)¹³⁶ in which the ‘clergy of the holy Mary’ (κληρικός τῆς ἁγίας Μαρίας) come to an agreement with a certain Paos.¹³⁷

There are no surviving records for this church in the seventh century, as for Aphrodite as a whole, and the church reappears again in the eighth century. There is a document dating to the beginning of the eighth century (706) that refers to a *topos* of holy Mary (τόπος ἁγίας Μαρίας) in an account of taxes, which includes land taxes, poll-taxes and *embola*.¹³⁸ Another eighth-century document that deals with the land taxes, poll-taxes and *embola* includes a reference to ἁγία Μαρία, which is mentioned as a τόπος in this list.¹³⁹ A third papyrus dates to the beginning of the eighth century (716-717) and records the existence of a ‘church of the holy Mary of the village’ (ἐκκλησία ἁγίας Μαρίας τῆς κώμης) in a fiscal document.¹⁴⁰ There is a parallel here with the inclusions of the term κώμης with the reference to the ἁγία ἐκκλησία ἅμα

¹³⁵ *P.Cair.Masp.* III 67283.ii 6.

¹³⁶ For a discussion of *antimisthosis*, see F. Lemaire, ‘*Antimisthosis* in the Dioscorus Archive’, in T. Gagos (ed.), *Proceedings of the Twenty-Fifth International Congress of Papyrology* (Ann Arbor, 2010) 397-408 at 400-1.

¹³⁷ *P.Cair.Masp.* I 67066.2. This is the first reference to a building dedicated to ἁγία Μαρία as opposed to ἅμα Μαρία in the Dioscorus archive. It is likely that these two different titles actually refer to the same building, as we see them used together in *P.Flor.* III 297.92, 242. Furthermore, the use of the term ἁγία Μαρία in the sixth century demonstrates that there is a precedent for its singular use in the village prior to its exclusive use in the eighth century. Papaconstantinou associates the κληρικός τῆς ἁγίας Μαρίας with the church of the holy Mary, whereas Timm, *Christlich-koptische Ägypten*, 1448, attributes this papyrus to the monastery.

¹³⁸ *P.Lond.* IV 1420.31, 35. The term τόπος does not indicate whether we are dealing here with a monastery or a church. For a discussion of the use of the term τόπος and its interchangeability with the term εὐκτηρίον see Papaconstantinou, *Culte des saints*, 272-3. A similar issue arises in *P.Lond.* IV 1419.66 in which the papyrus refers to a τόπος of Ama Maria and a church of holy Mary respectively. For *embola*, see C. Foss, ‘Egypt under Mu‘āwiya Part II: Middle Egypt, Fustāt and Alexandria’, *Bulletin of the of School of Orient and African Studies* 72 (2009), 259-78 at 259, who defines the term as the shipment of grain to Constantinople as a form of taxation.

¹³⁹ *P.Lond.* IV 1474. This reference is only mentioned in a list of names and τόποι from Aphrodite; it is uncertain whether it, like *P.Lond.* IV 1420, should be attributed to either a church or a monastery of the holy Mary. It is listed here along with *P.Lond.* IV 1420 for consistency.

¹⁴⁰ *P.Lond.* IV 1419.532. This particular papyrus, which mentions a ‘church of the holy Mary’, has yielded references to two additional places of Marian veneration. The first refers to a church of the Theotokos (ἐκκλησία θεοδόκου) (line 530) and the second to a monastery of the holy Mary (μοναστήριον [or ὄρος] ἁγίας Μαρίας) (lines 435, 1268, 1379). This suggests that we may have two churches and one monastery dedicated to Mary in eighth-century Aphrodite; both of which are discussed below at 14^{bis} and 15.

Μαρίας κώμης Ἀφροδίτης in the Dioscorus archive, which would suggest that we are dealing with the same building.

14^{bis} Aphrodite, church of the Theotokos

A single papyrus attests to a second possible church at Aphrodite. It states that the treasurers made a payment ‘on behalf of the church of the Theotokos’ (διὰ ἐκκλησίας θεοδόκου).¹⁴¹ The reference to this church is made in the same eighth-century document as the reference to the ἐκκλησία ἁγίας Μαρίας τῆς κώμης discussed above.¹⁴² These two references are only separated by two lines in the papyrus, and it seems unlikely that the individual would use two different titles for Mary if he were indeed intending to refer to the same church. In this case, the use of a different epithet for Mary likely indicates the existence of a second church at Aphrodite.

15. Aphrodite, monastery of the holy Mary

Aside from the church of the holy Mary (ἐκκλησία), the papyri also record the existence of a monastery of the holy Mary (μοναστηρίον or ὄρος) in Aphrodite, both of which are first recorded in the sixth century. The sixth-century attestation for this monastery stems from a single papyrus that refers to an ὄ[ρος] ἄμα Μαρίας, in which the ὄρος is mentioned in a document from the Dioscorus archive that deals with wool and sheep shearing.¹⁴³ There is no further mention of this building until the eighth century when the monastery appears in a number of papyri. Notably, an ὄρος is mentioned in an eighth-century fiscal document which also records the two other churches (ἐκκλησία ἁγίας Μαρίας and ἐκκλησία θεοτόκου) in Aphrodite.¹⁴⁴ Two additional early eighth-century papyri refer to accounts of the payments of the *chrysika demosia* tax by the ὄρος ἁγίας Μαρίας.¹⁴⁵ Another papyrus from the beginning of the eighth century records payments made by the ‘men of the holy Mary and monasteries’ (ἄνθρωποι ἁγίας Μαρίας (καὶ) μον(αστήρια)) in a fiscal document.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴¹ *P.Lond.* IV 1419.530. Read θεοτόκου for θεοδόκου.

¹⁴² *P.Lond.* IV 1419.532.

¹⁴³ *P.Cair.Masp.* II 67141.v r^o 12.

¹⁴⁴ *P.Lond.* IV 1419.1269. See the references to the two other churches in *P.Lond.* IV 1419.530 and 532.

¹⁴⁵ *P.Ross.Georg.* IV 19.6, 20.7, v^o 6.

¹⁴⁶ *CPR* XXII 59.3. There is an exact parallel for the use of the term ἄνθρωποι ἁγίας Μαρίας in the eighth century from Antinoe (see 6), although in the latter case the ‘men of the holy Mary’ appear to be associated with a church, whereas in the former case they are associated with a monastery.

The terms ὄρος and μοναστήριον are interchangeable in the papyri, and there are several additional instances in which both terms are used to refer to the same monastery at Aphrodite. In 709-710, a fiscal document records taxes paid by the μοναστήριον ἁγίας Μαρίας.¹⁴⁷ Between 714-716, the ὄρος ἁγίας Μαρίας appears several times in a list of requisitions from Arsinoe,¹⁴⁸ and both terms appear together in 716-717 when the ἁγία Μαρίας ὄρος and the μοναστήριον ἁγίας Μαρίας are both mentioned in the same tax register.¹⁴⁹ In 723, however, we return to the term μοναστήριον (ἀπὸ μοναστηρίου ἁγίας Μαρίας) when it appears several times in an account of taxes to be paid to the state and other agencies.¹⁵⁰ Another eighth-century document refers to the quota of taxes to be paid to the state, in which payments are made ‘from the monastery of holy Mary’ (ἀπὸ μονα[στηρίου] ἁγίας Μαρίας).¹⁵¹

There are three final documents from the eighth century that refer to an ὄρος ἁγίας Μαρίας. In the first document, the ὄρος is mentioned in a roll that lists several different accounts in which the monastery of the holy Mary and the associated ἄνθρωποι ἁγίας Μαρίας are involved in several transactions, including requisitions for naval purposes, calculation of taxes and the poll-taxes.¹⁵² A second papyrus again refers to the ὄρος and the ἄνθρωποι ἁγίας Μαρίας in a register of miscellaneous expenses.¹⁵³ The final document is a bilingual (Greek-Coptic) tax register mentioning the ὄρος of the holy Mary, which is represented by its priest Phoibammon.¹⁵⁴ The ‘men of the holy Mary’ (ἄνθρωποι ἁγίας Μαρίας) have a considerable presence in the papyrological evidence as they appear in fifteen distinct eighth-century papyri.¹⁵⁵

¹⁴⁷ SB I 5650.1, 9. The first edition gives a date of 710. For a date of 709-10, see K.A. Worp, ‘Hegira Years in Greek, Greek-Coptic and Greek-Arabic Papyri’, *Aegyptus* 65 (1985) 107-15 at 111.

¹⁴⁸ *P.Lond.* IV 1434.137, 195, 220, 295.

¹⁴⁹ *P.Lond.* IV 1419.435, 1268, 1379. Papaconstantinou, ‘Sanctuaires’, 87, states that ‘il est difficile de savoir si le μοναστήριον ἁγίας Μαρίας qui apparaît dans ce même document (l. 435) fait référence à la même institution’; but the terms μοναστήριον and ὄρος here likely refer to the same building, since there are contemporary references that mention the building by both terms. Still, this identification cannot be proven beyond doubt.

¹⁵⁰ *P.Lond.* IV 1413.106, 219, 327, 434, 547, 653.

¹⁵¹ *P.Lond.* IV 1414.275.

¹⁵² *P.Lond.* IV 1442.A7, 20, B30, C34, 40, G73, 77.

¹⁵³ *P.Lond.* IV 1445.2, 4, 11.

¹⁵⁴ *P.Lond.* IV 1552.28.

¹⁵⁵ *CPR* XXII 59.3; *P.Lond.* IV 1412.37, 149, 231, 308, 398, 484 = SB I 5178; 1416.A6, D38, F72; 1431.36 = SB I 5177; 1432.120; 1433.241 = SB I 5179; 1434.58, 76, 137, 191, 211, 222; 1436.25, 80, 104, 137; 1442.A7, C34, G73; 1445.4, 11; *CPR* III 88 = *P.Lond.* IV 1451.78; *P.Lond.* IV 1453.10; 1491.A; *P.Ross.Georg.* IV 20.v^o 6; SB I 5652.1, 9. It is impossible to know to which structure, the church or the monastery at Aphrodite, the ἄνθρωποι ἁγίας Μαρίας belonged, although there are several instances in the papyrological record where these individuals are mentioned alongside the monastery of the holy Mary. It is for this reason that the references to the ἄνθρωποι ἁγίας Μαρίας have been grouped under one heading. See e.g., *P.Lond.* IV 1433.241, 557, 561 = SB I 5179; 1434.58, 76, 137, 191, 195, 211, 220, 222, 295; 1442.A7, 20, B30, C34, 40, G73, 77; 1445.2, 4, 11; *P.Ross.Georg.* IV 20.7, v^o 6.

Finally, there is a single papyrus from c. 709 that refers to fugitives from Aphrodite that fled to other pagarchies. This document mentions property of the holy Mary in the παγαρχία Ὑψηλῆς, but it does not specify whether this property belongs to a church or a monastery.¹⁵⁶

16. Antaeopolis, holy Mary

The evidence for a church at Antaeopolis stems from three letters, the first of which dates to the sixth century and was written by the clergy of the holy Mary of Antaeopolis (ΑΓΙΑ ΜΑΡΙΑ ΝΤΚΩΟΥ) to Dioscorus.¹⁵⁷ Two additional letters from the clergy of the holy Mary (ΤΖΑΓΙΑ ΜΑΡΙΑ) were found in the archives of the Egyptian Museum in Cairo that mention the *demosion* and also appear to address Dioscorus.¹⁵⁸

17. Taniathis, holy Mary

A fifth-century papyrus records a contribution made by the οἶκος τῆς ἁγίας Μαρίας to the cathedral church.¹⁵⁹ The location of this church is established by the heading ‘village of Taniathis’ (κώμης Ταν[ιᾶθε]ως) under which a list of contributions is provided.

18. Jeme or environs, holy Mary¹⁶⁰

A church of holy Mary (ΑΓΙΑ ΜΑΡΙΑ) is known in the papyrological texts of Jeme, the town built in the former mortuary temple of Ramesses III at Medinet Habu, on the west bank at Thebes, from the beginning of the seventh century until the mid-eighth century.¹⁶¹ At the beginning of the seventh century, we find an ostrakon from a superior to a priest asking him to perform a service at the church of the holy Mary (ΘΑΓΙΑ ΜΑΡΙΑ).¹⁶² In a second seventh-century ostrakon, Elias, a deacon of holy Mary (ΔΙΑΚΟΝΟΣ ΘΑΓΙΑ ΜΑΡΙΑ) is mentioned as a scribe on receipt

¹⁵⁶ *P.Lond.* IV 1461.23. At present, there is no way of knowing to which institution this property belonged, and it has therefore been placed at the end of the entries on Aphrodite (14-5).

¹⁵⁷ L.S.B. MacCoull, ‘The Coptic Archive of Dioscorus of Aphrodito’, *CdE* 56 (1981) 185-93 at 190.

¹⁵⁸ L.S.B. MacCoull, ‘Missing Pieces from the Dioscorus Archive’, *CdE* 65 (1990) 107-10 at 110. For *demosion*, see T. Miller, ‘The *Basilika* and the *Demosia*. The Financial Offices of the Late Byzantine Empire’, *REByz* 36 (1978) 171-91 at 171, in which the term is defined as the ‘public treasury’.

¹⁵⁹ *P.Bad.* IV 94.9. On the term οἶκος, see Dijkstra, *Philae and the End*, 312, where it is described in relation to an inscription from the church of St Stephen at Philae.

¹⁶⁰ It cannot be established whether the references to a church of the holy Mary in these texts actually indicate a church within the town of Jeme or its immediate environs. See T.G. Wilfong, *Women of Jeme: Lives in a Coptic Town in Late Antique Egypt* (Ann Arbor, 2002) 32.

¹⁶¹ See, generally, Wilfong, *Women*.

¹⁶² *O.Crum* 511.2-3.

acknowledging a debt of a *solidus*.¹⁶³ A third seventh-century ostrakon has preserved a text written by the brothers of the holy Mary (ΝΕCΝΗΥ ΝΘΑΓΙΑ ΜΑΡΙΑ) to the clergy of the episcopal church.¹⁶⁴ A fourth ostrakon records that an oath was sworn in the holy Mary (ΝΖΟΥΝ ΝΘΑΓΙΑ ΜΑΡΙΑ) after the clergy had relieved the congregation.¹⁶⁵ A fifth document, this time a papyrus from the seventh century, records that Daniel, the priest of the holy Mary (ΠΡΕCΒΥΤΕΡΟC ΝΘΑΓΙΑ ΜΑΡΙΑ), drafted a document that granted land to the monastery of Phoibammon.¹⁶⁶ A further papyrus from this period notes that Pher and Joseph, ΠΡΕCΒΥΤΕΡΟC ΝΘΑΓΙΑ ΜΑΡΙΑ, gave their signatures as witnesses to a warranty deed.¹⁶⁷ A final document from the seventh or eighth century contains a list of churches on an ostrakon from Jeme. Among the churches is a reference to ΘΑΓΙΑ Μ[], which the editors likely restore to ΘΑΓΙΑ Μ[ΑΡΙΑ].¹⁶⁸

The eighth century has also yielded a significant amount of evidence for this church. In 733 (or 748) a papyrus records that Elie, a lector of the holy Mary (ΝΑΝΑΓΝΩΤ(ΗC) [read ΝΑΝΑΓΝΩCΤΗC] ΝΘΑΓΙΑ ΜΑΡΙΑ), signed a will for a man named Paul.¹⁶⁹ A second eighth-century papyrus (735/750) also records individuals associated with the church of the holy Mary in Jeme acting as witnesses in legal contracts. In this case, Senouthios, the ‘most humble priest of the holy Mary and Mouses its deacon’ (ΠΕΕΛΑΧΕCΤΟC ΠΡΕCΒΥΤΕΡΟC ΝΘΑΓΙΑ ΜΑΡΙΑ ΜΗΜΟΥCΗC ΠΔΙΑΚΟΝΟC) witness the signing of a contract that details the sale of a house.¹⁷⁰ A third example of a clergyman acting as a witness to a contract comes from a mid-eighth century (c. 756) papyrus, in which Kosma, the priest of the holy Mary, signs a hypothetical deed for the sale of a house.¹⁷¹ The same Kosma is found witnessing another mid-eighth century document, whereby he oversees a donation to the monastery of Phoibammon.¹⁷² A final, undated ostrakon, records

¹⁶³ *O.Crum* 175.5.

¹⁶⁴ *O.Crum* 292.3-4. This church is likely from Jeme, although there is no provenance provided in *O.Crum*. Papaconstantinou accepts that this church relates to this town, while Wilfong adds a question mark to the papyrus. See Wilfong, *Women*, 32 (n. 22).

¹⁶⁵ *O.Crum* 481.8.

¹⁶⁶ *P.KRU* 105.32. For the monastery of Phoibammon, see W. Godlewski, *Le monastère de St Phoibamon* (Warsaw, 1986).

¹⁶⁷ *P.MoscowCopt.* 44.14-8.

¹⁶⁸ *O.Crum* 470.1. The vast evidence for a church of the holy Mary at Jeme (or its environs) in the seventh and eighth centuries makes this restitution highly probable.

¹⁶⁹ *P.KRU* 74.111. See Förster, *WB* s.v. (p. 47-8), for this spelling of ΔΝΑΓΝΩCΤΗC.

¹⁷⁰ *P.KRU* 16.71-2.

¹⁷¹ *P.KRU* 58.31-2.

¹⁷² *P.KRU* 90.48. The Kosma in these two documents (*P.KRU* 58 and *P.KRU* 90) has to be the same individual, as he is referred to on both occasions as ΚΟCΜΑ ΠΩΗΡΕ ΝΠΕCΕΝΘΙΟC ΠΕΕΛΑΧΧΙCΤΟC ΝΠΡΕΒΕΤΕΡΟC ΝΘΑΓΙΑ ΜΑΡΙΑ. For the spelling of the name (Kosmas in Greek and Kosma in Coptic), see J.H.F. Dijkstra, *Syene I: The Figural and Textual Graffiti from the Temple of Isis at Aswan* (Darmstadt/Mainz, 2012) 157-8.

the acknowledgement of a debt by Kosma, made ‘in the holy Mary’ (ἡ ἁγία μαρία), for three *solidi* to be paid to Peter, son of Ananias.¹⁷³

There is a final papyrus that seems to refer to ‘the priest of the holy Mary Trygata of Jeme’ (ΠΡΕΣΒΥΤΕΡΟΣ ΘΕΑΓΙΑ ΜΑΡΙΑ ΝΤΡΥΓΑ[ΤΑ Ν]ΧΗΜΕ), if that is indeed the correct reading.¹⁷⁴ Like the majority of the other papyri from Jeme, this papyrus was deposited at the monastery of Phoibammon,¹⁷⁵ but the use of the toponym ‘Trygata’, is unique in the textual record from Jeme.¹⁷⁶ Given that the reading of this papyrus is uncertain, the question of whether it refers to a separate church remains open.

18^{bis} Jeme or environs, Theotokos Mary

There are two documents that refer to a church of Theotokos Mary (ΘΕΩΔΟΚΟΣ ΜΑΡΙΑ) at Jeme. In the first papyrus, Mouses, ‘the most humble priest and *oikonomos* of the Theotokos holy Virgin Mary’ (ΠΕΙΕΛΑΧΙΣΤΟΣ ΜΠΡΕΣΒΥΤΕΡΟΣ ΔΥΩ ΠΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΟΣ ΝΤΕΘΕΩΔΟΚΟΣ ΕΤΟΥΔΑΒ ΜΑΡΙΑ ΤΠΑΡΘΕΝΟΣ) is a witness to the signing of a will.¹⁷⁷ This document dates to the mid-seventh century. Thus, it is unlikely that the Mouses in this context refers to the Mouses that appears in the eighth-century reference to a church of Αγια Μαρια in Jeme (18).¹⁷⁸ The second papyrus holds the signature of Anastasios, ‘the most humble deacon of the Theotokos Mary’ (ΠΕΙΕΛΑΧΙΣΤΟΣ ΝΔΙΑΚΟΝΟΣ ΝΘΕΩΔΟΚΟΣ ΜΑΡΙΑ), on an act of partition dating to 738.¹⁷⁹ The use of the two different titles for the cult of Mary at Jeme (Αγια Μαρια [18] and ΘΕΩΔΟΚΟΣ ΜΑΡΙΑ [18^{bis}]) does not necessarily indicate the existence of two different churches. This is further complicated by the complex vocabulary ΘΕΩΔΟΚΟΣ ΕΤΟΥΔΑΒ ΜΑΡΙΑ ΤΠΑΡΘΕΝΟΣ applied to the mid-seventh century reference in *P.KRU* 75. There does not appear to be any conformity to the manner in

¹⁷³ *O.Medin.Habu* 61.4-5. The first edition does not provide a date for this ostrakon, but Papaconstantinou assigns it to the broad period of the seventh to eighth century, which given the dates for which we have evidence for Marian veneration at Jeme seems likely.

¹⁷⁴ *P.KRU* 94.62-3.

¹⁷⁵ Wilfong, *Women*, 20.

¹⁷⁶ It is clear that this papyrus refers to a church at Jeme ([N]ⲁⲙⲉ). The word 'Trygata', however, is largely reconstructed and thus the papyrus is grouped here with the other papyri from Jeme which mention a church of ⲑⲁⲅⲓⲁ ⲙⲁⲣⲓⲁ since it shares a common epithet for Mary, although it is not excluded that this church may, in fact, represent a distinct building. See H.E. Winlock and W.E. Crum, *The Monastery of Epiphanius: Part I* (New York, 1926) 116; W.E. Crum and H.G. Evelyn White, *The Monastery of Epiphanius at Thebes, Part II* (New York, 1973) 274, and Wilfong, *Women*, 32 (n. 22).

¹⁷⁷ *P.KRU* 75.143-4.

¹⁷⁸ Cf. *P.KRU* 16.71-2 (18). Mouses is a highly common name and there is a discrepancy of approximately 50 years between these two individuals.

¹⁷⁹ *P.KRU* 38.71-2.

which a possible second church was named, and it cannot be ascertained with confidence, therefore, whether these two references indicate the existence of a second church at Jeme, or whether they pertain to the known church of ἈΓΙΑ ΜΑΡΙΑ in the town.¹⁸⁰

19. Hermonthis, the holy church of the Theotokos¹⁸¹

There is a single direct reference to a church at Hermonthis in an undated graffito from the monastery of Epiphanius on the west bank at Thebes, not far from Jeme.¹⁸² This graffito asks the Lord to pray for Phoibamon, the unworthy reader of the ‘holy church of the Theotokos of Hermonthis’ (ἁγία ἐκκλησία θεοτόκης τ[ης?] Φ(ε)ρμωνθ[εως]).¹⁸³

20. Piohe, church of the holy Mary

A church of the holy Mary is mentioned in an undated Coptic ostrakon. In the text, three men (John, David and Simeon) request the Bishop of Hermonthis to ordain Isaac as a priest in the ‘church of the holy Mary of Piohe’ (ἐκκλησία ἁγίας Μαρίας Πιωχέ).¹⁸⁴ Even though the location of the village of Piohe is unknown, the request to the Bishop of Hermonthis indicates that it was at least situated in the Hermonthite nome.

21. Syene, holy Mary

There are three references to a church of the holy Mary in Syene, all from the archive of Flavius Paternouthis, a boatman and soldier from Syene, and dated to the sixth century.¹⁸⁵ In the first papyrus, from 585, Isakos son of Taeion, the ‘archdeacon of the holy Mary’ (ἀρχιδιάκονος τῆς ἁγίας Μαρίας) witnesses the receipt of four *solidi* from a certain Tapia to her daughter Tsone.¹⁸⁶ In 586, Isakos reappears with the same title and signs his name as a witness to the sale of a

¹⁸⁰ Wilfong, *Women*, 32, regards holy Mary and Theotokos as references belonging to the same church.

¹⁸¹ See Papaconstantinou, ‘Sanctuaries’, 89 (n. 84), for a discussion of the issues regarding the classification of this church in both Timm and Antonini.

¹⁸² For the Epiphanius monastery, see Winlock and Crum, *Monastery of Epiphanius*.

¹⁸³ *P.Mon.Epiph.* 678.2-3 = *SB IV* 7490. Cf. Papaconstantinou, ‘Sanctuaries’, 89 (n. 85), who reads the graffito as ἁγία ἐκκλησία θεοτόκης τ(οῦ) Φ(ε)ρμωνθ(ίτου), arguing that it is better to reconstruct the masculine noun for the nome designation, on account of the masculine Π in front of the aspiration Ϻ (for Φ). This resolution makes less sense, however, as we would expect to see the city rather than the nome indicated in the papyrus.

¹⁸⁴ *O.Crum* 36.8-9.

¹⁸⁵ On the Paternouthis archive, see in the latest instance, J.H.F. Dijkstra, ‘New Light on the Paternouthis Archive from Excavations at Aswan. When Archaeology and Papyrology Meet’, *BASP* 44 (2007) 179-210 and *Philae and the End*, 65-70.

¹⁸⁶ *P.Lond.* V 1731.45.

house.¹⁸⁷ The third attestation, on a fragmentary papyrus dated to the sixth century, includes the signature of a priest of the holy Mary (πρεσβύτερος τῆς ἁγίας Μαρίας).¹⁸⁸

22. Syene Region, Virgin

A Marian church is also mentioned on a tombstone from the monastery of St Simeon, which was originally called the monastery of Apa Hatre, on the west bank at Syene.¹⁸⁹ Here we come across the first funerary stela to indicate the existence of a Marian church. Dated to 716, an unknown individual is named as a monk and treasurer of the Virgin ([Π]ΜΟΝΟΧΟΣ ΔΥΩ ΠΕΙΚΟΝΟΜΟΣ ΝΤΠΑΡΘΕΝΟΣ).¹⁹⁰ The reference to a monk of the Virgin and the location of this tombstone at the monastery of Apa Hatre suggests that there was a monastery of Mary in the vicinity, but no such monastery has otherwise been attested.¹⁹¹

23. Philae, Theotokos Mary

The church in Philae is known from an inscription dating to 752.¹⁹² The inscription refers to an individual named Joseph, who donated a workshop in ‘the *topos* of the lady of us all, the holy Theotokos Mary, on Philae’ (ΠΤΟΠΟΣ ΝΤΕΝΧΘΕΙΣ ΤΗΡΝ ΤΕΘΕΟΤΩΚΟΣ ΕΤΟΥΔΑΒ ΜΑΡΙΑ ΜΠΙΛΑΚ).

¹⁸⁷ *P.Münch.* I 11.77-8. The first edition has Ἰσακος Παείονος, but this should be corrected to Ταείονος, since *P.Münch.* I 11 and *P.Lond.* V 1731 refer to the same individual. See *BL* I, p. 310; with Dijkstra, *Philae and the End*, 75 (n. 58).

¹⁸⁸ *P.Lond.* V 1850.

¹⁸⁹ For the monastery of Apa Hatre, see U. Monneret de Villard, *Il monastero di S. Simeone presso Aswân I* (Milan, 1927); P. Grossmann, *Mittelalterliche Langhauskuppelkirchen und verwandte Typen in Oberägypten* (Glückstadt, 1982) 7-13; Timm, *Christlich-koptische Ägypten II*, 664-7; G. Gabra, ‘Hatre (Hidra), Heiliger und Bischof von Aswan im 4. Jahrhundert’, *MDAIK* 44 (1988) 91-4 at 91-2, and *Coptic Monasteries. Egypt's Monastic Art and Architecture* (Cairo, 2002) 108-14; Grossmann, *Christliche Architektur in Ägypten* (Leiden, 2002) 562-5; Papaconstantinou, *Culte des saints*, 224; Dijkstra, *Philae and the End*, 61-2; R. Dekker, ‘The Development of the Church at Dayr Anba Hadra: A Study of the Plasterwork and Dated Inscriptions’, in Gabra and Takla, *Christianity in Aswan and Nubia*, 105-15.

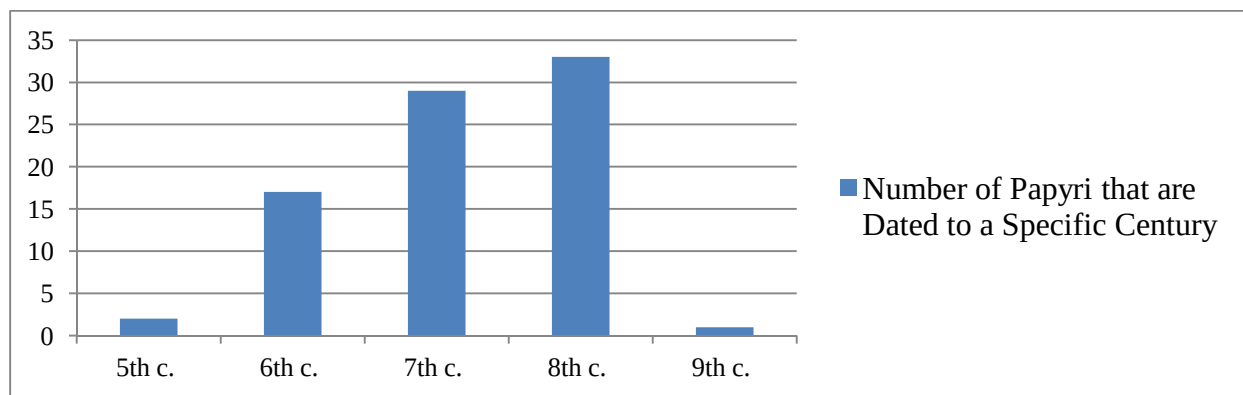
¹⁹⁰ H. Munier, ‘Les stèles coptes du monastère de Saint-Siméon à Assouan’, *Aegyptus* 11 (1930-1931) 287-330 at 287-8 (no. 53) = *SB Kopt.* I 551.2-4.

¹⁹¹ A new church number (22) has been assigned to this church because the location is not in Syene, as Papaconstantinou, *Sanctuaires*, 90, implies.

¹⁹² *SB Kopt.* I 302.7-8, which should now be replaced by the re-edition of S.G. Richter, *Studien zur Christianisierung Nubiens* (Wiesbaden, 2002) 128-35, with corrections to text and translation by Dijkstra, *Philae and the End*, 320. For general bibliography of the work undertaken on this inscription, see S. Schaten, ‘Griechische und koptische Bauinschriften’, in S. Emmel et al. (eds), *Ägypten und Nubien in spätantiker und christlicher Zeit*, 2 vols (Wiesbaden, 1999) 2.305-14 at 312-3. Papaconstantinou, ‘Sanctuaires’, 90, erroneously dates the text to 753. In addition to this inscription, there are also two undated inscriptions from Philae that invoke Mary, *I.Philae* II 220.5-6 and 221.4-5, on which see Dijkstra, *Philae and the End*, 321.

Analysis of the Chronological Development of Marian Churches and Monasteries

An analysis of the regional dissemination of Marian churches and monasteries demonstrates the spatial distribution of these buildings across Egypt. This investigation, however, does not address the implications of the papyrological and epigraphical evidence for the chronological diffusion of these Marian churches and monasteries on a broader scale, in which their appearance and spread is tracked on the temporal plane. The significance of such a study is evident in the graph below, which demonstrates the volume of papyri that refer to a Marian building per century. As remarked in the methodology section at the beginning of this chapter, only those with secure dates (that is, dates with a range of only a few years or a particular century) are included in the discussion to follow and are indicated in the graph. Those papyri that span two or more centuries are purposefully excluded from the overall chronological analysis of the material, so as to avoid skewing the overall result.¹⁹³



Graph Displaying the Chronological Distribution of Papyri and Inscriptions per Century

The papyrological and epigraphical evidence for churches and monasteries of Mary in Egypt begins in the fifth century, which corresponds well with the physical emergence of Marian churches in the other areas of the Roman Empire (especially Rome and Jerusalem), as discussed in the General Introduction. The sudden appearance of these buildings in the fifth century was no doubt spurred by the theological developments centering on the person of Mary, ultimately culminating in her declaration as ‘Theotokos’ in 431. These early churches, however, are few in

¹⁹³ In some instances, important papyri with dates spanning more than one century (such as the ostrakon from Oxyrhynchus [3]) may be included in the discussion, but only as notable examples.

number, and a widespread materialization of such structures in the papyrological corpus does not appear until the sixth century and beyond.

There are only two papyrological references of Marian churches that are securely dated to the fifth century, one from the Herakleopolite nome and the other from Taniathis in the Hermonthite nome.¹⁹⁴ Two further buildings, a church and a monastery from Oxyrhynchus date to either the fifth or sixth century.¹⁹⁵ These four texts are all written in Greek. While two papyri include direct references to a place of worship, Taniathis (οἶκος τῆς ἁγίας Μαρίας) and Oxyrhynchus (μοναστήριον ἅμα Μαρίας), the other two are indirect, as the papyrus from Herakleopolis refers to a ‘wood-cutter of the holy Mary’ (ύλοκόπος τῆς ἁγίας Μαρίας), and the ostrakon from Oxyrhynchus to an administrator (or priest) of the blessed Mary (depending on the resolution of πρ() to πρ(ονοητοῦ) or πρ(εσβυτέρου) τ[ῆ]ς μακαρίας Μαρίας). Compared with Papaconstantinou’s inventory, only this late fifth- or early sixth-century monastery at Oxyrhynchus was added to the attestations from the period, and upholds her conclusion that only the title ἁγία (or μακαρία) was in use for Mary at this time.

There is a notable increase in the number of Marian churches in the sixth century, as the number of papyrological references swells from two to nineteen, of which four papyri were added to Papaconstantinou’s list.¹⁹⁶ These nineteen attestations reflect a general trend in the papyri that highlights the final integration of the Church into Late Antique Egyptian society.¹⁹⁷ Marian churches are attested in four additional locations: Hermopolis, Aphrodite, Antaeopolis, and Syene.¹⁹⁸ Moreover, there is evidence for the possibility of a second church in both Herakleopolis and Oxyrhynchus.¹⁹⁹ The distribution of these churches from Oxyrhynchus to the First Cataract region demonstrates the wide presence of Marian churches in Egypt already in the sixth century. In the matter of a century, nine, possibly eleven, Marian churches are attested in

¹⁹⁴ Herakleopolite nome: *SB XXIV* 16208.4 (2^{bis}); Taniathis: *P.Bad.* IV 94.9 (17).

¹⁹⁵ *SB I* 1977.1-2 (3); *P.Oxy.* LXVII 4620.27-8 (4).

¹⁹⁶ *P.Oxy.* LXXI 4833.3-4 (3); Hickey and Haug, ‘Dossier’, 103-6 (3^{bis}); *P.Oxy.* LXVII 4620.27-8 (4); *P.Cair.Masp.* II 67141.v r^o 12 (15).

¹⁹⁷ See De Bruyn and Dijkstra, ‘Amulets’, 174 (n. 50).

¹⁹⁸ Hermopolis: *P.Bad.* IV 95.166, 169, 171, 180, see also, *P.Sorb.* II 69, p. 73 (no. 5) (7); Aphrodite, Church: *P.Cair.Masp.* I 67061.3; *P.Cair.Masp.* I 67066.2; *P.Cair.Masp.* II 67138.i v^o 8; *P.Cair.Masp.* III 67283.ii 6; *P.Flor.* III 297.92, 242 (14), and the monastery: *P.Cair.Masp.* II 67141.v r^o 12 (15); Antaeopolis: MacCoull, ‘Coptic Archive’, 185-93 (16); two papyri are mentioned in MacCoull, ‘Missing Pieces’, 107-10; Syene: *P.Lond.* V 1850; *P.Lond.* V 1731.45; *P.Münch.* I 11.77-8 (21).

¹⁹⁹ Herakleopolis: *SPP* III 54.2 (2); Oxyrhynchus, holy Mary: *SPP* III 281 = *P.Oxy.* I 147.2; *P.Oxy.* XI.1357.30-2, 45; *P.Oxy.* XVIII 2197.11; *P.Oxy.* LXXI 4833.3-4 (3); Theotokos: Hickey and Haug, ‘Dossier’, 99-112 (no. 2, 17-8; v^o 1) (3^{bis}).

seven distinct locations. The increase in the number of attestations in the sixth-century papyri, on the one hand, reflects the relatively low number of extant papyri from the fifth century, but also the general integration of Christianity into society in the sixth century. On the other hand, it also seems to be an indication of the rising interest in the adoption of Mary as an object of veneration.

Despite this rise in the construction of Marian churches across the province, the Egyptians largely retain their preference for adopting ἁγία Μαρία as the designated title for individual churches. We begin to see, however, that new epithets are slowly starting to make headway into the Marian titlature over the course of the sixth century, as we find two references to a church of the Theotokos, one mentioning ‘the *oikonomos* of the Theotokos Mary’ (οἰκονόμος θευδόκου Μαρίας) in a papyrus referring to a potential second Marian church in Oxyrhynchus,²⁰⁰ and a second from Herakleopolis which mentions Kosmas, ‘the deacon of the Theotokos’ (διάκ(ονος) τῆς θεωτόκου).²⁰¹ A third reference appears in a sixth or seventh-century inscription from Arsinoites and mentions work undertaken by Elias, an *oikonomos* of Our Lady, Theotokos (δεσπ(οίνα) ἡμῶν θεοτόκος).²⁰² The use of this term is not seen with any regularity, however, until the seventh century. Additionally, all of the papyri are written in Greek, with the exception of three references to ἁγία μαρία in the Coptic papyri from the Dioscorus archive.²⁰³ This reflects the general absence of Coptic for documents until the end of the sixth century, of which these papyri from the Dioscorus archive are among the first.²⁰⁴ Aside from these references which have been securely dated to the sixth century, there are two further papyri that date to the sixth or seventh century.²⁰⁵

Only in the seventh century do we see a significant shift in the manifestation of Marian churches and monasteries and in the use of various epithets that are applied to these structures. Firstly, we see a further increase in the number of papyri that refer to a Marian church, from nineteen to 29.²⁰⁶ Furthermore, the documentary evidence reveals that the cult is attested in ten different locations, compared with seven in the sixth century, with the appearance of centers of

²⁰⁰ Hickey and Haug, ‘Dossier’, 103-6 (3^{bis}).

²⁰¹ *SPP* III 54 (2).

²⁰² Nachtergaele, ‘Dédicace’ (1).

²⁰³ See discussion at 16.

²⁰⁴ See e.g. A. Boud’hors, ‘Du copte dans les archives d’Apollôn’, in Fournet, *Archives de Dioscore d’Aphrodité*, 67-76.

²⁰⁵ Herakleopolite nome: *SPP* III 54.2 (2); Oxyrhynchus: *P. Wash. Univ.* I 6.5 (3).

²⁰⁶ There are 29 papyri that mention Marian centers of worship, although it should be noted that *P. Sorb.* II 69 contains eight references to churches, which refer to two (possibly three) different buildings dedicated to Mary.

Marian veneration in Arsinoe, Akoris and Jeme.²⁰⁷ The seventh-century evidence also highlights the continued existence of the Marian church that was constructed in Hermopolis in the sixth century, as it reappears several times in a fiscal codex.²⁰⁸ A second Marian church also appears in Hermopolis during this period in the same fiscal codex, which is distinguished by the use of the toponym ‘of the *topos* of Victor’ (τόπου Βίκτορος).²⁰⁹

In the seventh century there is a marked increase in the number of Coptic papyri in the papyrological record, which reflects the growing use of Coptic in documents after the sixth century, although the majority of the papyri are still written in Greek.²¹⁰ Additionally, in comparison with the sixth century when the term is only found twice, the title θεοτόκος becomes more common for churches in the documentary sources of the seventh century. There are a total of sixteen papyri that employ this term, which are further distributed between three different locations. The majority of these documents come from Arsinoe, where we find fourteen distinct references to a church of the θεοτόκος, seven of which come from the dossier of Stephanos.²¹¹ The other two references are found in papyri from Herakleopolis and Jeme.²¹²

The seventh century also produces the first instance for the appellation of Mary as παρθένος, which alongside the use of the term θεοτόκος, represents a notably late application of the theological vocabulary associated with the cult of Mary. There are three papyri that record the usage of this title in the seventh century, one Coptic fragment from Jeme which refers to ‘the priest and *oikonomos* of the holy Theotokos Mary, the Virgin’ (μπαρεσβ(γ)τερος αγω ποικονομος ντεθεωδοκος ετογλαβ μαρια τπαρθενος),²¹³ and two Greek papyri from Arsinoe which describe her as ‘Our Lady, the Theotokos and eternal Virgin Mary’ (δεσποίνα ήμῶν ή

²⁰⁷ Arsinoe: *CPR* X 1.1, 3.1, 4.1; *CPR* VI 11 = *SPP* III 484 = *CPR* X 7.1; *CPR* X 8.1; *SPP* VIII 1137 = *CPR* X 9.1; *SPP* VIII 1134 = *CPR* X 15.1; *SB* XXVI 16623.1-2; *CPR* II 158 = *CPR* IV 192.8; *SPP* III 266.2, 7; *SPP* III 685.2-3; *BGU* II 676 = *SPP* VIII 738.2; *SPP* VIII 744.3; *SPP* VIII 712 = *SPP* XX 175.2; *SPP* XX 243.14-6 = *SB* I 5278; *SB* I 5127.20, 22, 28; *SB* XX 14686.5; *P.Prag.* I 65.2-3 (1); *P.Lond.* II 450.1-2 (1^{bis}). Akoris: *Tyche* 5 (1998) 98 (no. 5) (5); Jeme: *O.Crum* 175.5; *O.Crum* 292.3-4, 470.1, 481.8, 511.2-3; *P.KRU* 105.32; *P.MoscowCopt.* 44.14-8 (18); *P.KRU* 75.143-4 (18^{bis}).

²⁰⁸ The church is first mentioned in *P.Bad.* IV 95.166, 169, 171, 180 (7), and its continued presence in Hermopolis is attested in the seventh-century by *P.Sorb.* II 69. 45.C3, 53.C18, 57.F8, 65.A12, 81.C6-7, 91.C3, and 106.B22; *P.Paramone* 18.16; *BGU* XIX 2815.8; *P.Lond.Copt.* I 1077.1 (7).

²⁰⁹ *P.Sorb.* II 69.13.7 (10).

²¹⁰ There are seven Coptic papyri from the seventh century, all of which come from Jeme (or its environs): *O.Crum* 511.2-3; *O.Crum* 175.5; *O.Crum* 292.3-4; *O.Crum* 481.8; *P.KRU* 105.32; *P.MoscowCopt.* 44. 14-8 (18); *P.KRU* 75.143-4 (18^{bis}). There is a papyrus referring to the church of the Theotokos is Arsinoe that is also written in Coptic, but its signature, which mentions the church of the Theotokos, is written in Greek: *CPR* II 158 = *CPR* IV 192.8 (1).

²¹¹ See the discussion at 1 above.

²¹² Herakleopolis: *SB* I 5295 = *SB* VI 9462.3-4 (2). Jeme: *P.KRU* 75.143-4 (18^{bis}), written in Coptic.

²¹³ *P.KRU* 75.143-4 (18^{bis}).

θεοτόκος καὶ ἀειπαρθένος Μαρία).²¹⁴ The title παρθένος thus only appears in combination with other Marian epithets in the seventh century; it is only in the eighth century that the word is found as an independent title for a Marian cult building.²¹⁵

The seventh century, then, marks a high point in the number of attestations to the Virgin Mary. There is a notable increase in the output of references to Marian churches and all three Marian titles (ἁγία Μαρία, θεοτόκος and παρθένος) have come into use. In our catalogue, several attestations are added to Papaconstantinou's existing inventory, but her general observations still stand. On the other hand, the inclusion of the new papyri has raised the number of Marian churches with an epithet of Theotokos for Mary from six to seven.²¹⁶ While the seventh century presents a greater diversity in the use of epithets in Marian church dedications, it should be noted that the vast majority of churches of Mary continue to bear the title ἁγία Μαρία.

The high volume of papyrological and epigraphical evidence for churches of Mary extends well into the eighth century, as there are 33 attestations to Marian churches and monasteries in the papyri from this period.²¹⁷ This number slightly exceeds the output of papyri from the seventh century and demonstrates the continued relevance of the cult of Mary in Egypt. We must take into consideration, however, that the majority of the eighth-century papyri come from Aphrodite, which has yielded 24 of these attestations, but also record the existence of two (perhaps three) different establishments in the city.²¹⁸ These references include: three attestations to a church of the holy Mary,²¹⁹ one reference to a potential church of the Theotokos²²⁰ and 27

²¹⁴ *P.Prag.* I 65.2-3 (1) and *SPP* XX 243.14-6 = *SB* I 5278. R.S. Bagnall and K.A. Worp, 'Chronological Notes on Byzantine Documents, I', *BASP* 15 (1978) 233-46 at 245-6, provide convincing evidence to date this papyrus to the seventh century. Cf. Papaconstantinou, 'Sanctuaires', 83, who dates it to the eighth century.

²¹⁵ The title also appears in combination with other Marian epithets in the undated building inscriptions from Philae, *I.Philae* II 220.5-6 and 221.4-5.

²¹⁶ Papaconstantinou, 'Sanctuaires', 93, notes that 'Theotokos' is employed as an exclusive epithet in only five cases out of 26 potential churches, although her inventory in fact only shows four cases of its exclusive use. However, she lists six cases in which the term is applied, four exclusively as Theotokos and two in combination with Maria.

²¹⁷ *P.Lond.* IV 1412.37, 149, 231, 308, 398, 484 = *SB* I 5178 (15) has been included under this century, as it dates to 699-705.

²¹⁸ The church and monastery at Aphrodite are known from the sixth century onwards, but a third possible church appears for the first time in the eighth century (the church of the Theotokos [14^{bis}]).

²¹⁹ *P.Lond.* IV 1419.532, 1420.31, 35 and 1474 (14).

²²⁰ *P.Lond.* IV 1419.530 (14^{bis}).

references to a monastery of Mary.²²¹ The remaining papyri come from Antinoopolis, Jeme, Syene, and Philae.²²²

Despite the developments of the previous centuries with regards to Marian titlature, the title ἁγία Μαρία remains the most common term attributed to churches of Mary in this period. In fact, the title θεοτόκος begins to fall out of use in the eighth century, as it only appears four times in the documentary sources of this period. Notwithstanding the significant reduction in the volume of usage for this term, it is still employed in the north as well as south, and in Greek as well as Coptic.²²³ While there is evidence for a pre-existing church of the ΘΕΩΔΟΚΟΣ ΕΤΟΥΛΑΒ ΜΑΡΙΑ ΤΠΑΡΘΕΝΟΣ in Jeme in the seventh century, the churches of the Theotokos in Aphrodite and Philae appear for the first time in the eighth century.²²⁴ Thus, while we see a reduction in the use of the epithet Theotokos for Marian churches and monasteries, there are still examples of new buildings appearing with this titlature in the eighth century.²²⁵

The title παρθένος, on the other hand, remains rarely attested in Marian titlature, as it only appears on one early eighth-century funerary inscription from the monastery of Apa Hatre on the west bank of Syene.²²⁶ The inscription, which reads [Π]ΜΟΝΟΧΟΣ ΔΥΩ ΠΕΙΚΟΝΟΜΟΣ ΝΤΠΑΡΘ(ΕΝΟΣ), is notable, however, as it represents the only occurrence of the term παρθένος as an individual qualifier for Mary. Furthermore, there is a marked regional difference in the use of this term. By the eighth century, παρθένος is applied to two distinct churches in Upper Egypt, where the epithet appears only in Coptic. In one instance it is used in combination with ΘΕΩΔΟΚΟΣ and ΜΑΡΙΑ, and in another instance it appears on its own. In Middle Egypt,

²²¹ CPR XXII 59.3 (15); P.Ross.Georg. IV 19.6 and 20.7, v^o 6; CPR III 88 = P.Lond. IV 1451.78; P.Lond. IV 1412.37, 149, 231, 308, 398, 484 = SB I 5178; P.Lond. IV 1431.36 = SB I 5177; P.Lond. IV 1433.241, 557, 561 = SB I 5179; P.Lond. IV 1461.23; SB I 5650.1, 9 and 5652.1, 9; P.Lond. IV 1434. 58, 76, 137, 191, 195, 211, 220, 222, 295; P.Lond. IV 1419.435, 1268, 1379; P.Lond. IV 1436.25, 80, 104, 137; P.Lond. IV 1413.106, 219, 327, 434, 547, 653; P.Lond. IV 1416.A6, D38, 72; P.Lond. IV 1414.275; P.Lond. IV 1432.120; P.Lond. IV 1442. A7, 20, B30, C34, C40, G73, G77; P.Lond. IV 1445.2, 4, 11; P.Lond. IV 1453.10; P.Lond. IV 1491.A; P.Lond. IV 1552.28.

²²² Antinoopolis: P.Cair.Masp. III 67359.vi.3 (6); Jeme: BM 415 = P.KRU 16.71-2 (18); BM 428 = P.KRU 58.31-2; P.KRU 74.111, 90.48, 94.62-3, 38.71-2 (18^{bis}); Syene (West Bank): SB Kopt. I 551.2-4 (22); Philae: Richter, *Studien*, 128-35 (lines 6-8) (23).

²²³ Arsinoe (Greek): SPP VIII 782 = BGU II 680.2, 5-6 (1). Aphrodite (Greek): P.Lond. IV 1419.530 (15). Jeme (Coptic): P.KRU 38.71-2 (18^{bis}), in combination with ΘΕΩΔΟΚΟΣ ΜΑΡΙΑ. Philae (Coptic): SB Kopt. I 302.7-8 (23) in combination with ΘΕΟΤΟΚΟΣ ΜΑΡΙΑ.

²²⁴ The eighth-century church in Jeme is referred to as ΘΕΩΔΟΚΟΣ ΜΑΡΙΑ. They are likely referring to the same building, although there is not enough evidence to make this association with absolute confidence.

²²⁵ The church of the Theotokos Mary at Philae only appears in an inscription from the eighth century, although this church may have existed as early as the second half of the fifth century, see Dijkstra, *Philae and the End*, 320-2, and the discussion of the church below, in Chapter 2.

²²⁶ SB Kopt. I 551.2-4 (22).

conversely, it is only used in Arsinoe as part of the highly developed nomenclature δεσποίνα ἡμῶν τῆς θεοτόκου καὶ ἀειπαρθένου Μαρίας and appears in the form ἀειπαρθένος.²²⁷ The favouring of the epithet ‘holy Mary’ above all others in the eighth century is reflected in the sixteen papyri that this study has added to Papaconstantinou’s inventory, all of which employ the title ἁγία Μαρία.

In the ninth century there is a drastic decrease in the documentary evidence for churches and monasteries of Mary, as Greek ceases to be used entirely, and Coptic declines in favour of Arabic as the administrative language of Egypt.²²⁸ There are only five attestations of Marian churches in this period, all of which come from the same Coptic document from Hermopolis.²²⁹ These five churches, moreover, all employ the titlature ΠΑΡΘΕΝΟΣ for Mary, but are differentiated by the use of toponyms or traditions associated with the Virgin.²³⁰

The present study concludes in the ninth century, as there is a lack of papyrological and epigraphical evidence for Marian churches and monasteries in Greek and Coptic beyond this period. This does not indicate, however, that Marian veneration ends in this century, nor that the epithets ἁγία Μαρία and θεοτόκος completely fall from use, as there is definitive evidence for the continued presence of Marian churches and monasteries beyond the ninth century (see, for example, the discussion of the church of the Theotokos at Deir el-Surian in the following chapter). It simply demonstrates that there is a shift in the language of papyrological and inscriptional expression from Greek and Coptic to Arabic, which marks the end of one period of Marian veneration and the beginning of another, and deserves to be studied in its own right.²³¹

²²⁷ *P.Prag.* I 65.2-3 (1) and *SPP* XX 243.14-6 = *SB* I 5278 (1).

²²⁸ Richter, ‘Greek’, 420-1.

²²⁹ *P.Lond.Copt.* 1100.23 (8), 26 (9), 5 (11), 16 (12), and 11 (13).

²³⁰ E.g. *P.Lond.Copt.* 1100.5 (11) employs a toponym (ΠΑΡΘΕΝΟΣ ΕΤΚΑΚΟ), while *P.Lond.Copt.* 1100.11 (13) may refer to the tradition of the Holy Family during their stay in Egypt (ΠΑΡΘΕΝΟΣ ΕΠΕΩΟΥΕ).

²³¹ For Marian veneration after the ninth century, see e.g. Dijkstra, *Philae and the End*, 229 in which he discusses the colophon of ms. British Library Or. 7029, fol. 76b that mentions the intercession of Mary in a Nile flood in 992, and Leroy, *Manuscripts coptes*, Pls 36 and 104 where Mary is referred to in an early tenth-century manuscript as ἁγία Μαρία, and in a thirteenth-century Coptic manuscript as Η ΑΓΙΑ ΜΑΡΙΑ ΠΑΡΘΕΝΟΣ ΕΤΟΥΑΔΒ. See also, Lantschoot, *Recueil*, in which there are several colophons that post-date the ninth century. See especially, pp. 1.78-9 (no. 50, year 913-4), 1.103-6 (no. 62, year 1005-6), 1.114-5 (no. 69, c. eleventh century), 1.127-31 (no. 77, year 1091), 1.155-6 (no. 92, tenth or eleventh century).

Conclusion

Despite the fact that 32 new texts have been added to Papaconstantinou's inventory of papyri and ostraka, her conclusions on this material are generally confirmed by the present study. There is a clear and decisive preference for the application of the term ἁγία Μαρία to churches and monasteries throughout the period under study, while θεοτόκος and παρθένος are applied sparingly and only occur later, θεοτόκος from the sixth century and παρθένος from the seventh century. Her observation on the limited use of the epithet θεοτόκος in the sixth century is strengthened by the addition of only a second papyrus from this period (that is, the potential church of the Theotokos at Oxyrhynchus [3^{bis}]) carrying this title. This epithet does not appear with any frequency, however, until the seventh century.

The organization and interpretation of the documentary evidence through both a regional and a chronological framework allows us, on the other hand, to add several interesting observations to the existing body of knowledge. Firstly, the addition of 32 new papyri, inscriptions and ostraka and the re-interpretation of the previously published corpus have increased the number of definitive Marian churches from 21 to 23. The first of these structures stems from a papyrus published in 2001, which refers to a monastery of ἁμα Μαρία in Oxyrhynchus (4). The second comes from the re-interpretation of a tombstone from the monastery of Apa Hatre on the west bank of Syene, which Papaconstantinou associates with the church of the holy Mary in Syene (21). The reference to a 'monk and *oikonomos* of the Virgin' ([Π]ΜΟΝΟΧΟΣ ΔΥΩ ΠΕΙΚΟΝΟΜΟΣ ΝΤΠΑΡΘ(Ε)ΝΟΣ), and the provenance of the stela from the west bank of the Nile, however, is a strong indicator of a separate Marian monastery (22).²³² Conversely, the number of potential Marian churches (that is, churches with varying titulatures in the same location) remains at five.²³³ Thus, the number now stands at 23 definitive and 28 potential Marian churches or monasteries.

With regards to the establishment of an actual number of Marian churches and monasteries that can be discerned from the papyrological and epigraphical record in Egypt, Papaconstantinou favours the lower number (in her case 21). She states that the three epithets could be used interchangeably by whoever composed each document, and in the cases where she

²³² Oxyrhynchus: *P.Oxy.* LXVII 4620.27-8 (4); Syene, west bank: *SB Kopt.* I 551.2-4 (22).

²³³ This study removed the monastery from the west bank of Syene (now 22) from this list, and added the potential church of θευδόκος Μαρία at Oxyrhynchus (3^{bis}).

applies a ‘bis’, the document likely refers to its numerical counterpart. In certain cases, the present study agrees with Papaconstantinou, as conclusive evidence was not found to distinguish these churches from those with diverging epithets. In other instances, however, such as the church of the Theotokos in Aphrodite (14^{bis}) and possibly the church of Theotokos Mary in Oxyrhynchus (3^{bis}), there is some evidence to argue for two different buildings. These churches maintain their ‘bis’ designation, however, until definitive proof can be ascertained for their separation.

Although some slight nuances are made to Papaconstantinou’s conclusions on the development of Marian titlature in the papyrological corpus, the current investigation aims to provide an analysis of all the known papyri and ostraka in an effort to see the development of the cult on both the regional and chronological axes. By bringing the papyrological and epigraphical evidence into a single investigation we can see distinct trends emerging with regard to the establishment of Marian churches and monasteries. There are few churches that appear in the texts of the fifth century, and it is unclear whether these buildings were constructed prior to, or as a result of, the Council of Ephesus in 431. There is a notable increase in Marian churches in the sixth century, but the number of churches of Mary appears to reach a highpoint in the seventh and the eighth century, although these numbers are skewed by high volume of papyri coming from Arsinoites and Aphrodito. Still, the sheer volume of papyri and ostraka illustrate the prominence of the Virgin Mary in the seventh and eighth centuries. There is also a tangible continuation into the ninth century, where five churches dedicated to Mary are named at Hermopolis.

Finally, a study that looks at both the regional and chronological developments of the cult of Mary is useful in distinguishing the extent to which, and at what point, the veneration of Mary is manifested in the papyrological and epigraphical evidence. It is only through an interlacing of these two approaches that we gain a clear understanding of the trajectory of the cult of Mary in Egypt. Furthermore, it is apparent from the abundance of churches that are entitled ἁγία Μαρία and the infrequency and relative lateness with which she is referred to as θεοτόκος and παρθένος that Mary was largely venerated, as Papaconstantinou rightly observed, as a saint among saints, and that the theological developments surrounding Ephesus seemed to have no immediate effect on the naming of Marian buildings. On the other hand, the sheer volume of instances in which a Marian building is mentioned in the papyrological and epigraphical

attestations surpasses all those of the other saints and highlights her elevated standing among them.

Chapter 2:

The Archaeological Evidence for Churches and Monasteries of the Virgin Mary

Introduction

In the first chapter, at least twenty-three different churches and monasteries dedicated to the Virgin Mary were identified among the papyri and inscriptions. The archaeological evidence presents an entirely different outlook on the prevalence of Marian churches in Egypt. The physical remains of these buildings are scarce and only three churches have been attributed to Mary with any degree of certainty: the church of the Theotokos at Deir el-Surian, the monastery and church of the Virgin at Deir el-Ganadla and the West Church at Philae; of these, only the West Church (23) is attested in an inscription and described in the catalogue of churches and monasteries in the previous chapter. The archaeological remains of a fourth potential Marian church are also investigated here, that of the church in the Isis temple at Aswan, which has long been assumed by scholars to be the church of Mary mentioned in the Patermouthis archive (21), but a recent study has shown that this identification can no longer be substantiated.

The paucity of Marian churches and monasteries in the archaeological record is a reflection of the problem of attributing the physical remains of particular buildings to specific saints. This stems from a lack of textual evidence, such as dedicatory inscriptions, which explicitly mentions the patron saint of an individual church.²³⁴ The opportunities to overtly link both the textual and archaeological materials are rare, and thus we are left with an immeasurable number of extant churches and monasteries whose dedications are unknown. At the same time, the association of less direct textual witnesses, such as papyri that mention a church of Mary without giving the exact location, with archaeological remains needs to be undertaken with caution, as it can lead to the misidentification of particular sites (as we will see happened at Syene).²³⁵ Thus, the archaeological evidence in this study serves primarily to supplement the papyrological and epigraphical references to Marian buildings collected in the first chapter. As

²³⁴ See, e.g. the dedicatory inscriptions of the church in the Isis temple at Philae to St Stephen. *I.Philae* II 200-4, with Dijkstra, *Philae and the End*, 306-15.

²³⁵ On the importance of the archaeological context of papyri, see H. Cuvigny, 'The Finds of Papyri: The Archaeology of Papyri', in R.S. Bagnall (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Papyrology* (Oxford, 2009) 30-58 at 41-4. On the relationship between papyri and material culture, see T. Gagos, J. Gates, and A. Wilburn, 'Material Culture and Texts of Graeco-Roman Egypt: Creating Context, Debating Meaning', *BASP* 42 (2005) 171-88.

such, it produces two churches that can be added to that catalogue, those at Deir el-Surian and Deir el-Ganadla.

Methodology

The archaeological analysis of these four churches is presented here as a series of case studies, in which particular attention is paid to the attribution of the building to Mary. The format of each case study, however, varies according to the type and amount of information that is available. In two instances, there is a plethora of material relating to the particular site, and its investigation considers the relationship of the archaeological, textual, and iconographic materials (Deir el-Surian and Philae), whereas in the remaining case, we are largely limited to an iconographic analysis (Deir el-Ganadla). Despite the small sample size and the available information, the analysis of the archaeological remains allows for rare insights into the structure and iconography of known Marian churches and the degree of variation that is exhibited within these buildings from the fifth to the ninth centuries.

In keeping with the topographical presentation of Marian churches and monasteries in the first chapter, the archaeological evidence is ordered here in the same fashion, beginning with the church of the Theotokos at Deir el-Surian in Lower Egypt, followed by the church of the Virgin at Deir el-Ganadla and concluding with the West Church at Philae in Upper Egypt. The church at Syene, while geographically north of Philae, is discussed at the end of the chapter since its attribution to Mary is not substantiated by any textual or archaeological evidence. The attributions of the other churches to Mary, however, are well-grounded in a variety of textual sources, including inscriptions and medieval Arabic literature. In one case (that is, Deir el-Ganadla), the association of the church with Mary post-dates the ninth century, although every effort is exhausted to determine if the dedication extends back to the period of time under study.

The Church of the Theotokos at Deir el-Surian

The remains of four monasteries (Deir Anba Bishoi, Deir el-Macarius, Deir el-Baramus, and Deir el-Surian) lie dispersed throughout the Wadi el-Natrun in the Western Delta. Of these, the latter houses a large church of the Theotokos. Deir el-Surian (or the monastery of the Syrians)

was originally constructed as an extension of the *λαύρα* of Deir Anba Bishoi, although an enclosure wall was later erected to delineate it as a separate monastery.²³⁶ The church of the Theotokos is unique in that it is the sole example of a continuously occupied Marian church from Late Antiquity to the present, a fact which has contributed to its incredible preservation. The modern occupation of the site, on the other hand, has impeded a complete and thorough archaeological investigation of the church and its environs. This limits our ability to study any structures that may pre-date the present church, including a sixth-century church that is likely buried underneath the current structure. It has, however, allowed for an in-depth analysis of the architectural and iconographical developments of a single church, whose basic structure has stood since the mid-seventh century.²³⁷

The unbroken occupation of the monastery caught the attention of many early travellers, who sought to document Deir el-Surian as early as the seventeenth century. In 1657, M. de Thévenot described the monastery as the best preserved of the remaining four monasteries in the Wadi el-Natrun, and noted that it had two churches, one Syrian Orthodox and one Coptic.²³⁸ A third church at the site is recorded by C. Sicard (1712), who mentions the churches of the Virgin, St Antony and St Victor within the monastery.²³⁹ One of the most well-known travellers to the monastery was R. Curzon, who caused a renewed interest in the site after his discovery of several ancient Coptic and Syriac manuscripts.²⁴⁰ These were found in two separate rooms in the *qasr* (or keep), which led later scholars to identify at least the first floor of this structure as the

²³⁶ H.G. Evelyn White, *The Monasteries of the Wadi 'n Natrûn*, 3 vols (New York, 1926-1933) 3.169. The monastery of the Syrians was not one of the original four monasteries in the Wadi el-Natrun. It was one of four secondary monasteries constructed after the Gaianite heresy of 509, and is the only one of these secondary monasteries that has survived. The fourth original monastic settlement was the monastery of John the Little, which is currently being excavated by a team from Yale University. On these excavations see, D. Brooks Hedstrom et al., 'New Archaeology at Ancient Scetis: Surveys and Initial Excavations at the Monastery of St. John the Little in Wādī al-Natrūn (Yale Monastic Archaeology Project)', *DOP* 64 (2011) 217-27; S.J. Davis et al., 'Life and Death in Lower and Upper Egypt: A Brief Survey of Recent Monastic Archaeology at Yale', *JCS* 3-4 (2012) 9-26 at 10-3.

²³⁷ Although the history of the church extends to the present day, this study focuses on the development of the church until the ninth century, although some analysis of the post-ninth century material is given in cases where it is deemed relevant to the architectural history or iconography of the church.

²³⁸ M. de Thévenot, *Voyages de M. de Thévenot, tant en Europe qu'en Asie et en Afrique*, 5 vols (Paris, 1689) 2, ch. 71. He was also the first individual to connect a tree on the grounds of the church with the legend of the walking stick of St Ephraem. Legend states that St Ephraem left his walking stick at the monastery, which took root and grew into a tree. It should be noted, however, that Thévenot did not visit the monastery himself, but recounted the story as told to him by another traveller.

²³⁹ C. Sicard, *Lettre du Père Sicard, missionnaires en Égypte, à son Altesse Mgr. le Comte de Toulouse* (Paris, 1780) 23.

²⁴⁰ R. Curzon, *Visits to Monasteries in the Levant* (London, 1865⁵) 96-100.

monastic library. The texts were divided by language: the Coptic manuscripts were kept in wall niches of one room, while the Syriac manuscripts were housed in another.²⁴¹

The accounts of European travellers largely yielded only cursory descriptions of the architecture and history of the monastery. This remained the case until a more comprehensive description of Deir el-Surian appeared in a study by A.J. Butler, in which we find the first detailed plan of the monastery, and a short, but still useful description of the architecture and some of the paintings.²⁴² The first comprehensive publication of the monastery did not appear, however, until the second quarter of the twentieth century when H.G. Evelyn White produced his extensive three volume study of the monasteries in the Wadi el-Natrun, part of which are dedicated to Deir el-Surian.²⁴³ This was followed by a detailed investigation of the church by U. Monneret de Villard.²⁴⁴ Most recently, there has been a concerted effort to study the wall paintings and inscriptions at Deir el-Surian, especially in light of the deterioration of several layers of the wall plaster. This ongoing project, under the auspices of the University of Leiden and the direction of K.C. Innemée, employs several conservators who are working towards uncovering and conserving approximately 1,400 years worth of wall paintings.²⁴⁵

The original church of the Theotokos in the Wadi el-Natrun dates back to c. 535, when a group of monasteries was founded after the Gaianite heresy. This heresy, subscribing to the Christological stance of Julian of Halicarnassus, denied the doctrine of the Incarnation and resulted in the expulsion of the orthodox (or Theodosian) monks from Deir Anba Bishoi. This expulsion led the orthodox community to erect a duplicate monastery, which they dedicated to the Theotokos, only c. 500 meters west of its sister monastery.²⁴⁶ Unfortunately, nothing remains of the original monastery as it was entirely destroyed by raiding tribes, likely sometime during

²⁴¹ Evelyn White, *Monasteries* III, 176-7.

²⁴² See A.J. Butler, *The Ancient Coptic Churches of Egypt* (Oxford, 1884), esp. 317-26.

²⁴³ Evelyn White, *Monasteries*.

²⁴⁴ U. Monneret de Villard, *Les églises du monastère des Syriens au Wâdî en-Natrûn* (Milan, 1928).

²⁴⁵ For recent work on the wall paintings at Deir el-Surian, see J. Leroy, *Les peintures des couvents du Ouadi Natrun* (Cairo, 1982) 53-74; P. van Moorsel, 'La grande annonce de Deir al-Surian', *BIFAO* 95 (1995) 517-37; K.C. Innemée and L. van Rompay, 'La présence des Syriens dans le Wadi al-Natrun (Égypte)', *POr* 23 (1998) 167-202; K.C. Innemée, 'Deir al Surian (Egypt): New Discoveries of January 2000', *Hugoye* 3 (2000) 253-79, and 'Deir al-Surian (Egypt): Conservation Work of Autumn 2000', *Hugoye* 4 (2001) 259-68; K.C. Innemée and L. van Rompay, 'Deir al-Surian (Egypt): New Discoveries of 2001-2002', *Hugoye* 5 (2002) 245-63; K.C. Innemée, 'A Newly Discovered Mural Painting in Deir al-Surian', *ECA* 1 (2004) 61-6, and 'A Newly Discovered Painting of the Epiphany at Deir al-Surian', *Hugoye* 14 (2011) 215-36. The recent publications of the inscriptions include L. van Rompay, 'Syriac Inscriptions in Deir al-Surian: Some Reflections on Their Writers and Readers', *Hugoye* 2 (1999) 189-202, and L. van Rompay and A.B. Schmidt, 'A New Syriac Inscription in Deir al-Surian (Egypt)', *Hugoye* 4 (2001) 109-14.

²⁴⁶ Evelyn White, *Monasteries* III, 170; A. Cody, 'Dayr al-Suryan: History', in *Copt.Enc.* III (1991) 876-9 at 876.

the beginning of the seventh century, and a lack of any archaeological remains suggests that the second church was built directly on top of the original structure. Thus, the current work at the monastery of Deir el-Surian is focused entirely on the second church erected at the site, which dates to 645 and is attributed to the Patriarch Benjamin I (622-661).²⁴⁷

The basic plan of the seventh-century church is still visible throughout the present structure, despite undergoing significant modifications over time to suit the changing needs of the monastic population (Fig. 2). The church measured 24.3 x 10.3 m, and Evelyn White describes it as a 'long' or festal type. It consists of a nave, two side aisles, a western return aisle, a *khurus* (or choir) with a central dome and a north and south semi-dome, and a central, square *haikal* (sanctuary), flanked by a smaller, rectangular *haikal* on either side, each of which holds an altar. The entire structure was originally covered by a wooden roof. The layout of the building is influenced by the nearby church at Deir Anba Bishoi, which is based on the Coptic cruciform arrangement, although the square-ended *haikals* in the church of the Theotokos bear similarities to the other churches in the Wadi el-Natrun.²⁴⁸ By the end of the ninth century, the church was enclosed within a quadrilateral monastic complex. Most of the buildings, including the secondary churches and monk's cells, are built against this enclosure wall, with the exception of the south wall of the church of the Theotokos (and possibly the south wall of its refectory) and the north wall of the *qasr*. These two walls are incorporated into the enclosure wall, thus predating its construction.²⁴⁹

While the basic layout of the mid seventh-century church was generally maintained over time, the original iconographic programme was progressively obscured by several phases of decorative overhauls. At present, the majority of the church decoration dates to the eighteenth century, although the gradual deterioration of these paintings has revealed four earlier iconographical phases, including some of the original seventh-century paintings. The deterioration of the plaster also revealed several periods of structural renewal, which only became visible once the overlying layer of plaster was removed. Thus, the exposure of the

²⁴⁷ Evelyn White, *Monasteries* II, 269 (n. 9), and 3, 170; P. Grossmann, 'Neue Beobachtungen zur al-Adrâ Kirche von Dair as-Suryân', *Nubian Letters* 19 (1993) 1-8 at 5; Van Moorsel, 'Grande annonciation', 518.

²⁴⁸ Evelyn White, *Monasteries* III, 180-1 (Pl. 53); P. Grossmann, 'Dayr al-Suryan: Architecture', in *Copt.Enc.* III (1991) 879-80; C.C. Walters, *Monastic Archaeology in Egypt* (Warminster, 1974) 26-7, 42-3 and 46-53. For a description of some of the architectural features in relation to other Late Antique churches in Upper Egypt, see generally P. Grossmann, *Mittelalterliche Langhauskuppelkirchen*, with a plan at 113 (Fig. 47).

²⁴⁹ Evelyn White, *Monasteries* III, 174, states that the deliberate inclusion of the south wall of the church into the enclosure wall of the monastery suggests haste and an 'economizing effort' on the part of the monks, thus the wall likely post-dates the sacking of the monastery in 817 by Arab tribes. See also Cody, 'History', 876.

different decorative phases of the church helped to establish a relative chronology for its architectural development from the seventh century to the present day. By these means we know that the church was initially entirely constructed of stone, with the exception of a timber roof. Additionally, the proximity of the first wall paintings to the initial stone structure suggests that the interior of the church was decorated from the outset. Thus, these paintings are hereafter discussed as the decorations of Layer 1 and represent the original iconographic programme of the church. These paintings are marked by their relative simplicity and consist largely of crosses, floral motifs, peacocks, and geometric patterns.²⁵⁰

From the end of the seventh until the end of the eighth century, the church of the Theotokos gradually received a second layer of wall painting.²⁵¹ This layer corresponds to a monumental decorative upgrade to the church, which appears to have taken several years and several different hands to complete. Some Layer 1 paintings, however, were left intact and integrated into the new decorative scheme. The first phase of this decorative renewal was probably limited to the decoration of the dado (the lower part of the wall), up to a height of approximately two meters. The decoration of the dado exudes a notable stylistic coherence, as it largely imitates columns and marble inlay. Following the completion of the dado in Layer 2, figural decoration was added directly above it in the *khurus* and on the engaged columns. The nature of the figural iconography in Layer 2 is entirely Egyptian and bares no indication that the Syrians had yet arrived at the monastery. This evidence contrasts with the once commonly accepted notion that the Syrians purchased the monastery from Egyptian monks in 710.²⁵²

²⁵⁰ Innemée, 'Work of Autumn 2000', 263, and 'Newly Discovered Painting', 215.

²⁵¹ K.C. Innemée, 'Mural Painting in Egypt: Problems of Dating and Conservation', in P. Sellev (ed.), *Living for Eternity: The White Monastery and Its Neighborhood* (Minneapolis, 2003) 1-24 at 4, who notes that the dating of the Layer 2 paintings is informed partly by their iconography, style and the encaustic technique used in their creation, but also indirectly by a Syriac inscription written overtop of the Layer 2 paintings on the north wall, which states that 'a certain Mattay and Yacqub have built and constructed this monastery in the year 818/19'. Innemée states that the inscription does not refer to the founding of the monastery, but to its restoration and re-occupation after the Berber sack of a few years prior. This particular inscription likely refers, at least in part, to the erection of the perimeter wall, which blocked the ground floor windows of the southern wall of the church, subsequently rendering them useless. The Layer 2 paintings on this wall had incorporated these windows into the iconographic programme, thus suggesting that they predate the construction of the perimeter wall. For the dating of this inscription, see Innemée and Van Rompay, 'Présence des Syriens', 179.

²⁵² Evelyn White, *Monasteries II*, 314 cites three manuscripts that refer to the sale of the monastery to Takritan monks for 12,000 dinars: ms. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Syr. 27 = H. Zotenberg, *Manuscrits orientaux: Catalogues des manuscrits syriaques et sabéens (mandaites) de la Bibliothèque nationale* (Paris, 1874) 10-2 (dates to the seventh century, but the mention of the purchase of the monastery is added in a note that dates much later than the manuscript itself); ms. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, *Arabe* 297, fol. 180 = W.M. Slane, *Catalogues des manuscrits arabes* (Paris, 1883-1895) 82 (dates to 1562); and University Library, *Add.*, 3280, fol. 176a = W. Wright, *A Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts Preserved in the Library of the University of Cambridge*, 2

These paintings, which portray both individual biblical figures and scenes, are the first figural decorations to appear in the church. The figure of the Virgin *galaktrophousa* from the south wall of the *khurus* appears to be one of the first paintings in this layer, and dates to the second half of the seventh or beginning of the eighth century.²⁵³ There are three murals on the second tier of the north wall in the *khurus* that flank two windows, which depict saints Pisentios and Apakir (left), Damianus (centre) and Luke and Barnabas (right). The paintings in the dado and the second tier probably date to the first half of the eighth century, and predate the images in the dome of the *khurus*, which were added sometime after the paintings below them were finished. The dating of these dome paintings is highly contentious, however, as dates ranging from the eighth to the twelfth centuries have been offered for their completion.²⁵⁴ The north dome of the *khurus* bears an Epiphany scene, in which an enthroned Virgin holds a *clipeus* of Christ Emmanuel (Christ depicted as a miniature adult), flanked by two archangels, three shepherds on her right and three magi on her left.²⁵⁵ In the dome of the western return aisle there is another monumental painting dating to the second phase, which depicts an Annunciation

vols (Cambridge, 1901) 2.851-2 (dates to 1607). This argument is taken up by O.F.A. Meinardus, *Christian Egypt: Ancient and Modern* (Cairo, 1977) 218-9, Cody, 'History', 876, and Gabra, *Coptic Monasteries*, 48. Cf. Leroy, *Peintures des couvents*, 54 (n. 3), who questions the validity of Evelyn White's assertion. In addition, Innemée and Van Rompay, 'Présence des Syriens', 191-3, J. den Heijer, 'Relations between Copts and Syrians in the Light of Recent Discoveries at Dayr as-Suryān', in M. Immerzeel and J. van der Vliet (eds), *Coptic Studies on the Threshold of a New Millennium, Proceedings of the Seventh International Congress of Coptic Studies* (Leiden, 2000) 923-38 at 934-8, and L. van Rompay and A.B. Schmidt, 'Takritans in the Egyptian Desert: The Monastery of the Syrians in the Ninth Century', *Journal of the Canadian Society for Syriac Studies* 1 (2001) 41-60, have convincingly argued that there is no evidence for the arrival of the Syrian monks in 710, nor that the monks ever purchased the monastery from the Coptic community at Deir el-Surian. Rather, the Syrians only arrived in the first half of the ninth century and appear to have lived side-by-side with their Egyptian counterparts. This is demonstrated by the continued reference to the Egyptian patriarch in Syriac colophons, the procuring of manuscripts for the monastery with an 'indigenous Egyptian origin' and Coptic historical documents that do not distinguish Syrian Christians as a distinct group. The first evidence for Syrians at the monastery only appears in 818/819, when a fifteen-line Syriac inscription was placed on the north wall, for which, see Innemée and Van Rompay, 'Présence des Syriens', 179.

²⁵³ Innemée and Van Rompay, 'Présence des Syriens', 171; Van Rompay, 'Syriac Inscriptions', 194, notes that the inscription associated with this image of the Virgin is in Greek, and suggests that Coptic and Greek functioned side by side in the monastery. In fact, the earliest figural paintings at the monastery (Layer 2) have only yielded Greek inscriptions, whereas Coptic inscriptions do not appear until Layer 3 (199). Cf. Bolman, 'Enigmatic Coptic Galaktotrophousa', 13 (n. 3), who opts for a wider range of dating and suggests a date somewhere between the seventh and tenth centuries.

²⁵⁴ Innemée, 'Discoveries of January 2000', 253; Innemée and Van Rompay, 'Discoveries of 2001-2002', 246. Paint drops from the dome murals were discovered on the layer two wall paintings below, which suggest that the dome must have been painted later. At what point they were created is a matter of debate, and at this time we cannot be more specific than that the first half of the eighth century serves as a *terminus post quem* for the dome paintings and the thirteenth-century paintings that overlay them serve as a *terminus ante quem*.

²⁵⁵ Innemée, 'Newly Discovered Painting', 218-23. Originally this painting was thought to depict the Nativity, but when the entire image was revealed, it became clear that it was in fact an Epiphany scene.

scene.²⁵⁶ These two dome paintings were probably part of a larger Christological cycle, spread across the four semi-domes of the church.²⁵⁷

The second phase also saw a distinct architectural change, which may indicate the earliest Syrian presence in the church.²⁵⁸ At some point in the eighth century, the door leading into the northern sanctuary from the *khurus* was enlarged and centered, and its low, rectangular lintel was altered to receive an arch. This remodelling of the door cut into the original masonry of the church and some of its original geometric painting, which was then re-plastered and given a second layer of paint around the new door. The modifications to this room also extend to the interior of the chamber, which received a second layer of decoration, including a *crux gemmata* encircled in several different colours and made to look like a sun, flanked by two *orantes* (individuals with outstretched hands). One of these figures is identified by a Coptic inscription as St James, who is considered to be the author of the Syriac liturgy.²⁵⁹ The alterations to this side chamber suggest a change in function, possibly from a *pastoforion* (side room) into a proper sanctuary, as well as the arrival of a new group of monks, perhaps of Syrian origin, who may have lived among the Coptic congregation at this time.

²⁵⁶ The dates for this painting are based entirely on stylistic grounds, which are notably difficult to date for this period, thus a date between the eighth and twelfth century is considered. A panel discussion was held at the École Pratique des Hautes Études in Paris solely to discuss the date of this painting, the papers of which were published in *CArch* 43 (1995) 117-52. See also L.-A. Hunt, 'The Fine Incense of Virginité: A Late Twelfth Century Wall Painting of the Annunciation at the Monastery of the Syrians, Egypt', *BMGS* 19 (1995) 182-232 at 183, who dates the Annunciation painting to the end of the twelfth century, specifically to the 1170s-1180s, based on the style and symbolic imagery in the painting, particularly the presence of incense in the composition. Cf. Innemée, 'Mural Painting', 4, who challenges the use of a single stylistic element to date this painting, and rather dates it prior to 818/819, based on the Syriac inscription on the north wall. In contrast, A. Semoglou, 'L'Annonciation de Deir es-Souriani en Égypte', *CArch* 48 (2000) 35-43 at 40, attributes this painting to the tenth century and the patronage of Moses of Nisibis. These widely varying dates illustrate the issue of establishing a definitive date for this painting, which will be discussed in further detail in the third chapter.

²⁵⁷ This assumes that there are Christological scenes in the eastern and southern semi-domes, and Innemée, 'Newly Discovered Painting', 226, suggests that these would depict the Ascension and Pentecost. The same type of sequence is found at Deir el-Baramus.

²⁵⁸ The earliest written attestation of Syrians at the monastery appears in the first quarter of the ninth century with the inscription by Mattay and Yacqub on the north wall, dating to 818/19. See discussion at n. 252. A second attestation of Syrian presence stems from a Syriac manuscript, which recounts the donation of ten manuscripts by the monks, Isaac, Daniel and Shalmon to the 'Monastery of the Mother of God of the Syrians, which is in the desert of Egypt... They entered this monastery in the days of the holy blessed Patriarch Mar Cosmas of Alexandria (851-859) and Mar John of Antioch (846-873)...'. See W. Wright, *Catalogue of Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum Acquired since the Year 1838*, 3 vols (London, 1871) 2.766 (no. 781).

²⁵⁹ Innemée, 'Newly Discovered Mural', 61-6. If the reconstruction of the door and the painting of St James do coincide with the arrival of the Syrian monks, this assumes their presence in the second half of the eighth or early ninth century at Deir el-Surian. Furthermore, this scene does not appear to be connected to any biblical text, but rather with a story from the *Apocryphon of James*, in which James and Peter have an ecstatic vision of Christ (who Innemée believes is represented here by the cross).

The Layer 3 paintings date to c. 900, although they do not appear to cover the entire surface of the church. This layer was intended to augment the existing iconographic programme of the eighth century, and thus appears to be limited to the square zone under the dome of the *khurus*, where a more monumental iconographic programme was created.²⁶⁰ The paintings in this phase also correspond to a period before the windows in the *khurus* were blocked and plastered over, and thus also probably pre-date the rebuilding of the *haikal*. The figural paintings in this area are badly preserved, but there are several Syriac inscriptions, which aid in the identification of some of the individuals. The figures all appear to be part of an iconographical programme depicting the conversion of foreign peoples, including a representation of Constantine and the Syrian king, Abgar.²⁶¹ These paintings also seem to be contemporary with a Coptic inscription that runs around the dome, which indicates that the paintings were commissioned by a certain Moses, who was an *hegoumenos* and *oikonomos* of the monastery, and is provisionally dated to the tenth century based on its palaeography and the potential association of this individual with Moses of Nisibis.²⁶²

Directly below the level of the painting of Constantine and Abgar are a series of paintings with Coptic inscriptions, all of which pertain to the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, including the Dormition (left), the Virgin and Christ enthroned side-by-side (centre) and the Assumption itself (right). There is a slight overlap of these paintings with those of Constantine and Abgar, suggesting that they were completed slightly later.²⁶³ There is also some fragmentary evidence for a Layer 3 painting in the dome of the *khurus*, which may depict the three men in the fiery furnace; specifically, it preserves part of a winged individual who holds a staff pointing in the

²⁶⁰ Innemée, 'Newly Discovered Painting', 215-6.

²⁶¹ See Innemée and Van Rompay, 'Présence des Syriens', 172-3 and 'New Discoveries of 2000-2001', 250-1.

²⁶² Innemée, 'Conservation Work Autumn 2000', 265. The authors do not discount that this inscription could indeed refer to Moses of Nisibis, a well-known monk who lived at Deir el-Surian in the tenth century. Furthermore, the presence of a Coptic inscription dated to the tenth century suggests that the community may still largely have been Egyptian, or that the Syrians at the monastery assimilated or identified themselves with the Egyptian Christians with whom they shared the church. Moses of Nisibis is specifically mentioned, however, in two Syriac inscriptions that appear on the lintels and jams of two tenth-century wooden doors, one of which closes the *haikal* and the other closes off the *khurus*. Here we see the definitive presence of Moses of Nisibis at the monastery in the tenth century. Thus, the inscription around the dome attests to the use of both Coptic and Syriac as functional languages in the monastery at this time. The relationship between the Syrian and the Egyptian Christians is further demonstrated by the depiction of both patriarchs St Mark the Evangelist and St Ignatius on two panels in the first row of the *khurus* door. See Evelyn White, *Monasteries III*, 197-200, 207 (Pl. 64); O.F.A. Meinardus, *Monks and Monasteries of the Egyptian Deserts* (Cairo, 1989) 124; Van Rompay, 'Syriac Inscriptions', 189-202.

²⁶³ Innemée and Van Rompay, 'New Discoveries of 2000-2001', 252-3. The authors note that there were cracks in the plaster even before the paintings had been applied here, which suggests that the image was applied to the same coat of plaster that was laid down for the painting of Constantine and Abgar, but that a few decades passed before the second group was completed.

direction of flames. The evidence for this association is based solely on these two badly preserved elements of the scene, and it seems unusual that an Old Testament scene would occur in the eastern part of the *khurus* dome at this time. Only the discovery of further fragments of this painting can provide us with a definitive identification of this fragmentary image.²⁶⁴

The fourth and final layer of the ancient paintings dates to the thirteenth century, when the interior of the church was entirely over-plastered and repainted.²⁶⁵ Unfortunately, little of this iconographic programme remains, as the church again underwent a complete decorative overhaul in the eighteenth century, which only left the paintings in the three half-domes untouched.²⁶⁶ These half-domes bear a Marian cycle similar to that uncovered in the Layer 2 paintings, although the arrangement reveals distinct variations: the Dormition (north), a double composition of the Annunciation and Nativity (south) and the Ascension (west).²⁶⁷ The content of the Layer 4 painting in the eastern apse is unknown, since it was plastered over during the eighteenth century renovations. It may have continued the Marian cycle present on the other three domes, or it may have displayed an entirely different scene. There is also a notable change in the language of the church at this time, as we see a shift away from Coptic to the predominant use of Greek and Syriac.²⁶⁸

²⁶⁴ Innemée and Van Rompay, 'New Discoveries of 2000-2001', 253. This is the only Layer 3 painting to appear in any of the domes.

²⁶⁵ Leroy, *Peintures des couvents*, 114-7, dates the paintings to the late twelfth or early thirteenth century. Cf. L.-A. Hunt, 'Christian-Muslim Relations in Painting in Egypt of the Twelfth to mid-Thirteenth Centuries: Sources of Wall Painting at Deir es-Suriani and the Illustration of the New Testament Ms. Paris, Copte-Arabe1/Cairo Bibl. 94', *CArch* 33 (1985) 111-55 at 117-25, who dates the paintings more specifically to c. 1225 based on their stylistic and iconographic similarities to other Coptic paintings and illuminated manuscripts of this date. Cf. Innemée, 'Mural Painting in Egypt', 6, who acknowledges the difficulty of dating these paintings without any epigraphical evidence, but argues that Leroy's date has yet to be convincingly contradicted.

²⁶⁶ Innemée and Van Rompay, 'New Discoveries of 2000-2001', 253-4. Much of the loose plaster from the thirteenth century was removed before the church was plastered over in the eighteenth century, and therefore there is little evidence for the decorative programme of this phase, aside from the three half domes. This decorative overhaul coincided with the re-consecration of the church in 1781 and there are no graffiti that are earlier than this date on the most recent layer of plaster. See, Innemée, 'Mural Painting in Egypt', 6.

²⁶⁷ Van Rompay, 'Syriac Inscriptions', 192-3.

²⁶⁸ Van Rompay, 'Syriac Inscriptions', 199-200, notes that the presence of Greek inscriptions for the identification of figures in wall paintings is not uncommon in the thirteenth century, even though it had ceased to function as the administrative language of Egypt. In fact, there are notable parallels with the monastery of St Moses in Syria, which used Greek inscriptions until the second half of the eleventh century. See P. dall'Oglio, 'Storia del Monastero di San Mose' l'Abissino e descrizione degli affreschi della sua Chiesa', in P. dall'Oglio et al. (eds), *Il restauro del Monastero di San Mose' l'Abissino, Nebek, Siria* (Damascus, 1998) 11-22 at 14-6. Van Rompay (pp. 200-1) also demonstrates that Coptic does not entirely disappear from the monastery in the thirteenth century, and probably still represents the language of the local congregation, but highlights that Syriac became the predominant language of the monastic population.

From the above survey we can see that the preservation of paintings from four distinct ancient phases provides an opportunity to thoroughly analyze the particular decorative scheme of this Marian church against the other churches discussed below, whose iconographic programmes were lost over time. Here, there is a deliberate attempt to underline the importance of the Virgin by depicting scenes from her life in two separate cyclical compositions (Layers 2 and 4). She is also intermittently depicted in several other wall paintings throughout both the *khurus* and *haikal*. The iconographic presence of Mary, however, is limited to these few prominent images, and the remaining decorative scheme is representative of the diverse Coptic and Syrian character of the church. Furthermore, it is the only Marian church whose preservation allows for a complete study of its occupation, complex reuse and stratigraphical assessment of changing monastic iconographical habits spanning over a millennium.

The Monastery of the Virgin at Deir el-Ganadla

The monastery of Deir el-Ganadla, also known as the monastery of the Virgin (Deir el-Adra), is located c. two kilometers west of the village of el-Ganadla and c. 60 km north-west of Atriye (Shenoute Monastery). It is often mistaken, however, for the nearby monastery of St Macrobius (Deir Abu Maqrufa).²⁶⁹ The entire monastic complex is constructed at the foot of, and partially within, the remains of a pharaonic quarry, which was adapted to suit the functional needs of the monastic community. These converted caves not only housed the monks at Deir el-Ganadla, but were also modified to contain the earliest church at the site. The core layout of the original complex remained relatively unaltered until the monastery was abandoned in the medieval period. The site saw a brief period of reinvigoration in the nineteenth century, when the quarry

²⁶⁹ R.-G. Coquin, 'Dayr Abu Maqrufah and Dayr al-Janadlah: History', in *Copt.Enc.* III (1991) 704-5, who indicates that the modern village of Deir el-Ganadla is, in fact, an agglomeration of two villages: Deir el-Ganadla and Deir Abu Makrufah, the latter being the older of the two. The confusion lies in the use of the name of the village Deir Abu Makrufah by Arab writers to describe the quarry church. They also note the existence of a small *λαύρα* of Dayr Maqrufiyus about an hour's walk from Deir el-Adra. See also G. Gabra and G.J.M. van Loon, *The Churches of Egypt: From the Journey of the Holy Family to the Present Day* (Cairo, 2007) 266, who note that the monastery of St Macrobius is actually 'a nearby *λαύρα* dedicated to the sixth-century hermit St Macrobius'. Furthermore, none of the stelae published from the excavations of the tombs at the monastery of the Virgin by Petrie in 1907 mentions the name Macrobius. See W.M.F. Petrie, *Gizeh and Rifeh* (London, 1907) Pls 39-40, and *Memphis I* (London 1909) Pl. 54, no. 13.

church was partially reconstructed with *spolia* and a second church was constructed at the site, which is entirely independent from the caves.²⁷⁰

The monastic complex is enclosed by walls on the north, east and south sides, but by limestone cliffs and the quarry caves on the west. The enclosure walls are constructed with a square masonry that is supported by buttresses at intervals. A doorway in the northern wall provides entry to this monastic complex, after which one immediately sees the nineteenth-century church of the Apostles on the right, in the north-west quadrant of the complex. This church was constructed in 1865 and stands slightly south of the northern enclosure wall. The position of this church left a small passage which now provides access to an ancient tomb immediately to its west. The church of the Apostles itself is entered from a door in the north-west, through which the central nave is accessed from the west.²⁷¹ The new church is constructed in the style of a three-aisled basilica, in which each aisle is adorned with three domes and terminated by a *haikal* dedicated to a particular saint: St Macrobius (north) Sts Peter and Paul (centre) and St George (south).²⁷²

Immediately to the west of this church is the Late Antique quarry church, which is structurally independent from its nineteenth-century counterpart except for the small aforementioned passage, which now leads to a contemporary entrance in the southern wall of the Late Antique church.²⁷³ Unlike the church of the Apostles, however, this church is not a free-standing construction, as it is built almost entirely within the mouth of the pharaonic quarry. In fact, the cavernous church is delineated on the north, south and west by the walls of the cave, and only an eastern wall was constructed in order to create the formal structure of a church. Unfortunately, however, Deir el-Ganadla has not received the same kind of extensive study by scholars as the other sites with which this chapter deals, and excavations have focused solely on the tombs in the vicinity of the monastery; thus, our knowledge of this site is limited to basic descriptions and a singular intensive study of the wall paintings.²⁷⁴

²⁷⁰ Timm, *Christlich-koptische Ägypten* II, 634; Gabra and Van Loon, *Churches of Egypt*, 266.

²⁷¹ H. von Buschhausen and F.M. Khorshid, 'Die Malerei zu Deir al-Genadla', in M. Krause and S. Schaten (eds), *ΘΕΜΕΛΙΑ: Spätantike und koptologische Studien Peter Grossmann zum 65. Geburtstag* (Wiesbaden, 1998) 55-66 at 55.

²⁷² E. Somers Clarke, *Christian Antiquities in the Nile Valley* (Oxford, 1912) 171-2.

²⁷³ Gabra and Van Loon, *Churches of Egypt*, 266.

²⁷⁴ The early twentieth-century travellers to the site only gave cursory descriptions of the monastery, see e.g. M. Julien, 'Quelques anciens couvents de l'Égypte', *Missions catholiques* 35 (1903) 237-40, and Somers Clark, *Christian Antiquities*, 171-2. See also the cursory description by Meinardus, *Christian Egypt*, 287-8. The most

The current state of the Late Antique church at Deir el-Ganadla is a reflection of several modifications that were made to the quarry caves over a period of many centuries. The original church was constructed within a single cave that was oriented northeast by southwest and had a slightly trapezoidal ground plan (Fig. 3). The eastern opening of the cave was given an apse and was closed by a stone wall.²⁷⁵ In Late Antiquity, the cave was modified to include a strip-like extension in the north, the roof of which is about one meter lower than the rest of the church. There was also an expansion in the southern part of the church, which saw the addition of an elevated podium and stairs in the south-west corner, although the height of the ceiling in this extension is also approximately one meter lower than the height of the nave in the church. The varying levels of the ceiling may be a reflection of the spatial distinction of the areas, the lower areas serving as the side aisles, and the area under the elevated ceiling as the nave. It appears as though the north and south extensions are contemporary, since they carry a cohesive decorative programme that seems to belong to the initial decoration of the church.²⁷⁶

The construction of the church within the cave has allowed for its excellent preservation, with the exception of the original east wall. This wall was partially closed at the corners by the hewn out cave, while the remainder was finished with a stone wall, *iconostasis*, and recessed apse. The entire eastern wall, including the apse, was destroyed sometime during the period of abandonment and reoccupation of the monastery, and the exact location of these architectural elements has yet to be uncovered. This is largely on account of the modern reconstruction of the east wall, which was presumably built on the line of the former wall and its apse. The reconstructed east wall is built almost entirely out of brick, with the exception of the *iconostasis*, which is largely composed of damaged stone *spolia*, including stelae, fragments of decorative friezes and sculpture, and capped by modern brickwork.²⁷⁷ The provenance of these *spolia* is

extensive study of the church at Deir el-Ganadla was undertaken by Buschhausen and Khorshid, 'Malerei', 55-66, on which what follows is mostly based.

²⁷⁵ Buschhausen and Khorshid, 'Malerei', 55 describe the quarry church as a converted Pharaonic tomb, although there is no conclusive evidence that it ever served as such. The general consensus is that the church was constructed within a quarry cave. See e.g. Somers Clarke, *Christian Antiquities*, 172-3, and Gabra and Van Loon, *Churches of Egypt*, 266.

²⁷⁶ Buschhausen and Khorshid, 'Die Malerei', 55-6. Cf. P. Grossmann, 'Dayr abu Maqrufah and Dayr al-Janadlah: Architecture', in *Copt.Enc.* III (1991) 705-6, who argues that the central section functioned as the nave, but that the nave was defined by the hallowing out of the ceiling, not by the expansion of the cave to the north and south.

²⁷⁷ For an example of these *spolia*, see G. Duthuit, *La sculpture copte. Statues bas-reliefs-masques* (Paris, 1931) Pl. 60b.

unknown, but they may have belonged to the original decoration of the Late Antique church.²⁷⁸ Additionally, the east wall now also includes a small, unpainted room immediately north of the apse, which may have served as a storage area. It is unknown whether this type of room was also present in the Late Antique church.²⁷⁹

The original entrance to the church is located in the eastern half of the north wall, and is accessed via a small, cavernous corridor that extends immediately to its north. There is a second entrance in the south wall that is visibly later, as it is partially constructed of brick; this material is typical of the nineteenth-century restorations in the church. The later modifications to the church also include an exedra-shaped expansion in the north-west corner of the cave, which is significantly lower than the already low-lying extensions of the north and south side aisles that were added in Late Antiquity. The date of the north-western addition is unknown but it cuts through the first layer of painted decoration and, thus, must post-date the original decoration of the church.²⁸⁰ Additionally, the space gives no indication of its intended function, although it may have served to satisfy the needs of a larger congregation or functioned as a *gynaikion*.²⁸¹

The exedra-shaped expansion also cuts through a painted niche along the northern wall. Similar, contemporary niches are found elsewhere throughout the church, distributed at fairly regular intervals along the north, south and west walls, which indicate that they must also pre-date the north-west expansion and probably coincide with the original conversion of the cave into a church. It stands to reason that several more of these niches were lost along the north and west walls on account of this extension. The remaining niches are coherent in their design and decoration; all are c. 30 cm deep and carved with an elongated body, capped with a distinctive conch and gable in the upper zone and a consistent decorative scheme throughout the lower zone. The lower zone of every niche is painted with a different gemstone-lined cross, each of which

²⁷⁸ Grossmann, 'Architecture', 705; Buschhausen and Khorshid, 'Malerei', 58-9; Gabra and Van Loon, *Churches of Egypt*, 266. One of the *spolia* is a funerary stela, which partially preserves the name of the deceased under a decorative field containing an *ankh*-cross (*crux ansata*) between heavy foliage, although the name cannot be made out. It is unknown from where this funerary stela originated, although it is probable that it once stood in the monastery's necropolis that was excavated by Petrie. On the *crux ansata*, see Dijkstra, *Syene I*, 81, with references.

²⁷⁹ Buschhausen and Khorshid, 'Malerei', 56; Gabra and Van Loon, *Churches of Egypt*, 266.

²⁸⁰ Buschhausen and Khorshid, 'Malerei', 56, date this extension to the post-medieval period, although they only refer to the extension cutting through the first (sixth-century) layer of paint. The second layer of wall paintings (eleventh/twelfth century) is largely missing in the lower decorative zones of the church, so it is unclear whether this addition was made during that time of renewal, or if it was an addition by the nineteenth-century monks at the site. The surviving wall painting in the exedra, however, is distinct from the eleventh/twelfth-century decorative scheme in that the wall appears to be painted in a single colour without any iconographic or figural elements.

²⁸¹ For the interpretation of this area as a *gynaikion*, see Somers Clarke, *Christian Antiquities*, 173.

bears an epithet or invocation to Christ as Saviour running through it. This type of decoration is reminiscent of other Middle Egyptian monastic decorative programmes, especially those of the White and Red Monasteries at Atriye (modern Sohag).²⁸²

The establishment of a chronology for the church of the Virgin relies heavily on an analysis of its decorative programme. It is clear that there are two distinct phases of decoration in the church. The first corresponds to the original construction of the church within the cave and probably dates to the sixth century,²⁸³ while the second phase dates to the medieval period, sometime in the eleventh/twelfth centuries.²⁸⁴ During the initial decoration of the church, all of the architectural features appear to have been painted, including the niches, walls and ceiling. These paintings are of a much higher quality than their later counterparts, as they are applied both thinly and translucently, and with a greater level of technical skill. For the most part, however, the paintings are faded and beyond recognition, having been covered under a thick layer of soot from centuries of exposure.

The exposed sixth-century wall paintings are largely contained to the walls of the lower side aisles. In fact, the paintings on these walls almost exclusively belong to the sixth century, with only two notable exceptions. These walls are predominantly decorated with small-scale vegetal scenes, ornamental elements and various crosses. This is best exemplified by the surviving decoration above the niches on the north side aisle. Just below the level of the ceiling

²⁸² Grossmann, 'Architecture', 705, notes the similarity of these niches to the composition of those from the White Monastery. See also Buschhausen and Khorshid, 'Malerei', 57, and Gabra and Van Loon, *Churches of Egypt*, 266. For detailed studies on the decoration of the niches at the White Monastery, see, Gabra, *Coptic Monasteries*, 103; S. Hodak, 'Snapshots on the Sculptural Heritage of the White Monastery at Sohag: The Wall Niches', in G. Gabra and H.N. Takla (eds), *Christianity and Monasticism in Upper Egypt I: Akhmim and Sohag* (Cairo, 2008) 225-38 at 230-2.

²⁸³ Both Buschhausen and Khorshid, 'Malerei', 56; and Gabra and Van Loon, *Churches of Egypt*, 266, date the first layer of paintings (and thus the construction of the church) to the sixth century, based on the similarity of these paintings to those of the White Monastery. A seventh- or eighth-century date for these paintings was originally hypothesized in J. Georg, *Neueste Streifzüge durch die Kirchen und Klöster Ägyptens* (Leipzig and Berlin, 1931) 8-10 (Figs 10-5), while Grossmann, 'Architecture', 706, dates the church to the seventh century, based on its architectural features. A strictly architectural assessment is difficult in this particular situation, as a cave church does not necessarily include the same elements that a freestanding church would.

²⁸⁴ Buschhausen and Khorshid, 'Malerei', 56, date some of the paintings to the twelfth century, based on a comparison to a similar scene in the Gospel Book from Damietta (1179-1180; now in Paris), but mention that the entire programme was painted over again in the thirteenth century, although they do not discuss these thirteenth-century restorations in their article. A twelfth-century date was reinforced by G.J.M. van Loon, 'The Meeting of Abraham and Melchizedek', in Immerzeel and van der Vliet, *Coptic Studies*, 1373-92 at 1380 where she refers to the painting of the 'Communion of the Apostles' at Deir el-Ganadla as an example from the twelfth century, while adding that some poorly executed restorations did take place. She also cites communication with Buschhausen (n. 29), who now proposes an earlier date for this painting. Cf. Gabra and Van Loon, *Churches of Egypt*, 266, who now date the paintings to the eleventh/twelfth century. The dating of this painting, however, is beyond the scope of the present thesis.

is a series of faded crosses, only the surviving gemstones of which indicate their original shape, and each bears an abbreviated inscription running through the cross. Below this level are two continuous rows of leaves, running the entire length of the wall, under which there is a further ornamental panel with a modified meander pattern. Traces of this decoration can be seen on the remaining part of the west wall, and we can assume that the series would have continued onto the south, and perhaps also sections of the east walls. It is worth mentioning, however, that there are no paintings on the south wall, potentially indicating that this area was extended again at a later time.²⁸⁵ These particular decorative elements, moreover, find parallels in the wall paintings from Bawit,²⁸⁶ but more importantly from the *spolia* in the east wall of the church at Deir el-Ganadla. Thus, the similarity between the decorative pattern on the walls and the *spolia* in the *iconostasis* suggests a sixth-century date for the *spolia*, and further strengthens the suggestion that it may have originated from the church of the Theotokos or its environs.

Remnants of the sixth-century decorative programme are also found on the high walls of the nave, and consist of a series of alternating arches and inscriptions. This programme is comparable to the alternating series of niches and ornamental patterns on the lower walls. Only minor sections of these paintings are visible, however, as most of the original decoration is concealed beneath the well-preserved second iconographic programme of the church. The best example of such a composition can be seen in the south half of the upper west wall, where a significant part of an arch and an area below its entablature has survived. Like the niches, moreover, the upper and lower zones of the arches have two different decorative schemes. In this case, the upper zone of the arch holds an unidentifiable object, perhaps a shell against a red background. The lower zone, on the other hand, is defined by two stocky Corinthian capitals, which support an entablature that is adorned with hanging curtains, all of which frame the uppermost portion of a *kantharos* in the center of the composition. A small plant stems from each end of the entablature and a third is visible springing from the base of the southern column.

²⁸⁵ Buschhausen and Khorshid, 'Malerei', 57-8 (Fig. 4). The lack of paintings on the south wall could indicate that this area was extended at a later time, as there are visible chisel marks in the stone. At what point this modification was undertaken is still unclear. The complete lack of painting on the south wall suggests that it was modified sometime after the twelfth century, since this second layer would surely have been applied to all four walls.

²⁸⁶ For the wall paintings from the chapels at the Monastery of Apa Apollo at Bawit, see generally, J. Clédat, *Le monastère et la nécropole de Baouît*, (Cairo, 1999).

To the right of the northern column is a faded inscription reading $\overline{\text{IC}}$, the *nomen sacrum* for 'Jesus', followed by a cross and then the letters $\overline{\text{XC}}$, the *nomen sacrum* for 'Christ'.²⁸⁷

A second arch is visible just north of this inscription on the west wall, while fragments of three other arches are found on the upper east wall, and a final fragment is discernible amongst a second layer painting on the upper north wall. While the general composition of the arches is relatively consistent (arch with Corinthian columns, the presence of plants sprouting from the entablature and bases), the interior fields of the arches seem to vary, much like the decoration of the niches. For example, the northernmost arch on the upper west wall depicts a decorative circle (perhaps a flower or plant) and two semi-circles, also with some kind of floral design in the upper zone. The lower zone contains traces of a large cross. To the right of the northern column, we can again see the faded *nomen sacrum* $\overline{\text{IC}}$, which suggests that although the alternating arches differ in content, all of the inscriptions in between are probably identical. The size and placement of these arches, moreover, suggests that both the north and south walls could have supported six such paintings.²⁸⁸

Our discussion of the sixth-century paintings concludes with a few remarks on the decoration of the ceiling. Originally, the entire ceiling was painted, much of which is still visible particularly on the ceiling in the nave. The composition consists of a network of square fields, all arranged around a central rectangular field that contains a cross inside a medallion with foliage running laterally to it. The surrounding square fields are decorated with a variety of alternating designs, consisting of rosettes that are enveloped by either wreaths or heart-shaped leaves, and various types of foliages are used to fill in the rest of the composition.²⁸⁹ The decoration of the ceiling also extends to the low-hanging ceilings of the side aisles, although most of these paintings have disappeared; the sole exception is a cross surrounded by nine small ornamental circles.

As we have seen, the church entered a phase of iconographical renewal in the eleventh or twelfth century. At this time, the church of the Virgin was re-plastered and painted with an entirely different iconographic programme, which abandoned the ornamental decoration of the sixth century and largely adopted a programme of figural representations. The majority of these

²⁸⁷ Buschhausen and Khorshid, 'Malerei', 59 (Fig. 10); Gabra and Van Loon, *Churches of Egypt*, 266.

²⁸⁸ Buschhausen and Khorshid, 'Malerei', 59-60 (Fig. 6).

²⁸⁹ Buschhausen and Khorshid, 'Malerei', 58 (Fig. 7); Gabra and Van Loon, *Churches of Egypt*, 266 and the picture on p. 269.

paintings are preserved on the upper north, east and west walls of the nave, with the exception of the two symbols of the apocalyptic creatures (winged lion and ox), which are found on the lower south and north walls respectively.²⁹⁰ The paintings on the upper walls, moreover, are punctuated with large sections of broken plaster, revealing some of the sixth-century paintings underneath. Thus, only a fraction of the original second phase iconographic programme is visible at present. In some places, the walls contain clearly identifiable biblical scenes, while in others we find only fragments of figures, whose relationship to one another is unknown. The identification of the remaining paintings is further hindered by later restoration attempts, perhaps in the thirteenth century, which proved more detrimental than beneficial, as they smudged the edges of some of figures and inscriptions.²⁹¹

The eleventh/twelfth-century wall paintings are best exemplified, however, by the well-articulated scene of the communion of the apostles on the north wall. Christ stands at the center behind an altar, looking to his proper right, extending a chalice to his apostles, six of which stand on either side of him. The six apostles in the eastern half of this composition are well-preserved, two of whom are identified as John and Jacob by inscriptions. In the western half, however, only fragments of two apostles have survived. The remaining walls of the upper nave have not fared as well in the preservation of their second-phase paintings, as only fragments of individual figures are still visible. Specifically, there are only three surviving figures on the upper east wall, two almost identical *orantes* and a third barely visible figure, which were spared during the nineteenth-century reconstruction of the east wall. The west wall, on the other hand, displays a clear, albeit damaged, depiction of an angel, perhaps the archangel Michael, given that he appears to have a sword over his shoulder and a globe in his left hand. The contours of two other

²⁹⁰ Buschhausen and Khorshid, 'Malerei', 57-8. The authors refer to these images as the evangelical symbols of Mark (winged lion) and Luke (winged ox), and note that the evangelical symbols for Matthew and John are lost, but may have originally been situated on the east and west walls, both of which were heavily disturbed and/or destroyed by the later renovations. These symbols, however, are actually representations of the four apocalyptic creatures and their association with the Evangelists comes from Western Christendom and only influenced Egyptian Christian art from the seventeenth century onwards. See, generally, M. Kupelian, 'On the Four Apocalyptic Creatures in Coptic Art', in Y.N. Youssef and S. Moawad (eds), *From Old Cairo to the New World: Coptic Studies Presented to Gawdat Gabra on the Occasion of his Sixty-Fifth Birthday* (Leuven, 2013) 97-110, and Gabra and Van Loon, *Churches of Egypt*, 32. Aside from these two apocalyptic creatures, the other second-phase paintings on the lower walls are completely lost, although the shift from decorative elements to figural paintings on the upper walls suggests that this shift may have also extended to the lower walls. The lack of evidence for these paintings (aside from the two creatures), however, makes a reconstruction of the second-phase paintings of the lower walls impossible.

²⁹¹ Buschhausen and Khorshid, 'Malerei', 56, suggest that the restoration work may have been conducted by the same workshop that undertook restorations to the wall paintings at Manqabat, Bawit and Antinoopolis.

individuals can be seen on the west wall, one of which may possibly represent John the Baptist.²⁹² Unfortunately, nothing remains of the paintings on the upper southern wall, although we can hypothesize that this wall would have also depicted a series of saints.

The church at Deir el-Ganadla presents an interesting example of a monastery that appears to have consistently served the needs of a Christian community over the course of at least six centuries (sixth to twelfth centuries), and owes its preservation to its unique location and its re-occupation by monks in the nineteenth century. As at Deir el-Surian, the varying phases of wall paintings can be used not only to date the church, but also to study the changing decorative programme of a particular church over time. In the sixth century, we find a penchant for ornamental decorations, including architectural elements, foliage and geometric patterns, whereas the eleventh/twelfth-century inhabitants favoured a figurative programme, dominated by biblical scenes and major saints. This is reminiscent of the iconographic developments at Deir el-Surian, although in this case there are no surviving representations of Mary in the figurative phase, despite the dedication of the church and the monastery to her.

It is unlikely that a figural representation of Mary existed amongst the sixth-century decorative programme, given its proclivity to ornamental designs, but we would expect to see her integrated into the iconographic programme of an eleventh/twelfth-century Coptic church. While the absence of such a painting in this period is notable, we must take into account the nearly entire absence of figural paintings on the lower walls and the significant disturbance to the upper walls, on which there may have once existed a Marian composition similar to the Christological scene on the north upper wall. On the other hand, the presence of Marian imagery is not requisite for the existence of a Marian church; hence, it is not inconceivable that Mary may have been wholly absent from the figural decorations in the later phase of the church and monastery to which she lent her name.

The West Church at Philae

The West Church once stood amidst a thriving village of mudbrick houses on the island of Philae, but now finds itself submerged in the Nile after the construction of the Aswan High Dam.

²⁹² Buschhausen and Khorshid, 'Malerei', 58 (Fig. 6). It should be noted that the authors describe this angel and the potential figure of John the Baptist as being situated on the east wall, although they are actually located on the west wall.

In 1895, the Egyptian Antiquities Service enlisted British army captain H.S. Lyons and German Egyptologist L. Borchardt to conduct a survey of the island and assess the effect that the first dam would have on the temples of Philae, and the means by which these structures could be saved for posterity. Throughout antiquity, the limited availability of space on the island resulted in the gradual spread of Late Antique and Arab mudbrick houses to the former precincts of these temples, and the later buildings were regarded as an impediment to the architectural study of the temples.²⁹³ Thus in 1895 and 1896, the temples were cleared of all subsidiary structures, resulting in the utter demolition of the later mudbrick buildings. The priority given to the preservation of the temples also resulted in a near total disregard for the village that had spread out across the island. This was especially true for the northern part of the island and its churches. Thus, the resulting studies by Lyons and Borchardt largely neglected a substantial period of occupation in the island's history.²⁹⁴

While the study of the temples has left us with a detailed examination of the major monuments and a plan of the island that remains authoritative, any attempt to document the Late Antique settlement was limited to its two freestanding churches, known as the East and West Churches (nos Q and P on Fig. 4). Both were briefly described in Lyon's study and indicated in the map of the island, while several photographs of significant finds were included.²⁹⁵ The rest of the village remains unpublished, appearing only sporadically in the excavation report, often in relation to the temples on which they were built. The ground plans of the mudbrick houses are also indicated on the map of the island, which is the only record conserving the original placement of these buildings, along with several photographs of relevant finds that were again taken without any indication of their context. In order to create the plans of the island, however, most, if not all, of the mudbrick structures were cleared from the temples as 'rubbage' and dumped into the Nile.²⁹⁶

²⁹³ H.G. Lyons, *A Report on the Island and Temples of Philae* (London, 1896) 9; G. Haeny, 'A Short Architectural History of Philae', *BIFAO* 85 (1985) 197-233 at 218.

²⁹⁴ U. Monneret de Villard, *La Nubia medioevale*, 4 vols (Cairo, 1935) 2.8-10, criticizes Lyons for his treatment of the mudbrick houses, especially his lack of establishing contexts for the later buildings and no meaningful attempt to determine a date for these structures.

²⁹⁵ Lyons, *Report on the Island and Temples*, 32-3 (West Church: Pl. 47; East Church: Pl. 48, Plan 10). Like the other photographs of finds from the island, the material from the churches is photographed in large groups, with no indication of their provenance or context, see Lyons, *Report on the Islands and Temples*, Pls 58-61 and 66-7. Cf. the treatment of the material in Monneret de Villard, *Nubia medioevale* II, Pls 2-5.

²⁹⁶ The final report on the excavations of 1895 and 1896 is given in Lyons, *Report on the Island and Temples*. See also H.G. Lyons, *A Report on the Temples of Philae* (Cairo, 1908), which provides an update on the condition of the temples over a decade later. A series of additional articles discusses various aspects of the excavations, including

The fate of any mudbrick building that remained on the island was sealed upon the completion of the first Aswan Dam in 1902, as nearly all were destroyed upon their extended submersion. Such was the outcome for the two freestanding churches of Philae, which lost their mudbrick walls to the rising waters, though largely retaining their stone foundations, which were still visible in the 1960s during low tide. The survival of these foundations provided a unique opportunity to re-examine the monuments of Christian Philae in the 1970s, before the temples were transferred to the nearby island of Agilkia and the foundations of the churches were lost to posterity beneath the waters of the Nile. The emphasis in these later studies, however, was placed on the East Church, which is the larger of the two structures and most likely the episcopal church.²⁹⁷ The West Church, on the other hand, only received cursory discussions in the ensuing scholarship, and its treatment always appears in relation to the other churches of Philae, especially the East Church but also the church of St Stephen in the *pronaos* of the Isis temple (M).²⁹⁸

In fact, the modest church in the Isis temple has been at the center of attention in studies of Christian Philae, as the closure of the Isis temple, which Procopius (*Pers.* 1.19.27-37) attributes to Justinian (535-537), and the construction of the church within its walls, was seen to mark the ‘triumph’ of Christianity over ‘paganism’ on the island.²⁹⁹ The church was created by the insertion of a small niche in the eastern wall of the *pronaos*, and the three aisles were

H.G. Lyons and L. Borchardt, ‘Eine trilingue Inschrift von Philae’, *SPAW* 1896, no. 20, 469-82; L. Borchardt, ‘Bericht über den baulichen Zustand der Tempelbauten auf Philae’, *SPAW* 1896, no. 45, 1199-215, ‘Bericht über die Corrosion des Sandsteinmaterials der Tempelbauten auf Philae’, *SPAW* 1898, no. 23, 291-303, and ‘Der Augustustempel auf Philae’, *JDAI* 18 (1903) 73-90; O. Rubensohn and L. Borchardt, ‘Griechische Bauinschriften ptolemäischer Zeit auf Philae’, *AfP* 3 (1906) 356-66.

²⁹⁷ A.E.P. Weigall, *A Report on the Antiquities of Lower Nubia* (Oxford, 1907) 54; Somers Clarke, *Christian Antiquities*, 89-90; Monneret de Villard, *Nubia medioevale* I, 7; P. Grossmann, ‘Überlegungen zum Grundriss der Ostkirche von Philae’, *JbAC* 13 (1970) 29-41, and *Christliche Architektur*, 461-4 (Fig. 78); J.H.F. Dijkstra, ‘Late Antique Inscriptions from the First Cataract Area Discovered and Rediscovered’, *JJP* 33 (2003) 55-66 at 56-9, and *Philae and the End*, 318-9; P. Grossmann, ‘Neue Überlegungen zum Grundriss der Ostkirche von Philae’, *Mitteilungen zur christlichen Archäologie* 16 (Vienna, 2010) 53-8.

²⁹⁸ G.J. Chester, ‘The Early Christian Church at Philae’, *The Academy. A Weekly Review of Literature, Science, and Art* 21 (1882) 107-8; Borchardt, ‘Bericht über den baulichen Zustand’, 1204-5; Lyons, *Report on the Island and Temples*, 32; Weigall, *Report*, 54; Somers Clarke, *Christian Antiquities*, 89; Monneret de Villard, *Nubia medioevale* I, 7-8; W.Y. Adams, ‘Architectural Evolution of the Nubian Church, 500-1400 A.D.’, *JARCE* 4 (1965) 87-139 at 105-6; Grossmann, *Mittelalterliche Langhauskuppelkirchen*, 105, and *Christliche Architektur*, 464-5; Dijkstra, *Philae and the End*, 320-2.

²⁹⁹ P. Nautin, ‘La conversion du temple de Philae en église chrétienne’, *CArch* 17 (1967) 1-43; *I.Philae* II, pp. 253-4; P. Grossmann, ‘Die Kirche des Bischofs Theodoros im Isistempel von Philae. Versuch einer Rekonstruktion’, *RSO* 58 (1984) 107-17, and ‘Tempel als Ort des Konflikts in christlicher Zeit’, in P. Borgeaud et al. (eds), *Le temple, lieu de conflit* (Leuven, 1994) 181-201 at 194; J. Hahn, ‘Die Zerstörung der Kulte von Philae. Geschichte und Legende am ersten Nilkatarakt’, in J. Hahn, S. Emmel and U. Gotter (eds), *From Temple to Church: Destruction and Renewal of Local Cultic Topography in Late Antiquity* (Leiden, 2008) 203-42 at 211-5.

delineated by the existing pillars within the room. Its identification as the church of St Stephen is indicated by several inscriptions in both the entrance and on the northern wall of the *pronaos*, which refer to the structure as the τόπος of St Stephen and commemorate its dedication by Bishop Theodore, whose episcopate of Philae spanned the years c. 525 - after 577.³⁰⁰ The use of the term τόπος rather than ἐκκλησία denotes the status of this church as a shrine or *martyrium* rather than a regular church, which indicates that it was not the principle church of Philae.³⁰¹ This identification lends credence to the probability of the East Church being the cathedral church, especially since it is larger than the τόπος of St Stephen.

The name 'Theodore' is found on a block from the screen of the *presbyterium* in the East Church, and P. Nautin has connected this 'Theodore' with the bishop named in the mentioned inscriptions. He suggests that Bishop Theodore had constructed the East Church before the conversion of the Isis temple, probably around 530, and that this event is commemorated in one of the inscriptions from the τόπος of St Stephen, which states 'Also this good work was done under our most holy father, Bishop Apa Theodore'.³⁰² P. Grossmann, on the other hand, questions the assumption that the inscription in the Isis temple refers to the East Church and whether the screen block that mentions Theodore in the East Church is contemporaneous with the construction of the church, as it could have been added at a later date. Nevertheless, he attributes the construction of the East Church to 525-537, that is, sometime between the beginning of the episcopate of Theodore and the closure of the Isis temple as described by Procopius.³⁰³ This dating is problematic, however, as it uses Procopius' date for the closure of the Isis temple in 535-537 as a *terminus post quem* for the reuse of building material from the other temples on the island (and as a *terminus ante quem* for the lack thereof in the East Church).

In a later work, Grossmann has re-evaluated his initial dating of the church, which he now attributes on the basis of the stonework to the turn of the sixth and seventh centuries.³⁰⁴ We cannot exclude, however, that the East Church was renovated or re-built at this time, whether under Bishop Theodore or slightly later, and that the current building may have supplanted an earlier church in this location. In fact, J.H.F. Dijkstra has suggested that the East Church may

³⁰⁰ *I.Philae* II 200-4. See Dijkstra, *Philae and the End*, 312.

³⁰¹ Antonini, 'Chiese cristiane', 129-33; É. Bernand, 'Τόπος dans les inscriptions grecques d'Égypte', *ZPE* 98 (1993) 103-10 at 105; Papaconstantinou, *Culte des saints*, 267-78; Dijkstra, *Philae and the End*, 312.

³⁰² *I.Philae* II 202, on which see Nautin, 'Conversion', 42.

³⁰³ Grossmann, 'Überlegungen zum Grundriss', 40-1, repeated by Richter, *Studien*, 127.

³⁰⁴ Grossmann, *Christliche Architektur*, 464.

well date back to a fourth-century predecessor, noting that this building stands as the largest church on Philae and probably served as the episcopal church of the bishopric, which was created c. 330.³⁰⁵

The presence of the East and West Churches in the northern part of the island and the prominence of the temples in its southern half has led U. Wilcken to suggest that the island was religiously divided between ‘pagans’ and Christians.³⁰⁶ A more practical explanation, however, is that the availability of space, on a small island already filled with temples, was the determining factor. The creation of a bishopric, as said presumably around 330, necessitated the construction of an episcopal church, and the northern half of the island yielded ample space for such an endeavour.³⁰⁷ The unique, quadrilateral shape of the East Church (Fig. 5) suggests that it was constructed within the precincts of the existing Late Antique settlement, although the lack of archaeological evidence limits the extent to which we can assert this claim.³⁰⁸

The West Church, like its freestanding counterpart to the northeast, also follows the irregular lines of the Late Antique settlement north of the Isis temple, although its ground plan is smaller and more regular in comparison (Fig. 6). The building is laid out as an elongated, three-aisled church, with a tripartite sanctuary. The church was largely constructed of mudbrick, although reused stones from the temple of Harendotes (no. O, Fig. 4) provided a strong foundation and made up the lower courses of the walls. Other architectural elements from the temple are punctuated throughout the design of the church, including a rectangular niche in the apse. The west wall of the building bears a broad, yet shallow niche opposite the apse, and the building is accessed through two doors at the western end of each side aisle.³⁰⁹

There are several instances, however, where the irregularities of the settlement layout have contributed to the overall asymmetry of the West Church. Firstly, the north wall is c. 1 m

³⁰⁵ See Dijkstra, *Philae and the End*, 55-6, on the creation of the episcopal see c. 300, and p. 317 (n. 50), where he notes that the sixth-century Coptic *Life of Aaron* records a conversation of Macedonius, the first bishop of Philae, with some Christian inhabitants who inform him that priests had to come from Syene to administer communion. This implies that some kind of gathering place existed for the Christians of Philae prior to c. 330. Dijkstra, however, suggests caution in entrusting a hagiographical work which was written several centuries after the events it is describing. A critical edition of this manuscript by Dijkstra and J. van der Vliet is currently underway, for which see J.H.F. Dijkstra, ‘Monasticism on the Southern Egyptian Frontier in Late Antiquity: Towards a New Critical Edition of the Coptic *Life of Aaron*’, *JCS* 5 (2013) 31-47. See also Dijkstra, *Philae and the End*, 317-9, who is the first to argue for the association of the East Church with the cathedral church.

³⁰⁶ U. Wilcken, ‘Heidnisches und Christliches aus Ägypten’, *AfP* 1 (1901) 396-436 at 403.

³⁰⁷ Dijkstra, *Philae and the End*, 317. See Richter, *Studien*, 128, who also suggests that there may be a predecessor to the present church.

³⁰⁸ Grossmann, ‘Überlegungen’, 36-40, and *Christliche Architektur*, 464-5.

³⁰⁹ For a discussion of the previous scholarship on this church and its architectural components, see n. 299 above.

longer than its corresponding south wall, which in turn has drawn the apse slightly off-centre, favouring the north of the church. This has rendered its adjoining sanctuaries notably different in shape and size. The right alcove is large and square, and bears evidence of a staircase, while the left alcove is smaller and rectangular in shape. The church is divided into three nearly equal aisles by two rows of four columns, although the colonnades are also slightly off-centre, as the nave takes its axis from the apex of the apse. The general shift of the internal features to the north of the church is counterbalanced by the position of the elevated platform that precedes the apse. This platform extends disproportionately further to the south than it does to the north and highlights the asymmetry of the entire ground plan.³¹⁰

The archaeological investigation of the West Church and its immediate environs has provided a single clue for the association of this building with the church of the Theotokos Mary of Philae (23). A Coptic inscription on the back of a reused block with a solar disk was found in the street that runs along the west side of the church. The inscription, which dates to 752, records that Joseph donated a workshop to ‘the *topos* of the lady of us all, the holy Theotokos Mary, on Philae’ (ΠΤΟΠΟΣ ΝΤΕΝΔΟΕΙC ΤΗΡΝ ΤΕΘΕΟΤΩΚΟΣ ΕΤΟΥΔΑΒ ΜΑΡΙΑ ΜΠΙΛΑΚ).³¹¹ The proximity of this inscription to the church makes the correlation of the West Church with ‘the *topos* of the lady of us all, the holy Theotokos Mary’ highly probable on several grounds. Firstly, the inscription excludes a reference to an episcopal church, which rules out the possibility of its association with the East Church (if it is indeed the cathedral church). Secondly, the church in the Isis temple is identified by an inscription as the church of St Stephen. This leaves the possibility of its identification with the church that was built in front of the temple of Augustus (L) or the temple of Arensnuphis (B), but both are located at a significant distance from the place where the inscription was found. Therefore, unless the inscription refers to a church that is otherwise unknown to us, it is reasonable to assume that the church of the Theotokos Mary refers to the West Church.³¹²

In contemporary scholarship, this inscription has been used as an example of a ‘cult adoption’ at Philae, whereby the cult of Mary deliberately supplanted the cult of Isis. In his re-edition of the inscription, S.G. Richter suggests that this ‘cult adoption’ is evident in the use of

³¹⁰ See Grossmann, *Christliche Architektur*, 464, and his reconstruction of the colonnades in Fig. 79.

³¹¹ Richter, *Studien*, 128-35 (= *SB Kopt.* I 302), with the revised translation by Dijkstra, *Philae and the End*, 320. For further references to previous editions of this inscription see 23.

³¹² Dijkstra, *Philae and the End*, 322-3.

the title ‘Our Lady’ (ΤΕΝΔΟΕΙC) for Mary, which corresponds to the Greek κυρία for Isis. He also finds parallels in the term Theotokos (ΘΕΟΤΩΚΟΣ) and the hieroglyphs for ‘mother of god’ (*mtw-ntr*). Richter extends the association of the two women further by noting the inclusion ‘of Philae’ (ΜΠΙΛΑΚ) to the epithet for Mary, which also appears as a common addition to epithets of Isis on the island (Φιλῶν). The similarities between the epithets for Mary on this inscription and the commonly used titles for Isis on Philae in the Graeco-Roman period, leads him to believe that there was competition between the two cults on the island. In a similar argument which is used to date the East Church, he dates the West Church after 535-537 as it contains reused blocks. However, a predecessor of the church of Mary must have predated the closure of the Isis temple in 535-537, otherwise the temple would have been turned into a church of Mary.³¹³

The evidence for a ‘cult adoption’ between Isis and Mary on Philae has been re-evaluated in recent scholarship, and little evidence was found to substantiate this claim, especially in light of a more nuanced understanding of the dating of the churches on Philae. Firstly, an eighth-century inscription and its epithets for Mary cannot be retroactively associated with much earlier epithets for Isis, especially given that the titles ‘Our Lady’ and ‘Theotokos’ have different connotations in Christian contexts. A similar formula can also be seen on two undated Greek building inscriptions from Philae, which read ‘the holy Virgin Theotokos Mary’ (ἁγία παρθένης θεοτόκος Μαρία).³¹⁴ In these instances, Mary’s importance is entirely dependent upon her role as the mother of God, whereas *mtw-ntr* is used to indicate that Isis, who is a goddess in her own right, begot a son, the god Horus.³¹⁵

The inscription on the reused block is dated to 752, thus providing a *terminus ante quem* for the construction of the church of the holy Theotokos Mary. We can also establish a *terminus post quem* of 431 based on the use of the epithet ‘Theotokos’, which only came into common usage for Mary after the Council of Ephesus. If we proceed with the assumption that the West Church and the church of the holy Theotokos Mary are, in fact, the same building, a date in the

³¹³ Richter, *Studien*, 133-5, following Baumeister, ‘Stephanuspatrozinium’, 187-8; Grossmann, *Christliche Architektur*, 464; Hahn, ‘Zerstörung der Kulte’, 231. Cf. R. Unger, *Die Mutter mit dem Kinde in Ägypten* (PhD diss. Leipzig, 1957) 116-7, who sees the use of these similar epithets as a part of the appropriation of Isiac attributes by the cult of Mary.

³¹⁴ *I.Philae* II 220.5-6, 221.4-5.

³¹⁵ J.H.F. Dijkstra and J.J. Van Ginkel, review of Richter, *Studien zur Christianisierung Nubiens*, in *Muséon* 117 (2004) 233-7 at 236; J. van der Vliet, review of Richter, *Studien*, in *VChr* 59 (2005) 219-23 at 220; Dijkstra, *Philae and the End*, 321; J.H.F. Dijkstra, ‘The Fate of the Temples in Late Antique Egypt’, in L. Lavan and M. Mulryan (eds), *The Archaeology of Late Antique ‘Paganism’* (Leiden, 2011) 389-436 at 425-6. Cf. F.R. Trombley, *Hellenic Religion and Christianization c. 370-529*, 2 vols (Leiden, 1993-1994) 1.158.

second half of the fifth century or later seems probable for its construction, as it was built with reused blocks from the temple of Harendotes.³¹⁶ The exact date of the closure of this temple is unknown, although three inscriptions from the back of the East Colonnade (between the two pylons) indicate that the falcon cult continued to be worshipped until at least 434.³¹⁷ It is unlikely, however, that the temple of Harendotes was dismantled before the closure of the Isis temple, and probably did not remain in use long after 456/457, which is the date of Philae's final inscription testifying to the ancient Egyptian cults.³¹⁸

There is no further evidence for cultic activity on the island after 456/457 until the account of Procopius, who indicates that the temples were 'destroyed' by the Roman general Narses on the orders of Justinian in 537-537.³¹⁹ Procopius' report is problematic, however, since the temple of Isis was not in fact 'destroyed'. Nor does Procopius mention the Christian population on the island, even though we know that they formed a major community there.³²⁰ Since it is unlikely that nearly a century would have passed between the last cultic inscription and the 'destruction' of the temples by Justinian, it can be assumed that Justinian's temple closure was only a symbolic one, as the temples probably had largely ceased to function already in the second half of the fifth century.³²¹

Any attempt to establish a more precise date for the West Church is hindered by the fact that the remains have only been cursorily studied (and are now lost beneath the waters of the Nile), and the relatively late date of the inscription. It can be safely said, however, that the West Church, in its present form, was constructed in the second half of the fifth century or later, when the temples of Harendotes and Isis fell into disuse and the former could be dismantled and its blocks reused in the West Church. This does not eliminate the possibility, however, that a

³¹⁶ Dijkstra, *Philae and the End*, 322. Cf. W.Y. Adams, 'Architectural Evolution', 105-6, who uses the West Church as an example of his Type 1b Nubian Churches, which he dates generally to 550-750, and Grossmann, *Christliche Architektur*, 465, who dates the West Church to the second half of the sixth century on typological grounds.

³¹⁷ *I.Philae* II 190-2. For a detailed treatment of the lifespan of the falcon cult at Philae, see Dijkstra, *Philae and the End*, 209-13.

³¹⁸ *I.Philae* II 199. This inscription was found on the exterior of the east *naos* wall of the Isis temple.

³¹⁹ Procop. *Pers.* 1.19.34-5. In this account, Procopius states that Diocletian had permitted the Noubades and Blemmyes to access the sanctuaries on Philae, and that these cults continued to function until his own time when Justinian closed them. Cf. Prisc. F 27 Blockley (= *FHN* III 318), who writes shortly after the events of 452/53 that he is describing. For a discussion of both sources, see Dijkstra, *Philae and the End*, 138-46.

³²⁰ Wilcken, 'Heidnisches', 396-407; Dijkstra, *Philae and the End*, 13.

³²¹ For a nuanced discussion of the account by Procopius on the event of 535-7 in connection with the end of the cults at Philae, see Dijkstra, *Philae and the End*, esp. 216-8 and 306-15, and 'Fate of the Temples', 424-6, who also argues to disassociate the temple closure of 535-7 from the construction of the church of St Stephen in the temple under Bishop Theodore.

predecessor to the West Church existed sometime in the first half of the fifth century, as the Appion petition refers to ‘churches’ on the island as early as 425-450,³²² or even the fourth (as suggested for the East Church), since we know that a bishopric was established around 330. Although the extant evidence to associate the West Church with the church of the holy Theotokos Mary only exists in the form of an eighth-century inscription (23), the archaeological evidence suggests that a Marian church may have been present on the island well before this date.

Church in the Isis Temple at Syene

A study of the church in the temple of Isis at Syene is included here as it warrants a re-investigation of its presumed association with the ‘church of the holy Mary’ mentioned in three papyrological attestations in the Paternouthis archive (21). The temple of Isis was discovered in 1871 and remained largely unnoticed until E. Bresciani conducted the first systematic study of the temple in the early 1970s.³²³ The project also uncovered a badly preserved wall painting of Mary on a pillar, which Bresciani dated to the sixth century on stylistic grounds, and led her to believe that this temple was converted to a church of Mary, based on notions of ‘cultic continuity’.³²⁴ This hypothesis has been taken over in subsequent scholarship, and inspired G.

³²² *P.Leid. Z 5-7 = FHN III 314*, for which, see Dijkstra, *Philae and the End*, 156-7, with further literature. The Appion petition implies the existence of at least two churches. Given that the date of the petition (425-450) partially overlaps with a time in which some of the temples were still in use, we can deduce that the reference likely refers to the two freestanding churches (the predecessors of the East and West Churches). The three additional churches on Philae were constructed within pre-existing ‘cultic’ buildings and are unlikely referred to in the petition. These include the church of St Stephen, which was built in the *pronaos* of the Isis temple, the church in front of the temple of Augustus and the church constructed on the foundations of the temple of Arensnuphis once it had ceased to function. See Richter, *Studien*, 125, and Dijkstra, *Philae and the End*, 322 (with references).

³²³ The temple of Isis was exposed during the construction of the railroad from Aswan to Shellal in 1871 and is first mentioned by A. Mariette, *Itinéraires de la Haute-Égypte* (Alexandria, 1872) 249, and *Monuments divers recueillis en Égypte et en Nubie* (Paris, 1889). Afterwards, the reliefs on the façade were published by J. de Morgan, *Catalogues des monuments et inscriptions de l’Égypte antiques 1* (Vienna, 1894) 47-57. The first ‘excavations’ of the temple were undertaken by the Services des Antiquités, which cleared the temple of debris and constructed a mudbrick retaining wall, see H. Carter, ‘Report on Work Done in Upper Egypt (1903-1904)’, *ASAE* 6 (1905) 112-29 at 129; N. Reeves and J. Taylor, *Howard Carter before Tutankhamun* (London, 1992) 57. Finally, from 1961-1963, excavations were carried out around the temple by M.A. el-Hetta, Director of Museums in Upper Egypt, who used the temple to store stonework from his own excavations. See J. Leclant, ‘Fouilles et travaux en Égypte et au Soudan, 1962-1963’, *Or* 33 (1964) 337-404 at 349-50. For the study of the Isis temple, see E. Bresciani, and S. Pernigotti, *Assuan. Il tempio tolemaico di Isi. I blocchi decorati e iscritti* (Pisa, 1978). For a detailed history of the excavations at Aswan in general, see C. von Pilgrim et al., ‘The Town of Syene: Preliminary Report on the 1st and 2nd Season in Aswan’, *MDAIK* 60 (2004) 119-48 at 122-4.

³²⁴ Bresciani and Pernigotti, *Assuan*, 41.

Husson to assert that the church in the Isis temple was in fact the Marian church attested in the Patermouthis archive.³²⁵ Our study of the eighth-century Coptic inscription from the West Church at Philae, however, has demonstrated that the notion of ‘cultic continuity’ is problematic and subject to a more nuanced interpretation of the evidence. Therefore, we must re-examine the previously accepted interpretation that this temple was converted to a Marian church based on a single painting and an assumed ‘cultic continuity’ between Isis and Mary.

Although the focus of Bresciani’s study is on the hieroglyphic reliefs, she nevertheless provides a short description of the adaptations to the temple for Christian reuse, in which she observes that the Christian graffiti and wall paintings are limited to the pillared hall. Moreover, she offers a still authoritative ground plan of the temple.³²⁶ Bresciani’s work was supplemented by the later survey campaigns of H. Jaritz from 1987-1996, which examined the urban environment in the vicinity of the temple.³²⁷ These surveys were followed by the first large-scale excavations at Aswan by the joint Swiss-Egyptian mission, under the direction of C. von Pilgrim, from 2000 onwards. The first four seasons of this ongoing excavation project largely focused on the houses encroaching upon the Isis temple, and led to a renewed interest in the use of this temple throughout antiquity.³²⁸

This renewed interest in the temple resulted in the creation of a separate project in 2001, the Isis Temple Graffiti Project, which was directed by Dijkstra. It built upon the earlier study of the graffiti by Bresciani, which only recorded a small portion of these materials, and ultimately resulted in the collection, drawing and description of 352 extant graffiti and *dipinti* (painted texts and figures).³²⁹ At the same time, the graffiti were systematically studied together with the architectural elements of the Isis temple, allowing Dijkstra to delineate several stages of Late

³²⁵ G. Husson, ‘Houses in Syene in the Patermouthis Archive’, *BASP* 27 (1990) 123-37 at 132, who states that ‘[t]he church of the holy Mary must be the Ptolemaic temple of Isis: this temple, excavated by E. Bresciani and S. Pernigotti, was converted into a Christian church and remains of paintings on a pilaster show a Madonna as a central figure’.

³²⁶ Bresciani and Pernigotti, *Assuan*, 13-41.

³²⁷ H. Jaritz and M. Rodziewicz, ‘Syene – Review of the Urban Remains and its Pottery’, *MDAIK* 50 (1994) 115-41 and ‘Syene – Investigation of the Urban Remains in the Vicinity of the Temple of Isis (II)’, *MDAIK* 52 (1996) 233-49.

³²⁸ The preliminary reports of these excavations were published in Von Pilgrim et al., ‘Town of Syene. 1st/2nd Season’, 119-48; C. von Pilgrim et al., ‘The Town of Syene. Report on the 3rd and 4th Season in Aswan’, *MDAIK* 62 (2006) 215-77. The results from subsequent seasons in Aswan, when the focus shifted to rescue excavations throughout the city, can be found in C. von Pilgrim et al., ‘The Town of Syene. Report on the 5th and 6th Season in Aswan’, *MDAIK* 64 (2008) 305-55, ‘The Town of Syene – Report on the 7th Season in Aswan’, *MDAIK* 66 (2010) 179-224, and ‘The Town of Syene – Report on the 8th Season in Aswan’, *MDAIK* 67 (2011) 131-66.

³²⁹ For the graffiti published by the Italian team, see Bresciani and Pernigotti, *Assuan*, esp. 34-9, and 121-52. See also Dijkstra, *Syene I*, 13.

Antique and medieval reuse of the building. He was also able to attribute these phases of reuse to specific alterations to the temple, and in this way, was able to reconstruct the layout of the church in the Isis temple and indicate it within Bresciani's ground plan (Fig. 7).³³⁰

These revised plans illustrate the ease with which a temple could be re-appropriated as a Christian church. The original building measured 19 x 15 x 7 m and remained largely undecorated.³³¹ The temple had a forecourt (no. A, Fig. 7), which was originally surrounded by large mudbrick walls on foundations that were 1.5 m thick at the base.³³² The surviving pavement in both the forecourt and the temple is identical and indicates that both surfaces are contemporary. The temple proper is accessed by two doors in the façade, one central doorway (B) and a secondary entrance just to its south (C). Each door is framed with well-preserved hieroglyphic reliefs on both their exterior and interior surfaces, although some of the figures around the main entrance have been partially hacked away.³³³ The doorways lead into a pillared hall (D), which occupies nearly half of the internal surface area of the temple. The room is dominated by two square pillars (PI and PII) and has two windows, one in the north and the other in the south wall. There are almost no decorations from the Ptolemaic period in the pillared hall, with the exception of a wall painting between the central and southern entrances and hieroglyphic decoration around the central door to the *naos* (E).³³⁴

There are three doors (E, G, and I) that lead from the pillared hall into three different sanctuaries. These include a central *naos* (F) and two side chambers (H and J). The *naos* is accessible from the south side chamber (J) through a small doorway (K), but the north side chamber is only accessed from the pillared hall (D). Only the *naos* contains reliefs from the Ptolemaic period, which are limited to the aforementioned hieroglyphic decorations around its main entrance (E) and the east wall of the sanctuary.³³⁵ The lack of decoration throughout the temple (with the exception of the doorways B, C and E and the east wall of the *naos*) suggests

³³⁰ For the preliminary results from the Isis Temple Graffiti Project, see Von Pilgrim et al., 'Town of Syene. 3rd/4th Season', 228-38, J.H.F. Dijkstra, 'Structuring Graffiti: The Case of the Temple of Isis at Aswan', in R. Preys (ed.), *Ägyptologische Tempeltagung: Structuring Religion* (Wiesbaden, 2009) 77-93, and 'The Reuse of the Temple of Isis at Aswan as a Church in Late Antiquity', *JCS* 1 (2010) 33-46. All these studies culminated in the final publication of the graffiti project in Dijkstra, *Syene I*.

³³¹ Bresciani and Pernigotti, *Assuan*, 17.

³³² Dijkstra, *Syene I*, 13.

³³³ Bresciani and Pernigotti, *Assuan*, 17-8 (Pls 7 and 15-20); Dijkstra, *Syene I*, 15-6.

³³⁴ Bresciani and Pernigotti, *Assuan*, 18 (Pls 21-3 and 26); Dijkstra, *Syene I*, 14-5.

³³⁵ Bresciani and Pernigotti, *Assuan*, 18 (Pls 24-5); Dijkstra, *Syene I*, 14-5.

that the temple remained unfinished, although it was in use for several centuries.³³⁶ An altar was also found *in situ* towards the rear of the sanctuary, bearing the cartouche of Ptolemy X (107-88 BCE), although it had been knocked over sometime after the temple fell into disuse.³³⁷

The Christian reuse of the temple is marked by several distinct architectural changes to the original layout. Most notably, there are two bark stands bearing the cartouche of Ptolemy X that were placed in line with the northern pillar (PI). These stands bear a striking resemblance to the fallen altar in the *naos* and likely originally stood in the side chapels (H and J), but were moved to their current location during the foundation of the church.³³⁸ This created an abridged version of the former pillared hall, in which the northern portion of the room was visibly divided from the rest. It is unclear, however, if this northern area was closed to the public or served an entirely different function. Nevertheless, the effect produced an asymmetrical ground plan that placed the emphasis on the southern portion of the pillared hall.³³⁹

A fourth altar was found against the southern wall of the pillared hall, although it was notably not *in situ*, and bore little resemblance to the bark stands from the Ptolemaic period.³⁴⁰ This altar is made of red Aswan granite and stands to a height of only 0.86 m, while the others all measure 1.10-1.20 m in height and bear the cartouche of Ptolemy X. Furthermore, the top of the altar bears distinct markings, the function of which is unknown, but perhaps they held up some kind of construction, while the moulding suggests that it was originally constructed during the Roman period.³⁴¹ It is likely, however, that this fourth altar was reused and served as the main altar of the church, given the deliberate avoidance of the bark stand in the *naos* and the reuse of the other two in the delineation of space.³⁴² The altar probably stood in front of the apse, which

³³⁶ The north and east exterior walls were not smoothed down like the finished south and west exterior walls, which further indicates that this temple remained unfinished. See Dijkstra, *Syene I*, 14.

³³⁷ There is no evidence to suggest that this altar was reused in the Christian period.

³³⁸ Dijkstra, *Syene I*, 15. There are incised crosses on the ground slabs towards the rear of the side chapels, likely indicating the original placement of the bark stands and perhaps functioning as part of the ritual purification of the temple.

³³⁹ Dijkstra, *Syene I*, 15-6.

³⁴⁰ Dijkstra in Von Pilgrim et al., 'Town of Syene. 3rd/4th Season', 235, and *Syene I*, 16-7. There was a piece of plastic under the altar, indicating that it was intentionally moved in modern times, perhaps during one of the earlier excavation campaigns

³⁴¹ Dijkstra in Von Pilgrim et al., 'Town of Syene. 3rd/4th Season', 236, and *Syene I*, 16-7, where he argues that a statue base is unlikely, and that the type of construction that it held must remain inconclusive. Cf. Bresciani and Pernigotti, *Assuan*, 34, who suggested that it was used for libations.

³⁴² See Dijkstra in Von Pilgrim et al., 'Town of Syene. 3rd/4th Season', 235-6, and *Syene I*, 16-7, for a comparable example from the church of St Stephen in the Isis temple at Philae. Three red Aswan granite altars were found in that temple. One was found lying on the ground *in situ* in the *naos* of the temple, as it served as the bark stand for the goddess, and was thus avoided in the Christian reuse of the building, as at Aswan. A second bark stand dates to

was constructed across the main entrance of the *naos* (E).³⁴³ The apse was identified by two postholes in a horizontal line behind the entrance to the *naos*, and a third between these, slightly recessed into the sanctuary. Additional construction marks were found higher up on the doorway, in line with the two horizontal postholes, which suggests that there was some kind of built apse that blocked the former sanctuary from view. The distribution of the post holes suggests a rounded apse, although a rectangular apse cannot be discounted.³⁴⁴

The clergy probably accessed this apse through a *presbyterium*, but nothing remains of its original construction, except for a large, rectangular posthole between the two pillars and a heavily worn ground slab on the same axis to its north, which may have supported some kind of construction. The lack of small *stipites* in the pavement to hold the *cancelli* (screen panels), suggests that the *presbyterium* was perhaps constructed of mudbrick, since there is a paucity of evidence in the pavement for a permanent construction.³⁴⁵ Just as the *presbyterium* was strictly limited to the clergy, the former *naos* and side chapels also appear to have been closed off from the public. There is little evidence for Christian activity in these chambers, which suggests that they were probably used as storage facilities or changing rooms for the clergy. The only adaptations to these rooms were several niches, which come in two forms: rectangular ones and those bordered by cuttings for wooden frames. The former type may belong to the original architecture of the temple, while the latter are definitely associated with the Christian reuse, probably to store items belonging to the church.³⁴⁶

the 25th dynasty and stands in the inner court between the First and Second Pylons. Both of these altars are comparable in size to the three altars in the temple of Isis at Syene (1.10-1.20 m). The third altar at Philae is smaller (0.90 m), has an incised cross and one of its sides does not contain a cornice. This altar served as the main altar for the church of St Stephen and bears the closest resemblance to the altar from Aswan, although it does not have the circular groove or rectangular holes on its top. These altars were first published by F.L. Griffith, 'Four Granite Stands at Philae', *BIFAO* 30 (1930) 127-30.

³⁴³ Dijkstra, *Syene I*, 18. The construction of a church within the temple-proper is exceptional, since churches in most converted temples were constructed in the *pronaos*; e.g. in the temple of Mandulis at Kalabsha and the temple of Isis at Philae. Cf. P. Grossmann, 'Tempel', 194, who incorrectly situates the church in 'das Allerheiligste des Tempels'.

³⁴⁴ For the discussion of a rounded apse versus rectangular apse, see Dijkstra, *Syene I*, 17, who argues for the probability of a rounded apse (although he does not exclude a rectangular apse) based on the similarly constructed churches with small apses from Abu Mina, on which see Grossmann, *Christliche Architektur*, 334, and Biga, on which see P. Grossmann, 'Überlegungen zur Gestalt der Kirche im Tempel von Biḡa', in T.A. Ba'cz (ed.), *Festschrift E. Gaál, U. Luft, L. Török* (Budapest, 2002) 279-87.

³⁴⁵ For a more detailed examination of the pavement and the possibility of a *presbyterium* see Dijkstra in Von Pilgrim et al., 'Town of Syene. 3rd/4th Season', 233-4, and *Syene I*, 17.

³⁴⁶ It is unusual that a temple would have niches, but there is one in the side chapel (J) that may be contemporary with the Ptolemaic temple. There is a niche with the cuttings for a wooden frame in the sanctuary (F), which strengthens the argument that this area would have been used by clergymen for practical purposes. See Dijkstra in

These architectural modifications, marking the confinement of the church to the pillared hall, also agree with the spatial distribution of the Christian graffiti. Although Bresciani was the first to identify the church in the pillared hall on the basis of the graffiti, Dijkstra's exhaustive study of the material combined with an architectural analysis of the building, resulted in a thorough re-analysis of its Christian reuse. His analysis of all 352 graffiti also aided in the establishment of a relative chronology for the entire period of occupation, including different phases of Late Antique and later reuse. Moreover, the graffiti project and rescue excavations of the nearby houses were undertaken simultaneously, so that the study benefitted from direct access to stratigraphical data coming from its immediate vicinity.³⁴⁷ In the end, three distinct phases of graffiti were distinguished: Graeco-Roman, Christian and modern, with the placement of the graffiti on the walls telling us generally about the phase of occupation.³⁴⁸ The Graeco-Roman graffiti are typically located on the third and fourth courses of blocks (standing height) on both the interior and exterior of the building. The interior walls contain largely textual graffiti or *dipinti*, while the exterior walls and roof predominantly bear figural graffiti.

The placement of the Christian graffiti reflects the changing floor levels in and around the temple in Late Antiquity. In some cases, they are found amongst the Graeco-Roman graffiti on the lower courses of both the exterior and interior temple walls, confirming the initial maintenance of the floor level. The spatial distribution of these graffiti also suggests a shift away from the use of the central entrance (B), towards the smaller south-west door (C), which was marked by crosses that were not found around the main doorway.³⁴⁹ There are also numerous graffiti spread throughout the pillared hall (D), including inscriptions and depictions of boats, crosses and *orantes*, although there is a near complete absence of graffiti from inside the *naos* (F) and the two side chapels (H and J). The exceptions are a few Christian graffiti that were found on the upper courses of the *naos* walls (F), which bear no apparent connection to those in

Von Pilgrim et al., 'Town of Syene. 3rd/4th Season', 237, and *Syene I*, 17-8. Cf. Bresciani and Pernigotti, *Assuan*, 18, who argue that every wall niche dates to the Christian period.

³⁴⁷ Dijkstra in Von Pilgrim et al., 'Town of Syene. 3rd/4th Season', 230-2, and *Syene I*, 18. See the latter study generally for the edition of all 352 graffiti from the temple of Isis.

³⁴⁸ Dijkstra in Von Pilgrim et al., 'Town of Syene. 3rd/4th Season', 230. When distinguishing graffiti as 'Christian', Dijkstra notes that this period is not limited to Late Antiquity, but extends well into the Arab period.

³⁴⁹ Dijkstra, *Syene I*, 26. The crosses around the south-west doorway suggest that it functioned as the main doorway for visitors in Late Antiquity. There are only eight Coptic graffiti in the central doorway that can be dated to the same period, which suggests that it was either closed or reserved for special occasions.

the pillared hall (D).³⁵⁰ This confirms that these rooms were not accessible to the general public while the building functioned as a church.³⁵¹ We also encounter Christian graffiti high up on the exterior walls, especially in the upper west corner of the southern wall (M). The concentration of graffiti in this area probably corresponds to the elevated ground level of a ninth/tenth century house that encroached upon the *temenos* (sacred boundary) of the temple, thus dating these graffiti to the ninth/tenth century or later.³⁵²

In addition to the Christian graffiti, there were two wall paintings belonging to the Late Antique church within the pillared hall. They were initially recorded by Bresciani's team, although they were already fading in the 1970s, and have since completely disappeared. Originally, the paintings were located on the north (PI) and south (PII) pillars, measuring 0.95 m in height and placed c. 1 m above the pavement. The painting on the north pillar (PI) depicted an enthroned Mary with child, flanked by three saints on either side. The image on the south pillar (PII) portrayed four bearded saints and what appears to be an angel.³⁵³ As we have seen, the identification of Mary in the first painting led Bresciani to conclude that the church in the Isis temple was dedicated to the Virgin and that a 'cult adoption' must have occurred in Syene.³⁵⁴ Most notably, this postulation led Husson to associate this church with three attestations to the 'church of the holy Mary' in the Paternouthis archive (21), a claim that was generally accepted.³⁵⁵

³⁵⁰ The placement of these graffiti corresponds to a later time, when debris had accumulated and the building ceased to function as a church, and probably date to after the ninth/tenth century based on their similarity to the graffiti on the upper courses of the exterior southern temple wall. For a full discussion, see Dijkstra in Von Pilgrim et al., 'Town of Syene. 3rd/4th Season', 231-2, *Philae and the End*, 102, and *Syene I*, 26. The modern graffiti are located on the upper courses of the interior of the building and correspond to two provisional entrances that were made in the façade at a later date, when the church had definitively ceased to function and the building was used for domestic purposes.

³⁵¹ Dijkstra, *Syene I*, 16-7.

³⁵² Dijkstra in Von Pilgrim et al., 'Town of Syene. 3rd/4th Season', 230-1, and *Syene I*, 24-6. For a discussion of the ninth/tenth-century house and its relation to the southern wall of the temple of Isis, especially with regard to the dating of the temple, see also Dijkstra in Von Pilgrim et al., 'Town of Syene. 3rd/4th Season', 222-8.

³⁵³ Bresciani and Pernigotti, *Assuan*, 39-41; Dijkstra and Van Loon, 'Church', 6-10. For a detailed discussion of this painting, see also the discussion in Chapter 3 (Enthroned Virgin and Child in Single Compositions, Fig. 24) and the catalogue at no. 20.

³⁵⁴ Bresciani and Pernigotti, *Assuan*, 41.

³⁵⁵ Husson, 'Houses', 132. See also, L.S.B. MacCoull, 'Christianity at Syene/ Elephantine/ Philae', *BASP* 27 (1990) 151-62 at 154; B. Porten, *The Elephantine Papyri in English. Three Millennia of Cross-Cultural Continuity and Change* (Leiden, 1996) 525 (n. 16); Richter, *Studien*, 138. Cf. Papaconstantinou, 'Sanctuaires', 90, who indicates the tenuous identification of this church with the church of the holy Mary based on a single wall painting, but still adheres to this identification.

More recently, however, it has been questioned whether the dedication of the church in the Isis temple to Mary can be deduced from a single wall painting and monolithic notions of ‘cultic continuity’.³⁵⁶ These concerns were addressed in a recent study by Dijkstra and Van Loon, which uses *comparanda* from the iconographic programmes of contemporary Egyptian churches to argue that the presence of a Marian painting does not indicate the presence of a Marian church.³⁵⁷ Specifically, they note that paintings of Mary appear prominently in churches which are both dedicated to her (for example, Deir el-Surian) or to another saint (for instance, the Church of Anba Bishay at the Red Monastery, near Sohag), but that Mary may also be wholly absent from the iconographic programme of churches wherein she is the patron saint (for example, Deir el-Ganadla).³⁵⁸ In fact, only a small number of paintings depicting Mary have survived in Egypt for the time period in question (fifth-ninth centuries), and most of these come from monastic contexts or churches which are not, in fact, dedicated to Mary.³⁵⁹ Dijkstra and Van Loon also challenge Bresciani’s dating of the painting (sixth century), and argue for a wider date (sixth to ninth centuries) based on the fragmentary nature of the image and the noted difficulty of dating stylistic elements for Late Antique Egyptian paintings.³⁶⁰

This study also necessitates that we abstain from associating the church in the Isis temple with the ‘church of the holy Mary’ attested in the Patermouthis archive (21). Although we know that this church once existed in ancient Syene, there is no evidence with which we can associate this attestation to any particular archaeological remains. Thus, this case study stands as an example that we cannot rely on a single wall painting and static notions of ‘cultic continuity’ to determine the attribution of a particular church. Instead, such instances demand that we leave these identifications open until there is sufficient evidence to warrant their definitive association with one saint or another.

³⁵⁶ Dijkstra, ‘New Light’, 195-6, and *Philae and the End*, 75 and 99.

³⁵⁷ Dijkstra and Van Loon, ‘Church’, and again in ‘Christian Wall Paintings’.

³⁵⁸ For the church of Anba Bishay, see E.S. Bolman, ‘Late Antique Aesthetics, Chromophobia, and the Red Monastery, Sohag, Egypt’, *ECA* 3 (2006) 1-24 (Pls 1 and 5), and ‘The Red Monastery Conservation Project, 2006 and 2007 Campaigns. Contributing to the Corpus of Late Antique Art’, in Gabra and Takla, *Christianity in Akhmim and Sohag*, 305-17; P.-H. Laferrière, *La bible murale dans les sanctuaires coptes* (Cairo, 2008) 26-8 (Pl. 4); Dijkstra and Van Loon, ‘Church’, 8 and 12.

³⁵⁹ For a list of all paintings of Mary that survive from this period, see Appendix 2 in the present study, with discussions of the paintings in Chapter 3.

³⁶⁰ Dijkstra and Van Loon, ‘Church’, 12.

Conclusion

The present examination of the archaeological remains of Marian churches and monasteries serves to supplement the existing catalogue of buildings collected in the first chapter, while also revisiting several of the papyri that were attributed to physical remains of churches. The archaeological evidence has given life to the church of the holy Theotokos Mary on Philae, which can be associated with the West Church. Furthermore, two churches have been added to the growing number of definitive fifth- to ninth-century Marian buildings throughout Egypt, both of which occur in monastic settings (Deir as-Surian and Deir el-Ganadla). The addition of these two churches thus raises the total number of churches and monasteries dedicated to the Virgin to 25. While we did examine a fourth church in this chapter, that of the church in the Isis temple at Syene, the evidence is not sufficient to ascribe this church to Mary, nor to associate it with any particular papyrological reference from Syene. Therefore, it is included here only as an example of the problems involved in identifying material remains with a specific church of Mary.

The addition of these two Marian monasteries to our present list demonstrates the importance of interweaving both the papyrological/epigraphical and the archaeological evidence. In doing so, we have shown a greater diversity of Marian buildings, including a freestanding monastic church at Deir el-Surian and a monastic cave church at Deir el-Ganadla. Moreover, both of these structures are dated to the sixth century, thus raising the number of locations with a Marian church in this century from seven to nine. It is more difficult, however, to evaluate the impact these two churches had on the development of Marian titlature, as neither produced a sixth-century reference in which the building is identified by a particular title. The church of the Theotokos at Deir as-Surian is first attested as such in a mid-ninth century Syriac manuscript,³⁶¹ and the monastery and church of the Virgin at Deir el-Ganadla is first recorded by the later Arabic sources Abu Salih and al-Maqrizi.³⁶² While these references are indicators that the respective churches were attributed to Mary, the later historical references to them make it impossible to determine which sixth-century Marian titlature was applied to these buildings,

³⁶¹ Cody, 'History', 876.

³⁶² On the disputed authorship of these sources, see U. Zanetti, 'Abû l-Makârim et Abû Sâlih', *BSAC* 34 (1995) 85-138, esp. 131-3, who attributes both works to al-Maqrizi in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century, which were preserved by copyists in the fourteenth century.

and thus have no bearing on the overall trends in the emergence of particular titles, as discussed in the previous chapter.

Thus, it is only through the convergence of the papyrological, epigraphical and archaeological sources that we may begin to discern the manner in which Marian veneration became physically visible in Egyptian society. Papyri and inscriptions reveal patterns in the emergence, distribution and prominence of the cult of Mary across Egypt, while the archaeological record supplies us with actual evidence for the various types of architectural features and iconographic elements that might occur within a given Marian church or monastery. The Marian churches described in this chapter vary significantly in their locations and layouts, as one is a freestanding monastic church (Deir el-Surian), another partially constructed in a cave (Deir el-Ganadla), while a third is a freestanding church built with reused blocks of a temple (West Church). We also saw a disparity amongst their decorative programmes, whereby Mary could be featured prominently (Deir el-Surian), or not at all (Deir el-Ganadla). The variations among these buildings demonstrate the impossibility of establishing criteria that would distinguish a particular church as being dedicated to Mary. Instead, we see that the construction of a church is entirely dependent upon the needs of the community and the resources available to them, and that the iconographic programmes are more a reflection of the tastes of the local community than a proscribed notion of how a Marian church should be decorated.

As a result, any attribution of archaeological remains as a Marian church or monastery must be weighed against the historical, documentary and epigraphical sources that are available to us. This is especially apparent from our re-analysis of the evidence at Aswan, whereby the attempts of previous scholars to bring together disparate papyrological, art historical and archaeological materials, based on an outdated notion of ‘cultic continuity’, ultimately proved to be inconclusive. Therefore, without written records it is impossible to establish a connection between the archaeological remains of a church or monastery and the saint to whom it was originally dedicated. This, thus, leaves the remains of many potential Marian churches unidentifiable at the present time and highlights the importance of an interdisciplinary approach to the study of the physical materialization of Marian veneration.

Chapter 3:

The Iconographical Evidence for the Virgin Mary in Egyptian Wall Paintings

Introduction

In the preceding chapters, we have focused on the presence and dissemination of Marian churches and monasteries throughout Egypt through the collection of papyrological, epigraphical and archaeological materials. While this pursuit has produced a total of 25, potentially 30, religious buildings dedicated to the Virgin and demonstrated her importance in Late Antique Egypt, it has not yet been addressed how she was perceived and understood among its population. For this, we must rely especially on the development of a visual culture associated with the Virgin, one which is manifested in the creation of a distinct Marian iconography.³⁶³ Previous studies of Marian imagery have largely focused on specific iconographic types, such as the Ascension or *galaktotrophousa*, but a comprehensive thematic analysis of all wall paintings of the Virgin has never been undertaken in a single study. By conducting such a study, we are able to trace the development of distinct Marian themes that were propagated in the Christian communities of Egypt. Thus, the present chapter adds an additional facet to the study of the physical materialization of the Virgin Mary, one that collects and analyzes every known Marian wall painting from the fifth to the ninth centuries, while also tracing the themes back to their earliest occurrences.³⁶⁴

A thorough study of these images is impeded, however, by the widespread lack of preservation of Late Antique structures, including churches, domestic buildings, funerary chapels, and to a lesser extent, monastic complexes. Even in cases where the structures are standing to a significant height, their exposure to the elements over the centuries has caused large-scale degradation to the paintings and few entire iconographic programmes have survived in the archaeological record. A similar situation emerges in newly excavated sites, where typically only select paintings are chosen for conservation or removal to a museum. Thus, the analysis of the majority of the paintings collected in the present study by necessity relies heavily

³⁶³ This study is limited to wall paintings, although Marian iconography appears across a variety of media (e.g. book illuminations, stelae, small arts), for which some examples are listed at n. 49.

³⁶⁴ As indicated in n. 54, the third-century representation of the Wedding at Cana in the Karmuz catacombs at Alexandria is excluded from the catalogue, as it does not fall within the established time frame of this study, although it is discussed briefly at p. 127.

on descriptions and photographs in excavation reports; only in a limited number of cases have paintings in churches and monasteries undergone conservation efforts. As a result, this chapter presents what is undoubtedly only a minute selection of the Marian images that would have adorned both religious and secular buildings of Late Antique Egypt.

Methodology

The iconographical analysis of Marian wall paintings is presented here as a series of thematic studies, which collect all the images of a specific type and examine them under a single heading. The themes are divided into established Marian iconographic types, and are analyzed in the following order: double compositions, single-tiered enthroned Mary and Child, enthroned Mary without Child, *galaktotrophousa*, Annunciation, Marian cycles and miscellaneous scenes with Mary. In some cases, there are several variations within an iconographic type and the group is further divided into manageable sub-categories (for instance, in the case of the double compositions) or there may be overlap and an image may belong to more than one category. In the latter case, these instances are noted in-text and only one description is provided. Moreover, all of the thematic discussions adhere to the same layout, beginning with an introduction to the specific theme, which highlights the characteristics that designate an image as a particular type. This is followed by a chronological enumeration of all the wall paintings that fall into that category, and a discussion of the differing iconographic elements found in each particular image. The analysis concludes with a summary of the images as a group, with a specific focus on the prevalence of the type and any changes to its iconography across space and time.

As was noted, the search for representations of the Virgin Mary in Egyptian wall paintings is hindered by the lack of a comprehensive study on the material thus far. Therefore, the material collected in this study was acquired through an extensive search of every known excavation report of monasteries, churches and domestic structures in Egypt that has yielded wall paintings, as well as every major work on Christian art in Egypt. As a result, this study only contains images of the Virgin that are published, although every attempt was made to include Marian wall paintings that are only photographed or described, even if they are no longer extant. Once all the images were identified, they were organized into a catalogue by thematic groups, which are all subsequently arranged chronologically (Appendix 2). Each painting is assigned a

unique catalogue number, and its entry enumerates the type, location, date, and description. In a few cases, the dates of the paintings are disputed and may actually date beyond the ninth century. In these instances, every effort has been exhausted to determine the correct date, and they are included here with their suggested date range, so as to offer the most comprehensive analysis of the surviving Marian wall paintings.³⁶⁵

Whenever one of these paintings is discussed in text, it is also accompanied by an internal reference to Appendix 2, so as to immediately link the image to its catalogue entry. Since a system using bold numbering was adapted for internal references to the attestations of churches and monasteries in the papyrological and epigraphical record in Appendix 1, a different method of enumeration is employed here. Therefore, any in text reference to Appendix 2 appears as: no. 1, no. 2, and so on. In the cases where the attestation of a painting in the literature are supplemented by a picture or drawing, the figure number is added after the internal reference to Appendix 2 (for example, no. 1, Fig. 8).

Mary in Double Compositions

In our corpus of paintings from Egypt, Mary appears most frequently as part of a double composition, in which an enthroned Christ in a *mandorla* appears in the upper zone, with Mary and the apostles and/or saints in the lower zone. There is a marked disparity, however, among scholars as to the meaning of these compositions. For some, most notably E.T. Dewald, these scenes are representations of the Ascension, which reflect the narratives in the canonical books of Mark (16:19), Luke (24:50-1) and Acts (1:9-12), as well as the apocryphal *Gospel of Nicodemus* (14). He argues that the iconography of the Ascension evolved from these texts into two completely different types: the Hellenistic and Oriental type. The Hellenistic type was confined to the Western Empire and reflects a realistic rendering of the scene,³⁶⁶ while the Oriental type has its origins in the Christian East and presents a more abstract and mystical treatment of the Ascension narrative, drawing on the apocalyptic narratives of Isaiah 6, Ezekiel 1

³⁶⁵ See e.g. the case at Syene, discussed in the previous chapter.

³⁶⁶ E.T. Dewald, 'The Iconography of the Ascension', *AJA* 19 (1915) 277-319 at 278-82. The Hellenistic form is characterized by a beardless Christ stepping from the mountain into heaven, assisted by the hand of God. The apostles are depicted below, often prostrate or looking upwards in amazement. The first known example of this type is an ivory diptych in Munich, which likely dates to the end of the fourth century. For the diptych, see G. Stuhlfauth, *Die altchristliche Elfenbeinplastik* (Freiburg and Leipzig, 1896) 58, esp. n. 5 with references; O.M. Dalton, *Byzantine Art and Archaeology* (Oxford, 1911) 191.

and Revelation 4.³⁶⁷ The Egyptian double compositions, however, do not conform to a single iconographic type, but rather reflect a combination of the Syro-Palestinian forms, with a typically Egyptian rendering of frontal, emotionless figures and a greater emphasis placed on the Virgin.³⁶⁸

Although Dewald offers some astute observations on the basic patterns of the Egyptian double compositions, his conclusions are based on only a small sample of paintings, skewing his perspective of this type.³⁶⁹ His interpretation was questioned by A. Grabar, who recognized a connection with the Ascension scene but preferred to regard these double compositions as theophanic visions, in which Christ is depicted in Majesty at his Second Coming, announced at the moment of the Ascension. He thus saw the presence of Mary in the lower zone as complementary to the theophany, whereby she assumes the role of Theotokos, reminding the viewer of the mystery of the Incarnation and the omnipresence of God among mankind.³⁷⁰ A more comprehensive study of the material by C. Ihm has also argued against a straightforward understanding of these scenes as Ascensions. Instead, she opts for a hypothesis which posits the Ascension as the source of the double compositions, but also leaves room for both historical and symbolic ideas, which she believes spread to Egypt from Palestine.³⁷¹

³⁶⁷ Dewald, 'Iconography', 282-4. The Oriental type is sub-divided into the Syrian and Palestinian types. In the Syrian type, a bearded Christ stands in a *mandorla* giving the sign of benediction with his right hand and holding a scroll in his left. The *mandorla* is supported by two angels, with an additional angel on either side offering a crown to Christ, below which are the four creatures of the apocalypse. In a lower zone, Mary stands in the *orans*-position, flanked on either side by an angel holding a wand, each of which addresses a group of six apostles who point and gaze upwards in amazement. The sun and moon are typically included in the lower zone as well. The Palestinian type is similar in many ways, although there are a few notable differences: Christ is nimbed, generally bearded and enthroned within a *mandorla*, which is supported by either two or four angels. He gives the sign of benediction with his right hand and holds a book in his left. In the lower zone, Mary is nimbed and stands in the *orans*-position and flanked by six disciples on both sides who gesticulate and stare up towards Christ. There are also a variety of symbols that frequently appear above Mary's head (e.g. hand, dove, star).

³⁶⁸ Dewald, 'Iconography', 289-90. The Egyptian double compositions are typically Syrian in the arrangement of their upper zones with the exception that Christ is enthroned and the angels no longer support the *mandorla*. The lower zone is typically Palestinian, as it renders Mary and the apostles without the presence of Gabriel and Michael. Notably, however, the Egyptian versions also integrate a number of local saints.

³⁶⁹ Walters, *Monastic Archaeology*, 125-6, who notes that Dewald only refers to one or two frescoes from Bawit and briefly to a painting from Deir el-Surian in his discussion of the Egyptian double compositions. The brevity of his treatment thus causes Dewald to make several unfounded generalizations, including the suggestions that Christ is always bearded and that the two zones are always separated by a band in these particular compositions.

³⁷⁰ A. Grabar, *Martyrium: recherches sur le culte des reliques et l'art chrétien antique*, 2 vols (Paris, 1946) 2.207-13.

³⁷¹ C. Ihm, *Die Programme der christlichen Apsismalerei vom vierten Jahrhundert bis zur Mitte des achten Jahrhunderts* (Wiesbaden, 1960) 95-108. In particular, Ihm sees a relationship between these images and the festivals of the Ascension and Pentecost, which were closely linked in Jerusalem. Thus, she believes that the double compositions reflect both the ascent and descent of Christ, which is manifested as Christ in Majesty in the upper

A second stream of scholarship, exemplified by the work of C. Osieczkowska, disregards the interpretation of the double composition as an Ascension scene, but rather suggests that they represent the Deisis (Mary and John interceding before God), where the interceding Christ appears as *Maiestas Domini* in the upper register.³⁷² Osieczkowska tries to demonstrate a link between the paintings and the liturgy, especially the litany of the saints, arguing that the individuals in the paintings are invoked in inscriptions on the walls. Her arguments, however, are unconvincing, as most inscriptions are badly damaged and, in many cases, individuals mentioned in inscriptions are not rendered in the paintings.³⁷³ Thus, more recent scholarship has avoided these all-encompassing terms, arguing that there is little evidence to assume that either the liturgy or the feast of the Ascension had significant bearings on the iconography of these double compositions. Instead, scholars recognize the presence of several complex representations of different gospel and apocryphal narratives, which embody distinctly local (that is, Egyptian) beliefs, practices and traditions, in particular, the recognition of the paradox of Christ, who both takes of his mother's breast and reigns over heaven and earth.³⁷⁴

In the following discussion of Mary in double compositions, the scenes are divided into four separate, but admittedly arbitrary categories, which serve only to highlight the different ways in which Mary is depicted. This is done to demonstrate the iconographic developments within each type, while also illustrating the prevalence or paucity with which each of these types

zone and the incarnation and founding of the Church (or 'local' Church) in the lower zone. See also Walters, *Monastic Archaeology*, 127-8.

³⁷² C. Osieczkowska, 'La mosaïque de la porte royale de Sainte Sophie et la litanie de tous les saints', *Byzantion* 9 (1934) 41-83 at 53-7.

³⁷³ Walters, *Monastic Archaeology*, 126-7, notes, e.g. that Room 6 at Bawit has several inscriptions invoking Apollo, Anoup and Phib, but none of these saints are depicted in that room.

³⁷⁴ Walters, *Monastic Archaeology*, 128-9, who is the first to argue for a limited liturgical function of the double compositions, suggesting that the type may in fact derive from a passage in the anaphora of St Mark/Cyril, in which Mary, the saints and apostles are called to serve as intercessors for the faithful. He does not suggest that this is the only function of these paintings, but merely proposes it as an Egyptian nuance to the existing meaning of the painting. This notion is taken up by P. van Moorsel, 'Church Art', in *Copt.Enc.* II (1991) 555-7, who argues that the double compositions may 'have been created as a conscious depiction of the orthodox doctrine of the person of Christ'. See also K.C. Innemée, 'The Word and the Flesh', in Gabra and Takla, *Christianity in Aswan and Nubia*, 187-99 at 189-93, who recognizes that this composition could represent either the dual nature of Christ or the complimentary themes of the theophany and the Incarnation. He sees the placement of these images in the apses of the church as both ritually and symbolically connected with the liturgy, especially in terms of Christ's manifestation as the Word and the Flesh. Cf. M. Kupelian, 'The Ascension Scene in the Apse of the Church at Dayr Qubbāt al-Hawā: A Comparative Study', in Gabra and Takla, *Christianity: Aswan and Nubia*, 202-12, who alleges that we can differentiate between Ascension scenes and Christ in Majesty scenes. She contends that Ascension scenes never include the four apocalyptic creatures, the Virgin is always represented as an *orans*, and they are always located in the western part of the church. The available paintings to support this theory, however, are few in number and all of them date beyond the established time frame of this study.

appear in the archaeological record. The themes are discussed under the following headings: Mary in a medallion, enthroned Mary and Child, Mary *orans* and Mary in an indeterminate pose. These categorizations are not meant to provide a new framework through which these paintings should be studied, but merely to organize the scenes into manageable categories. In doing so, this study, by extension, demonstrates the difficulty of assigning a definitive meaning to these double compositions, and opts for a more ritual or symbolic understanding of the theme, which ties back to the dichotomy of Christ's heavenly rule and Mary's role in the Incarnation.

a) *Mary in a Medallion*

This category is represented by a single example from Chapel B at the Monastery of Apa Jeremiah in Saqqara, which dates to the sixth/seventh century. The well-preserved lower tier depicts the bust of Mary encased within a medallion (no. 1, Fig. 8). She is flanked on either side by a medallion with the bust of an archangel. All three figures are depicted frontally, although Mary is the only individual who is afforded a *nimbus*. The upper tier, on the other hand, preserves only the bottom segment of the composition, in which the lower part of Christ's legs are visible and He appears to be encased in a *mandorla*. On either side, we find wings with eyes, which are typical of the vision of Ezekiel.³⁷⁵ The significant loss of the upper tier makes a full discussion of this image difficult, although we should note that it is unclear whether Christ is standing or enthroned in this painting. There is a portion of some painted element in the lower right hand side of the *mandorla*, which may be the leg of a throne, but its counterpart on the left is missing. There is also a poorly preserved bust of an individual just to the right of the *mandorla*, which seems to represent the sun or the moon, suggesting that its counterpart would have once mirrored it on the left.

b) *Enthroned Mary and Child*

The oldest surviving Egyptian representation of an enthroned Mary and Child in a double composition does not find its origins in monastic wall painting, but rather on a fifth-century door from Sitt Barbara in Old Cairo. Here, a panel near the top of the door depicts angels holding up a

³⁷⁵ J.E. Quibell, *Excavations at Saqqara 1906-7* (Cairo, 1908) 65 (Pl. 46). Cf. Walters, *Monastic Archaeology*, 122, who explicitly states that two of the four creatures of the apocalypse are present. Although the creatures of the apocalypse commonly appear on the wings of the Seraphim, there is no evidence for their presence in the photographic record, nor are they mentioned by Quibell.

bust of Christ within a *clipeus*, while on a lower panel an enthroned Mary and Child are flanked by a group of apostles.³⁷⁶ While these panels bear the basic elements of the double composition with an enthroned Virgin and Child, they represent but one of the several ways in which this scene can be depicted. In fact, the paintings in this category, although grouped together, show remarkable differences in both their compositions and details. Primarily, we see variations in Christ's position, the presence or absence of the four creatures of the apocalypse and angels in the upper zone, and the arrangement of the Virgin and Child and their accompanying figures in the lower zone. This is especially notable given that these nine paintings stem from only two different monasteries (Saqqara and Bawit), and all fall somewhere within the date range of the sixth to eighth centuries.

This diversity is nowhere more evident than in the double compositions from Saqqara, where all five paintings show a variety of subjects and arrangements. Firstly, the badly damaged upper zone of Cell F preserves an enthroned Christ in a *mandorla*,³⁷⁷ as well as one of the four apocalyptic creatures (ox) and two busts of *orans* figures in medallions, which represent the sun and moon (no. 2, Fig. 9).³⁷⁸ In the lower zone, an enthroned Mary holds her child in her left lap, flanked by the archangels Gabriel and Michael and six local saints, one of which is a woman and two of whom are identified as Apa Peter and Apa Enoch.³⁷⁹ In contrast, Cell 1723 has significantly fewer elements in its tiers, as the upper portion depicts a largely effaced enthroned Christ, surrounded by the sun, moon and stars, while the lower zone only portrays an enthroned Mary holding a beardless Christ in a *clipeus*, and flanked solely by the two archangels (no. 3, Fig. 10).³⁸⁰

³⁷⁶ J. Beckwith, *Coptic Sculpture, 300-1300* (London, 1963) Figs 97-8; D. Shepherd Payer, 'Christian Subjects in Coptic Art: Virgin Enthroned', in *Copt.Enc.* II (1991) 542-3. Another early representation of a double composition from Egypt is found in the sixth-century Cleveland Tapestry. See, generally, D.G. Shepherd, 'An Icon of the Virgin', *Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art* 56 (1969) 90-120.

³⁷⁷ Note that this study adheres to the terms assigned to these buildings by their excavators: 'cells' (Quibell) at Saqqara and 'chapels' (Clédât) or 'rooms' (Maspero) at Bawit, although many of them likely had the same function.

³⁷⁸ Quibell, *Saqqara 1906-7*, Pl. 55. Quibell only includes a partially visible photograph of this painting in his excavation report, without a discussion of the double composition. Its chance publication owes to its proximity to the painting of the Hebrews in the fiery furnace, which stands directly to its left. Brief descriptions are also given in Walters, *Monastic Archaeology*, 123, and M. Rassart-Debergh, 'Quelques remarques iconographiques sur la peinture chrétienne à Saqqara', in G. Bretschneider (ed.), *Miscellanea Coptica* (Rome, 1981) 207-20 at 210.

³⁷⁹ See Rassart-Debergh, 'Quelques remarques', 216-8 (Fig. 2), who suggests that this unnamed female without a *nimbus* is Ama Sibylla, who is often mentioned in the same inscriptions as Enoch and Jeremiah, and is depicted on several occasions in the decorations at Bawit.

³⁸⁰ J.E. Quibell, *Excavations at Saqqara, 1908-9, 1909-10* (Cairo, 1912) 23 (Pl. 25), who argues that Mary is holding a *clipeus* of a beardless saint rather than Jesus. This is unlikely, as it is inconsistent with the iconography of the double compositions. Cf. Walters, *Monastic Archaeology*, 123; Shepherd Payer, 'Virgin Enthroned', 543.

The third painting from Saqqara is found in Cell 1727, but the poor preservation of the upper tier prevents a proper analysis of this section. It is only possible to note the apparent absence of a throne and *mandorla*, as Christ seemingly appears to be depicted in 'half length' (no. 4, Fig. 11). In addition, there are two large medallions containing the bust of an angel on either side of the central Christ.³⁸¹ In the lower zone, we encounter an enthroned Mary with Christ on her left lap, flanked by Gabriel and Jeremias on her proper right and Michael and Enoch on her proper left.³⁸² The fourth painting from Saqqara was originally found in Cell 1733, although it was never photographed by J. Clédat and is no longer extant (no. 5). Clédat did publish a description of this image, in which he remarked that it was reminiscent of Cell 1727 in its composition. He describes an enthroned Virgin and Child, flanked by Jeremias and Michael on their proper right and Enoch and Gabriel on their proper left hand side.³⁸³ In the upper zone, however, he recounts the presence of Christ flanked by the four apocalyptic creatures, which he discerns from the visible head of an ox, and two figures (perhaps angels), whose presence is extrapolated from visible hands that are holding books on either side of the central Christ.³⁸⁴

The double compositions from Bawit, on the other hand, show a greater degree of uniformity amongst its three surviving images (Chapel 3, Room 6 and Chapel 42), all of which are dated generally to the sixth or seventh century.³⁸⁵ The many parallels are especially evident in the upper tiers, which each bear a clearly defined Christ enthroned in a *mandorla* that is surrounded by the four creatures of the apocalypse. In Chapel 42, the upper portion of Christ has completely disappeared, but Chapel 3 and Room 6 clearly depict Christ holding an open book in his left hand, and offering the sign of benediction with his right. The major differences in these upper tiers lie in the ancillary decorations, which vary from one composition to the other. In

³⁸¹ The painting is severely damaged, making an assessment of his position difficult. The interpretation of the 'half length' figure is taken from Walters, *Monastic Archaeology*, 123. Note, however, that he sees four medallions with angels, although only two appear in the photographs.

³⁸² Quibell, *Saqqara 1908-9, 1909-10*, Pl. 24. Cf. G.B. Ladner, *Images and Ideas in the Middle Ages* (Rome, 1983) 129, who notes that Jeremias curiously wears both a square and circular *nimbus*, which is also present on an image of the same saint in Cell D at Saqqara. This element of Jeremias' iconography, however, is not evident in the photograph of the painting.

³⁸³ Quibell, *Saqqara 1908-9, 1909-10*, 22. There is no positional discussion of Jesus on Mary's lap in Quibell, although Shepherd Payer, 'Virgin Enthroned', 543, mentions that Jesus sits on Mary's left lap. This is problematic, however, as she cites Quibell as her source of information. The consistency with which Christ generally appears in Mary's left lap (although not always, see Chapel 42, Bawit), makes Shepherd Payer's assumption probable.

³⁸⁴ Walters, *Monastic Archaeology*, 123.

³⁸⁵ Clédat, *Monastère* (1999), 45, see also pp. 362-3 where he discusses the difficulty of dating paintings which belong to the period of the sixth to eighth centuries. Cf. A. Effenberger, *Koptische Kunst. Ägypten in spätantiker, byzantinischer und frühislamischer Zeit* (Leipzig, 1975) 213, who dates the composition in Room 6 to the seventh/eighth century.

Chapel 3, for example, there are no additional figures,³⁸⁶ while in Room 6 there are personifications of the sun and moon and the *mandorla* is carried by four wheels, below which there are a pair of flames. In addition, Christ is flanked by two standing angels who bow their heads in supplication.³⁸⁷ In Chapel 42, on the other hand, the *mandorla* is flanked by two medallions, which contain the busts of the sun and moon.³⁸⁸

Any significant degree of variation in these paintings, however, stems from the lower zones, especially in regards to the arrangement of the figures. In Chapel 3, for example, Mary is enthroned with Jesus on her left lap, flanked by the archangel Michael and seven local saints on her proper left and Gabriel and another seven local saints (including one Apa Apollo) on her proper right (no. 6, Fig. 12). In Room 6, Jesus sits on the left lap of an enthroned Mary, although in this case twelve bearded apostles and two local saints flank them (no. 7, Fig. 13).³⁸⁹ Finally, in Chapel 42 we see an arrangement that is unique to all of the double compositions, as we encounter our first representation of Mary as *galaktotrophousa* (or Mary breastfeeding).³⁹⁰ In this scene, Jesus sits on Mary's right lap and she offers her right breast with her left hand. They are flanked by at least thirteen individuals, seven to their proper right and at least six to their proper left, which consist of a mix of apostles and saints, almost all of which are identified by inscriptions (no. 8, Fig. 14).³⁹¹

c) *Mary Orans*

The third group of double compositions are differentiated from the aforementioned examples by the presence of Mary in the *orans* (praying) gesture and the absence of the infant Jesus. There are only two surviving images of this type, both of which come from niches in the eastern walls of the 'chapels' from the monastery of Apa Apollo at Bawit. The first of these appears in Chapel 17, which is dated to the seventh or eighth century.³⁹² In the upper tier we encounter an

³⁸⁶ J. Clédat, *Le monastère et la nécropole de Baouît*, 2 vols (Cairo, 1904-1916) 1.13-29, esp. 23-4 (Pl. 21).

³⁸⁷ Walters, *Monastic Archaeology*, 122; G. Gabra and M. Eaton-Krauss, *The Illustrated Guide to the Coptic Museum and Churches of Old Cairo* (Cairo, 2007) 96 (Pl. 51).

³⁸⁸ Clédat, *Monastère* (1999), 45-7 (Pls 46-51).

³⁸⁹ The local saints are identified as Apa Paul of Psilikous and Apa Naberho.

³⁹⁰ For a detailed description of this type, see the thematic entry on the *galaktotrophousa* at pp. 110-5.

³⁹¹ Clédat, *Monastère* (1999), Pls 46, 48-50. The figures read from left to right include: an unnamed saint, ΒΑΡΘΟΛΟΜΕΟΣ, ΦΙΛΙΠΠΟΣ, [ΝΙΚΩΔΕΙΜΟΣ], ΙΩ[ΣΑΝΝ]ΗΣ, ΑΝΔΡΕΑΣ, ΠΕΤΡΟΣ, ΜΑΡΙΑ, ΠΑΥΛΟΣ, ΜΑΘΕΟΣ, ΙΑΚΚΟΒΟΣ, ΣΙΜΟΝ, ΘΑΔΔΕΟΣ, and ΜΑΘΙΑΣ.

³⁹² Clédat, *Monastère* I, 73-85; Cf. E.S. Bolman, 'Joining the Community of Saints: Monastic Paintings and Ascetic Practice in Early Christian Egypt', in S. McNally (ed.), *Shaping Community: The Art and Archaeology of*

enthroned Christ in a *mandorla*, holding an open book in his left hand, and offering the sign of benediction with his right (no. 9, Fig. 15). On either side of the *mandorla* are the two archangels holding crowns, the four apocalyptic creatures, and busts of the sun and the moon.³⁹³ In the lower tier, Mary *orans* is flanked by the twelve apostles, each of whom holds a book across his chest with his right hand, and one anonymous figure.

The second depiction of Mary *orans* stems from Chapel 20 at Bawit, and also likely dates to the seventh or eighth century (no. 10, Fig. 16).³⁹⁴ Although there is not a strict line dividing the upper and lower zones, as we see elsewhere amongst the double compositions, there are still two distinct tiers in this painting. In the upper half, Christ appears enthroned in a *mandorla*, surrounded by the four creatures of the apocalypse and flanked by representations of the sun and moon. In the lower portion, a central Mary *orans* is flanked by eleven apostles, as well as Gabriel, Michael, Apa Paternoute, Apa Macarius and Apa Kollouthios. This painting bears a strong similarity to the aforementioned image in Chapel 17, as both include representations of the four creatures of the apocalypse and busts of the sun and moon. In the lower levels, there is a clear preference for including a large number of subsidiary figures, both of which include representations of the apostles and at least one other extra-gospel figure.³⁹⁵

d) *Mary in an Indeterminate Pose*

The final double composition is addressed as a separate entry, as its extensive damage limits any formal categorization of the image. This painting, which dates to the sixth or seventh century, was located in a niche in the eastern wall of Cell D at Bawit. The upper tier of this composition is almost entirely lost, with the exception of the lower part of a *mandorla*, which contains only a small portion of either Christ's leg or the base of a throne (no. 11, Fig. 17). The *mandorla* is flanked on either side by two medallions, which contain the busts of the sun and moon.³⁹⁶ The

Monasticism (Oxford, 2001) 41-56 at 44, who attributes the painting to the seventh century based on a graffito that overlies it, which dates to 753.

³⁹³ Walters, *Monastic Archaeology*, 121.

³⁹⁴ J. Maspero, *Fouilles exécutées à Baouît*, E. Drioton (ed.) (Cairo, 1931) 31-2 (Pls 31-4); Walters, *Monastic Archaeology*, 122.

³⁹⁵ There is a third double composition with Mary *orans* in Chapel 46 at Bawit, but scholars generally agree that it dates to the tenth century, and is thus not included in the present discussion. For a discussion of this painting, see J. Clédat, 'Nouvelles recherches à Baouît (Haute-Égypte). Campagnes 1903-1904', *CRAI* 48 (1904) 517-26 at 524 (Fig. 3); Dewald, 'Iconography', 288; Walters, *Monastic Archaeology*, 122.

³⁹⁶ The presence of these busts is omitted from Quibell's description of the painting, although they are clearly visible in the photograph. See Quibell, *Saqqara 1906-7*, 67 (Pl. 59). They are mentioned, however, in Rassart-Debergh, 'Quelques remarques', 210.

lower tier, on the other hand, is better preserved, in the sense that the outline (and some detail) of five figures are preserved. In the center we encounter what appears to be an enthroned Mary, as there are two large, curved lines above her head which suggest the presence of a throne, and she is flanked by the archangels and Apa Jeremias (left) and Enoch (right). The difficulty in interpreting this painting, however, lies in the fading of the lower register and the inability to discern whether or not the Child is included in this composition.³⁹⁷ Moreover, all of the figures, including Mary, seem to be portrayed in bust form, which then renders the presence of the throne unusual.

In summary, the double compositions represent the largest and most varied group of images amongst the Marian iconographic types, appearing in eleven instances, even though their presence is limited to monastic contexts.³⁹⁸ Furthermore, they only exist on either the eastern walls or prayer niches of the monastic cells and small chapels at Bawit and Saqqara between the sixth and eighth centuries.³⁹⁹ In fact, the surviving evidence reveals a marked absence of double compositions outside of these locations until around the tenth and eleventh centuries, when they resurface in the apses and semi-domes of larger churches (monastic and otherwise), in places such as the sanctuary of Benjamin at Deir Abu Maqar in the Wadi el-Natrun and the North Church at Deir el-Shohada in Esna and the church at Qubbet el-Hawa.⁴⁰⁰ That is not to say, however, that this image disappears completely from the iconographic repertoire of wall paintings for several centuries before its return; merely that there is presently a gap in our

³⁹⁷ Quibell, *Saqqara 1906-7*, 67 makes no reference to a child in his description of the image, but Walters, *Monastic Archaeology*, 123 sees Jesus appearing within a medallion. This painting is no longer extant, and therefore it is difficult to judge the accuracy of either scholar's interpretation of the scene. Walter's suggestion of Christ within a medallion is plausible, as we find it elsewhere at Saqqara (no. 1, Fig. 9), but more importantly, in the badly damaged lower, central portion of this scene there does appear to be what one could interpret as the faint outline of a head. The damage here is too extensive, however, to definitely attest to Christ's presence. Moreover, I would like to add a further interpretation of this painting, that is, the possibility of Mary appearing as an *orans*. A closer look at Mary shows that her proper right arm may be extended upwards and outside of the limit of the 'throne' or the feature encircling her. Her left arm, on the other hand, is too damaged and offers nothing in the way of evidence for this posture. For the time being, this painting stands as an indeterminate representation of Mary in a double composition.

³⁹⁸ Maspero, *Fouilles*, 19 (Pl. 13a and b), discusses another potential depiction of Mary in a double composition at Bawit, but even he is uncertain of the attribution and nothing remains other than the lower portion of a central figure flanked by six saints. There is no way of telling if this is Mary, but it is included here so as to provide an exhaustive list of potential Marian depictions.

³⁹⁹ See Innemée, 'Word and Flesh', 190.

⁴⁰⁰ For a discussion of these later double compositions, see G.J.M. van Loon, 'The Esna Monasteries: Dayr al-Shuhada and Dayr al-Fakhuri', in G. Gabra and H.N. Takla, *Christianity and Monasticism in Upper Egypt II: Nag Hammadi and Esna* (Cairo, 2010) 225-44 at 226; R. Dekker, 'An Updated Plan of the Church at Dayr Qubbat al-Hawa', in Gabra and Takla, *Christianity in Aswan and Nubia*, 117-35 at 128; and M. Kupelian, 'The Ascension Scene in the Apse of the Church at Dayr Qubbat al-Hawa: A Comparative Study', in Gabra and Takla, *Christianity in Aswan and Nubia*, 201-12 at 203-6.

knowledge of these paintings between the eighth and tenth centuries. On the other hand, the sheer number of such images coming out of these monastic cells and chapels suggests that the painted double compositions may have originated here, from which the type spread outward to the larger ecclesiastical structures.

In addition, we can see the variety with which these double compositions are depicted, as each of the eleven paintings renders the scene in a slightly different manner. Even amongst the arbitrary categories we assigned to the various poses that Mary assumes, there are few instances where identical elements occur. Thus, by analyzing the corpus of double compositions in its entirety, we recognize the variety of ways in which they are manifested, and the resulting difficulty in assigning a particular theme (viz. the Ascension, Christ in Majesty, Theophany, and so on) to these paintings. Perhaps, as P. van Moorsel has suggested, we must discard our strict iconographic categories and opt for a ‘pluri-dimensional interpretation’ of these compositions, one which does not separate Christ’s Ascension from his continuing action, which defies both space and time.⁴⁰¹ Thus, we need to abandon our unilateral classifications and notions of iconographic unity and embrace the uniqueness of the Egyptian double compositions, each of which draws on different elements from the Old and New Testaments, apocrypha (such as the *Gospel of Nicodemus*), liturgy, hymns and patristic writings to create a wholly distinct rendering of the scene.

Enthroned Virgin and Child in Single Compositions

Depictions of the enthroned Virgin and Child singlehandedly outnumber all other representations of Mary in the surviving corpus of Christian art in Egypt. These images, however, are divided between the aforementioned enthroned Virgin and Child in double compositions and those that appear strictly within a single tier. Whereas the former suggests a ‘pluri-dimensional’ interpretation that encompasses both Christ’s Ascension and Second-Coming, the latter specifically highlights Mary’s role as Theotokos, as defined by the Council of Ephesus.⁴⁰² Here, Mary assumes a Christological function, whereby she serves to highlight Christ’s divinity. The

⁴⁰¹ P. van Moorsel, *Called to Egypt: Collected Studies on Painting in Christian Egypt* (Leiden, 2000) 107-14 at 111-2 (‘The Vision of Philotheus [On Apse Decorations]’, 1982¹).

⁴⁰² I. Kalavrezou, ‘Images of the Mother: When the Virgin Mary Became “Meter Theou”’, *DOP* 44 (1990) 165-72 at 167-8.

oldest surviving painting of such a composition is the sixth-century 'Icon of the Virgin' from the Monastery of St Catherine in the Sinai. This icon, however, is not representative of the other sixth-century wall paintings from Egypt, in that its composition and execution bear distinct influences from Byzantium that are not seen elsewhere in Egypt at this time.⁴⁰³

The first representative example of this type comes not from a monastic context, but from the courtyard of House D at Kom el-Dikka and is extolled as the only surviving depiction of Mary in an Egyptian domestic context (no. 12, Fig. 18). The early sixth-century date attributed to this painting marks the earliest appearance of this image amongst the surviving compositions. As such, we could entertain the possibility of trends in domestic art bearing influence over monastic artistic choices, but it seems more plausible that this painting drew on existing iconographies that appeared in contemporary Christian churches, especially given the placement of the painting in the courtyard and the presence of two iron brackets for oil lamps. The arrangement of these elements suggests that the painting was probably commissioned for private worship, perhaps as part of a household oratory.⁴⁰⁴ The notion of a private commission is furthered by a unique element in the painting. We find here the only representation of a miniature individual in a composition depicting an enthroned Virgin and Child. The painting is badly damaged, so any identification of this person is speculative, but the life-sized angel to its proper right and enthroned Virgin and Child to its left suggests an individual of lesser importance, perhaps the benefactor of the oratory (or a saint).⁴⁰⁵

Following the first appearance of this iconographic type in a domestic setting, it is preserved thereafter almost exclusively in monastic contexts. We encounter two such wall paintings at the Monastery of Apa Jeremiah in Saqqara (Cells 1719 and 1943), both of which are located in the eastern niches of the rooms and are dated to the sixth/seventh century. Unfortunately, neither image was afforded much detail in the excavations reports. The

⁴⁰³ Thus we exclude this icon from our discussion of Marian wall paintings in Egypt. Moreover, the Sinai falls outside of the geographical boundaries of this study, as set out in the General Introduction (esp. n. 50).

⁴⁰⁴ C. Haas, *Alexandria in Late Antique Egypt: Topography and Social Conflict* (Baltimore, 1997) 200-3. In n. 45, Haas discusses the possibility of private oratories reserved for ascetics wishing to remain in Alexandria and mentions the Chalcedonian Bishop John the Almsgiver (610-9), who established private oratories for monks in the seventh century, suggesting that this may have also occurred in the sixth century. This is quite speculative, however, and there is nothing in the archaeological record to suggest that it functioned as such.

⁴⁰⁵ M. Rodziewicz, *Alexandrie III: Les habitations romaines tardives d'Alexandrie* (Warsaw, 1984) 199-204 (Fig. 236); T.F. Mathews and N. Muller, 'Isis and Mary in the Early Icons', in Vassilaki, *Images of the Mother*, 3-11 at 4; McKenzie, *Architecture*, 238 (Fig. 406). The complete loss of the painting to the proper left of the Virgin hinders any further attempts to reconstruct it.

composition in Cell 1719 is not discussed at all by Quibell, although it was auspiciously included in the plates as a watercolour and the original painting is conserved in the Coptic Museum.⁴⁰⁶ The scene is comprised of an enthroned Virgin, carrying the Child on her left lap, while resting her right hand on his knee (no. 13, Fig. 19). The pair is flanked by the archangels and two local saints, likely Jeremiah and Enoch, who figure prominently elsewhere in the wall paintings of the monastery.⁴⁰⁷ In Cell 1943, on the other hand, Quibell only briefly mentions the existence of ‘a picture of the Virgin and Child’, without the inclusion of a photograph or drawing (no. 14).⁴⁰⁸ In this case, we can hypothesize that he is referring to an enthroned Virgin and Child, as there is only one surviving instance from Egypt during this timeframe, in which the Virgin and Child appear together without the throne.⁴⁰⁹

At approximately the same time (sixth/seventh century), this type has also materialized at the Monastery of Apa Apollo in Bawit. It is notable, however, that the six surviving paintings from this site are markedly different from one another, and three of them appear outside of the eastern wall niches (North Sanctuary and Chapels 7 and 32). The first of these was painted on the northeast column of the North Sanctuary and depicts a heavily faded enthroned Virgin with the Child on her left lap, lacking any visible subsidiary figures (no. 15, Fig. 20).⁴¹⁰ A second was located on the east wall of Chapel 7 and depicts a centrally enthroned Virgin and Child, flanked on their proper right by Gabriel, the deacon Stephen and Apa Kiriakos, while George the porter (?), Michael, and an anonymous figure stand to their proper left (no. 17).⁴¹¹ The last is found in a niche in the west wall of Chapel 32, where a centrally enthroned Mary and Child are flanked by two angels (no. 19). In this instance, however, Mary offers the sign of benediction with her right hand, and inclines her head towards the Child, whom she holds on her left lap.⁴¹² This painting marks the only occasion where the Virgin appears within a western niche in a monastic chapel,⁴¹³

⁴⁰⁶ Quibell, *Saqqara 1908-9, 1909-10*, Pl. 23.

⁴⁰⁷ Walters, *Monastic Archaeology*, 125.

⁴⁰⁸ Quibell, *Saqqara 1908-9, 1909-10*, 28.

⁴⁰⁹ This occurs in a depiction of the Flight into Egypt at Deir Abu Hinnis, which is discussed further below (no. 34, Fig. 35).

⁴¹⁰ Unfortunately, there is no discussion of this painting in Clédât’s excavation reports, and its survival in the academic record is owed to a photograph of the image, which happens to document the beginning of the excavations at the North Sanctuary. See Clédât, *Monastère* (1999), Fig. 184. The painting is also briefly mentioned in McKenzie, *Architecture*, 304.

⁴¹¹ Clédât, *Monastère I*, 33-48, esp. 38-9; Walters, *Monastic Archaeology*, 124.

⁴¹² Walters, *Monastic Archaeology*, 124.

⁴¹³ Clédât, *Monastère II*, 13; Walters, *Monastic Archaeology*, 124. Note that no photograph or drawing of this image was ever published.

and these three images, along with the painting from Kom-el-Dikka, represent the first instances in this discussion where a depiction of Mary occurs outside of an eastern apse or niche.

The remaining three paintings of this type from Bawit, however, are typically located in the eastern wall niche. The first painting stems from Room 1 and represents the first instance in which Mary is not depicted centrally in an eastern wall niche (no. 16, Fig. 21). Here, the original central figure (perhaps Christ) is completely missing, and a large hole stands in its place. All that remains is a large vase or chalice filled with small circular objects, which is flanked on either side by a local unnamed saint and an angel, who stands further back in the composition. Mary is found on the far left of the composition, where she sits enthroned. The upper portion of her body is missing, but there are two feet visible on her left lap, indicating that she carries the Child in this painting.⁴¹⁴

The second image stems from Chapel 28 and depicts a centrally enthroned Virgin holding a *clipeus* of the Child, who gives the sign of benediction (no. 18, Fig. 22). On either side of the Virgin, we encounter, for the first time, representations of the Angel of God and the Angel of the Lord, both of whom carry a casket and a censer and are identified by inscriptions.⁴¹⁵ A similar arrangement occurs in Chapel 55, as the enthroned Mary carries the Child in the center of her lap (no. 20, Fig. 23). He holds open a book in front of himself, as Mary's left hand rests on his *nimbus*, and her right on his right leg. The figures are flanked by the archangels on either side, both of whom carry a green disc in one hand and a baton in the other.⁴¹⁶ While some of the arrangements of the single-tiered compositions bear distinct similarities, there are, thus, still notable variations within the iconography at Bawit. This diversity demonstrates the fluidity with which this scene is depicted and interpreted by individuals living within the monastic community.

The final painting in this category was originally located on the north pillar of the church in the Isis temple at Syene, although it is no longer extant (no. 21, Fig. 24).⁴¹⁷ When Bresciani first published this image, only Mary's head (no discernible *nimbus*) and lower half, including a jewelled throne, were visible, as well as the lower portions of six standing individuals, probably saints and perhaps the archangels (though there are no visible wings). She dated this painting to

⁴¹⁴ Maspero, *Fouilles*, 15-6 (Pl. 8b). Cf. Walters, *Monastic Archaeology*, 124, who does not mention the presence of the Child in the composition.

⁴¹⁵ Clédat, *Monastère I*, 153-64, esp. 154-5 (Pls 96-8); Walters, *Monastic Archaeology*, 124 and 143.

⁴¹⁶ Clédat, *Monastère* (1999), 149-50 (Pls 131-4).

⁴¹⁷ See discussion of the church in the Isis temple at Syene in Chapter 2.

the sixth century, based on the treatment of Mary's eyes and mouth, and hypothesized the presence of the Christ Child in this composition based on the position of the left knee and the placement of Mary's hand (indiscernible).⁴¹⁸ A more recent study by Dijkstra and Van Loon has demonstrated, however, that the date range should be opened up to the sixth to ninth centuries.⁴¹⁹ Their detailed discussion of the image notes the visible absence of Christ's feet in Mary's lap, but also suggests that He was perhaps placed higher in her arms (as in the Cleveland Tapestry) or in a *clipeus* (as in Chapel 28 at Bawit).⁴²⁰ Given the relatively few occurrences in which we encounter an enthroned Mary without Child, and the placement of the left knee, it is highly probable that the Child was indeed originally depicted in the painting.⁴²¹

Whereas the surviving double compositions are slightly more numerous, the single-tiered paintings demonstrate a greater fluidity in their compositions and a wider geographical reach. Moreover, they are not limited to monastic contexts, as in the previous cases (monastic churches, cells and chapels), but emerge from domestic, monastic and ecclesiastical environments, ranging as far north as Alexandria and as far south as Aswan. There is also a shift away from a containment of these images to apses and niches, and a movement towards incorporating Mary into a more generalized iconographic programme. This is especially evident in the placement of this image on the columns of larger churches (northeast column at Bawit and north pillar in Syene) and in a western niche in Chapel 32 at Bawit. While most of these paintings are securely dated to the sixth or seventh century, with the exception of the painting from Aswan, each adopts a unique approach to their composition. The Virgin and Child are depicted both autonomously and with subsidiary figures, while Christ is depicted both within and without a *clipeus*. Furthermore, Mary appears for the first time as a subsidiary figure in an eastern wall niche, relinquishing the central position in which she is typically found. Thus, the flexibility displayed in each portrayal denotes a sense of individuality amongst those who commissioned such paintings, and the ability to shape one's personal notions of the Theotokos.

⁴¹⁸ Bresciani and Pernigotti, *Assuan*, 41 (Pl. 27).

⁴¹⁹ Dijkstra and Van Loon, 'Church', 12, and 'Christian Wall Paintings', 150-1.

⁴²⁰ Dijkstra and Van Loon, 'Church', 6-10

⁴²¹ See the *comparanda* in the present catalogue for the placement of the knee and foot in scenes where Mary is enthroned with Child.

Enthroned Virgin without Child

Only rarely do we encounter a depiction of an enthroned Mary without Child.⁴²² At present, there are two potential instances of such paintings, both of which come from the Monastery of Apa Apollo in Bawit. The infrequency with which this image appears, however, has hindered any historical analysis of this type. It is also difficult to assess its roots, since we have yet to find any precursor in Christian art. It is probable nonetheless, that while this image adapts aspects of a pre-existing iconography (that is, enthroned Virgin, flanking archangels, and optionally, local Egyptian saints), it shifts the focus from her Christological functions as Theotokos to her role as an intercessor for the Christian community. The absence of Christ permits the viewer to interact directly with Mary, allowing for an increasingly personal relationship with her. It is unsurprising that we find this type of painting in Egypt, where Marian veneration surpasses that of all other saints.

The images from Bawit are found in the eastern wall niches and date to the sixth or seventh century. This first painting stems from Chapel 8 and was found in a poor state of preservation, as Clédat could only discern traces of an enthroned Virgin and two flanking archangels (no. 23).⁴²³ The second image is recorded in Quibell's excavation notes of Cell 1724 at Saqqara, where he mentions a poorly preserved painting in a niche in the east wall (no. 22). He describes the painting as a Virgin flanked by the saints Enoch and Jeremiah, both of whom hold long crosses over their shoulder, with the archangels Gabriel and Michael visible on the outer ends of this group.⁴²⁴ There is no photograph of this painting, so we can only speculate that Mary is enthroned without Child in this composition, but there are several indications that this assumption is correct.

Firstly, Quibell always indicates when the Child is present in the compositions, even when offering the briefest of treatments (for example, in the case of no. 14).⁴²⁵ Secondly, he never describes Mary as enthroned; in fact, he takes for granted that this is her natural position in the paintings and remarks only on her posture when it varies from the norm. Moreover, there is a

⁴²² This category excludes scenes of the Annunciation, which are their own distinct iconographic type.

⁴²³ Clédat, *Monastère I*, 49-52, mentions that this image could also possibly depict an enthroned Christ. Unfortunately, this painting was never photographed and thus we cannot analyze it further. See also Walters, *Monastic Archaeology*, 124, who refers to this figure as the Virgin.

⁴²⁴ Quibell, *Saqqara 1908-9, 1909-10*, 23; Walters, *Monastic Archaeology*, 124.

⁴²⁵ See Quibell, *Saqqara 1908-9, 1909-10*, 28. The painting is described only as 'a picture of the Virgin and Child'.

complete absence in the surviving paintings from Saqqara of instances where Mary appears as *orans*, which is the only other occasion where she appears flanked by some variation of the aforementioned subsidiary figures. Therefore, given Quibell's description of the arrangement of the scene, we can infer that Mary is likely enthroned without Jesus here. Thus, we possibly have here two enthroned Virgins without Child, both dating to the sixth or seventh century and located in the eastern niches of private monastic cells.

Galaktotrophousa

The *galaktotrophousa*, also known as the *lactans*, means 'she who nourishes with milk' and depicts an enthroned Mary who offers her breast to the Christ child seated in her lap.⁴²⁶ Typically, Jesus is placed on Mary's right knee while she offers her right breast with her left hand, and both are given haloes.⁴²⁷ Furthermore, Mary is generally portrayed as hieratic with little-to-no visual interaction with her child. The Virgin and Child are occasionally independent figures in the wall painting, or they are depicted centrally amongst varying saints, apostles or archangels. The paintings are not consistent in this regard. However, in every case the physical act of nursing is downplayed as much as possible. Mary is always fully clothed with the exception of a single breast, which is highly stylized and often barely visible; Mary's virginity and modesty are highlighted even in this aspect of her iconography.

The iconography of Mary as *galaktotrophousa* bears a striking resemblance to that of other nursing mothers throughout the Mediterranean, as it represents one manner in which feminine divinity could be expressed. The *galaktotrophousa* imagery arrives relatively late in Christian Egypt, yet calls to mind the image of Isis *lactans*, which became an established means of depicting the goddess around 700 BCE.⁴²⁸ Like the *galaktotrophousa*, Isis is typically seated on a throne without a backrest or a very low one, holding her right breast with her left hand while her right hand supports the head of her son Horus; his legs hang to the left of her lap and they avoid each other's gaze. The interpretation of these images as Isis, however, is predicated on the

⁴²⁶ P. van Moorsel, 'Galaktotrophousa', in *Copt.Enc.* II (1991) 531-2 at 531, and E.S. Bolman, 'The Enigmatic Coptic Galaktotrophousa and the Cult of the Virgin Mary in Egypt', in Vassilaki, *Images*, 13-22.

⁴²⁷ There is one instance from this period (church of Anba Bishay at the Red Monastery in Sohag, no. 29, Fig. 29), where we find the reverse: Mary offers her left breast with her right hand, while Jesus sits in on her left knee.

⁴²⁸ Tran Tam Tinh, *Isis lactans*, 8-9. A *lactans* statuette dating to c. 1,900 BCE is often ascribed to Isis, but it lacks any definitive attributes that would securely identify her as such. Thus we can only ascertain the arrival of this particular branch Isiac iconography in Egypt around 700 BCE.

presence of a throne or a horned sun-disk on her head, and often both of her breasts are exposed.⁴²⁹

For many decades, the obvious similarities of these two particular iconographies inspired two major streams of scholarship regarding the creation, development and cultural importance of Mary as *galaktotrophousa*, which we shall classify here as the Egyptologists and the Mariologists. The first group, the Egyptologists, argue for a direct relationship between the iconographies of Isis and Mary, suggesting that the iconography of the latter was borrowed from the former.⁴³⁰ This branch of scholarship is characterized by the assertion that these images mark a cultic continuity between the cult of Isis and the cult of Mary, and is reminiscent of the notion of ‘cult adoption’ that was prevalent in our discussions of Philae and Syene.⁴³¹ The Mariologists on the other hand, deny any deliberate cult adoption by highlighting that the images of the *galaktotrophousa*, regardless of their similarity to the Isis *lactans*, were understood by Christians through their own cultural and religious framework.⁴³² This branch of scholarship also incorporates a theological component to the physical act of breastfeeding, as Mary’s virginity rendered her unable to produce milk, thus arguing that the *galaktotrophousa* functions to

⁴²⁹ Tran Tam Tinh, *Isis Lactans*, 31-4.

⁴³⁰ We begin our discussion with Unger, ‘Mutter mit dem Kinde’, 116-7, who uses the epithets of Theotokos for Mary and *mwt ntr* (‘divine mother’) for Isis to suggest that there was a transfer of attributes from Isis to Mary, and the appropriation of Isiac iconography was a natural progression from their shared titulature. K. Wessel, *L’art copte* (Brussels, 1964) 35-6, nuances this argument by stating that while their adherents would have understood the images differently, the nursing mother was used because it was familiar, and helped Mary usurp Isis’ place in popular devotion. Unger’s hypothesis is picked up again, however, by R.E. Witt, *Isis in the Ancient World* (Baltimore, 1997) 278, who sees Isiac devotion ingrained in Marian theology and imagery. Finally, F. Dunand, *Isis: Mère des dieux* (Paris, 2000) 161-5, looks at the wider images of nursing mothers throughout the Mediterranean, but still argues that the prevalence of Isis in the psyche of Late Antique Egyptians would have allowed Christians to adopt and reuse her iconography, suggesting a cultic continuity between Isis and Mary.

⁴³¹ For a discussion of cult adoption at Philae, see the discussion at p. 80 of this study. For Syene, see the discussion at pp. 89-90 in the present study.

⁴³² See Langener, *Isis Lactans*, 133-5, 145-6, who believes that the portrayal of Mary as a nursing mother represents devotion to her by highlighting her role in Christ’s incarnation. C.M. Maza, ‘Los antecedentes isiacos del culto a María’, *Aegyptus* 80 (2000) 195-214 at 213, nuances this argument by discussing the gradual amplification of Mary from a relatively obscure figure to a divine presence, while Isis’ divinity was ever-present. Thus, she argues it is inappropriate to suggest religious continuity from similarities in their iconographic representations. Cameron, ‘Cult’, 13, on the other hand, addresses the notion of cultic continuity directly by stating that religion cannot be explained in mono-causal terms and that competition may be a more effective model for studying the iconographic similarities. This notion is taken up by McGuckin, ‘Early Cult’, 11, who contends that the image of the nursing Mary was understood by Christians within their own cultural syntax. He positions himself against the notion of syncretism and argues that this image may have been chosen without any intention of ‘cult adoption’, but he also admits that the iconography may have been selected because it resonated with followers of Isis.

highlight Jesus' divinity by his suckling of the divine *logos*, which was provided by God, through the vessel that is his mother.⁴³³

The studies of the *galaktotrophousa* must move beyond these diverging approaches and focus rather on emphasizing their iconographic complexity. This calls for a more nuanced view of the development and proliferation of this particular image, which acknowledges both the use of a pre-existing iconographic type (the *lactans*) and the distinct cultural framework in which the *galaktotrophousa* was understood.⁴³⁴ It is best, then, to adopt a middle-of-the-road approach, which recognizes the undeniable influence of the Isis *lactans* iconography on Mary *galaktotrophousa*, while at the same time dispelling any notions of cultic continuity.⁴³⁵ The longstanding tradition of nursing mother imagery, in particular through the goddesses Isis and Sekhmet in Egypt, provided a reference through which the Christological notions of breastfeeding, developed by Clement of Alexandria (c. 150-215) and Cyril of Alexandria (378-444), could be expressed within an existing iconographical framework. On the other hand, there is no direct chronological link between the two types of representations, as nearly two centuries pass between the last known depiction of Isis *lactans* and the first appearance of Mary *galaktotrophousa* in Egypt.⁴³⁶

The *lactans*-iconography is not limited, however, to the divine mothers, as it is also found in two funerary stelae dating to the Roman period, which suggests that the image was used more broadly. The first, which is currently in Warsaw, dates to the second century and bears an inscription that identifies the nursing mother and child as Sarapous and Hierax.⁴³⁷ Her completely exposed breast is reminiscent of contemporary Isiac imagery, and there is no reason to assume that this woman is a Christian. The second funerary stela, this one in Berlin, marks the

⁴³³ G.P. Corrington, 'The Milk of Salvation: Redemption by the Mother in Late Antiquity and Early Christianity', *HThR* 82 (1989) 393-420 at 412-3; Bolman, 'Enigmatic Coptic Galaktotrophousa', 17-9; S.J. Davis, *Coptic Christology in Practice: Incarnation and Divine Participation in Late Antique and Medieval Egypt* (Oxford, 2008) 191-4.

⁴³⁴ This type of approach is also briefly touched upon by Walters, *Monastic Archaeology*, 138-9.

⁴³⁵ See S. Higgins, 'Divine Mothers: The Influence of Isis on the Virgin Mary in Egyptian *Lactans*-Iconography', *JSCS* 3-4 (2012) 71-88, on which this section is based and to which the reader is referred for further details.

⁴³⁶ The fourth century marks the last appearance of Isis *lactans* in Egypt, when only three such representations have been recorded: a limestone statue from Antinoe, a wall painting from Karanis and a limestone statuette from Ahkmin. See Tran Tam Tinh, *Isis lactans*, 54-5, 60-1, 72 (Figs 17, 30 and 48); Higgins, 'Divine Mothers', 73-4. Cf. M. von Falck, *Ägypten, Schätze aus dem Wüstensand: Kunst und Kultur der Christen am Nil* (Wiesbaden, 1996) 76 (cat. no. 7), who argues that the limestone statue from Antinoe is a partial falsification and may date to the third century.

⁴³⁷ K. Parlasca, 'Pseudokoptische Grabreliefs aus Ägypten', *CdE* 82 (2007) 323-9 at 324, with references.

first surviving instance of a Christian nursing mother and child in Egypt.⁴³⁸ This fourth-century stela comes from Medinet el-Fayum and depicts a mother seated on a low-backed stool, holding a reclined child high above her lap in her left arm, while she offers him her breast with her right hand. There is a cross etched in on either side of her head, below which are traces of two Greek inscriptions. These attest to the figure as a 21 year old female, whose name is unfortunately no longer preserved.⁴³⁹ Both of these images are contemporary to the continued, albeit waning, use of the Isis *lactans*, and were influenced by contemporary Isiac iconography, which apparently ‘spilled over’ into individual funerary art.⁴⁴⁰ Unfortunately, they offer little assistance in bridging the chronological gap with the later *galaktotrophousa* representations, although the stela from Medinet el-Faiyum does mark the first Christian appropriation of this imagery. Thus, we can trace back the iconographic tradition of the nursing mother not only to traditional religious imagery (that is, the figure of Isis *lactans*), but also to both ‘pagan’ and Christian funerary art.

There are two sixth- or seventh-century wall paintings from the monastery of Apa Jeremiah at Saqqara that mark the first appearance of Mary as *galaktotrophousa* in Egypt. Both of these paintings are located in monk’s cells and are fairly similar in composition. The first is located in Cell A and depicts an enthroned Virgin offering Jesus her right breast with her left hand, while Jesus sits on her right knee, grasping her left arm with both hands (no. 24, Fig. 25). In this composition, both mother and child appear hieratic as they gaze forward and they are flanked by the archangels Michael and Gabriel.⁴⁴¹ The second image, from Cell 1725, is notably more maternal, as the enthroned Mary tilts her head towards the child seated on her right leg (no. 25, Fig. 26). She offers him her right breast with her left hand, while Jesus grasps her arm with both hands and gazes upwards towards his mother. This composition also includes the archangels

⁴³⁸ Until recently, scholarship has suggested that two images in the catacombs of Priscilla at Rome marked the earliest appearance of the *galaktotrophousa*, but there is no evidence that these paintings either represent Mary or a nursing mother. On these paintings, see A. Grabar, *Le premier art chrétien* (Paris, 1966) 116 (Fig. 115); Tran Tam Tinh, *Isis lactans*, 46; Parlbay, ‘Origins’, 48; Higgins, ‘Divine Mothers’, 73.

⁴³⁹ Wessel, *L’art copte*, 17 (Fig. 5); Tran Tam Tinh, *Isis lactans*, 29-30, and 45 (Fig. 202), who dates this image to the fifth or sixth century. For the fourth-century dating of the stela, see A. Effenberger, ‘Die Grabstela aus Medinet el-Fajum. Zum Bild der stillenden Gottesmutter in der koptischen Kunst’, *FoB* 18 (1977) 158-68 at 163-7, who was also the first to identify the inscription and prove that the woman in the image was not Mary, but a deceased mother.

⁴⁴⁰ Corrington, ‘Milk of Salvation’, 403-4; Von Falck, *Ägypten*, 114-5 (cat. no. 61); Langener, *Isis Lactans*, 152-64; T.K. Thomas, *Late Antique Funerary Sculpture: Images for this World and the Next* (Princeton, 2000) 71; L. Török, *Transfigurations of Hellenism: Aspects of Late Antique Art in Egypt AD 250-700* (Leiden, 2005) 271-2; Parlasca, ‘Pseudokoptische Grabreliefs’, 323-4.

⁴⁴¹ Quibell, *Saqqara 1906-1907*, 81-2 (Pls 40-3); Tran Tam Tinh, *Isis lactans*, 44 (Fig. 203); Higgins, ‘Divine Mothers’, 75 (Fig. 9).

as well as the saints Jeremiah and Enoch who flank the central figures.⁴⁴² A third *galaktotrophousa* scene at Saqqara in Cell 1807 is described in the excavation reports of Quibell, although the painting is no longer extant (no. 26). Here Quibell mentions an enthroned Mary nursing Jesus, who is flanked to her proper right by an archangel carrying a cross, above whom is a saint holding a book.⁴⁴³

The monastery of Apa Apollo at Bawit has yielded two additional sixth- or seventh-century wall paintings of the *galaktotrophousa*, which also come from monastic cells. These paintings were recorded during both J. Maspero and Clédat's excavations, but are unfortunately no longer extant. The first of these stems from Room 30 and portrays an enthroned Mary offering her right breast with her left hand, while Jesus sits on her right knee, grasping her left arm with both hands (no. 27, Fig. 27).⁴⁴⁴ The second image was found in the eastern wall niche of Cell 42 and was part of a double composition (no. 8, Fig. 14).⁴⁴⁵ The upper zone, which is discussed in the first section, depicts Christ enthroned in a *mandorla*, while in the lower zone, an enthroned Mary offers her right breast with her left hand to the infant Jesus. He sits on her right knee and grasps her left arm with both hands. They are flanked by the twelve apostles, many of whom are identified by inscriptions.⁴⁴⁶

There are two more paintings of the *galaktotrophousa* in Egypt, both of which also come from monastic contexts. In these cases, however, they are not found in monastic cells, but in monastic churches. The first comes from Deir el-Surian in the Wadi Natrun and dates to the second half of the seventh or the beginning of eighth century.⁴⁴⁷ This image was found on a half column on the eastern wall of the *khurus* during the removal of the crumbling eighteenth-century wall plaster (no. 28, Fig. 28). It depicts an enthroned Mary offering Jesus her right breast with

⁴⁴² Quibell, *Saqqara 1908–9, 1909–10*, 23 (Pls 20-2); Tran Tam Tinh, *Isis lactans*, 44 (Fig. 204); Higgins, 'Divine Mothers', 75 (Fig. 10).

⁴⁴³ See the excavation reports of Quibell, *Saqqara 1908–9, 1909–10*, 19. To my knowledge, no photograph of this painting was ever taken. The lack of a photograph and outright temporal discussion of this painting by Quibell makes assigning a date to this painting difficult. Quibell does mention that 'the picture is singularly like that of a cell published in a former report [Cell A], but ruder', which is generally dated to the sixth or seventh century. See Bolman, 'Enigmatic Coptic Galaktotrophousa', 13 (n. 2).

⁴⁴⁴ Walters, *Monastic Archaeology*, 124; Maspero, *Fouilles*, 37-8 (Pls 42-4).

⁴⁴⁵ For a discussion of the prevalence of double compositions in the niches of monastic cells at Saqqara and Bawit, see Gabra and Van Loon, *Churches of Egypt*, 32.

⁴⁴⁶ Clédat, 'Nouvelles recherches', 522 (Fig. 1), and *Monastère* (1999), 45 (Pls 46, and 48-50). See also Tran Tam Tinh, *Isis lactans*, 44.

⁴⁴⁷ This painting is probably one of the first decorations of the Layer 2 paintings at Deir el-Surian. See Innemée and Van Rompay, 'Présence des Syriens', 179; Van Rompay, 'Syriac Inscriptions', 194; Innemée, 'Mural Painting', 4. For a full discussion of the dating of this layer, see p. 64 (n. 253) of this study.

her left hand, while He sits on her right knee, reaching for her left arm with both hands.⁴⁴⁸ The final image stems from the church of Anba Bishay at the Red Monastery in Sohag.⁴⁴⁹ This painting dates to the seventh or eighth century and occupies the most prominent place of all the aforementioned images, appearing in the north triconch of the monastic church (no. 29, Fig. 29).⁴⁵⁰ We also note that arrangement of the composition is reversed: an enthroned Mary offers Jesus her left breast with her right hand, while he sits on her left knee, his hands outstretched towards her right arm.

A study of these seven known paintings of the *galaktotrophousa* demonstrates that each is contained to a monastic context. They seem to first appear in monastic cells at Saqqara and Bawit in the sixth and seventh centuries, especially in the eastern wall niches, which served to direct the focus of one's prayers. By the eighth century, however, the iconography spread to the decoration of the monastic churches at Deir el-Surian and Sohag and was removed from a purely individual sphere of devotion and became a symbol that was understood by the collective community of monks. Although at present our sample of wall paintings depicting the *galaktotrophousa* is limited to these few monastic contexts, we must be wary of assuming its outright exclusion from ecclesiastical churches, and account for the limited preservation, pillaging and destruction of many Late Antique sites. Finally, while the eighth century marks the last surviving wall painting within our given time frame, the ninth century actually marks a turning point in the promulgation of the *galaktotrophousa*, when the theme appears frequently in illuminated manuscripts.⁴⁵¹

Annunciation

The iconography of the Annunciation represents the pictorial interpretation of Luke 1:26-38, in which the archangel Gabriel announces the miraculous birth of Jesus to the Virgin Mary. In doing so, it creates a visual framework through which the believer can conceptualize the

⁴⁴⁸ Innemée, 'Mural Painting', 3 (Fig. 9).

⁴⁴⁹ Laferrière, *Bible murale*, 26-8 (Pl. 4).

⁴⁵⁰ E.S. Bolman, 'The Red Monastery Conservation Project, 2006 and 2007 Campaigns. Contributing to the Corpus of Late Antique Art', in Gabra and Takla, *Christianity in Akhmim and Sohag*, 305-17 at 311-3; Dijkstra and Van Loon, 'Church', 8 and 12.

⁴⁵¹ There are several of these images in Leroy, *Manuscripts coptes*, esp. Pls 31 (M 612, dated to 892/893), 34 (M 574, dated to 897/898) and 36 (M 600, dated to 905/906). There is a second manuscript frontispiece depicting the *galaktotrophousa* that dates to the tenth century, ms. British Library Or. 6782, fol. 16. On these manuscripts, see also, Papaconstantinou, 'Sanctuaires', 93, and Bolman, 'Enigmatic Coptic Galaktotrophousa', 13.

Incarnation and the Immaculate Conception.⁴⁵² This image occurs four times in the extant Egyptian Christian iconography and there are two different ways in which it is expressed. The first, and most common, of these images typically depicts a standing Gabriel who gestures towards an enthroned Mary on his proper right. Aside from the presence of Mary and Gabriel, there are no consistently recurring subsidiary elements. In some cases, the two individuals appear alone in the composition, while in other cases they are flanked by several prophets. In the second type, Gabriel is omitted from the scene and replaced by a dove, which approaches Mary standing in prayer with the message of Jesus' impending birth.

The fifth century marks the first-known representation of an Annunciation scene in Egypt, which is depicted on a fragment of a wooden relief that is now in the Louvre. In this relief, the entire figure of the Virgin is preserved. She sits on a high stool, spinning wool, with a look of wonder upon her face as Gabriel announces the birth of her son. Gabriel, however, is almost entirely absent from this composition, with the exception of his leg and foot.⁴⁵³ Although nearly half of the composition is missing, the scene finds resonance in two similar compositions. The first is a painted textile from Akhmin (fifth-sixth century), currently in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, which depicts the Virgin seated on a chair and spinning wool, while Gabriel stands to her proper left.⁴⁵⁴ The second is found on a gold medallion currently in the Staatliche Museen at Berlin.⁴⁵⁵

The earliest wall painting of the Annunciation appears at approximately the same time as the iconography in the aforementioned media. In the fifth/sixth century, the image is present on the dome of a tomb, known as the 'Chapel of Peace', in the Khargah Oasis, the southernmost oasis of Egypt's Western Desert.⁴⁵⁶ This Annunciation scene is only one of several images that encircle the dome of the tomb, all of which depict allegorical or biblical subjects from the Old

⁴⁵² M.-H. Rutschowskaya, 'Annunciation', in *Copt.Enc.* II (1999) 528-9 at 528.

⁴⁵³ Wooden panel: Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv. no. E 17118, on which see E.S. Bolman, 'Veiling Sanctity in Christian Egypt: Visual and Spatial Solutions', in S.E.J. Gerstel (ed.), *Thresholds of the Sacred: Art Historical, Liturgical, and Theological Perspectives on Religious Screens, East and West* (Washington, 2006) 73-104 at 87.

⁴⁵⁴ A.F. Kendrick, *Catalogue of Textiles from Burying-Grounds in Egypt*, 3 vols (London, 1922) 3.64 (Pl. 19); S.J. Davis, 'Fashioning a Divine Body: Coptic Christology and Ritualized Dress', *HThR* 98 (2005) 335-62 at 339.

⁴⁵⁵ H. Maguire, 'Byzantine Domestic Art as Evidence for the Early Cult of the Virgin', in Vassilaki, *Images*, 183-93.

⁴⁵⁶ A. Fakhry, *The Necropolis of el-Bagawat in Kharga Oasis* (Cairo, 1951) 77-8 (Fig. 70, Pl. 24).

and New Testaments.⁴⁵⁷ This particular image belongs to the less prominent of the two types of Annunciation iconography. Here, Mary stands frontally with her hands open on her breast to signify prayer (no. 30, Fig. 30). She has a particularly large halo extending down to her torso and wears a short, wide purple tunic with two broad green stripes extending downwards from the shoulders. The archangel Gabriel is replaced by a dove, approaching Mary from her proper left, to deliver the announcement of Christ's birth.⁴⁵⁸ Just above her head we find a cross and an inscription bearing her name.

The Annunciation in the Chapel of Peace marks the only preserved wall painting in Egypt that substitutes the dove for Gabriel, and its singular attestation in the archaeological record is followed by a slight chronological break in the presence of the theme in general. Hereafter, the iconography is limited to its most popular form, that of a seated Virgin and a figural depiction of the archangel Gabriel. The Annunciation next occurs in a sixth- or seventh-century wall painting from a crypt in the monastery of Abu Jirjah, which is located approximately 35 km south-west of Alexandria.⁴⁵⁹ The fragmentary image is found on the north wall of the subterranean church, although it only partially preserves the left side of Mary's face and the high-backed chair on which she is enthroned (no. 31, Fig. 31).⁴⁶⁰ The archangel Gabriel, however, is almost entirely preserved and is shown frontally, and his movement towards the Virgin is marked by the raising of his hands and the positioning of his feet in her direction. In between the two figures is an inscription that recounts the announcement made to the Virgin.⁴⁶¹

⁴⁵⁷ Fakhry, *Necropolis of el-Bagawat*, 70; M. Zibawi, *Images de l'Égypte chrétienne: Iconologie copte* (Milan, 2003) 31-8. The content of the dome paintings is reminiscent of the early Christian catacombs and church paintings. Cf. e.g. the early Christian catacombs in Alexandria, M.S. Venit, 'The Painted Tomb from Wardian and the Decoration of Alexandrian Tombs', *JARCE* 25 (1988) 71-91 at 83-5, as well as the early Jewish and Christian paintings from Dura Europos, J. Gutmann, 'The Dura Europos Synagogue Paintings and Their Influence on Later Christian and Jewish Art', *Artibus et Historiae* 9 (1988) 25-9.

⁴⁵⁸ Fakhry, *Necropolis of el-Bagawat*, 77; Rutschowskaya, 'Annunciation', 528.

⁴⁵⁹ M. Rassart-Debergh, 'Peinture copte de la région Maréotique: Abou Girgeh et Alam Shaltout', *AIPhO* 26 (1982) 91-107 at 105-6, dates this painting to the same period as those at Saqqara and Bawit (sixth/seventh century). Cf. Rutschowskaya, 'Annunciation', 528, who dates the image to the eighth century.

⁴⁶⁰ E. Breccia, *Rapport sur la marche du Service du Musée en 1912* (Alexandria, 1912) 3-14, and *Alexandria ad Aegyptum: Guide de la ville ancienne et moderne et du Musée Gréco-Romain* (Bergamo, 1914) 285-6; Rassart-Debergh, 'Peinture copte Maréotique', 98-9.

⁴⁶¹ Only a portion of the inscription remains (to the right of the Virgin), and Rassart-Debergh, 'Peinture copte Maréotique', 99, interprets it as a fragment from Luke, although it requires further study. The inscription reads:

XEPE	KEXA
PITO	MENH
OKOΣ K	META
ΣOY	

The third Annunciation scene appears on the north wall of Cell 51 at the monastery of Apa Apollo at Bawit (no. 32, Fig. 32). This particular image is part of a larger Marian cycle than runs along the entirety of the northern wall, below the level of the *tympanum* (semi-circular section above the main portion of the wall).⁴⁶² This painting was originally dated to the eighth or ninth century, although a date as early as the beginning of the seventh century is not excluded.⁴⁶³ The painting depicts an enthroned Mary, with her right hand on her left breast, while her left hand makes the sign of benediction. The archangel Gabriel is winged and stands on Mary's proper left side, making a gesture towards her with his right hand. In his left hand, he holds a cross that is mounted on a long staff. Both figures have haloes and are identified by inscriptions placed to the proper left side of their heads.

The fourth and final Annunciation scene is found in the semi-dome of the western return aisle in the Church of the Theotokos at Deir el-Surian (no. 33, Fig. 33).⁴⁶⁴ This painting is part of the second decorative phase and belongs to a Marian cycle that seems to run across the four semi-domes of the church. Only one additional painting from this cycle, however, has been uncovered, an Epiphany scene from the north semi-dome of the *khurus*. The entire cycle is especially difficult to date, as the archaeological, iconographical and epigraphical evidence cannot narrow its chronological limits any further than the eighth to twelfth centuries. The dating of the Annunciation is particularly contentious, and its unusual iconography has recently sparked a considerable debate in scholarship.⁴⁶⁵ The painting consists of a central group comprised of an enthroned Mary and a standing Gabriel to her proper left. He gestures towards the Virgin with his right hand and holds a cross atop a long staff with his left. They are flanked by the four

⁴⁶² Only the Annunciation will be addressed here, as the Marian cycle is studied below in its entirety.

⁴⁶³ Clédat, *Monastère* (1999), 110-4, esp. n. 63, where the editors of Clédat's notes date the paintings in Cell 51 to the eighth or ninth century, but do not exclude Clédat's earlier hypothesis that these paintings could date as early as the sixth or beginning of the seventh century.

⁴⁶⁴ This painting was briefly mentioned in the discussion of Deir el-Surian in Chapter 2 of this study and is discussed here in greater detail.

⁴⁶⁵ From an archaeological perspective, the paintings are no more precisely dated than the eighth to twelfth centuries. See Innemée, 'Discoveries of January 2000', 253, and Innemée and Van Rompay 'Discoveries of 2001-2002', 246, who notes the presence of drops of encaustic paint on the layer two paintings beneath the dome. This suggests that the dome was painted after the walls (perhaps mid-eighth century) and the cycle was over-painted in the thirteenth century, providing a *terminus ante quem*. The epigraphical evidence points to a much earlier date for the appearance of the paintings. See Innemée, 'Mural Painting in Egypt', 4, who uses the inscription dating to 818/819 on the north wall as a *terminus ante quem* for the paintings in phase two. The iconographical evidence is probably the most problematic, as it is notably difficult to date Late Antique Egyptian wall paintings entirely on stylistic grounds. A. Semoglou, 'Annonciation', 40, attributes this painting to the tenth century and the patronage of Moses of Nisibis. Cf. Hunt, 'Fine Incense', 183, who dates the Annunciation painting to the end of the twelfth century, specifically to the 1170s-1180s, based on the style and symbolic imagery in the painting, particularly the presence of incense in the composition.

prophets, Moses, Isaiah, Ezekiel and Daniel (two on each side and named in Greek), who hold proclamation scrolls written in Bohairic Coptic.

This collection of Annunciation images highlights the variety of ways in which the iconography is manifested. We see the early and limited substitution of the dove for Gabriel in the Chapel of Peace (fifth/sixth century), and the later and restricted use of figural depictions of Gabriel after the sixth century. These later images, however, are by no means congruent, as each bears minor stylistic differences in their overall compositions, with the exception of the presence of an enthroned Virgin and Gabriel, who makes some variation of gestures in her direction. At Bawit and Deir el-Surian, Gabriel stands frontally and gestures towards Mary with his right hand, while holding a cross on a long staff in his left. Additionally, both of these paintings belong to Marian cycles, although the former appears as a strip along a singular wall, whereas the latter is more monumental, in that the scenes are spread out across the four semi-domes of the church. The monumentality of the scene at Deir el-Surian is emphasized by the presence of subsidiary figures (the prophets), whereas the Annunciation at Bawit only contains Mary and Gabriel. The painting from the crypt at Abu Jirjah on the other hand, portrays Gabriel as walking towards the Virgin, and gesturing towards her with both hands. Inscriptions detailing the events of the Annunciation appear only at Deir el-Surian and the crypt of Abu Jirjah, while only the names of the figures are given at Bawit.

In addition to the chronological implications of this iconographical type, we note that the initial manifestation of the Annunciation in Egypt appears in a funerary context in the far reaches of the Western Desert in the fifth/sixth century, and is next found in the sixth/seventh century in Upper Egypt and the western branches of the Nile Delta. Like the iconography of the *galaktotrophousa*, paintings of the Annunciation have yet to surface in the heavily populated regions along the Nile in Upper Egypt, but still there is a greater variety of settings in which this iconography was used. The Annunciation is found a monk's cell (Bawit), a monastic church (Deir el-Surian), the crypt of a church (Abu Jirjah) and a funerary chapel (Khargah Oasis). Thus these four surviving paintings provide a representative sample of both the types of Annunciations that could appear and the variety of locations in which they could be placed. Furthermore, this kind of representation was used for varying purposes as it can occur both independently and as part of a larger Marian cycle.

The narrative cycles usually emerge slightly later amongst the iconographic programmes of Egyptian churches and monasteries, the first surviving series appearing in the seventh century.⁴⁶⁶ Several of the themes within these cycles, however, such as the Annunciation, certainly appear in earlier contexts. The first narrative cycles in Egypt are entirely Christological in nature. In these examples, Mary's role is secondary and her inclusion in them relates only to her acknowledged presence in particular events in the life of Christ. The cycles, moreover, not only draw on biblical events, but also take inspiration from the apocrypha. In fact, it is this early use of the apocrypha that inspires the later creation of entirely Mariological narrative cycles, which subsequently draw heavily on these extra-biblical episodes of her life. The first complete Marian cycle, however, does not appear until the thirteenth century at Deir el-Surian. Within our particular timeframe, there are only three surviving cycles that include representations of Mary, those at Deir Abu Hinnis, Bawit and Deir el-Surian.

The oldest surviving narrative cycle in Egypt is found in the subterranean church of Deir Abu Hinnis.⁴⁶⁷ This particular cycle, which probably dates no earlier than the sixth century,⁴⁶⁸ is unique in its choice of themes and layout, as it is spread across at least two walls of the

⁴⁶⁶ The fifth/sixth-century decoration from the Chapel of Peace in the Khargah Oasis is excluded from the category of narrative cycles, as the images do not convey a continuous cyclical narrative, even though they are arranged in a circular pattern. The individual scenes, moreover, appear to represent piecemeal images from both the Old and New Testament with no consideration of a specific chronological or thematic arrangement.

⁴⁶⁷ Early travellers to the subterranean church often connected it with the Empress Helena, thus attributing it to the fourth century. See, J. Murray, *A Handbook for Travellers in Lower and Upper Egypt* (London, 1880⁶) 414; Butler, *Ancient Coptic Churches*, 364; K. Baedeker, *Egypt, Handbook for Travellers* (London, 1898⁴) 191; G. Bénédict, *L'Égypte* (Paris, 1900) 406. Cf. J. Clédat, 'Notes archéologiques et philologiques', *BIFAO* 2 (1902) 41-70 at 45-6, and H. Leclercq, 'Antinoë', in *DACL* I (1924) 2326-59 at 2344-45, who reject the notion of Helena's involvement based on a lack of evidence.

⁴⁶⁸ Clédat, 'Notes archéologiques', 47 and 51-2, assigns a twofold dating scheme to the wall paintings of subterranean church. Firstly, he asserts that a date before the sixth century is impossible, as there is an inscription by a certain Alexander that underlies the paintings on wall 1. He proposes, then, that there was a period when the church was in use and the walls were bare. Secondly, he attributes the paintings more precisely to the first half of the seventh century, based on the survival of several partially preserved saints' names in the paintings on wall 2. These names include Cosmas and Damian (third century), Domitian (either the Bishop of Ancyra appointed by Justinian in 537 [Clédat says 507] or the Bishop of Mytilene, who died in 602), and Macarius the Great (fourth century). He rules out the possibility of Domitian referring to the bishop of Mytilene, but bases his seventh-century date on the argument that Macarius the Great lived in the sixth century, although he lived in the fourth century. See A. Guillaumont, 'Macarius the Egyptian, Saint', in *Copt. Enc.* V (1991) 1491-2 at 1491. Thus, given that the inscriptions do not delineate the date further, we must revert to Clédat's initial notion, which attributes the paintings to no earlier than the sixth century.

church.⁴⁶⁹ Moreover, the cycle combines themes from both the *Protoevangelium of James* (22-23) and the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. The narrative cycle begins on the left side of wall 1 with a depiction of the Massacre of the Innocents, in which a nimbed Herod is shown sitting on a throne, while children are murdered in front of him by two different hoplites. A third soldier approaches Elizabeth and the infant John (both named by inscriptions), ready to seize the child (no. 34, Fig. 34). The scene continues partially on wall 1 with an unnamed man extending his left hand towards a man on his knees (on wall 2), who appears in front of a house or sanctuary inscribed with the name Zacharias. Clédat has interpreted this scene as a continuation of the Massacre of the Innocents, in which a Roman approaches a supplicated Zacharias, who has hidden Elizabeth and the child inside of their home.⁴⁷⁰ A second interpretation of this scene may be extrapolated from Luke 11:51, in which Zacharias is murdered between the altar and the sanctuary.⁴⁷¹

Immediately following this continuation of the Massacre of the Innocents on wall 2 we encounter the apparition of Gabriel to Joseph. Here, Joseph, who is named by an inscription, is depicted in a reclining position with a vase (or water jug) within reach of his left hand (no. 34, Fig. 35).⁴⁷² Gabriel stands directly behind Joseph, slightly inclined towards him with his right hand extended, giving the sign of benediction. This scene is interpreted as Gabriel instructing Joseph to flee into Egypt (Matthew 2:13). The flight of the Holy Family is picked up in the

⁴⁶⁹ The Christological cycle appears in Room 1 (walls 1 and 2) of the subterranean church, although figurative scenes are also present on the walls of the other rooms. The damage to these paintings, however, hinders any definitive interpretation of their scenes. At present, it appears as though some of the figurative paintings from Room 2 are also taken from the gospel narratives (especially walls 8 and 9), whereas the paintings from Room 3 derive from the apocrypha. While there is a clear development of a Christological narrative on walls 1 and 2, it is unclear where and when this narrative is picked up again in another room, if at all. For this discussion see Clédat, 'Notes archéologiques', 48. Cf. W. de Bock, *Matériaux pour servir à l'archéologie de l'Égypte chrétienne* (St. Petersburg, 1901) 84 (Pl. 33), who gives a reproduction of parts of walls 1 and 2, but does not thoroughly discuss these paintings.

⁴⁷⁰ Clédat, 'Notes archéologiques', 50, provides a good discussion of this painting. He mentions the different possible interpretations of this scene, including the identification of the suppliant, the standing male (neither of which bears a halo) and the name ΖΑΧΑΡΙΑΣ (for ΖΑΧΑΡΙΔΗΣ) on the lintel of the house. He deduces that Zacharias is likely the suppliant, pleading with a Roman male for his son's life. Clédat notes, however, that there is no biblical precedent for this image, and that it is unusual for Zacharias to appear without a halo in this scene, since he is traditionally depicted with one. Cf. Leclercq, 'Antinoë', 2348, who, suggests that the suppliant may be a female.

⁴⁷¹ The author would like to thank P. Piovanelli for the suggestion that the building in the background is a stylized version of the façade of the Holy of Holies with its *parokhet* (or 'veil') visible.

⁴⁷² Clédat, 'Notes archéologiques', 50, makes an interesting archaeological and ethnographical point here, noting that Joseph is depicted in Oriental costume and that the vase or 'gargoulette' (water jug), also bears an Oriental influence, as it is a typical way in which an individual might refresh himself during the night. This would then imply that Joseph is sleeping on some sort of bed/couch in this scene. Clédat does not make this connection, but describes the feature enclosing Joseph here as a 'thick fog'.

following scene, where we encounter Mary and the infant Jesus, with Joseph behind them, fleeing Bethlehem on the back of a donkey.⁴⁷³ Only Joseph is identified by an inscription, and much of the painting on the right hand side has been destroyed. This particular scene has only one comparable representation in the entire corpus of Late Antique art: an ivory plaque from a pulpit in Ravenna (c. 546-556), which bears an image of Joseph walking alongside and supporting Mary, who rides a donkey led by the archangel Gabriel.⁴⁷⁴

The second narrative cycle in which Mary appears is found entirely on the north wall of Chapel 51 at the monastery of Apa Apollo at Bawit.⁴⁷⁵ While the cycle at Deir Abu Hinnis focuses on a particular narrative from Christ's early life, the cycle at Bawit deals largely with the pre-partum narrative, that is, the series of events leading up to Christ's birth. Here, there is a greater emphasis on the role of the Virgin, for which the artist took inspiration from the apocryphal narratives, especially the *Protevangelium of James*.⁴⁷⁶ This composition is particularly difficult to date, as there is little in the way of inscriptions or stylistic features that could date this painting more securely than to sometime between the end of the sixth to ninth centuries.⁴⁷⁷

The cycle begins with the Annunciation, in which Gabriel announces to an enthroned Mary the miraculous birth of a son to be named Jesus (no. 32, Fig. 32).⁴⁷⁸ The Annunciation scene is followed by a rendition of Mary's visitation to Elizabeth. Here, the women stand before a large building, holding each other in a tight embrace (no. 35, Fig. 36). Both figures have haloes and are identified by inscriptions above their heads (Η ΑΓΙΑ ΜΑΡΙΑ and ΕΛΙΣΑΒΕΤ). The cycle continues to the right of the aforementioned building with an illustration of the voyage to Bethlehem (no. 36, Fig. 37). In this scene, Gabriel (Ο ΑΓΙΟΣ ΓΑΒΡΙΗΛ) leads a white horse with his right hand, while holding a long cross in his left. Mary sits atop the horse holding the reigns in

⁴⁷³ For a discussion on the Flight into Egypt, see Bishop Gregorios, 'Flight into Egypt' in *Copt.Enc.* IV (1991) 1117-8.

⁴⁷⁴ H. Leclercq, 'Âne: L'âne de la fuite en Égypte', in *DACL* I (1924) 2059-61.

⁴⁷⁵ Clédat, *Monastère* (1999), 110-4.

⁴⁷⁶ Note that the first three scenes (Annunciation, Visitation and Voyage to Bethlehem) could be either inspired by the Gospel of Luke 1:26-56 or the *Protevangelium of James*, while the fourth (the so-called 'Nativity') is apocryphal and appears most prominently in the *Protevangelium of James*. The author would like to thank Piovaneli for his helpful discussion on the apocryphal elements in this narrative cycle.

⁴⁷⁷ Clédat, *Monastère* (1999) 110-1, who initially dated the paintings to the eighth or ninth century, but a revised dating to the beginning of the seventh century is suggested by Bénazeth and Rutschowskaya in an editor's note at n. 63. Stylistically, however, the painting could fall anywhere within these time periods and an extended date is maintained here.

⁴⁷⁸ This image is discussed in detail under the theme of the 'Annunciation' and is therefore only briefly mentioned here. See discussion at p. 118 above.

her right hand and what appears to be a baton in the other. Joseph (ΙΩΣΗΦ) walks behind her in a short yellow tunic with a red sash that hangs over his left shoulder and ties at the waist.⁴⁷⁹ The cycle concludes with a depiction of the so-called Nativity (*Protoevangelium of James* 19-20), in which Mary, found reclining on a bed, is accompanied by Salome the midwife (ΣΑΛΟΜΕ ΜΕΤΕΙΟ)⁴⁸⁰ to her proper left with her hands outstretched towards the Virgin (no. 37, Fig. 38).⁴⁸¹ Curiously, Salome is given a rectangular *nimbus* in this scene, whereas every other figure wears the typical circular *nimbus*.⁴⁸²

The third and final narrative cycle that bears discussion is found in the Church of the Virgin at Deir el-Surian. At present, only two scenes from this cycle are visible: the Epiphany (no. 38, Fig. 39) in the northern semi-dome of the *khurus* and the Annunciation (no. 33, Fig. 33) in the western return aisle of the nave.⁴⁸³ The identification of these separate paintings as a cycle, moreover, assumes the presence of two additional narrative scenes in both the eastern and southern semi-domes of the *khurus*, which Innemée believes would have once represented the Ascension (east) and Pentecost (south).⁴⁸⁴ The surviving and hypothesized scenes from these semi-domes are notably different from those that we have encountered thus far, both in their composition and thematic choice. Whereas the cycles from Deir Abu Hinnis and Bawit largely

⁴⁷⁹ The journey to Bethlehem is rarely depicted in Late Antique art. There are few *comparanda* for this image, with the notable exception of a sixth-century ivory panel from the throne of Maximian at Ravenna. Cf. Leclercq, 'Âne', 2060 (Fig. 600), who compares this ivory panel to the painting of the Flight into Egypt at Deir Abu Hinnis. In fact, this ivory has a stronger relationship to the depiction of the Voyage to Bethlehem at Bawit, and should rather be used as a comparandum for this particular image.

⁴⁸⁰ For ΜΕΤΕΙΟ 'midwife', see Crum, *Dict.* s.v. (p. 186b).

⁴⁸¹ G.A. Wellen, *Theotokos: eine ikonographische Abhandlung über das Gottesmutterbild in frühchristlicher Zeit* (Utrecht, 1960) 54, is hesitant to call this scene a 'Nativity' since the typical figures from the Nativity (Christ, Joseph, angels, animals, etc.) are missing. Rather he sees the image of Salome and Mary as an extrapolation of a scene from the birth narratives of Christ, which do not appear in art before the sixth century. He notes the parallel of this image with a relief from the Cathedral Church in Ravenna and a fresco from Santa Maria Antiqua in Rome. This idea is shared by P. Testini, 'Alle origini dell'iconografia di Giuseppe di Nazareth', in *RAC* 48 (1972) 271-347 at 314 (n. 99). See also L. del Francia, 'Le thème de la Nativité dans les tissus coptes, à propos d'un exemplaire inédit', in W.F. Reineke (ed.), *Acts of the First International Congress of Egyptology* (Berlin, 1979) 221-4 at 223, who sees the image as the culmination of a pre-partum Marian cycle, which highlights the theme of her virginity. While this interpretation seems probable, G.J.M. van Loon, 'The Virgin Mary and the Midwife Salome: The So-Called Nativity Scene in Chapel LI in the Monastery of Apa Apollo in Bawit', *ECA* 3 (2006) 81-104 at 100-1, does not exclude the possibility that the painting in its eroded form could have shown the child in the now absent space to the proper left of Salome.

⁴⁸² For a discussion of Salome in Christian art, see Van Loon, 'Virgin Mary', 89-100.

⁴⁸³ A similar cycle was found at Deir el-Baramus in the Wadi el-Natrun. See G.J.M. van Loon, M. Immerzeel, 'Inventory of Coptic Wall-Paintings', *Essays on Christian Art and Culture in the Middle East* 1 (1998) 10-3.

⁴⁸⁴ Innemée, 'Newly Discovered Painting', 226. The suggestion that these four semi-domes were appropriated for a narrative cycle is given further support by the presence of an overlying Mariological cycle, which used the same semi-domes for a different narrative in the thirteenth-century re-painting of the church.

depict scenes from the pre-partum narratives of Christ, Deir el-Surian probably once contained a complete Christological cycle from conception to resurrection.

The Annunciation scene in the west, which depicts an enthroned Mary and a standing Gabriel in the central position, flanked by the prophets Moses, Isaiah, Ezekiel and Daniel, was examined in the earlier discussion of Annunciation scenes and was dated to sometime between the eighth and twelfth centuries.⁴⁸⁵ Alternatively, the Epiphany was painted by two different hands and may offer aid in determining the date of the entire cycle. Here, the Virgin Mary occupies the central position, where she is seated on an ornately decorated throne.⁴⁸⁶ She is dressed in a green/grey *maphorion* (mantle) and a grey tunic, and holds a dark blue *clipeus*, in which Christ Emmanuel is depicted.⁴⁸⁷ Although much of the figure is lost, Innemée argues that Christ, who is wearing a tunic and *pallium*, holds a book in his left hand and makes the gesture of benediction with his right. Christ faces the left and looks toward the archangel Michael, while Gabriel stands to the right of the Virgin. Both are identified by inscriptions and wear grey tunics and purple *pallia*, and carry a long staff with a cross atop it in their left hand. Next to Michael stand the three magi, each of whom wear a Phrygian hat and carries an ornate box.⁴⁸⁸ Two of the magi are further identified by inscriptions as Dikastia (ΔΙΚΑΣΤΙΑ) and Melchior (ΜΕΛΧΙΩΡ). Next to Gabriel, we find the three shepherds (also identified by inscriptions) in short tunics with rams lying at their feet.⁴⁸⁹

The stratigraphic position of the Epiphany and Annunciation within the series of paintings in the semi-domes suggests that they belong to the Layer 2 paintings at Deir el-Surian, which are so far dated to the eighth century. Moreover, they were found underneath the thirteenth-century narrative cycle (Layer 3), which thus serves as the *terminus ante quem* for their construction. The Christological cycle was not among the initial paintings in Layer 2, as

⁴⁸⁵ See discussion at pp. 115-6.

⁴⁸⁶ For a detailed description of the Epiphany scene, see Innemée, 'Newly Discovered Painting', 218-9.

⁴⁸⁷ On the *maphorion*, see N. Morfin-Gourdier, 'Costumes of the Religious', in *Copt.Enc.* II (1991) 650-5 at 652; R. Fredrickson, 'Madonna and Hodigitria', *Journal of Religion and Health* 43 (2004) 151-63 at 153-4.

⁴⁸⁸ Innemée, 'Newly Discovered Painting', 222, notes that the presence of the archangels flanking Mary is not typical for scenes of the Epiphany. It seems to him that this composition is modeled rather on Byzantine imperial iconography, whereby the archangels serve as the protectors of the throne.

⁴⁸⁹ The inscription is found at the far right of the composition and possibly reads .ΙΜΕΝΕC, which Innemée, 'Newly Discovered Painting', 219, suggests should probably be reconstructed as ΠΙΜΕΝΕC (read ΠΟΙΜΕΝΗC) 'shepherd'. At pp. 224-5, he also compares the composition of this painting to several sixth- or seventh-century miniature Monza-*ampullae* (miniature oil flasks) from Israel, for which the similarities are so strong (especially *ampulla* no. 1) that Innemée suggests that the compositions must have been based on the same prototype. He also makes explicit note of the use of rams instead of sheep, the shape of the throne and the second shepherd pointing at the star of Bethlehem. See A. Grabar, *Ampoules de Terre Sainte* (Paris, 1958) 16 and 18 (Pls 1, 2 and 4).

there were drops of encaustic paint that fell from the Epiphany onto the painting below.⁴⁹⁰ Additionally, there is nothing to suggest that the Epiphany and the Annunciation were created by the same hand, as the figures are done in two completely different styles. This is especially evident in the treatment of Mary's face in both paintings, in which her features are softer and more realistic in the Annunciation scene, but she has linear features and appears stark and motionless in the Epiphany scene. The contrast in painting style is also not strictly limited to the two paintings, as there are distinct stylistic and technical differences within the Epiphany itself. This is most notable in the treatment of the hair and the use of highlighting in the depictions of the figures flanking Mary. It is unclear, however, which hand actually painted the Virgin, as Mary's rigid frontality starkly contrasts with the gesticulations of the other individuals.⁴⁹¹

The differences in style and technique offer little help in the way of ascertaining a date for this painting. Although the two images were completed by different hands, they likely date to approximately the same period, as they were clearly part of a singular narrative cycle. This does not discount the possibility, however, that these paintings were completed over a period of several years (or decades), which might account for their stylistic differences. Although we cannot definitively narrow down the dates of the composition further than the eighth to the twelfth centuries, the use of encaustic paint suggests that they are likely closer to the eighth than the twelfth century. The use of this encaustic paint to date these images, on the other hand, is still contentious as until recently, technical evaluations of paintings were not always conducted.⁴⁹²

While the three surviving narrative cycles vary considerably in content and style, there are still many parallels that we can draw from these images. Firstly, the cycles, thus far, only stem from monastic settings, initially appearing on the walls of monastic chapels and churches (Deir Abu Hinnis and Bawit), but eventually spreading to the semi-domes of monastic churches (Deir el-Surian). Secondly, there is a distinct diachronic progression in the iconographic content of the paintings, beginning with the limited inclusion of Mary in the oldest surviving

⁴⁹⁰ For a discussion of the use of encaustic paint in Egypt during the eighth century, see generally K.C. Innemée, 'Encaustic Painting in Egypt', in B. Mathieu, D. Meeks, M. Wissa (eds), *L'apport de l'Égypte à l'histoire des techniques* (Cairo, 2006) 133-42, in which he demonstrates the use of encaustic paint at Deir el-Surian in the eighth century, but notes that there is no continuous tradition of encaustic mural painting between the fourth and eighth centuries. He attributes this to the poor preservation of wall paintings from this time, but also to a general disinterest among modern scholars to the study of painting techniques, suggesting that many encaustic paintings may have gone unnoticed. Cf. Weitzmann, *Monastery*, 8, who suggests that encaustic painting went out of fashion between the seventh and eighth centuries.

⁴⁹¹ Innemée, 'Newly Discovered Painting', 219-20.

⁴⁹² Innemée, 'Encaustic Painting', 133-42 at 139.

aforementioned cycle, which is followed by an increasingly notable propensity to highlight Mary within the Christological narrative. In these later paintings (Bawit, Deir el-Surian), the Virgin assumes a central role and appears in nearly every scene. Finally, Mary's Christological importance in these scenes is limited entirely to the event leading up to and immediately after Jesus' birth, thereby tying her presence in these images strictly to her role as the Theotokos.

Miscellaneous Marian Themes

There are a few surviving wall paintings in Egypt that do not fall into any of the categories discussed above, either because the iconography is unique in the present corpus of paintings or because the preservation is too poor to allow for a definitive interpretation of the scene. The variety between these remaining images is remarkable and highlights the wealth of ways in which Mary was depicted in Christian art across Egypt. In fact, the extent of their diversity is marked by a complete lack of comparable iconographic elements between any of the paintings, both in style and overall composition. Moreover, this variety extends to the numerous contexts in which the images appear, including monastic cells, oratories and a church. Thus, each of these miscellaneous wall paintings is discussed individually, and relevant *comparanda* for the image is provided when such material exists.

The first of these miscellaneous images is a poorly preserved painting from the eastern wall niche of Cell 1740 at Saqqara, which likely dates to the sixth or seventh century (no. 39). Here Quibell could only discern what he described as 'the figure of Our Lord and the head of the Virgin'. This account provides little information on the composition of the scene, although based on Quibell's remarks we can assume that we are dealing with an adult Christ, probably positioned next to his mother.⁴⁹³ The exact composition of this painting, however, remains a mystery as it was never photographed or discussed in further excavation reports from Saqqara. There is a precedent, however, for the depiction of an adult Christ and Mary together in a single composition, notably a painting from the eastern wall of Chapel 59 at Bawit. Here, a centrally enthroned Christ (left), who holds a book in his lap with his left hand and gives the sign of benediction with his right, sits next to Mary (right), and they are flanked by ten individuals (no.

⁴⁹³ Quibell, *Saqqara 1908-9, 1909-10*, 21, who always refers to Jesus as the 'Child' in cases where he is depicted as an infant. His description of Jesus as the 'figure of Our Lord' suggests that he appears here in adult form.

40, Fig. 40). The pair is enthroned on an elevated platform, along with two seated figures immediately to Christ's proper left. The other eight individuals, however, assume the typical standing position.⁴⁹⁴ This unique composition is attributed stylistically to the eighth or ninth centuries, based on the delicate treatment of the figures (especially the faces and drapery), although it also retains the typical frontal and distant pose that is common in the sixth and seventh centuries.

The third and fourth uncategorized Marian wall paintings are unusual as they are located immediately next to each other on a wall in the subterranean church at Deir Abu Hinnis, but there is no apparent narrative connection between them (nos 41 and 42, Fig. 41). This contrasts with the distinct Marian cycle that appears on wall 2, although stylistically, all of these images seem to have been created at the same time (no earlier than the sixth century). In fact, the paintings on wall 9 appear to represent two completely different themes. On the far left, we find a partially preserved representation of the Virgin carrying a *clipeus* with the Child, both of whom are nimbed (no. 41). The figures are encased in a medallion, but Mary is only depicted in bust form and there is no indication that she is seated on a throne. Although the faces of both individuals are lost, Mary is identified by her veil, which is identical to the one she wears in the following scene.

In this second image, we shift away from viewing Mary as the Theotokos, seeing her instead at the Wedding at Cana as a witness to the miracles of Christ (no. 42). An earlier representation of this scene is found in the Karmuz catacombs in Alexandria, which dates to the third century and is therefore excluded from the catalogue that is the basis for this chapter. This painting shows Mary seated alongside a group of other individuals around a standing Christ.⁴⁹⁵ The composition of the one at Deir Abu Hinnis, however, is very different in that she stands at the outer left edge of the composition, as Christ (to her proper left) changes water into wine. There are three additional figures in the scene, including a woman on the far right, who participate in the event.⁴⁹⁶

⁴⁹⁴ Clédat, *Monastère* (1999), 175-6 (Pls 154-5 and 158).

⁴⁹⁵ See Wescher, 'Notice', 57-9; Leclercq, 'Alexandrie (Archéologie)', in *DACL* I (1924) 1098-1182 at 1127-37; Beckwith, *Early Christian*, 70; Zibawi, *Images*, 17-8; L.A. Hunt, 'Eastern Christian Iconographic and Architectural Traditions: Oriental Orthodox', in K. Parry (ed.), *The Blackwell Companion to Eastern Christianity* (Malden, MA, 2007) 388-419 at 403; G.J.M. van Loon, 'Christian Art: Egypt', in M. Gagarin (ed.), *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Greece and Rome*, 2 vols (Oxford, 2010) 1.101-3 at 102.

⁴⁹⁶ Clédat, 'Notes archéologiques', 52-3 (Pl. 3).

The final uncategorized painting was found on the east wall of the south oratory in hermitage number four in Esna, and is dated to the second half of the sixth or first half of the seventh century (no. 43, Fig. 42).⁴⁹⁷ While this painting displays several elements that could have warranted its inclusion in some of the aforementioned categories of Marian iconographies, there is one unusual feature, which is also found at Deir Abu Hinnis, namely a bust of Mary holding the infant Christ. Mary is identified by an inscription (ἁγία Μαρ[ία]), and is depicted holding the Child on her left lap, while gesturing towards him with her right hand. It remains unclear, however, whether Jesus is depicted in a *clipeus* or merely sports a halo, since most of his likeness is missing.⁴⁹⁸ The uniqueness of this painting, however, lies in the absence of a throne and the inclusion of two flanking archangels, who also appear as busts. Thus far, every depiction of the Virgin or the archangels as such has been contained within a medallion (that is, at Chapel B at Saqqara [no. 1] and Deir Abu Hinnis [no. 41]), but this is not the case in Esna. The painter simply drew from a variety of different elements to create a scene that is entirely unique to the Marian corpus.

Conclusion

The surviving 43 representations of Mary assembled in this chapter mark only a fraction of the number of paintings that would have adorned the walls of structures across Egypt throughout the fifth to ninth centuries. Although the majority of these paintings stem from the well-documented monasteries of Saqqara and Bawit, where their survival owes much to a long period of occupation, extending well beyond the Arab conquest, we also find representations of the Virgin, albeit fewer in number, in other places as far north as Alexandria, and as far south as Aswan. Moreover, these Marian wall paintings are not limited to monastic contexts, as they are encountered in a variety of locations, including urban churches, funerary monuments and a domestic structure. This proclivity to represent Mary across a vast geographical area and in a

⁴⁹⁷ S. Sauneron and J. Jacquet, *Les ermitages chrétiens du desert d'Esna*, 4 vols (Cairo, 1972) 1.80-1 (Pl. 30c); R. Boutros, 'The Hermitages in the Desert of Esna', in Gabra and Takla, *Christianity in Nag Hammadi and Esna*, 181-99 at 197-8, who also provides a general analysis of the hermitages at Esna (pp. 185-8). This painting is not dated stylistically, but rather by the inscriptions in the church, the pottery and the lack of Arabic graffiti.

⁴⁹⁸ M. Krause, 'Die Bedeutung alter Dokumentationen für die koptische Kunst', in S. Giversen, M. Krause and P. Nagel (eds), *Coptology: Past Present and Future* (Leuven, 1994) 17-33 at 26-7, identifies this figure as a *galaktotrophousa* based on the conserved painting that now appears at the monastery, in which Mary appears to offer her breast. In a photograph from the original excavation report, however, no such breast is visible, and it appears as though the breast was added during the restoration of the painting.

variety of different settings suggests not only the widespread adoption of Mary as an important figure in Christology, but also clearly as an important figure in personal devotion, taking on the role of intercessor, through whom one could access the divine.

This intercessory function is nowhere more evident than in the eastern niches of the monastic cells and small chapels, which served as a focal point of the monk's personal devotion. When Mary is depicted in these niches, she appears only in a limited number of forms, typically enthroned with her Child (both in single and double-zoned compositions), but also as an *orans* or enthroned without the Child. In almost every instance, she appears in the center of the composition, flanked by at least two individuals, all of whom the viewer may have perceived as bearing access to the divine. These figures include the archangels, the Angel of the Lord and the Angel of God, the apostles, as well as local saints.⁴⁹⁹ There are, however, two notable exceptions to this observation. The first is found in Room 1 at Bawit (no. 16), where Mary appears as a subsidiary figure in the composition, as she is positioned in the far left corner of the composition. The second stems from Room 30 at the same monastery (no. 27), where an enthroned *galaktotrophousa* appears alone in the eastern niche.

Although these niche paintings draw on Mary's importance in Christ's Ascension and Incarnation and her role as Theotokos, her inclusion in these scenes bears more of a symbolic than a narrative function. In fact, there are no instances of a purely narrative scene contained within a niche, which is logical given the limited availability of space. Instead they are limited to churches, oratories and funerary chapels. In these larger settings, the focus shifts to the creation of an iconographic programme where the viewer is encouraged to engage with the biblical and apocryphal narratives, many of which include references to the Virgin.⁵⁰⁰ Not only are these narrative scenes found in several different kinds of structures, their placement within them is not limited to one particular area, and are found in domes, semi-domes and various walls in churches and oratories. The decoration of these buildings, however, is by no means limited to narrative scenes, as we also encounter the typical representations of the enthroned Mary, both with and without Child, although there are no surviving double compositions outside of the eastern niches in monastic cells and chapels from this time period.

⁴⁹⁹ In Cells 1740 and 1943 at Saqqara there may have been subsidiary figures, but the paintings were either badly damaged or poorly recorded.

⁵⁰⁰ Note that Chapel 51 at Bawit is considered an oratory, not a monastic cell, based on its size and decoration. Cf. Clédat, *Monastère* (1999), 110.

The single-tiered compositions of an enthroned Virgin are largely restricted to the columns or pillars of churches (Deir el-Surian, Bawit and Syene), or on the walls of monastic chapels and oratories (Chapel 7 and 59 at Bawit, Esna), although in one instance she is depicted on the wall of a domestic courtyard (Kom el-Dikka). There is only one representation of a single-tiered composition with Mary in the semi-dome of a church, that is, the north triconch at Deir Anba Bishay (no. 27), which appears slightly later (eighth century). Apparently, more flexibility exists in the larger independent and monastic churches (and/or oratories) as well as funerary chapels, where Mary is depicted in a variety of scenes, which draw from both the symbolic and narrative elements of her existing iconography. In the monastic cells, on the other hand, we are limited to largely symbolic representations of Mary, which are exclusively found on the eastern wall, the direction of the viewer's prayers.

Having looked at the spatial distribution of the paintings, we now move to a diachronic analysis of Marian art in Egypt beginning in the fifth century. Depictions of Mary in Christian art, especially in Egypt, do not just materialize after the Council of Ephesus. There is evidence to suggest that depictions of the Virgin existed as early as the third century in funerary art. While the evidence for this claim is limited to a single third-century painting of Mary in the Karmuz catacombs at Alexandria, which draws on a scene from the New Testament (Wedding at Cana), it nevertheless leave open the possibility for other such early depictions that are no longer extant.⁵⁰¹ The oldest surviving painting of Mary discussed in this study unsurprisingly finds resonance with this earlier example, in which a biblical scene is incorporated in the decorative programme of a fifth- or sixth-century funerary chapel in the Kharga Oasis. Here, Mary is depicted at the Annunciation and surrounded by a multitude of disparate Old Testament scenes. Another of the earlier paintings stems from a house at Kom el-Dikka in Alexandria, in which we encounter the first representation of an enthroned Mary and Child. These early images are followed by an upsurge of Marian wall paintings in the sixth and seventh centuries, the majority of which stem from the monastic cells and chapels in Saqqara and Bawit. From the seventh century onwards, Marian imagery is securely found in both monastic and ecclesiastical settings, although her inclusion in the semi-domes of churches is not definitively seen until the eighth century.

⁵⁰¹ M. Rassart-Debergh, 'Painting, Coptic Mural', in *Copt.Enc.* VI (1991) 1872-6 at 1873.

In sum, a chronological and regional study of Marian images reveals that although wall painting depicting the Virgin existed, at least plausibly in funerary contexts, before the Council of Ephesus, the impetus for illustrating her likeness was spurred by her declaration as Theotokos in 431. Immediately following this event, there is a clear artistic development which is at first contained to New Testament narratives, but gradually explores the different facets of Mary's developing theology. This is best exemplified by the implementation of iconographies such as the double compositions, Annunciation and *galaktotrophousa*, that were beginning to appear both in Egypt and across the Mediterranean, especially in the minor arts. The development of distinct Marian iconographic themes in Egyptian wall painting reaches its pinnacle in the sixth and seventh centuries, when the intense devotion to the Virgin in monastic communities creates a surge in its production, the majority of which focuses on her intercessory function. As her importance grows in the developing Christology, so does the production of her iconography and the variety of ways in which Mariological themes are expressed. Artists begin to draw on associated biblical and apocryphal narratives to generate an ever-expanding artistic database, which then shifts away from its origins in funerary and private monastic context, to include both domestic and ecclesiastic contexts across Egypt. Thus, the monastic community had a strong influence on the creation, propagation and most importantly, the survival of Marian art in Egypt, which is evident in its overwhelming contribution to our present database.

General Conclusion

At the beginning of this study, we noted that there is a lacuna in the study of the cult of Mary in Egypt, one which analyzes the physical materialization of her cult across the *longue durée* in an Egyptian context. The General Introduction familiarized the reader with this issue by briefly outlining the state of contemporary Marian scholarship, which we argue is largely focused on establishing a date for the origins of her cult (that is, whether it started before or after the Council of Ephesus). Instead of immersing ourselves in this debate, the present study attempts to transcend it, since it mostly hinges on one's definition of 'cult'. In doing so, we are able to recognize that the fifth-century marks a significant point in its development, while acknowledging that a 'community of interest' existed previously. Still, the theological debates of the early fifth century are intrinsically linked to the development of a physical cult of the Virgin Mary, in that it only really lifts off from this time onwards. From this perspective, it is rather a formative period, which deserves to be studied in its own right. Thus, we return to our initial question: to what extent does the evidence for the physical materialization of the cult of Mary reflect its geographical and chronological diffusion in Late Antique Egypt?

In Chapter 1, we address this question from the perspective of the papyrological and epigraphical evidence, which on the basis of a catalogue (Appendix 1), enumerates all attestations of Marian churches and monasteries in these texts from the fifth to ninth centuries. The study of these materials, which builds on Papaconstantinou's previous study, adds an additional 32 papyri and inscriptions, and raises the total of definitive Marian churches from 21 to 23, and the potential number of total churches from 26 to 28. Our analysis reveals that the dedication of churches and monasteries to Mary in Egypt was relatively slow at the outset, as only two structures are definitively dated to the fifth century. The sixth century sees a notable increase in the number of churches and monasteries to seventeen, while the seventh and eighth centuries actually mark the highpoint in the extant source material, with 29 papyri attributed to the former and 33 to the latter. There are also tangible continuities into the ninth century, when five churches are recorded in a single papyrus from Hermopolis. The relative slowness with which Marian buildings appear to have been constructed in Egypt also finds resonance with the notably late and limited use of the titles θεοτόκος and παρθένος for Mary, suggesting that the

theological implications of the Council of Ephesus took some time to gain traction in the name giving of churches and monasteries in Egypt.

In Chapter 2, we analyze the actual archaeological evidence of the four extant churches and/or monasteries from Egypt that have been attributed to the Virgin Mary. While there is no question that those of Deir el-Surian, Deir el-Ganadla and Philae were dedicated to Mary, it is doubtful that we can attribute the church in the Isis temple at Aswan to Mary based on the presence of a single wall painting and subsequently identify it with the church of the Virgin mentioned in the Paternouthis archive. This reservation is confirmed in Chapter 3 of the present study, which demonstrates that we cannot equate Marian wall paintings with the existence of a Marian church. Of the remaining three churches, only the one at Philae is attested in the papyrological/epigraphical corpus collected in Chapter 1 (23), and thus this study adds the monasteries at Deir el-Surian and Deir el-Ganadla to the total number of buildings dedicated to the Virgin before the ninth century, raising the total to at least 25. Both of these structures, moreover, are assigned archaeologically to the sixth century, increasing the total number of churches in Egypt at this time from seven to nine. By combining this evidence with that of the papyri and inscriptions, it seems that the physical materialization of the cult of Mary may have experienced a slightly greater expansion during the sixth century than the aforementioned source material suggested. The addition of these two monasteries, moreover, raises the total number of sixth-century monastic sites to four, nearly half of the buildings dedicated to Mary that appear in the known source materials from this century.

Chapter 3 looks at the iconographic evidence for the physical materialization of the cult of Mary. A total of 43 surviving representations form the basis of this thematic study (Appendix 2), which traces the different image types across both time and space. Despite an early outlying image from the catacombs at Karmuz in Alexandria, dating to the third century, images of the Virgin Mary do not survive in wall paintings until the fifth/sixth century, at which time she is found in a single New Testament scene from a funerary context. In the sixth and seventh centuries, however, there is a marked increase in Marian paintings, most of which stem from the monastic cells and churches at Bawit and Saqqara, although there is also a sixth-century image in a domestic context at Kom el-Dikka and potentially a painting from the urban church at Syene, which has a wider date range of the sixth to ninth century. There are only a limited number of paintings from the eighth and ninth centuries; this period marks the first instance that Mary

appears in the semi-dome of a monastic church, namely in the church of Anba Bishay at Sohag. The diminished number of extant images from the later periods, however, may have more to do with the noted difficulty of dating Christian wall paintings in Egypt than a decline in actual depictions of Mary.

Let us now look at the wider implications of these results for the gradual expansion of the cult of Mary across Egypt on both the spatial and temporal axes. By interweaving these diverging sources, we can compare any emerging trends in one group against patterns that are apparent in the others, thus nuancing the results of each assemblage. To start with the chronological development, we find that there are only a limited number of extant remains that can be attributed to the fifth century across all three source materials (that is, two churches mentioned in the papyri, and one fifth/sixth-century wall painting). This trend may reflect a bias in the surviving evidence, especially the papyri, where the overall numbers are generally lower for the fifth century, and the attestations connected to the Church are relatively higher for the sixth century, reflecting Christianity's final integration into Egyptian society. However, it is probably also indicative of the relative slowness with which the cult of Mary took root in Egypt. Thus, the theological developments of the fifth century did not appear to have an immediate or significant impact on the dedication of churches and monasteries to Mary or her inclusion in the iconographic repertoire of Christian Egypt.

We must note, however, that there is a near total absence of material evidence from Alexandria, which would have been one of the main centers for the expansion of her cult. That is not to say that Alexandria was devoid of Marian churches or veneration, but rather that the physical evidence for these structures has not survived. In this way, it may be helpful to briefly turn to the literary record. Firstly, the *Annales* of Eutychius of Alexandria (876-940) record that the patriarch Theophilus (385-412) dedicated a church to Mary in the *environs* of Alexandria.⁵⁰² The existence of such an early Marian church is certainly plausible, especially given Alexandria's role in the Christological controversies of the fourth and fifth centuries, although we must be wary of trusting a source 400 years removed from the event. A second church dedicated to the Virgin in Alexandria, however, is recorded in the *Spiritual Meadow* of John Moschus (c. 550-619), who notes that his contemporary, patriarch Eulogius (581-608 CE), built

⁵⁰² Eutychius of Alexandria, *Annales* 528, PG III, col. 1026A. See also J. McKenzie, *The Architecture of Alexandria and Egypt c. 300 BC to AD 700* (New Haven, 2007) 247.

[or rebuilt] the Church of ‘holy Theotokos’ also called Dorothea.⁵⁰³ Despite the addition of the literary sources from Alexandria, the evidence still strongly suggests that the fifth century marked a formative period in the physical materialization of the cult of Mary, and that it only became widespread over the course of the following two centuries.

The cult of Mary experienced a significant growth throughout the sixth century. The papyrological and archaeological evidence demonstrates that there were nine churches definitively dedicated to her, a marked increase from the just two churches of the previous century. This period also represents the first instance in which the title θεοτόκος is used in the naming of Marian churches/monasteries, although it does not appear with any frequency until the seventh century. The increase in Marian buildings and an awareness of her theological importance, moreover, is reflected in an increase in the output of wall paintings in which she is depicted. Although only one image can be securely dated to the sixth century, there are several that are attributed to the sixth/seventh century, and we find a broader spectrum of scenes in which she appears. At this point, her iconography is no longer strictly limited to New Testament scenes; rather there is an almost exclusive effort to depict her alongside her son, drawing on her role as Theotokos.

The seventh century represents the pinnacle of the physical materialization of the cult of Mary. This period marks a significant increase in the output of papyrological/epigraphical attestations of Marian churches and monasteries, producing a total of 29 texts, and yields the largest number of Marian paintings (25 of the 43 paintings are attributed to the sixth/seventh century, and four are dated to the seventh/eighth century). We also encounter the greatest diversity in her imagery, whereby all of the iconographic types discussed in this study are finally present in Egypt, and representations of Mary in wall paintings begin to appear with some frequency outside of monastic cells and chapels. The seventh century also sees an increase in the use of the term θεοτόκος and the introduction of the term παρθένος into the titles of Marian buildings, although the latter title appears only as an individual title for Mary in limited instances from the eighth century onwards. As a result, we note that the physical materialization of the cult of Mary reached its peak in the seventh century, at least in the time period in question, one which is not matched in the output of materials in the following two centuries.

⁵⁰³ John Moschus, *Spiritual Meadow* 77; PG 87.3, col. 2929D and 2930D. See also discussion in McKenzie, *The Architecture of Alexandria and Egypt*, 253-4.

There are still tangible manifestations of the cult of Mary in the eighth and ninth century, although the quantity of evidence varies across the different source materials. The volume of the eighth-century papyrological/epigraphical attestations even slightly surpasses that of the seventh century, as there are a total of 33 texts. The majority of these materials come from a single city (that is, Aphrodito), but three new churches are still attested at this time. The ninth century, on the other hand, records five new churches, all of which stem from the same Coptic papyrus from Hermopolis. The relatively few sources in the ninth century may be explained by the cessation of Greek as a major scribal language in the eighth century, and the exclusion of Arabic texts from this study.

The continuities of the physical cult that we see in the papyri and inscriptions are contrasted with the limited number of Marian paintings in our catalogue that we can date to this period. There are no paintings that are definitively attributed to either century, and the majority of images cannot be more precisely dated than the seventh/eighth or eighth to twelfth centuries. It is difficult to say, however, whether this reduction in the number of paintings is a result of our insufficient dating methods and preservation circumstances or whether there was a general decrease in the output of wall paintings in this period. We should also keep in mind that the same iconographic programmes could be kept for several centuries, and that those buildings constructed in the sixth/seventh century may not have required re-painting at this time.

While the chronological study of the source materials demonstrates the rate with which the cult of Mary was disseminated throughout Egypt, we must now continue with an analysis of its geographical distribution. We might expect to see a linear spread of the cult of Mary outwards from Alexandria, but this in fact appears not to be the case. The earliest physical evidence is spread across vast geographical expanses, and there are virtually no discernible trends that we can extrapolate from its diffusion. In terms of the construction of churches and monasteries, the cult of Mary first appears in the Herakleopolite nome as well as Taniathis, both in Upper Egypt. By the end of the sixth century, however, they are attested both archaeologically and textually as far north as the Delta (Wadi el-Natrun) and as far south as the First Cataract region (Aswan and Philae). A more focused geographical study that looks specifically at the location of Marian churches versus the location of Marian monasteries, also finds no discernible trends. Marian monasteries can exist both in cities with existing Marian churches (Oxyrhynchus and Aphrodite) or as independent monastic sites (Deir el-Surian and Deir el-Ganadla).

Similar observations can be made about the iconographic evidence. Here, the earliest extant evidence of Marian wall paintings also crosses large geographical regions, ranging from Alexandria (the third-century in the Karmuz catacombs and the sixth-century in House D at Kom el-Dikka) to the Kharga Oasis (fifth/sixth century). Although there are no discernible patterns in the general spatial distribution of Marian wall paintings, there are noted trends in the use of specific Marian iconographic themes. For example, the eastern wall niches of the monastic chapels of Bawit and Saqqara form an independent unit, in which only a limited number of themes occur, specifically Mary enthroned either with or without Child (in both single and double-zoned compositions), or as an *orans* in a double composition, and she is always flanked by at least two individuals. The double compositions, moreover, appear exclusively in the eastern wall niches of monasteries at this time. More generally, there are several themes that are limited to monasteries, although not necessarily to monastic cells or chapels, which include the *galaktotrophousa* and Marian cycles, although this could be a reflection of the limited number of extant paintings outside of monastic contexts. Single-tiered compositions of Mary enthroned, on the other hand, appear in a greater variety of settings and show a wider geographical reach, as this iconography is found both in Alexandria (Kom el-Dikka) and Syene (church in Isis temple).

In summary, this study has demonstrated the importance of analyzing the physical materialization of the cult of Mary through the intersection of the papyrological/epigraphical, archaeological and iconographic evidence across the *longue durée*. In doing so, we have shown that the fifth century marked a formative period in the manifestation of her cult, when churches, monasteries and artistic representations are beginning to emerge across a broad spectrum of locations throughout Egypt. The physical cult of Mary did not coalesce until the sixth and, especially, the seventh century, at which time Mary's cult is on a par with, if not surpassing, those of other notable Egyptian saints. At this time, she has a developed iconography and titulature, her cult reaches from the Delta to the First Cataract and there are numerous churches and monasteries dedicated in her honour. Although this period is followed by a possible decrease in the source material, there are still new churches and paintings appearing at this time, across a number of different locations. In fact, the resonance of her cult with Egypt's population led Mary to become the most widely venerated saint in Egypt.

While this study looks at the three major source materials associated with the cult of Mary, an analysis of all the material evidence, including icons, stele, the small arts, and so on,

could further supplement our knowledge of the physical materialization of her cult in Late Antique Egypt. Such a study would contribute to the present study in two ways. Firstly, it would nuance our understanding of the chronological and geographical integration of her cult into the wider milieu of Christian Egypt. Secondly, a study that includes a wider analysis of representations of Mary in different media would create an even larger data set, against which we can analyze our current interpretations of the iconographic development of her cult. As a result, the present study serves as a basis for future research in which there is an opportunity to build on an existing database of materials for the study of the physical materialization of the cult of Mary in Egypt.

This study also establishes a framework for similar research that could be conducted in other geographical regions, especially Rome, Constantinople and Palestine, in which a comprehensive analysis of the physical remains has not yet been undertaken on the chronological and geographical axes. In doing so, we could discern whether the patterns of diffusion from Egypt are consistent with those of the other major Christian centers, or whether the cult of Mary materialized at different times across different locations. Studies that also include the iconographic evidence from each of the areas would contribute to the compilation of a corpus of Marian iconography, and contribute to tracing the distribution of Marian imagery and the use of particular themes across the wider Mediterranean. Such a study would provide insight into how different groups used images of Mary within particular settings (that is, churches, monastic cells, domestic architecture) and whether this reflects differences in Marian veneration across different geographical regions. Thus, further comprehensive studies of other areas could supplement and nuance the conclusions drawn from the Late Antique Egyptian materials and contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the distribution and diffusion of the physical materialization of the cult of Mary in the Late Antique world.

Appendix 1

Catalogue of Attestations of Churches and Monasteries of Mary in Papyri and Inscriptions

Church/ monastery Number	Location	Title/ Epithet	Reference	Attestation	Pap. #	Date	Language
1	Arsinoe	ἁγία θεοτόκος	<i>CPR</i> II 158 = <i>CPR</i> IV 192.8	Indirect; ἀπὸ λαύρας τῆς ἁγίας θεοτόκου	1	VII	Bilingual: Coptic with a Greek signature
	Arsinoe	θεοτόκος	<i>BGU</i> II 676 = <i>SPP</i> VIII 738.2	Indirect; ἀπὸ διαγ[ρ(αφῆς)] λαύρ(ας) τῆ(ς) θεοτόκου	1	VII-VIII	Greek
	Arsinoites	ἁγία θεοτόκος	<i>SB</i> I 5129.2	Direct; [ἐκ]κλησί(α) τῆ(ς) ἁγίας θεωδόκου	1	IV-VII	Greek
	Arsinoites	ἁγία θεοτόκος	<i>SPP</i> VIII 782 = <i>BGU</i> II 680.2, 5-6	Direct; ὑ(πὲρ) ἐνοικ(ίου) τόπ(ο)υ τῆ(ς) ἁγί(ας) θεοτόκο(υ)	1	IV-VIII	Greek
	Arsinoites	δεσπ(οίνα), ἡμῶν θεοτόκος	<i>REAC</i> 8 (2006) 11-4	Indirect; προνοία τῆς δεσπ(οίνης) ἡμῶν θεοτόκου ἐγένετο τοῦτο τὸ ἔργον ἐπινοία δούλου καὶ οἰκονόμου αὐτῆς		VI-VII	Greek
	Arsinoites	θεοτόκος	<i>SPP</i> VIII 1134 = <i>CPR</i> X 15.1	Indirect; Στέφανος δοῦλ(ος) τῆς θεοτόκ(ου)		Beginning of VII	Greek
	Arsinoites	θεοτόκος	<i>CPR</i> X 3.1	Indirect; Στέφανος δοῦλ(ος) τῆς θεοτόκ(ου)		608	Greek
	Arsinoites	θεοτόκος	<i>CPR</i> X 4.1	Indirect; Στέφανος δοῦλ(ος) τῆς θεοτόκ(ου)		608	Greek
	Arsinoites	δεσποίνα ἡμῶν, θεοτόκος	<i>CPR</i> X 1.1	Indirect; Στέφανος δοῦλος τῆς δεσπο(ίνης) ἡμῶ[ν] τῆς θεοτόκου		609	Greek
	Arsinoites	θεοτόκος	<i>CPR</i> VI 11 = <i>SPP</i> III 484 = <i>CPR</i> X 7.1	Indirect; Στέφανος δοῦλ(ος) τῆς θεοτόκ(ου)	1	609	Greek
	Arsinoites	θεοτόκος	<i>CPR</i> X 8.1	Indirect; Στέφανος δ]οῦλ(ος) τῆς θεοτόκ(ου)	1	609	Greek

	Arsinoites	θεοτόκος	<i>SPP VIII 1137 = CPR X 9.1</i>	Indirect; Στέφ[α]ν[ο]ς δ[οῦ]λ(ος) τῆς θεοτόκ(ου)	1	609	Greek
	Arsinoites	δεσποίνα ἡμῶν, θεοτόκος καὶ ἀειπαρθένος	<i>SPP XX 243.14-6 = SB I 5278</i>	Direct; Βίκτορα [οἰ]κονόμον τῆς ἁγίας ἐκκλησίας τῆς [δεσ]ποινῆς ἡμῶν τῆς θεοτόκου καὶ ἀειπαρθένου Μαρίας	1	648	Greek
	Arsinoites	ἁγία θεοτόκος	<i>SB XXVI 16623.1-2</i>	Indirect; τῇ(ς) ἁγί(ας) θεοτόκ(ου)		Mid VII	Greek
	Arsinoites	ἁγία θεοτόκος	<i>SB I 5127.20, 22, 28</i>	Indirect; ἁγί(ου) θεοτώκου (20); ἁγί(ου) θεοτόκου (22); ἁγί(ου) θεοτόκου (28)	1	IV-VII	Greek
	Arsinoites	δεσποίνα ἡμῶν, θεοτόκος καὶ ἀειπαρθένος	<i>P.Prag. I 65.2-3</i>	Indirect; θεωσεβεστάτου πρεσβυτέρου καὶ ἀρχιμαντρίδρου τῆς δεσποίνης ἡμῶν τῆς θεοτόκο(υ) καὶ ἀειπαρθένου Μαρίας	1	VII	Greek
	Arsinoites	θεοτόκος	<i>SPP III 685.2-3</i>	Indirect; (ὑπὲρ) διανομ(ῆς) λαύρ(ας) τῇ(ς) θ[εοτ]όκ(ου)	1	VII	Greek
	Arsinoites	θεοτόκος	<i>SPP VIII 744.3</i>	Indirect; ἀπὸ διαγραφ(ῆς) λαύρ(ας) τῇ(ς) Θεοτόκ(ου)	1	VII	Greek
	Arsinoites	θεοτόκος	<i>SPP VIII 712 = SPP XX 175.2</i>	Indirect; ἀπὸ διαγραφ(ῆς) λαύρ(ας) τῇ(ς) θεοτόκο(υ)	1	VII	Greek
	Arsinoites	θεοτόκος	<i>SB XX 14686.5</i>	Direct; νότου ἐκκλ(ησία) τῇ(ς) θεοτόκου		VII-VIII	Greek
	Arsinoites	ἁγία θεοτόκος	<i>SPP III 266.2, 7</i>	Indirect; ἀπὸ μέρ(ους) ἐν[οι]κίου τῇ(ς) ἁγίας θεοτ[όκου] (2); ἀπὸ μέρ(ους) ἐνοικίου τῇ(ς) ἁγ[ίας] θεοτόκου] (7)	1	VII-VIII	Greek
	Arsinoites	θεοτόκος	<i>SPP X 216.2-3</i>	Direct; ἐκ(κ)λ(ησία) τ(ῆς) θεοτόκο(υ)	1	VII-VIII	Greek
1 ^{bis}	Unknown (Arsinoe ?)	ἁγία	<i>P.Lond. II 450.1-2</i>	Indirect; Ἰωάννης στιππ(ουργός) ἁγίας Μαρίας	1 ^{bis}	VII	Greek

2	Herakleopolis	θεοτόκος	<i>SPP</i> III 54.2	Indirect; Κοσμ(ᾶς) διάκ(ονος) τῆς θεωτόκου	2	VI	Greek
	Herakleopolis	δεσποίνα ἡμῶν, θεοτόκος	<i>SB</i> VI 9462.3-4	Indirect; ἐν λ[α]ύρα τῆς δεσποίνης ἡμῶν τῆς θεοτόκου Μαρίας τῆς Βασιλείου	2	c. 657	Greek
2 ^{bis}	Herakleopolites	ἁγία	<i>SB</i> XXIV 16208.4	Indirect; π(αρά) Καλλινίκ(ου) ὑλοκόπου τῆς ἁγίας Μ[α]ρ[ί]ας	2 ^{bis}	V	Greek
3	Oxyrhynchus	μακαρία	<i>SB</i> I 1977.1-2	Indirect; Μηνᾶς πρ(ονοητοῦ) τ[ῆ]ς μακαρ(ίας) Μαρί(ας)	3	V-VI	Greek
	Oxyrhynchus	ἁγία	<i>P.Oxy.</i> LXXI 4833.3-5	Direct; τῇ ἁγίᾳ ἐκκλησίᾳ καλουμένη τῆς ἁγίας Μαρίας τῇ διακιμένη κατὰ ταύτην τὴν Ὁξυρυγχιτῶν πόλ[ι]ν		516	Greek
	Oxyrhynchus	ἁγία	<i>P.Oxy.</i> XI 1357.30-2, 45	Indirect; 3 services of ἁγί(αν) Μαρίαν γέννα τοῦ Χριστοῦ (30-2) and a second service of ἁγί(αν) Μα[ρ]ίαν ἡμέρα αὐτῆς (45)	3	535-536	Greek
	Oxyrhynchus	ἁγία	<i>P.Oxy.</i> I 147.1	Direct; εἰς τὴν μηχ(ανὴν) τοῦ κηπίου τῆς ἁγί(ας) Μαρίας	3	556	Greek
	Oxyrhynchus	ἁγία	<i>P.Oxy.</i> XVIII 2197.11	Indirect; [εἰς] χρεῖαν τῆ(ς) ἁγί(ας) Μαρίας	3	VI	Greek
	Oxyrhynchus	ἄμα	<i>P.Wash.Univ.</i> I 6.5	Direct; ἀντικρ[ύ] τ[ῆ]ς ἁγί[ας] ἐκκλη[σ]ίας τῆς ἄμα Μαρίας	3	late VI-early VII	Greek
3 ^{bis}	Oxyrhynchus	θεοτόκος	<i>BASP</i> 48 (2011) 103-6 (no. 2.17-8, 19)	Indirect; Αὐρήλιος Φεῖβ οἰκονόμος θευδόκος Μαρία τὴν ὑμετέρ(α) (17-8); Φῖβ οἰκονόμου θευδόκος Μαρία (19)		587/8	Greek
4	Oxyrhynchus	ἄμα	<i>P.Oxy.</i> LXVII 4620.27-8	Direct; εἰς τὸ μοναστήρ(ιον) ἄμα Μαρίας		Late V-first half of VI	Greek

5	Akoris	ἁγία	<i>Tyche</i> 5 (1998) 98 (no. 5.2)	Indirect; ἁγία Μαρία	4	VII	Greek
6	Antinoopolis	ἁγία	<i>P.Cair.Masp.</i> III 67359.vi. r ^o 3	Indirect; ἄνθ(ρωποι) ἁ[γία(ς)] Μαρία(ς); ἀπὸ ἀνθ(ρώπων) ἁγίας Μαρία(ς)	5	715-716	Greek
7	Hermopolis	ἁγία	<i>P.Bad.</i> IV 95.166, 169, 171, 180	Indirect; εἰς τὴν ἁγίαν Μαρίαν (166); εἰς τὴν ἁγίαν Μαρίαν (169); εἰς τὴν ἁγίαν Μαρίαν (171); εἰς τὴν ἁγία[ν Μα]ρία(ν) (181)	6	Beginning of VI	Greek
	Hermopolis	ἁγία	<i>P.Sorb.</i> II 69, 45.C3	Direct; δ(ιὰ) τῆς ἁγί(ας) Μαρί(ας) μικρ(οῦ) εὐκτ(ηρίου)	6	618-619 or 633- 634	Greek
	Hermopolis	ἁγία	<i>P.Sorb.</i> II 69, 53.C18	Direct; δ(ιὰ) τῆς ἁγί(ας) Μαρίας μικρ(οῦ) εὐκτ(ηρίου)	6	618-619 or 633- 634	Greek
	Hermopolis	ἁγία	<i>P.Sorb.</i> II 69, 57.F8	Indirect; δ(ιὰ) τῆς ἁγί(ας) Μαρ[ί]ας	6	618-619 or 633- 634	Greek
	Hermopolis	ἁγία	<i>P.Sorb.</i> II 69, 65.A12	Direct; δ(ιὰ) τῆς ἁγί(ας) Μαρ(ίας) μικρ(οῦ) εὐκτ(ηρίου)	6	618-619 or 633- 634	Greek
	Hermopolis	ἁγία	<i>P.Sorb.</i> II 69, 81.C6- 7	Direct; δ(ιὰ) τῆς ἁγί(ας) Μαρί(ας) μικρ(οῦ) εὐκτ(ηρίου) (6); δ(ιὰ) τῆς αὐτῆς (7)	6	618-619 or 633- 634	Greek
	Hermopolis	ἁγία	<i>P.Sorb.</i> II 69, 91.C3	Direct; δ(ιὰ) τῆς ἁ[γί(ας)] Μαρί(ας) μικρ(οῦ) εὐκτ(ηρίου)	6	618-619 or 633- 634	Greek
	Hermopolis	ἁγία	<i>P.Sorb.</i> II 69, 106.B22	Indirect; δ(ιὰ) τῆς ἁγί(ας) Μαρίας	6	618-619 or 633- 634	Greek
	Hermopolis	ἁγία	<i>P.Paramone</i> 18.16	Direct; ἁγία ἐκκλησία καλουμένη τῆς ἁγίας Μαρίας		620 or 641	Greek

	Hermopolis	ἁγία	BGU XIX 2815.8	Direct; τοῦ εὐαγοῦς ἐ[ὕ]κτηρίου τῆς ἁγίας Μαρίας		first half of VII	Greek
	Hermopolis	ἁγία	<i>P.Lond.Copt.</i> I 1077.1	Indirect; δ(ια) τῆς ἁγί(ας) Μαρίας	6	VII	Greek
8	Hermopolis	παρθένος	<i>P.Lond.Copt.</i> I 1100.23	Indirect; ΤΠΑΡΘΕΝΟΣ ΕΨΒΕΡΙ	7	IX	Coptic
9	Hermopolis	παρθένος	<i>P.Lond.Copt.</i> I 1100.26	Indirect; ΤΠΑΡΘΕΝΟΣ ΕΠΕΠΡΕΤΩΡ	8	IX	Coptic
10	Hermopolites	ἁγία	<i>P.Sorb.</i> II 69, 13.7	Indirect; δ(ια) τῆς ἁγί(ας) Μαρίας τόπ(ου) Βίκ[τορος]	9	618-619 or 633-634	Greek
11	Hermopolites	παρθένος	<i>P.Lond.Copt.</i> 1100.5	Indirect; ΤΠΑΡΘΕΝΟΣ ΕΤΚΑΚΟ	10	IX	Coptic
12	Hermopolites	παρθένος	<i>P.Lond.Copt.</i> 1100.16	Indirect; ΤΠΑΡΘΕΝΟΣ ΕΠΛΑΚ	11	IX	Coptic
13	Hermopolites	παρθένος	<i>P.Lond.Copt.</i> 1100.11	Indirect; ΤΠΑΡΘΕΝΟΣ ΕΠΕΩΟΓΕ	12	IX	Coptic
14	Aphrodite	ἁγία ἄμα	<i>P.Flor.</i> III 297.92, 242	Direct; ἐκκλ(ησία) ἡ ἁγία ἄμα Μαρία (92); ἐκκ]λ(ησία) ἡ ἁγία ἄμα Μαρίας (242)	13	525	Greek
	Aphrodite	ἄμα	<i>P.Cair.Masp.</i> II 67138.i, v ^o 8	Indirect; τ[ῶ] πρε(σβυτέρω) ἄμα Μαρ(ίας)	13	545-546	Greek
	Aphrodite	ἄμα	<i>P.Cair.Masp.</i> III 67283.ii 6	Direct; Καλλίνικο[ς] πρεσ[β(ύτερος)] ἐλεεινὸς τῆς ἁγίας ἐκκλησίας ἄμα Μαρίας κώμης Ἀφροδίτης	13	547	Greek
	Aphrodite	μεγάλη ἄμα	<i>P.Cair.Masp.</i> I 67061.3	Indirect; πρὸς τὴν μεγάλην ἄμα Μαρίαν	13	Mid VI	Greek
	Aphrodite	ἁγία	<i>P.Cair.Masp.</i> I 67066.2	Indirect; τοῖς κληρικοῖς τῆς ἁγίας Μαρί[ας]	13	VI	Greek
	Aphrodite	ἁγία	<i>P.Lond.</i> IV 1420.31, 35	Direct; μέ(ρους) τόπ(ου) ἁγί(ας) Μαρί(ας) (31); μέρ(ους) τόπ(ου) ἁγί(ας) Μαρίας(ς) (35)		706	Greek

	Aphrodite	ἄμα, ἄγία	<i>P.Lond.</i> IV 1419.66, 532	Direct; μ[έρ(ους) τόπ(ου) ἄμ]α Μαρίας (66); [δ(ιὰ) ἐκκλ(ησίας) ἄγί] (ας) Μαρί[ας] τ[ῆ] (ς) κώμ[η] (ς) (532)	13	716-717	Greek
	Aphrodite	ἄγία	<i>P.Lond.</i> IV 1474	Indirect; ἄγί(ας) Μαρία(ς)		VIII	Greek
14 ^{bis}	Aphrodite	θεοτόκος	<i>P.Lond.</i> IV 1419.530	Direct; δ(ιὰ) ἐκκλ(ησίας) θεοτόκου	13 ^{bis}	716-717	Greek
15	Aphrodite	ἄμα	<i>P.Cair.Masp.</i> II 67141.v r ^o 12	Direct; εἰς τὸ ὄρος] ἄμα Μαρίας		547-548 (?)	Greek
	Aphrodite	ἄγία	<i>CPR</i> XXII 59.3	Indirect; ἄνθ(ρωποι) ἄγί(ας) Μαρί(ας) (καὶ) μον(αστήρια)		Beginning VIII	Greek
	Aphrodite	ἄγία	<i>P.Ross.Georg.</i> IV 19.6	Direct; ὄρου ἄγί(ας) Μαρί(ας)		Early VIII	Greek
	Aphrodite	ἄγία	<i>P.Ross.Georg.</i> IV 20.7, v ^o 6	Direct; ὄρ'ου(ς) ἄγί(ας) Μ[α]ρί(ας) (7); Indirect; ἄνθ(ρώπων) ἄγί(ας) Μαρί(ας) (v ^o 6)		Early VIII	Greek
	Aphrodite	ἄγία	<i>CPR</i> III 88 = <i>P.Lond.</i> IV 1451.78	Indirect; ἄνθ(ρώπων) ἄγί(ας) Μαρία(ς)		701-702 or 716-717	Greek
	Aphrodite	ἄγία	<i>P.Lond.</i> IV 1412.37, 149, 231, 308, 398, 484 = <i>SB</i> I 5178	Indirect; ἀπὸ τ(ῶν) ἄνθ(ρώπων) ἄγία(ς) Μαρίας (37); ἀπὸ τ(ῶν) ἄνθ(ρώπων) Ἀγί(ας) Μαρίας (149); [ἀπὸ τ(ῶν) ἄνθ(ρώπων) Ἀγία(ς) Μαρίας] (231); ἀπὸ τ(ῶν) ἄνθ(ρώπων) Ἀγί(ας) Μαρία(ς) (308); ἀπὸ τ(ῶν) ἄνθ(ρώπων) Ἀγία(ς) Μαρίας (398); ἀπὸ τ(ῶν) ἄνθ(ρώπων) Ἀγία(ς) Μαρία(ς) (484)	14	699-705	Bilingual: Greek and Arabic (Reference in Greek)
	Aphrodite	ἄγία	<i>P.Lond.</i> IV 1431.36 = <i>SB</i> I 5177	Indirect; ἄ[νθ(ρώπων) ἄγί(ας) Μαρί(ας)]		706-707	Greek

Aphrodite	άγία	<i>P.Lond.</i> IV 1433.241, 557, 561 = SB I 5179	Direct; μοναστη(ρίου) άγία(ς) [Μαρί]α(ς) (557); Indirect; άνθ(ρωποι) άγία(ς) Μαρία(ς) (241); δ(ια) Πέτρ'ου' μονάξο(ντος) από τ(ῆς) άγί(ας) Μαρί(ας) (561)	14	706-707	Greek
Aphrodite	άγία	<i>P.Lond.</i> IV 1461.23	Indirect; έντ(ός) κτήμ(ατος) άγί(ας) Μαρί(ας)	14	c. 709	Greek
Aphrodite	άγία	SB I 5650.1, 9	Direct; [μον]αστη(ρίου) τῆ(ς) άγία(ς) Μαρίας (1); ύμῖν τοῖ(ς) από μοναστη(ρίου) άγία(ς) Μαρ[ίας κώ]μ[ης Ἀφ]ρ[οδ]ι[τ]ώ (9).		709-710	Greek
Aphrodite	άγία	SB I 5652.1, 9	Indirect; []υνθθ() τῆς άγί(ας) Μαρί(ας) (1); ύμῖν τοῖ(ς) από άνυνθθ() τῆς άγία(ς) Μαρ[ί]α(ς) κώμ(ης) Ἀφροδιτῶ		709-710	Greek
Aphrodite	άγία	<i>P.Lond.</i> IV 1434. 58, 76, 137, 191, 195, 211, 220, 222, 295	Direct; ὄρους άγία(ς) Μαρ(ίας) (195); ὄρους άγί(ας) Μαρ(ίας) (220); ὄρους άγί(ας) [Μαρί]α(ς) (295); Indirect; Example, άνθ(ρώπων) άγί(ας) Μαρία(ς) (191)]		714-716	Greek
Aphrodite	άγία	<i>P.Lond.</i> IV 1419.435, 1268, 1379	Direct; (ύπερ) μον(αστηρίου) άγί(ας) Μαρίας (435); άγί(ας) Μαρίας ὄρους (1268); [ά]πό μον[(αστηρίου)] άγί(ας) Μαρί[ας] (1379)	14	716-717	Greek
Aphrodite	άγία	<i>P.Lond.</i> IV 1436.25, 80, 104, 137	Indirect; e.g. άνθ(ρώπων) άγί(ας) Μαρί(ας) (25)		718-719	Greek
Aphrodite	άγία	<i>P.Lond.</i> IV 1413.106, 219, 327, 434, 547, 653	Direct; από μονα(στηρίου) άγίας Μαρίας (219)		716-721	Greek
Aphrodite	άγία	<i>P.Lond.</i> IV 1416.A6, D38, F72	Indirect; Example, άνθ(ρώπων) άγί(ας) Μαρ(ίας) (F72)	14	732-733	Greek

	Aphrodite	ἁγία	<i>P.Lond.</i> IV 1414.275	Direct; ἀπὸ μονα(στηρίου) ἁγία(ς) Μαρίας		VIII	Greek
	Aphrodite	ἁγία	<i>P.Lond.</i> IV 1432.120	Indirect; ἀνθ[(ρώπων) ἁγί(ας) Μαρί(ας)		VIII	Greek
	Aphrodite	ἁγία	<i>P.Lond.</i> IV 1442 A7, 20, B30, C34, 40, G73, 77	Direct; ὄρου(ς) ἁγί(ας) Μαρί(ας) (B30); ὄρου(ς) ἁγί(ας) Μαρία(ς) (C40); ὄρου(ς) ἁγί(ας) Μ(αρία(ς) (G77). Indirect; Example α ἀνθ(ρώπων) ἁγί(ας) Μαρία(ς) (C34)		VIII	Greek
	Aphrodite	ἁγία	<i>P.Lond.</i> IV 1445.2, 4, 11	Direct; ὄρου(ς) ἁγί(ας) Μαρί(ας) (2); ἀνθ(ρώπων) ἁγί(ας) Μαρί(ας) (11); Indirect; ἀνθ(ρώπων) ἁγί(ας) Μαρί(ας) (4)		VIII	Greek
	Aphrodite	ἁγία	<i>P.Lond.</i> IV 1453.10	Indirect; [ἀνθ(ρώπων(?)) ἁγία(ς) Μ]αρία(ς)		VIII	Greek
	Aphrodite	ἁγία	<i>P.Lond.</i> IV 1491.A	Indirect; ἀ]νθ(ρώπων) ἁγί(ας) Μαρίας		VIII	Greek
	Aphrodite	ἁγία	<i>P.Lond.</i> IV 1552.28	Direct; ὄρου(ς) ἁγί(ας) Μαρί(ας)	14	VIII	Bilingual: Greek and Coptic (Reference in Greek)
16	Antaeopolis	ⲁⲓⲓⲁ	<i>CE</i> 56 (1981) 185-93	Indirect; ⲁⲓⲓⲁ ⲙⲁⲣⲓⲁ ⲛⲧⲕⲱⲟϥ	15	VI	Coptic
	Antaeopolis	ⲁⲓⲓⲁ	<i>CE</i> 65 (1990) 107-10	Indirect; ⲧⲗⲁⲓⲁ ⲙⲁⲣⲓⲁ	15	VI	Coptic
	Antaeopolis	ⲁⲓⲓⲁ	<i>CE</i> 65 (1990) 107-10	Indirect; ⲧⲗⲁⲓⲁ ⲙⲁⲣⲓⲁ	15	VI	Coptic
17	Taniathis	ἁγία	<i>P.Bad.</i> IV 94.9	Direct; π(αρά) τ(οῦ) οἴκ(ου) τῆς ἁγί(ας) Μαρίας	16	c. V	Greek
18	Jeme	ⲁⲓⲓⲁ	<i>O.Crum</i> 511.2-3	Indirect; ⲉⲃⲁⲓⲁ ⲙⲁⲣⲓⲁ	17	Beginning of VII	Coptic

Jeme	αΓΙΑ	<i>O.Crum</i> 175.5	Indirect; ΗΛΙΑ[C] ΔΙΑΚ(ΟΝΟΣ) ΝΘΑΓΙΑ ΜΑΡΙΑ	17	VII	Coptic
Jeme	αΓΙΑ	<i>O.Crum</i> 292.3-4	Indirect; ΝΕCΝΗΥ ΝΘΑΓΙΑ ΜΑΡΙΑ	17	VII	Coptic
Jeme	αΓΙΑ	<i>O.Crum</i> 481.8	Indirect; ΝΘΑΓΙΑ ΜΑΡΙΑ	17	VII	Coptic
Jeme	αΓΙΑ	<i>P.KRU</i> 105.32	Indirect; ΔΑΝΙΗΛ ΝΑΝΔΡΕΑΣ ΠΡΕCΒ(ΥΤΕΡΟΣ) ΝΘΑΓΙΑ ΜΑΡΙΑ	17	VII	Coptic
Jeme	αΓΙΑ	<i>P.MoscowCopt.</i> 44. 14-8	Indirect; ΝΞΕΡ ΠΡΕCΒΥΤΕΡΟΣ ΝΘΑΓΙΑ ΜΑΡΙΑ (14-5); ΙΩCΗΦ ΠΡΕCΒΥΤΕΡΟΣ ΝΘΑΓΙΑ ΜΑΡΙΑ (16-8)	17	VII	Coptic
Jeme	αΓΙΑ	<i>O.Crum</i> 470.1	Indirect; ΘΑΓΙΑ Μ[ΑΡΙΑ	17	VII or VIII	Coptic
Jeme	αΓΙΑ	<i>P.KRU</i> 74.111	Indirect; ΞΗΛΙΑC ΠΩΗΡΕ ΜΜΩΥCΗC ΠΡ(ΕCΒΥΤΕΡΟΣ) ΠΕΙΕΛΑΧ(ΕCΤΟC) ΝΑΝΑΓΝΩΤ(ΗC) ΝΘΑΓΙ[Α ΜΑΡΙΑ]	17	733 or 748	Coptic
Jeme	αΓΙΑ	<i>P.KRU</i> 16. 71-2	Indirect; CΕΝΟΥΘΙΟC ΠΕΕΛΑΧΕCΤΟC ΠΡΕCΒΥ(ΤΕΡΟC) ΝΘΑΓΙΑ ΜΑΡΙΑ	17	735 or 750	Coptic
Jeme	αΓΙΑ	<i>P.KRU</i> 58.31-2	Indirect; ΚΟCΜΑ ΠΩΗΡΕ ΝΠΜΑΓΑΡΙΟC ΠΕCΕΝΘ(ΙΟC) ΠΕΕΛΑΧΧΙCΤΟC ΝΠΡ(Ε)C(ΒΥΤΕΡΟC) ΝΘΑΓΙΑ ΜΑΡΙΑ	17	c. 756	Coptic
Jeme	αΓΙΑ	<i>P.KRU</i> 90.48	Indirect; ΚΟCΜΑ ΠΩΗΡΕ ΝΠΕCΕΝΘΙΟC ΠΕΕΛΑΧΧΙCΤΟC ΝΠΡΕΒΕΤΕΡΟC ΝΘΑΓΙΑ ΜΑΡΙΑ	17	mid VIII	Coptic
Jeme	αΓΙΑ	<i>O.Medin.Habu</i> 61.4-5	Indirect; ΚΟCΜΑ ΠΩΗΡΕ ΝΠΜΑΚΑΡΙΟC ΙCΑΚ ΞΝΘΑΓΙΑ ΜΑΡΙΑ	17	unknown	Coptic
Jeme	αΓΙΑ	<i>P.KRU</i> 94.62-3	Indirect; ΠΡΕΒΕΤΕΡΟC ΝΘΑΓΙΑ ΜΑΡΙΑ ΝΤΡΥΓΑ[ΤΑ Ν]ΔΗΜΕ		c. 748-759	Coptic

18 ^{bis}	Jeme	ΘΕΟΤΟΚΟΣ ΕΤΟΥΔΑΒ, ΠΑΡΘΕΝΟΣ	<i>P.KRU</i> 75.143-4	Indirect; ΜΩΥΣΗΣ ΠΩΗΡΕ ΜΜΑΘΑΙΟΣ ΠΕΙΛΑΧΙΣΤΟΣ) ΜΠΡΕΣΒΥΤΕΡΟΣ ΔΥΩ ΠΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΟΣ ΝΤΕΘΕΩΔΟΚΟΣ ΕΤΟΥΔΑΒ ΜΑΡΙΑ ΤΠΑΡΘΕΝΟΣ	17 ^{bis}	Mid VII	Coptic
	Jeme	ΘΕΟΤΟΚΟΣ	<i>P.KRU</i> 38.71-2	Indirect; ΔΝΑΣΤΑΣΙΟΣ ΠΕΙΛΑΧΙΣΤΟΣ ΝΔΙΑΚ(ΟΝΟΣ) ΝΘΕΩΔΟΚ(ΟΣ) ΜΑΡΙΑ	17 ^{bis}	738	Coptic
19	Hermionthite Nome	θεοτόκος	<i>P.Mon.Epiph.</i> 678.2- 3 = <i>SB IV</i> 7490	Direct; τὸν] δοῦλ<ό>ν σου Φοιβάμων [ἐλ]άχ(ιστον) ἀναγνώστ(ην) ἀγίας ἐκκλ(ησίας) θεοτόκης τ(ῆς?) Φ<ε>ρμ[ωνθ]	18	Unknown	Greek
20	Piohe, Hermionthite Nome	ἀγία	<i>O.Crum</i> 36.8-9	Direct; ΕΤΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑ ΝΘΑΓΙΑ ΜΑΡΙΑ ΜΠΩΡΕ	19	Unknown	Coptic
21	Syene	ἀγία	<i>P.Lond.</i> V 1731.45	Indirect; Ἰσακος Ταείονος ἀρχιδιάκ(ονος) τῆς ἀγίας Μαρίας Συήνης	20	585	Greek
	Syene	ἀγία	<i>P.Münch.</i> I 11.77-8	Indirect; Ἰσακος Ταείονος ἀρχιδιάκ(ονος) τῆς ἀγίας Μαρίας Συήνης	20	586	Greek
	Syene	ἀγία	<i>P.Lond.</i> V 1850	Indirect; πρεσβύτερος τῆς ἀγίας Μαρία[ς]	20	VI	Greek
22	Syene, West Bank	παρθένοC	<i>SB Kopt.</i> I 551.2-4	Indirect; [Π]ΜΟΝΟΧΟΣ ΔΥΩ ΠΕΙΚΟΝΟΜΟΣ ΝΤΠΑΡΘ(ΕΝΟΣ)	20 ^{bis}	716	Coptic
23	Philae	ΤΕΝΧΘΕΙC ΤΗΡΗ, ΘΕΟΤΟΚΟΣ ΕΤΟΥΔΑΒ	Richter, <i>Studien</i> , 128-35 (lines 6-8) (= <i>SB Kopt.</i> I 302)	Indirect; ΠΤΟΠΟΣ ΝΤΕΝΧΘΕΙC ΤΗΡΗ ΤΕΘΕΩΤΩΚΟΣ ΕΤΟΥΔΑΒ ΜΑΡΙΑ ΜΠΙΔΑΚ	21	752	Coptic

Appendix 2

Catalogue of Wall Paintings of Mary from Egypt

Cat. No.	Fig. No.	Original Location	Publication	Composition	Date	Brief Description
MARY IN DOUBLE COMPOSITIONS						
<i>a) Mary in a Medallion</i>						
1	8	Apse in East wall of Chapel B, Monastery of Apa Jeremiah at Saqqara	Quibell, <i>Saqqara</i> 1906-7, 65 (Pls 46, 47 and 49).	Double Composition: Mary in a Medallion flanked by Saints	6/7th c.	Upper - Christ with two of the four creatures of the apocalypse. Largely destroyed. Lower - The bust of Mary is depicted in a medallion and she looks forward. She is veiled and has a halo. She is flanked by two medallions that contain the busts of the archangels Gabriel and Michael.
<i>b) Enthroned Mary and Child</i>						
2	9	Niche in East wall of Cell F, Monastery of Apa Jeremiah at Saqqara	Picture without description. Quibell, <i>Saqqara</i> 1906-7, Pl. 55.	Double Composition: Enthroned Mary and Child	6/7th c.	Upper: The lower half of an enthroned Christ in Majesty with the symbol of the ox in the lower right hand side of the composition. Christ is flanked by medallions of the sun and moon. Lower: Mary is enthroned with the Child sitting in her left lap. Both of them have haloes and Mary is identified by an inscription above her head. She is flanked by the archangels Gabriel and Michael as well as Apa Peter, Enoch and three other individuals, one of which may be a woman.
3	10	Niche in East wall of Cell 1723, Monastery of Apa Jeremiah at Saqqara	Quibell, <i>Saqqara</i> 1908-9, 1909-10, Pl. 25.	Double Composition: Enthroned Mary with <i>clipeus</i> of Child	6/7th c.	Upper: Enthroned Christ surrounded by the sun, moon and stars. Lower: Mary is holding a medallion that bears the face of a beardless Christ, and flanked by the archangels Gabriel and Michael.

4	11	Niche in East wall of Cell 1727, Monastery of Apa Jeremiah at Saqqara	Quibell, <i>Saqqara</i> 1908-9, 1909-10, Pl. 24.	Double Composition: Enthroned Mary and Child	6/7th c.	Double Composition: Upper: A figure of Christ is flanked by two medallions, each with the bust of an angel. Lower: An enthroned Virgin holds the Child in her left lap. They are flanked by Gabriel and Jeremias, who curiously has both a round and a square <i>nimbus</i> (her proper right) and Michael and Enoch (her proper left).
5	N/A	Niche in East wall of Cell 1733, Monastery of Apa Jeremiah at Saqqara	Never photographed. Quibell, <i>Saqqara</i> 1908-9, 1909-10, 22.	Double Composition: Enthroned Mary and Child	6/7th c.	Upper: Christ (not mentioned if enthroned) is flanked by two figures, the only remnants of which are two human hands on either side of him, each of which holds a book. On the right, there is the ox symbol, which assumes the presence the four apocalyptic creatures. Lower: A central Virgin and Child are flanked by Jeremias and Michael (her proper right) and Enoch and Gabriel (her proper left).
6	12	Niche in East wall of Chapel 3, Monastery of Apa Apollo at Bawit	Clédât, <i>Monastère</i> I, 13-29, esp. 23-4 (Pl. 21).	Double Composition: Enthroned Mary and Child	6/7th c.	Upper: Christ is enthroned within a <i>mandorla</i> , holding a book. The <i>mandorla</i> is surrounded by the four apocalyptic creatures. Lower: Enthroned Virgin and Child are flanked by the archangel Michael and seven local saints on her proper left and Gabriel and another group of seven local saints (including one Apa Apollo) on her proper right.

7	13	Niche in East wall of Room 6, Monastery of Apa Apollo at Bawit	Maspero, <i>Fouilles</i> , 20-3 (Pls 21-4).	Double Composition: Enthroned Mary and Child	6-8th c.	Upper: Enthroned Christ in a <i>mandorla</i> , which is carried on wheels, just above a pair of flames. Christ holds an open book in his left hand, while his right offers the sign of benediction. He is surrounded by the four apocalyptic creatures and flanked by two angels. Lower: Enthroned Mary with the Child sitting in her left lap. Both have haloes and Jesus holds up his right hand. They are flanked on both sides by six bearded apostles and a local saint.
8	14	Niche in East wall of Chapel 42, Monastery of Apa Apollo at Bawit	Clédât, 'Nouvelles recherches', 517-26 (Pl. 1).	Double Composition: Enthroned Mary as <i>Galaktotrophousa</i>	6/7th c.	Upper: Enthroned Christ in Majesty with two of the four preserved apocalyptic creatures, as well as busts of the sun and moon. Lower: An enthroned Mary offers her right breast with her left hand, while the Child sits on her right knee, grasping her left arm with both hands. On either side of them are the twelve apostles (with inscriptions).
d) Mary Orans						
9	15	Niche in East wall of Chapel 17, Monastery of Apa Apollo at Bawit	Clédât, <i>Monastère I</i> , 73-85, esp. 75-7 (Pls 40-4).	Mary Orans	7th/8th c.	Upper: Christ in Majesty inside of a <i>mandorla</i> , holding an open book in his left hand, while his right offers the sign of benediction. On either side of the <i>mandorla</i> are the two archangels holding crowns, the four apocalyptic creatures, and busts of the sun and moon. Lower: Mary stands in the orant position, flanked by the twelve apostles and one anonymous figure.

10	16	Niche in East Wall of Room 20, Monastery of Apa Apollo at Bawit	Maspero, <i>Fouilles</i> , 31-2 (Pls 31-4).	Mary <i>Orans</i>	7/8th c.	Upper: Christ, the four apocalyptic creatures and the sun and moon. Lower: Virgin <i>orans</i> , with eleven apostles, Gabriel, Michael, Apa Paternoute, Apa Macarius and Apa Kolluthius (Does not officially have two registers).
e) Mary in an Indeterminate Pose						
11	17	Niche in East Wall of Cell D, Monastery of Apa Jeremiah at Saqqara	Quibell, <i>Saqqara</i> 1906-7, Pl. 59.	Double Composition: Enthroned Mary and Child (?)	6/7th c.	Upper: The upper tier is poorly preserved. We only see the lower portion of a <i>mandorla</i> , in which there is either a fragment of Christ's leg or his throne. There are also the bottom portions of two medallions that flank the central Christ and each contain a bust of an unknown figure. Lower: Mary appears centrally (perhaps enthroned and with Child), flanked by the archangels and Apa Jeremias (left) and Enoch (right), all of which are only depicted from the waist up.
ENTHRONED VIRGIN AND CHILD IN SINGLE COMPOSITIONS						
12	18	Wall in Courtyard of House D, Kom el-Dikka	Rodziewicz, <i>Alexandrie III</i> , 199-204 (Fig. 236).	Enthroned Virgin and Child	Early 6th c.	Only small fragments of this painting are preserved, and the image of the Virgin is largely discerned from a faint outline of a face and eye, a few fragments of drapery, a foot and the placement of the child Christ in the scene. The enthroned Virgin and Child are flanked (at least to their proper right) by two figures, a small individual (perhaps the donor) and an angel. Jesus sits on her left knee.

13	19	Niche in East Wall of Cell 1719, Monastery of Apa Jeremiah at Saqqara	Quibell, <i>Saqqara</i> 1908-9, 1909-10, Pl. 23.	Enthroned Virgin and Child	6/7th c.	Mary is enthroned with Jesus sitting in her left lap. Both of them have haloes and Mary's right hand rests on Jesus' knee. They are flanked on either side by the archangels Gabriel and Michael and two saints (maybe Jeremias and Enoch).
14	N/A	Niche in East Wall of Cell 1943, Monastery of Apa Jeremiah at Saqqara	Never photographed. Quibell, <i>Saqqara</i> 1908-9, 1909-10, 28.	Enthroned (?) Virgin and Child	6/7th c.	Quibell only describes the painting as "a picture of the Virgin and Child".
15	20	NE column of North Church, Monastery of Apa Apollo at Bawit	Clédat, <i>Monastère</i> (1999), Pl. 184.	Enthroned Virgin and Child	6/7th c.	Painting is very faded. Appears to be an enthroned Virgin and Child. Jesus sits in Mary's left lap and both have haloes.
16	21	Niche in east wall of Room 1, Monastery of Apa Apollo at Bawit	Maspero, <i>Fouilles</i> , 15-6 (Pl. 8b).	Enthroned Virgin with Child	6/7th c.	Large hole cut through the central portion of the niche, thus any attempt at the reconstruction of this section is impossible. A large vase or chalice filled with small circular objects is featured in the centre of the composition. To its right are an angel and an unknown saint. To its left are another angel and saint, as well as the enthroned Virgin, who is depicted on the far left of the composition. The upper portion of her body is missing, but two small feet are seen near her left knee, indicating that she carries the Child on her left lap.

17	N/A	East wall of Chapel 7, Monastery of Apa Apollo at Bawit	Never photographed. Clédat, <i>Monastère</i> I, 133-48.	Enthroned Virgin and Child	6/7th c.	An enthroned Virgin and Child are flanked by Gabriel, the deacon Stephen, Apa Kiriakos on her proper right and George the porter (?), Michael, and an anonymous figure on her proper left.
18	22	Niche in East wall of Chapel 28, Monastery of Apa Apollo at Bawit	Clédat, <i>Monastère</i> I, 153-64, esp. 154-7 (Pls 96b and 98).	Enthroned Virgin and Child	6/7th c.	The Virgin holds a medallion bearing the infant Christ who makes the sign of benediction with his right hand. They are flanked by the angel of God and the angel of the Lord, who are identified by inscriptions.
19	N/A	Niche in West wall of Chapel 32, Monastery of Apa Apollo at Bawit	Never photographed. Clédat, <i>Monastère</i> I, 13.	Enthroned Virgin and Child	6/7th c.	An enthroned Mary inclines her head toward the Child, who sits on her left knee, and offers the sign of benediction with her right hand. She is flanked by two angels who slightly incline their bodies and gaze towards the Virgin.
20	23	Niche in East wall of Chapel 55, Monastery of Apa Apollo at Bawit	Clédat, <i>Monastère</i> (1999), 149-50 (Pls 131-4).	Enthroned Virgin and Child	6/7th c.	An enthroned Mary carries the Child in the center of her lap, as he holds open the book of the evangelists. Mary's left hand rests on Christ's <i>nimbus</i> , while her right is placed on Christ's right leg. They are flanked by the archangels on either side, both of whom carry a green disc in one hand and a baton in the other.
21	24	Southern face of North Pillar, Church in Isis Temple, Syene	Bresciani and Pernigotti, <i>Assuan</i> , 39-41 (Pl. 27).	Enthroned Virgin and Child	6-9th c.	Poorly preserved painting of an enthroned Mary (probably with Child), flanked by three standing individuals on either side. The composition is bordered along the bottom by a red frame, which presumably encased the entire image.

ENTHRONED VIRGIN WITHOUT CHILD						
22	N/A	Niche in East wall of Cell 1724, Monastery of Apa Jeremiah at Saqqara	Never Photographed. Quibell, <i>Saqqara</i> 1908-9, 1909-10, 23.	Virgin without Child	6/7th c.	Mary is flanked by Enoch and Apa Jeremias, each of which holds a long cross over their shoulder. There are two archangels on the outer sides of this composition.
23	N/A	Niche in East Wall of Chapel 8, Monastery of Apa Apollo at Bawit	Never Photographed. Clédat, <i>Monastère</i> I, 49-52.	Enthroned Virgin (?) without Child	6/7th c.	Poorly preserved. Traces of Enthroned Virgin (or perhaps Christ), flanked by archangels and Fathers of the Coptic Church.
GALAKTOTROPHOUSA						
24	25	Niche in East wall of Cell A, Monastery of Apa Jeremiah at Saqqara	Quibell, <i>Saqqara</i> 1906-1907, 81-2 (Pls 40-3).	<i>Galaktotrophousa</i>	6/7th c.	An enthroned Mary offers Jesus her right breast with her left hand, while Jesus sits on her right knee, grasping her left arm with both hands. Both have haloes and are looking frontally. The archangels Michael and Gabriel appear on either side of this composition.
25	26	Niche in East wall of Cell 1725, Monastery of Apa Jeremiah at Saqqara	Quibell, <i>Saqqara</i> 1908-9, 1909-10, 23 (Pl. 22).	<i>Galaktotrophousa</i>	6/7th c.	An enthroned Mary offers her right breast with her left hand, while Jesus sits on her right knee, grasping her left arm with both hands. Both have haloes. Mary is looking upwards and to the right, while Jesus turns his head towards Mary. The figures are flanked by the archangels Michael and Gabriel as well as two saints in the background (Jeremias and Enoch).

26	N/A	Niche in East wall of Cell 1807, Monastery of Apa Jeremiah at Saqqara	Never Photographed. Quibell, <i>Saqqara</i> 1908-9, 1909-10, 19.	<i>Galaktotrophousa</i>	6/7th c. (?)	An enthroned Mary nurses Jesus (there is no discussion of their positioning). To her proper right there is an archangel carrying a cross. Above him is a saint holding a book.
27	27	Niche in East wall of Room 30, Monastery of Apa Apollo at Bawit	Maspero, <i>Fouilles</i> , 37-8 (Pls 42-5).	<i>Galaktotrophousa</i>	6/7th c.	An enthroned Mary offers her right breast with her left hand, while Jesus sits on her right knee, grasping her left arm with both hands.
8	14	Niche in East wall of Cell 42, Monastery of Apa Apollo at Bawit	Clédât, 'Nouvelles recherches', 517-26 (Pl. 1).	Double Composition and <i>Galaktotrophousa</i>	6/7th c.	Double Composition: Christ in Majesty in the upper zone above an enthroned Mary, who offers her right breast with her left hand, while Jesus sits on her right knee, grasping her left arm with both hands. On either side of them are the twelve apostles (with inscriptions).
28	28	Half column in <i>khurus</i> , Deir el-Surian, in the Wadi el-Natrun	Innemée, 'Mural Painting', 1-24 (Fig. 9).	<i>Galaktotrophousa</i>	Second half of the 7th c. or beginning of 8th c.	An enthroned Mary offers Jesus her right breast with her left hand, while He sits on her right knee, reaching for her left arm with both hands.
29	29	North Triconch of the Church of Anba Bishay, Sohag	Laferrière, <i>Bible murale</i> , 26-8 (Pl. 4).	<i>Galaktotrophousa</i>	7/8th c.	An enthroned Mary offers her left breast with her right hand, while Jesus sits on her left knee. Jesus outstretches his hands towards her right arm. Both have haloes. They are flanked to their proper right by Isaiah and Daniel and to their proper left by Ezekiel and Jeremiah. All of the prophets hold scrolls recounting their prophecies of the Virgin birth. There are also four saints depicted on columns, two on either side of the Virgin. In the far corners above the main scene are the busts of John and Salome.

ANNUNCIATION						
30	30	Dome of the Chapel of Peace, Khargah Oasis	Fakhry, <i>Necropolis</i> , 77-8 (Fig. 70).	Annunciation	5/6th c.	Virgin Mary stands frontally, her hands open on her breast to signify prayer. Instead of the archangel Gabriel, a dove delivers the announcement to the Virgin. She has an oddly shaped halo that stretches down her back.
31	31	Crypt at Kom Abu Jirjah, West of Alexandria	Rassart-Debergh, 'Peinture copte', 91-107 (Fig. 2.4).	Annunciation	6/7th c.	Very little remains of this painting, but we can make out a throne and the left side of the Virgin's face. Gabriel appears on her proper left, gesturing towards her with his hands. He faces forward but his feet are directed towards her, assuming a walking position. An inscription with the Annunciation appears between the two figures.
32	32	North wall of Chapel 51, Monastery of Apa Apollo at Bawit	Clédat, <i>Monastère</i> (1999), 110-4 (Pls 109-13).	Annunciation (a); Visitation (b); Voyage to Bethlehem (c); Nativity (d)	end of 6-9th c.	This Annunciation is part of a Marian cycle that runs along the north wall of the Chapel. Mary is enthroned with a halo and rests her right hand on her left breast, while her left hand gives the sign of benediction. The archangel Gabriel stands on her proper left and gestures towards her with his right hand. Both are identified by an inscription.
33	33	Semi-dome of Western apse, Deir el- Surian, Wadi el-Natron	Innemée, 'Mural Painting', Fig. 1	Annunciation	Date disputed, between 8th - 12th c.	An enthroned Mary sits in the central position, while Gabriel stands to her proper left. He raises his right hand towards Mary. They are flanked by the four prophets Moses, Isaiah, Ezekiel and Daniel (two on each side and named in Greek), who hold proclamation scrolls written in Bohairic Coptic.

CYCLES WITH MARY						
34	34 and 35	Room I, Walls 1 and 2, Subterranean Church at Deir Abu Hinnis	Clédat, 'Notes archéologiques', Pl. 2.	Massacre of the Innocents (a); Visitation to Joseph (b); and Flight into Egypt (c)	Unknown. No earlier than 6th c.	Wall 1: Herod sits on a throne overseeing the Massacre of the Innocents, which is carried out by two soldiers (a). A third man stands in front of a house, where a kneeling Zacharias pleads for his child's life (partially on wall 2). Wall 2, we next find Gabriel appearing to Joseph, who is lying on a bed (b). This is followed by the Flight into Egypt (c), whereby Mary and Child are depicted riding a donkey, as Joseph walks behind them. Joseph is named in an inscription.
32, 35, 36, and 37	32, 36, 37, and 38	North wall of Chapel 51, Monastery of Apa Apollo at Bawit	Clédat, <i>Monastère</i> (1999), 110-4 (Pls 109-13).	Annunciation (a); Visitation (b); Voyage to Bethlehem (c); Nativity (d)	end of 6-9th c.	From left, (a) Annunciation: an enthroned Mary with a halo. Her right hand rests on her left breast, while her left hand gives the sign of benediction. The archangel Gabriel stands on her proper left. Both are identified by an inscription; (b) Visitation: Mary and Elizabeth are shown standing in an embrace in front of a building. Both are identified by inscriptions and have haloes; (c) Voyage to Bethlehem: Joseph walks behind a white horse, which Mary sits atop. She holds a baton (or stick) in her left hand. The horse is led by Gabriel. Most of the inscriptions have been erased, but they were probably all named. All have haloes; (d) Nativity: Mary is lying on a bed, accompanied by a standing female, with a square halo, to her proper left, arms extended towards the Mary. An inscription identifies her as Salome.
38 and 33	39 and 33	North and Western semi-domes, Deir el-Surian, Wadi el-Natrun	Epiphany: Innemée, 'Newly Discovered Painting, Fig. 1. Annunciation: Innemée, 'Mural Painting', Fig. 1.	Epiphany (North), Annunciation (West)	Date disputed, between 8th - 12th c.	Epiphany: An enthroned Virgin holds a <i>clipeus</i> of Christ Emmanuel, flanked by the archangel Gabriel and the three shepherds to her right, and the archangel Michael and the three magi to her left; Annunciation: An enthroned Mary sits in the central position, while Gabriel stands to her proper left. He raises his right hand towards Mary. They are flanked by the four prophets Moses, Isaiah, Ezekiel and Daniel (two on each side and named in Greek), who hold proclamation scrolls written in Bohairic Coptic.

MISCELLANEOUS SCENES WITH MARY						
39	N/A	Niche in East wall of Cell 1740, Monastery of Apa Jeremiah at Saqqara	Never photographed. Quibell, <i>Saqqara</i> 1908-9, 1909-10, 21.	Unknown type of Christ and Virgin	6/7th c.	The painting is largely damaged. Quibell could only detect the figure of Christ (described as 'Our Lord') and the head of Mary.
40	40	East wall of Chapel 59, Monastery of Apa Apollo at Bawit	Clédat, <i>Monastère</i> (1999), 175-6 (Pls 154-5 and 158).	Mary and Adult Christ Enthroned	8/9th c.	An adult Christ (left) and Mary (right) are enthroned on an elevated platform and flanked by ten individuals. Two of the saints to the proper right of Christ are also seated on this platform, while the remaining stand. Only the names of Peter and Daniel have survived. All have haloes. Christ holds a book against his lap with his left hand and his right makes the Greek sign of benediction. This is the first instance of the Greek sign of benediction in Egypt before the 10th c.
41	41	Room II, Wall 9, Subterranean Church at Deir Abu Hinnis	Clédat, 'Notes archéologiques', Pl. 3.	Virgin and Child	Unknown. No earlier than 6th c.	Partially preserved representation of the Virgin carrying a <i>clipeus</i> with the Child. Only Mary's <i>nimbus</i> is visible. The figures are encased in a medallion, but Mary is only depicted in bust form and there is no indication that she was enthroned.
42	41	Room II, Wall 9, Subterranean Church at Deir Abu Hinnis	Clédat, 'Notes archéologiques', Pl. 3.	Wedding at Cana	Unknown. No earlier than 6th c.	There are five figures in the scene. Mary and Jesus stand at the far left (both have haloes). Jesus extends his right hand, which holds a stick, towards an amphora to carry out the miracle. In the centre there is a male figure holding up his right hand, which may be holding some kind of vase. To his left is another male figure who is pouring wine from an amphora and at the far right is a woman who appears to be holding a vase on her shoulder.

43	42	East wall of the South Church, Hermitage No. 4, Esna	Sauneron and Jacquet, <i>Ermitages chrétiens</i> , 1.80-1 (Pl. 30c).	Virgin and Child	Second half of the 6th - first half of 7th c.	Mary holds the Child on her left side, while her right hand gestures towards the Child. They are flanked by the archangels Michael and Gabriel. This image is unusual as it depicts Mary and the archangels in bust form, with no evidence of a throne for Mary. A partial inscription identifies her. It is unclear whether Jesus is in a medallion or has a poorly formed halo, since only his head is displayed.
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Figures

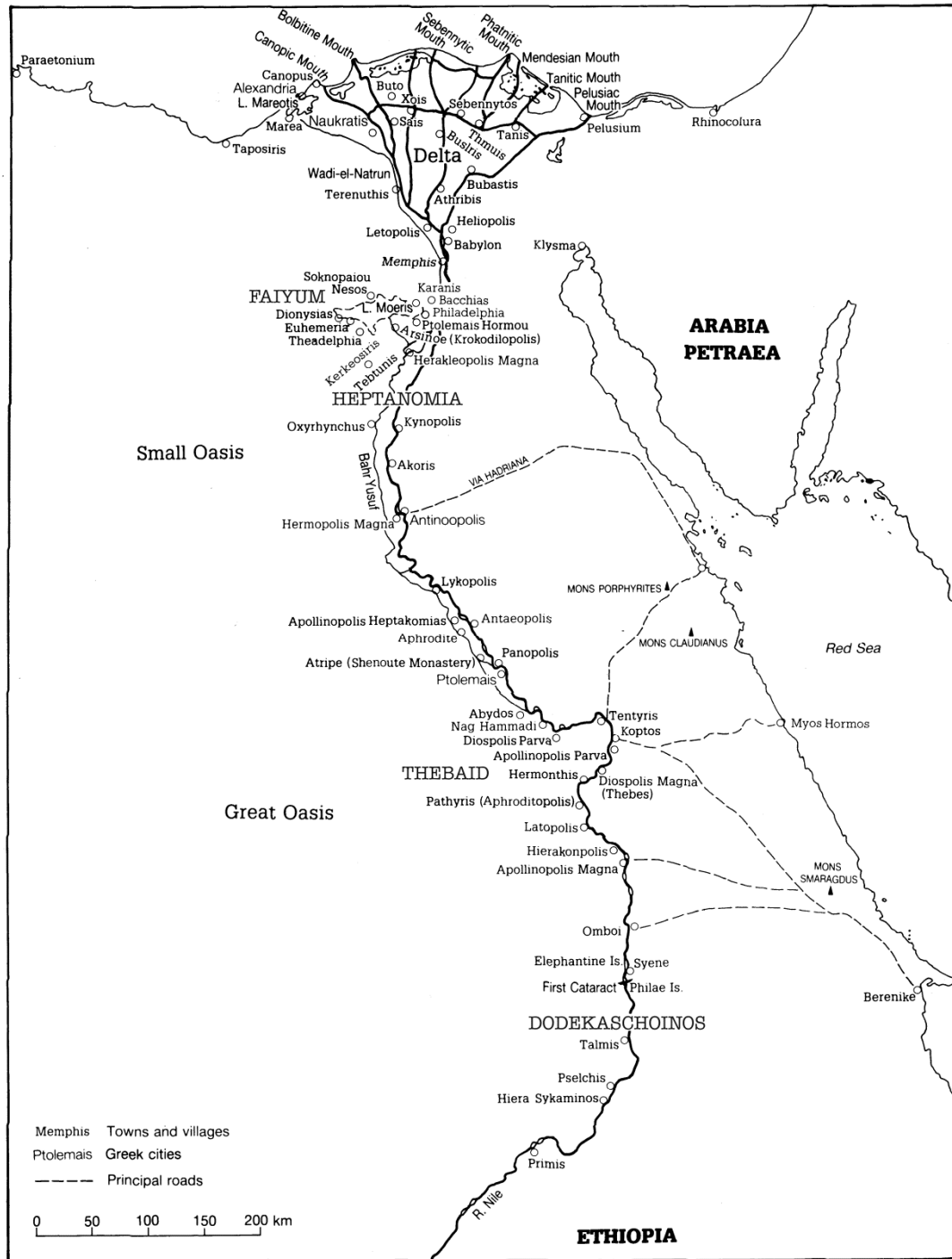


Fig. 1. Map of Egypt
(Dijkstra, *Philae and the End*, Fig. 1).

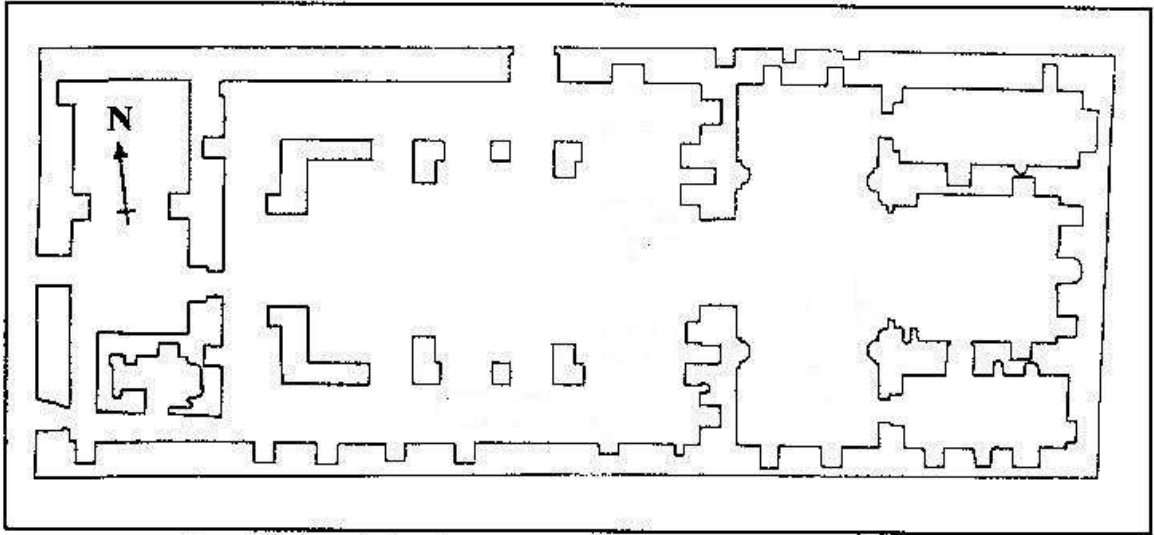


Fig. 2. Plan of the Second Church of the Theotokos at Deir el-Surian
(Innemée and van Rompay, 'Présence des Syriens', 168 (Fig. 1).

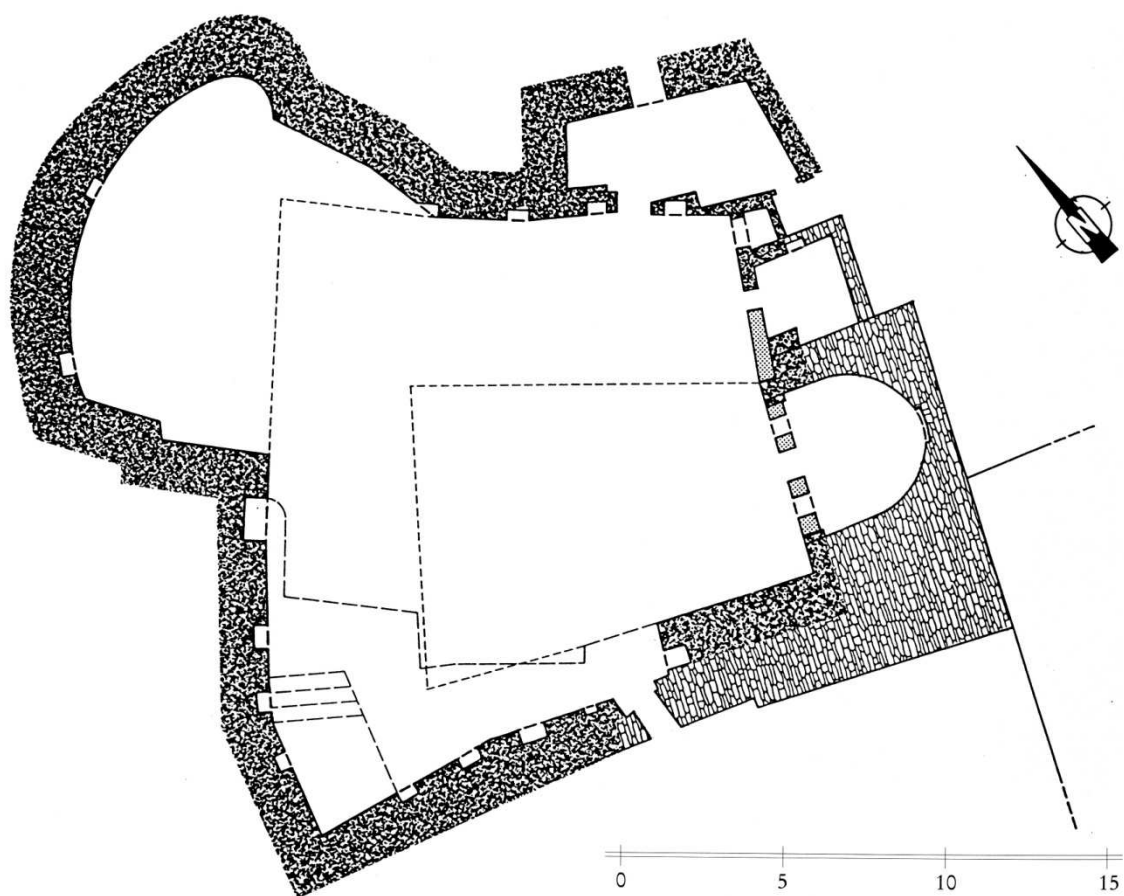


Fig. 3. Plan of The Church of the Virgin at Deir el-Ganadla
(Buschhausen and Khorshid, 'Malerei', 62 (Fig. 1).

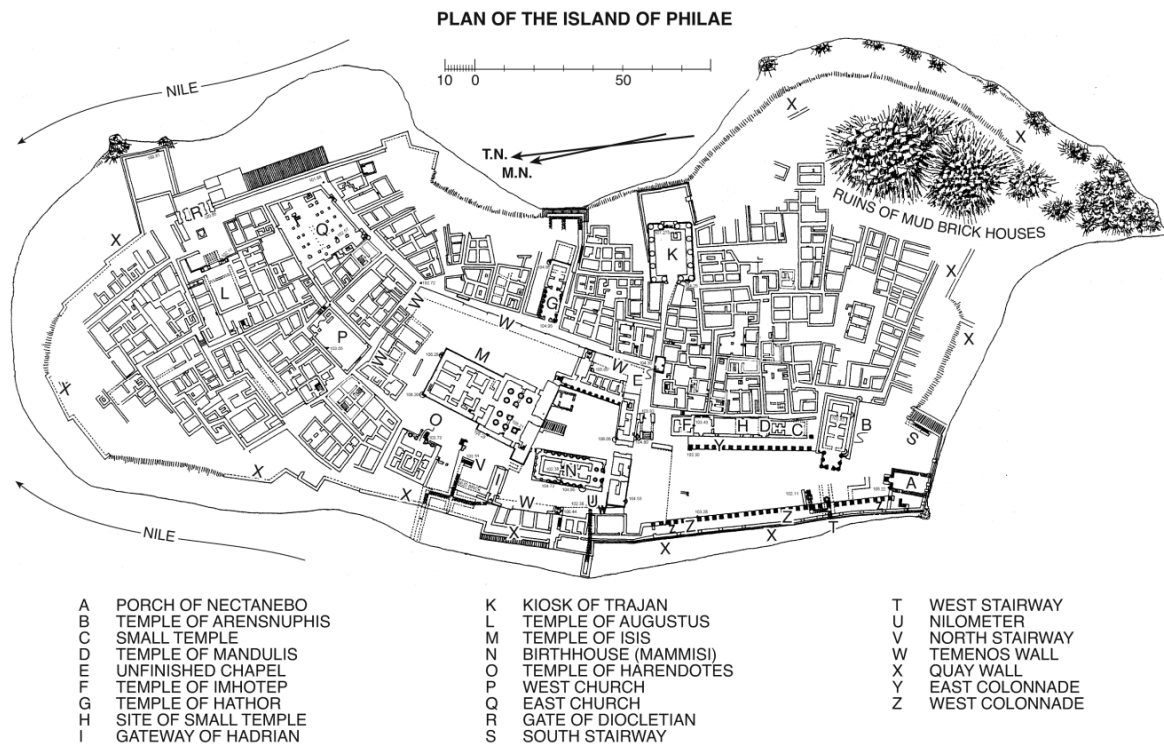


Fig. 4. Plan of the Island of Philae
(Dijkstra, *Philae and the End*, Fig. 13)

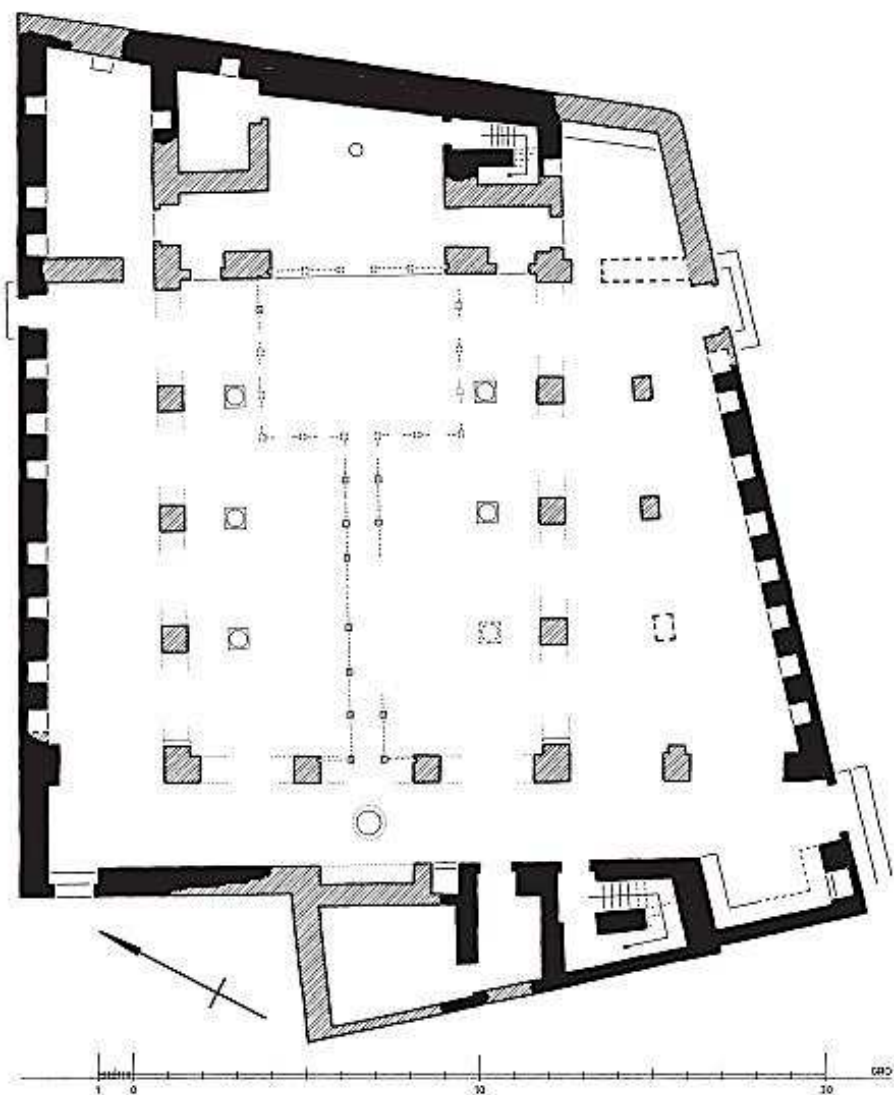


Fig. 5. Plan of the East Church at Philae
(Grossmann, 'Neue Überlegungen', 54 (Fig. 1).

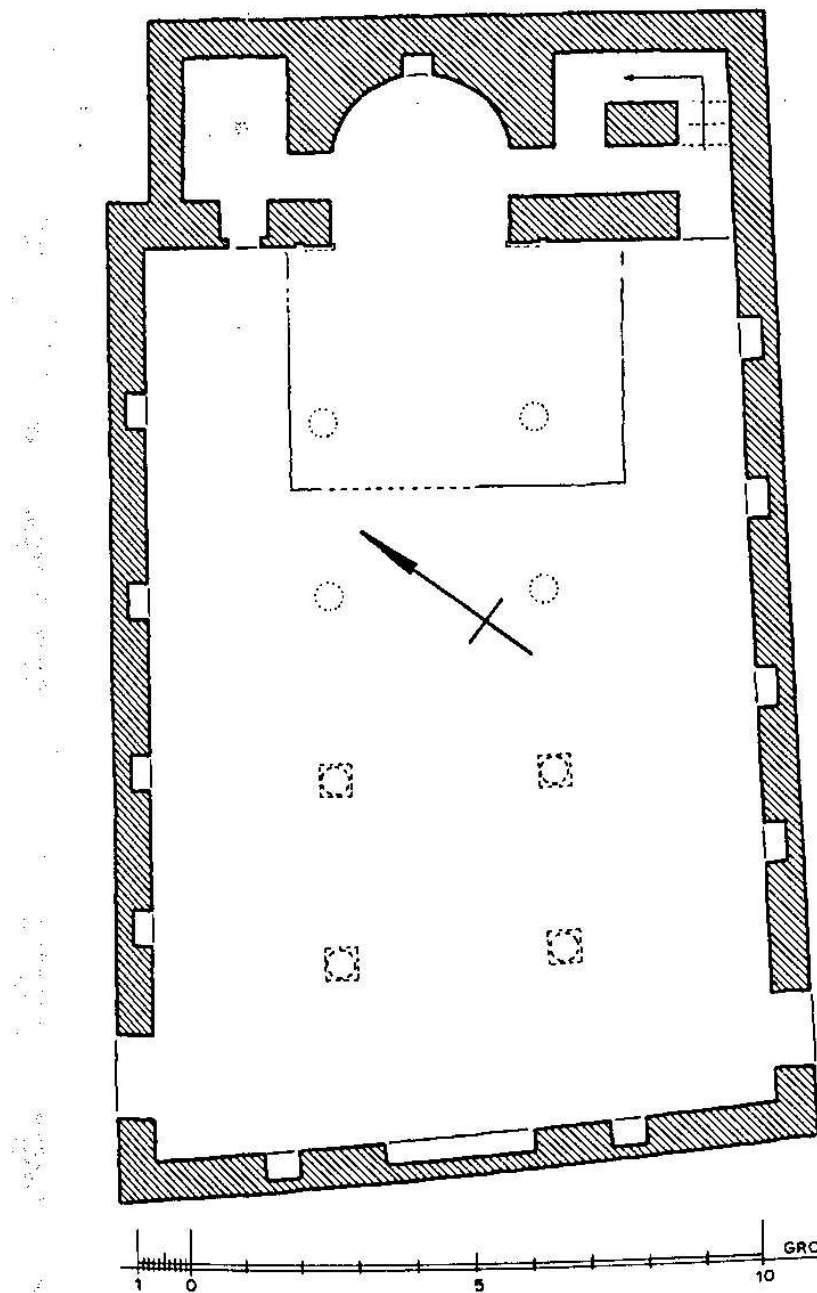


Fig. 6. Plan of the West Church at Philae
(Grossmann, *Christliche Architektur*, Fig. 79).

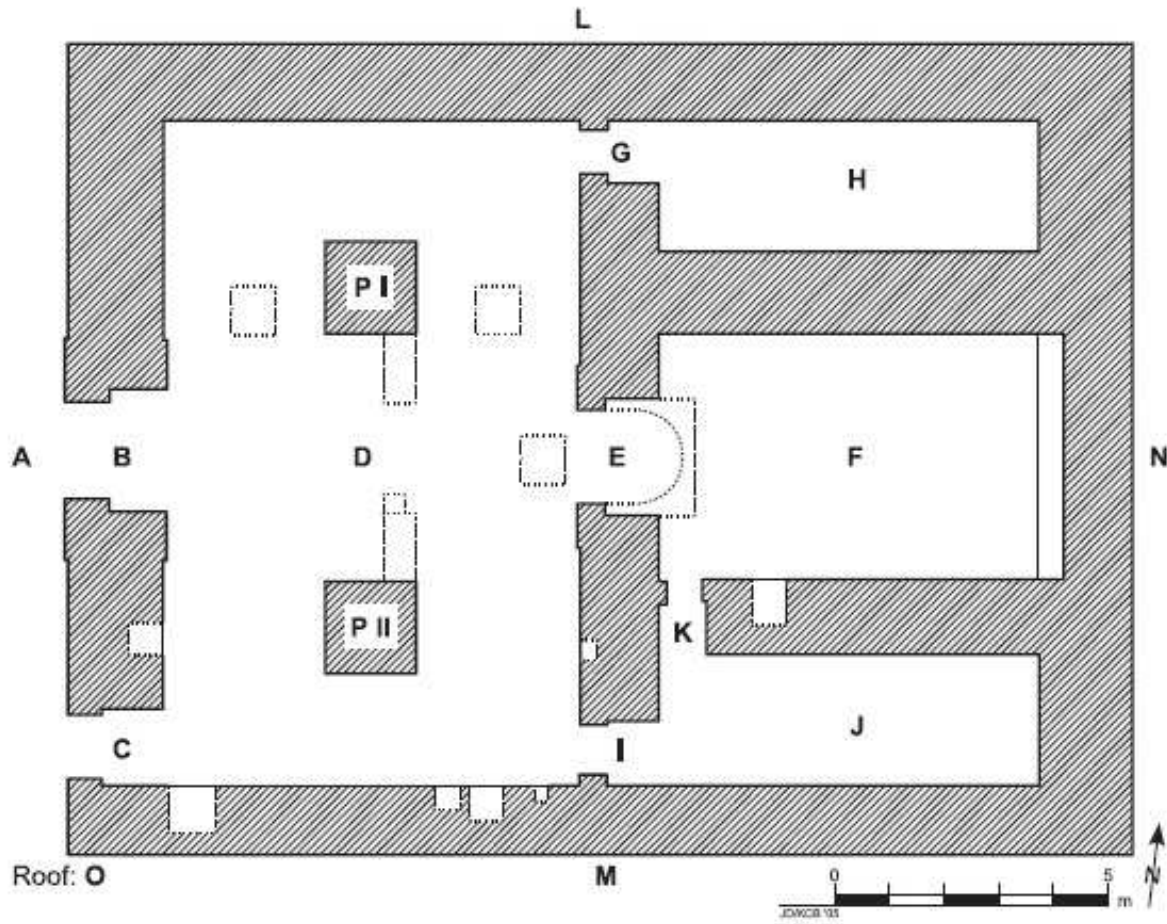


Fig. 7. Plan of the Isis Temple at Aswan (with indications of the traces of the church)
(von Pilgrim *et al.*, 'Town of Syene. 3rd/4th Season', 229 (Fig. 7).



Fig. 8. Double Composition: Mary in a Medallion
Chapel B, Monastery of Apa Jeremiah, Saqqara
(Quibell, *Saqqara* 1906-7, Pl. 46).



Fig. 9. Double Composition: Enthroned Mary and Child
Cell F, Monastery of Apa Jeremiah, Saqqara
(Quibell, *Saqqara* 1906-7, Pl. 55).



Fig. 10. Double Composition: Enthroned Mary and Child
Cell 1723, Monastery of Apa Jeremiah, Saqqara
(Quibell, *Saqqara* 1908-9, 1909-10, Pl. 25).



Fig. 11. Double Composition: Enthroned Mary and Child
Cell 1727, Monastery of Apa Jeremiah, Saqqara
(Quibell, *Saqqara* 1908-9, 1909-10, Pl. 24).



Fig. 12. Double Composition: Enthroned Mary and Child
 Chapel 3, Monastery of Apa Apollo, Bawit
 (Clédat, *Monastère I*, Pl. 21).



Fig. 13. Double Composition: Enthroned Mary and Child
Room 6, Monastery of Apa Apollo, Bawit
(Maspero, *Fouilles*, Pl. 21a).



Fig. 14. Double Composition: Enthroned Mary and Child
Chapel 42, Monastery of Apa Apollo, Bawit
(Clédat, 'Nouvelles recherches', Pl. 1).



Fig. 15. Double Composition: Mary Orans
Chapel 17, Monastery of Apa Apollo, Bawit
(Clédat, *Monastère I*, Pl. 40).

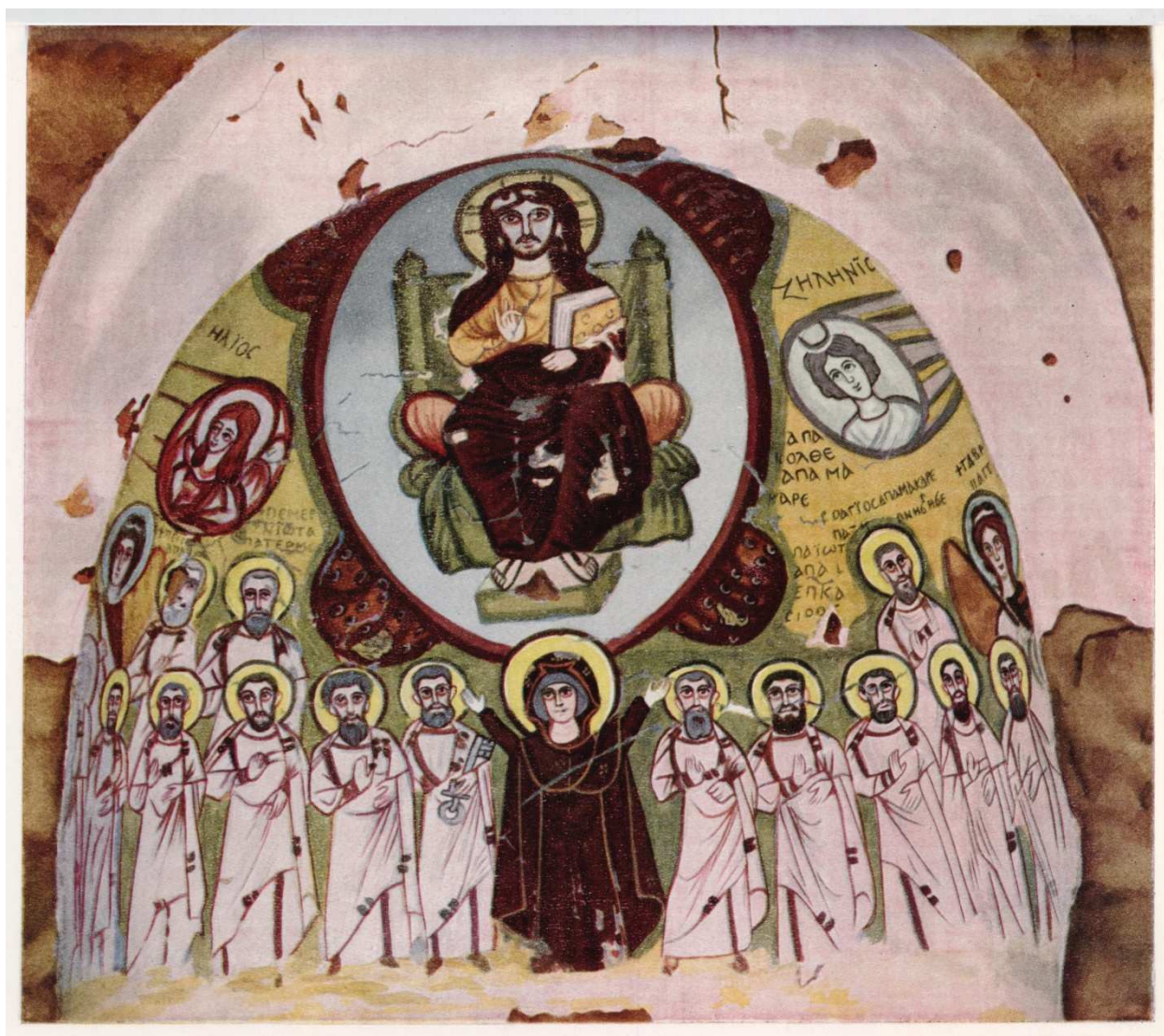


Fig. 16. Double Composition: Mary Orans
 Chapel 20, Monastery of Apa Apollo, Bawit
 (Maspero, *Fouilles*, Pl. 32).



Fig. 17. Double Composition: Mary in an Indeterminate Pose
Cell D, Monastery of Apa Jeremiah, Saqqara
(Quibell, *Saqqara* 1906-7, Pl. 59).



Fig. 18. Enthroned Virgin and Child: Courtyard of House D, Kom el-Dikka, Alexandria
(Rodziewicz, *Alexandrie III*, Fig. 236).

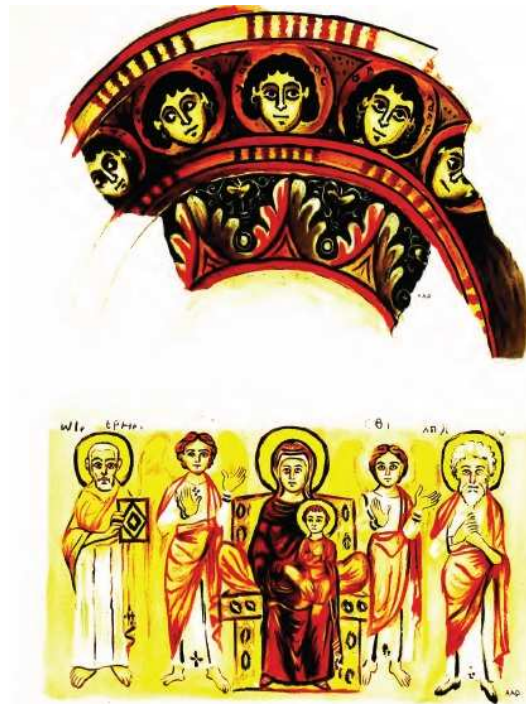


Fig. 19. Enthroned Virgin and Child: Cell 1719, Monastery of Apa Jeremiah, Saqqara (Quibell, *Saqqara 1908-9, 1909-10*, Pl. 23).



Fig. 20. Enthroned Virgin and Child
North-East Column of North Church, Monastery of Apa Apollo, Bawit (Clédat, *Monastère* (1999), Fig. 184).

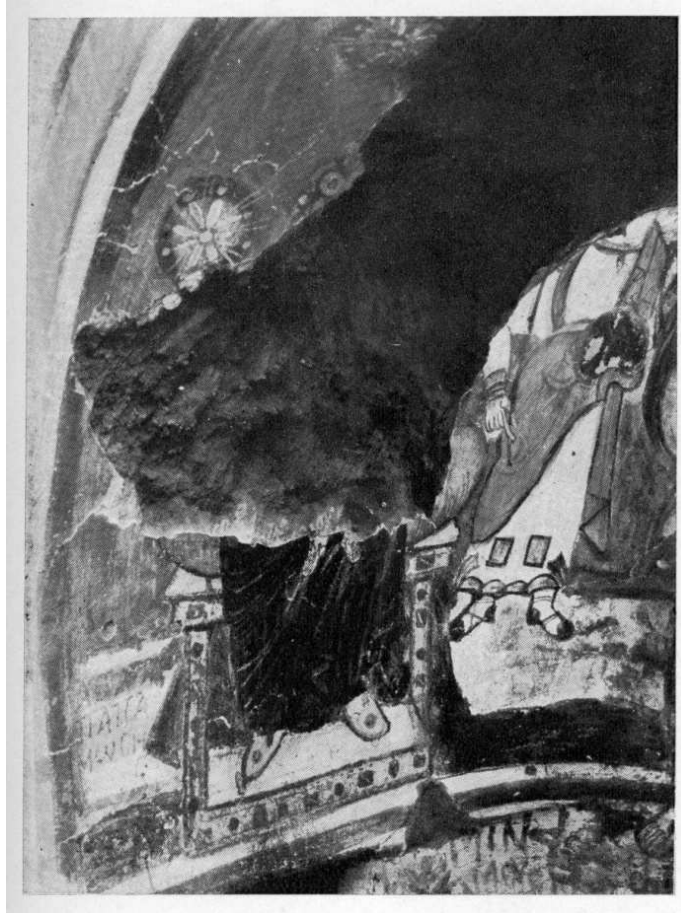


Fig. 21. Enthroned Virgin and Child: Room 1, Monastery of Apa Apollo, Bawit
(Maspero, *Fouilles*, Pl. 8b).



Fig. 22. Enthroned Virgin and Child: Chapel 28, Monastery of Apa Apollo, Bawit (Clédat, *Monestère 1*, Pl. 96b).



Fig. 23. Chapel 55: Monastery of Apa Apollo at Bawit
(Clédât, *Monastère* (1999), Pl. 133).

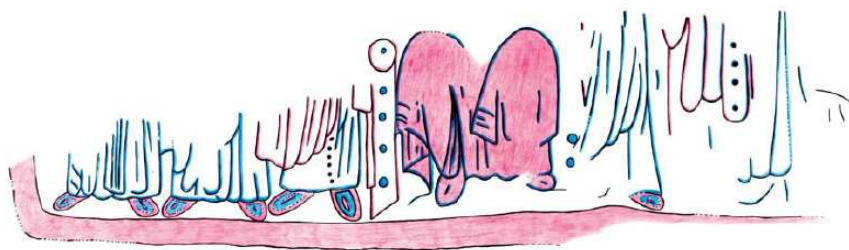


Fig. 24. Enthroned Virgin and Child: North Pillar, Church in the Temple of Isis, Syene
(Bresciani and Pernigotti, *Assuan*, Pl. 27).

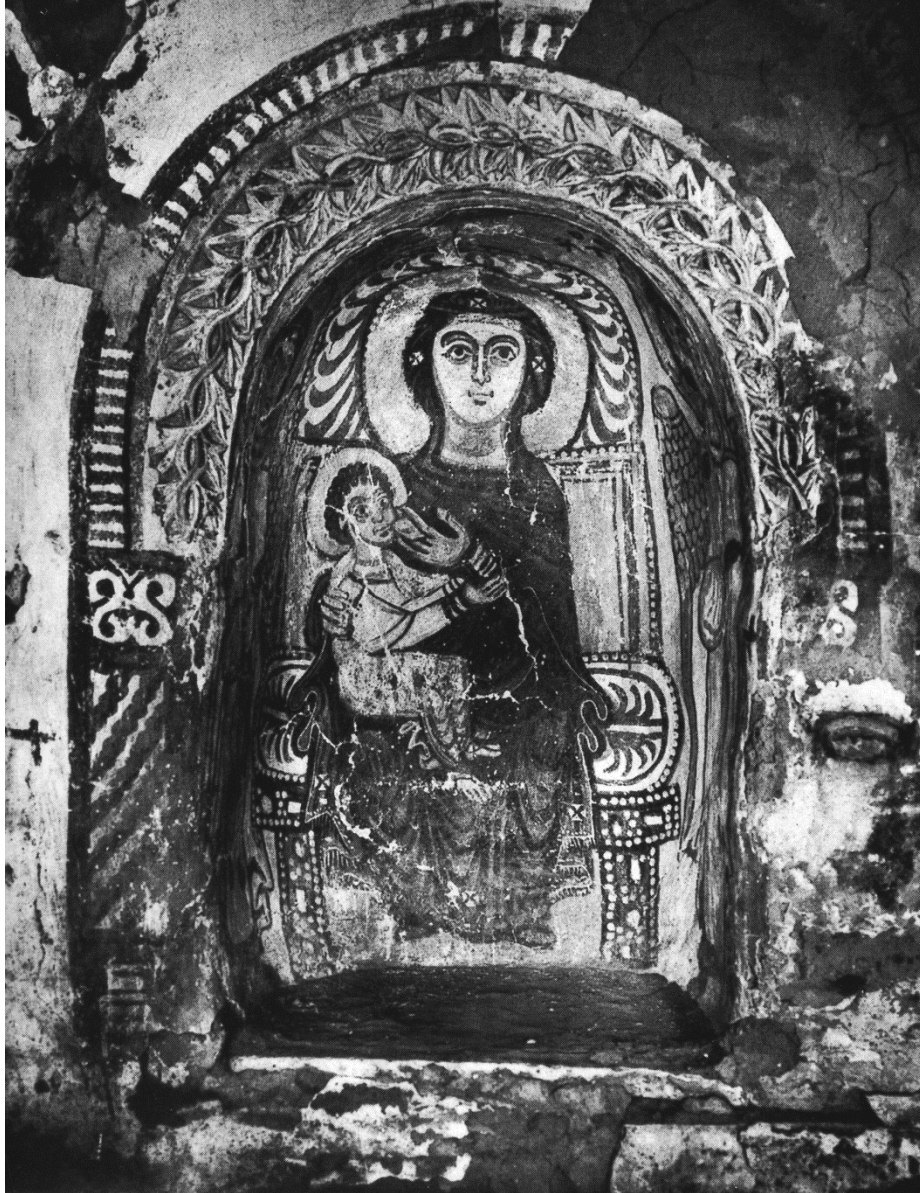


Fig. 25. *Galaktotrophousa*: Cell A, Monastery of Apa Jeremiah at Saqqara (Quibell, *Saqqara* 1906–1907, Pl. 41).



Fig. 26. *Galaktotrophousa*: Cell 1725, Monastery of Apa Jeremiah at Saqqara (Quibell, *Saqqara* 1908–9, 1909–10, Pl. 22).



Fig. 27. *Galaktotrophousa*: Room 30, Monastery of Apa Apollo, Bawit
(Maspero, *Fouilles*, Pl. 43).



Fig. 28. *Galaktotrophousa*: Half-column in Entrance to *Haikal*, Deir el-Surian, Wadi Natrun (Deir al-Surian Conservation Project, Leiden University).

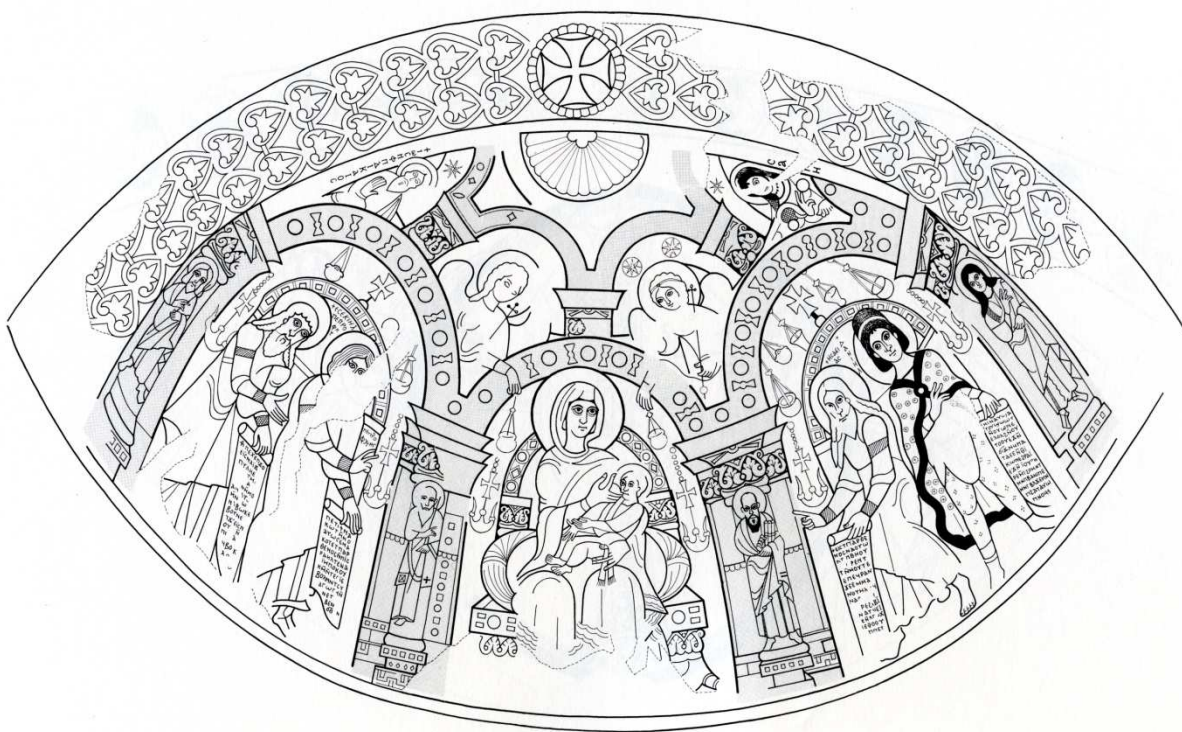


Fig. 29. *Galaktotrophousa*: North triconch, Church of Anba Bishay, Sohag
(Laferrière, *Bible murale*, Pl. 4).

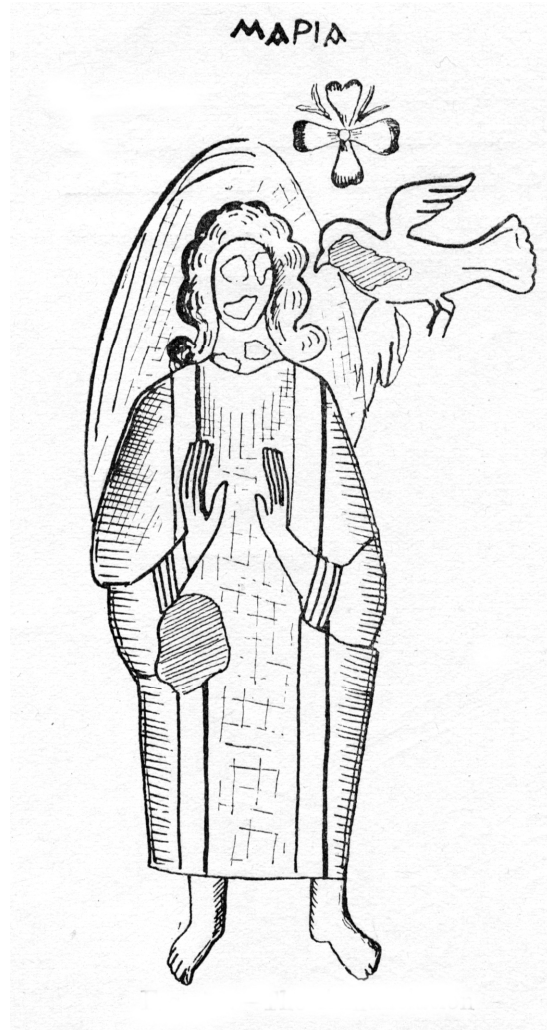


Fig. 30. Annunciation: Chapel of Peace, Kharga Oasis
(Fakhry, *Necropolis*, Fig. 70).

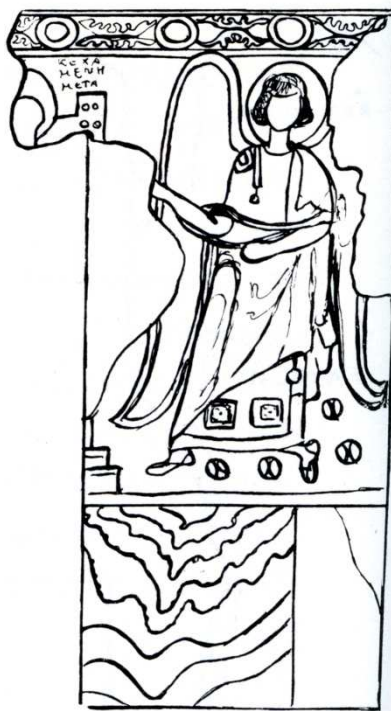


Fig. 31. Annunciation: Crypt, Kom Abu Jirjah, West of Alexandria (Rassart-Debergh, 'Peinture copte Maréotique', Fig. 2.4).



Fig. 32. Annunciation: Chapel 51, Monastery of Apa Apollo at Bawit (Clédât, *Monastère* (1999), Pl. 109).



Fig. 33. Annunciation: Western Semi-Dome, Deir el-Surian, Wadi el-Natrun
(Deir al-Surian Conservation Project, Leiden University)



Fig. 34. Cycle with Mary: Room I, Wall 1, Massacre of the Innocents, Subterranean Church at Deir Abu Hinnis (Clédat, 'Notes archéologiques', Pl. 1).



Fig. 35. Cycle with Mary: Room I, Wall 2, Massacre of the Innocents (left), Gabriel's warning to Joseph (center), Flight into Egypt (right), Subterranean Church at Deir Abu Hinnis (Clédat, 'Notes archéologiques', Pl. 2).



Fig. 36. Cycle with Mary: Chapel 51, The Visitation of Mary to Elizabeth, Monastery of Apa Apollo at Bawit
(Clédât, *Monastère* (1999), Pl. 110).



Fig. 37. Cycle with Mary: Chapel 51, The Flight of the Holy Family into Egypt, Monastery of
Apa Apollo at Bawit
(Clédat, *Monastère* (1999), Pl. 112).



Fig. 38. Cycle with Mary: Chapel 51, Monastery of Apa Apollo at Bawit (Clédât, *Monastère* (1999), Fig. 113).



Fig. 39. Cycle with Mary: Epiphany, North Semi-Dome of *Khurus*: Deir el-Surian, Wadi el-Natrun
(Deir al-Surian Conservation Project, Leiden University)



Fig. 40. Miscellaneous: Enthroned Adult Mary and Christ
Cell 59, Monastery of Apa Apollo at Bawit
(Clédât, *Monastère* (1999), Pl. 155).



Fig. 41. Miscellaneous: Mary and Child (left) and Wedding at Cana (right)
Room II, Wall 9, Subterranean Church at Deir Abu Hinnis
(Clédat, 'Notes archéologiques', Pl. 3).



Fig. 42. Miscellaneous: Mary with Child
East Wall of South Church, Hermitage no. 4, Esna
(Sauneron and Jacquet, *Ermitages chrétiens*, Fig. 30c).