



THE CHRISTIAN IN THE WORLD
& MONASTIC SPIRITUALITY

WHAT IS MONASTIC SPIRITUALITY?

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INTRODUCTION

1. *The thesis*

[The first monks'] continuous rumination upon Scripture, their desire to embody the texts in their lives, was a primary source of the compelling spirituality that emerged from the desert. (Douglas Burton-Christie, *The Word in the Desert*, 297)

11. *The Rule of Benedict*

RB 73.2–5: For anyone hastening on to the perfection of monastic life, there are the teachings of the holy Fathers, the observance of which will lead him to the very heights of perfection. What page, what passage of the inspired books of the Old and New Testaments is not the truest of guides for human life? ~~What book of the holy catholic Fathers does not resoundingly summon us along the true way to reach the Creator~~ [Or what book of the holy catholic Fathers does not re-echo this, so that we might reach our Creator by the direct route]? Then, besides the *Conferences* of the Fathers, their *Institutes* and their *Lives*, there is also the rule of our holy father Basil.

ANTONY THE GREAT

1. *Antony's conversion*

Life 2–3: Going to the Lord's house as usual and gathering his thoughts, he considered while he walked how the apostles, forsaking everything, followed the Savior [Mt 4:20], and how in Acts some sold what they possessed and took the proceeds and placed them at the feet of the apostles for distribution among those in need [Acts 4:35], and what great hope is stored up for such people in heaven [Mt 19:21]. He went into the church pondering these things, and just then it happened that **the Gospel was being read, and he heard the Lord saying to the rich man, *If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven* [Mt 19:21]. It was as if by God's design he held the saints in his recollection, and as if the passage were read on his account.** Immediately Antony went out from the Lord's house and gave to the townspeople the possessions he had from his forebears (three hundred fertile and very beautiful *arourae*), so that they would not disturb him or his sister in the least. And selling all the rest that was portable, when he collected sufficient money, he donated it to the poor, keeping a few things for his sister. But when, **entering the Lord's house once more, he heard in the Gospel the Lord saying, *Do not be anxious about tomorrow* [Mt 6:34], he could not remain any longer, but going out he gave those remaining possessions also to the needy.** Placing his sister in the charge of respected and trusted virgins, and giving her over to the convent for rearing, he devoted himself from then on to the discipline rather than the household, giving heed to himself and patiently training himself.

11. *Augustine's conversion*

Confessions 8.12.29: Suddenly I heard a voice from a house nearby—perhaps a voice of some boy or girl, I do not know—singing over and over again, “Pick it up and read, pick it up and read.” My expression immediately altered and I began to think hard whether children ordinarily repeated a ditty like this in any sort of game, but I could not recall ever having heard it anywhere else. I stemmed the flood of tears and rose to my feet, believing

that this could be nothing other than a divine command to open the Book and read the first passage I chanced upon; for **I had heard the story of how Antony had been instructed by a gospel text. He happened to arrive while the gospel was being read, and took the words to be addressed to himself when he heard, *Go and sell all you possess and give the money to the poor: you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.* So he was promptly converted to you by this plainly divine message.** Stung into action, I returned to the place where Alypius was sitting, for on leaving it I had put down there the book of the apostle's letters. I snatched it up, opened it and read in silence the passage on which my eyes first lighted: *Not in dissipation and drunkenness, nor in debauchery and lewdness, nor in arguing and jealousy; but put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh or the gratification of your desires* [Rom 13:13–14]. I had no wish to read further, nor was there need. No sooner had I reached the end of the verse than the light of certainty flooded my heart and all dark shades of doubt fled away...

111. *Simeon Stylites' conversion*

I heard his sacred tongue recount the following: he told how he heard the Gospel utterance which declares blessed those who weep and mourn, calls wretched those who laugh, terms enviable those who possess a pure soul, and all the other blessings conjoined with them [Mt 5:3–10; Lk 6:20–26]. He then asked one of those present what one should do to obtain each of these. He suggested the solitary life and pointed to that consummate philosophy. (Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *History of the Monks of Syria*, 26.2)

IV. *Antony and Scripture*

- A. *Life*, 3: He paid such close attention to what was read that nothing from Scripture did he fail to take in—rather he grasped everything, and in him the memory took the place of books.
- B. *Life*, 44: Their cells in the hills were like tents filled with divine choirs—people **chanting, studying**, fasting, **praying**, rejoicing in the hope of future boons, working for the distribution of alms, and maintaining both love and harmony among themselves.
- C. *Sayings, Antony 3*: Someone asked Abba Antony, saying, “What sort of practices do I need to maintain in order to please God?” In reply the elder said, “Practice what I’m prescribing for you: Wherever you go, keep God right before your eyes—always. Whatever you’re doing, hold on to the testimony of the holy Scriptures. Wherever you’re living, don’t be in a hurry to move on. Keep these practices and you’ll be saved.”
- D. *Sayings, Antony 19*: Brothers came to visit Abba Antony and said to him, “Tell us: How can we be saved?” The elder said to them, “Have you listened to Scripture? You’ll be fine.” ...

THE SAYINGS OF THE DESERT FATHERS (APOPHTHEGMATA PATRUM)

1. *A biblical script*

A. *“Abba, give me a word!”*

Cronius 1: A brother said to Abba Cronius, “**Tell me a story,**” so he said to him, “When Elisha came to the Shunamite woman he found that she would have nothing to do with anyone, yet she conceived and, because of the presence of Elisha, gave birth.” The brother said to him, “What does this story mean?” The elder said, “The soul, if she’s vigilant and alert and cuts herself off from distraction and abandons the things that she wants—then the Spirit of God approaches her and she is then able to give birth, even if she’s sterile.”

B. *“What must I do to be saved?”*

Antony 1: When Saint Abba Antony was dwelling in the desert one time, he became dispirited, and his thoughts were extremely dark and gloomy. He was saying to God, “Lord, I want to be saved, and my thoughts won’t leave me alone! Afflicted like this, what will I do? **How will I be saved?**” A little later, going outside, Antony saw someone like him: he was sitting and working; then he would stand up from his work and pray. Then he would sit down and plait rope; then once again he would stand to pray. It was an angel of the Lord, sent to set Antony right and strengthen him. Antony heard the angel saying, “Do what I am doing, and you will be saved.” Hearing this, he was filled with joy and courage. So, doing what the angel had said, he was saved.

11. *Attitudes toward Scripture*

APsys 15.116: They used to say of Abba Serapion that his life was like that of one of the birds. Not a thing of this world did he possess, nor did he ever stay in a cell. He used to go around with a little gospel [book], wearing a shroud like an incorporeal being. They would often find him sitting outside a village or by the roadside, weeping bitterly. When he was asked, “Why are you crying like that, elder?” he replied, “My Lord-and-master entrusted me with his wealth, but I have lost and squandered it; he wants to punish and to destroy me.” [cf. Mt 25:14–30 {Parable of the Talents}] Thinking he was talking about money, they who were hearing this threw him a little bread, saying, “Take this, brother; and so far as the wealth you lost, God can send it to you,” to which the elder answered, “Amen.”

15.117: Another time when he was going around in Alexandria, he met a pauper shivering with cold. Coming to a standstill, he thought to himself, “How can I, who am supposed to be an ascetic and a worker, be wearing a smock while this pauper (or rather, Christ himself [cf. Mt 25:35–45]) is dying of cold? If I leave him to die, I shall certainly be judged to be a murderer on the Day of Judgment.” Stripping down like a good athlete, he gave the article of clothing he was wearing to the pauper. Then he sat down naked with the little gospel [book] he always carried tucked under his arm. When the so-called peace officer came by and saw him naked, he said to him, “Abba Serapion, who stripped you?” and producing the little gospel [book], he said to him, “This one stripped me.” Getting up from there, he met another person who was being arrested by somebody else for a debt he could not repay. This immortal Serapion sold the gospel [book] and gave [the proceeds] toward the debt of the poor man who was suffering violence; then off he went, naked, to his cell. When the disciple saw him naked, he said to him, “Abba, where is your little vest?” The elder told

him, “I sent it on to where we shall need it, my son.” “And where is the little gospel [book]?” the brother said to him. The elder replied, “Well, naturally, my son, [that being] the very thing that says to me every day, ‘Sell all that you have and give to the poor’ [Mt 19:21], I sold it and gave away the proceeds so that we shall enjoy greater familiarity with [God] on the Day of Judgment.”

111. *Interpretation of Scripture*

A. It was a pastoral-ethical-ascetical approach to the interpretation of Scripture... What one finds there [in the desert] is a hermeneutic expressed as a whole way of life centered upon a profound appropriation of Scripture. (Burton-Christie, *Word*, 62)

B. Sisoës 35: A brother made this request of Abba Sisoës of Thebes: “Offer me some counsel,” and he said, “What have I got to say to you? I read the New Testament and head back to the Old.”

C. Poemen 71: Abba Poemen said, “Here’s why we’re subjected to so many temptations: we don’t protect our [good] names and the rule, just as Scripture says. Can’t we see that the Savior, because the Canaanite woman acknowledged her name, gave her peace and tranquility [Mt 15:21–28]? And there’s Abigail, because she said to David, ‘*The sin is mine*,’ and he heard her and loved her [1 Sam 25]. Abigail personifies the soul, David the deity. If therefore the soul blames herself before the Lord, the Lord loves her.”

* Mt 15:21–28: Then Jesus went from that place and withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon. And behold, a Canaanite woman of that district came and called out, “Have pity on me, Lord, Son of David! My daughter is tormented by a demon.” But he did not say a word in answer to her. His disciples came and asked him, “Send her away, for she keeps calling out after us.” He said in reply, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” But the woman came and did him homage, saying, “Lord, help me.” He said in reply, “**It is not right to take the food of the children and throw it to the dogs.**” She said, “**Please, Lord, for even the dogs eat the scraps that fall from the table of their masters.**” Then Jesus said to her in reply, “O woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish.” And her daughter was healed from that hour.

* 1 Sam 25:23–25: [*David asks Nabal for hospitality, but he rudely refuses; David intends to kill Nabal and his family; Abigail brings supplies to David and appeases him.*] As soon as Abigail saw David, she dismounted quickly from the donkey and, falling down, bowed low to the ground before David in homage. As she fell at his feet she said: “My lord, **let the blame be mine**. Please let your maidservant speak to you; listen to the words of your maidservant. My lord, do not pay any attention to that scoundrel Nabal, for he is just like his name. **His name means fool, and he acts the fool...**” [*Nabal dies; David marries Abigail*]

IV. *Scripture as a source of strength*

- A. The Scriptures were experienced as authoritative words which pierced the hearts of the monks, illuminated them concerning the central issues of their lives, protected and comforted them during dark times of struggle and anxiety, and provided practical help in their ongoing quest for holiness. (Burton-Christie, *Word*, 4)
- B. Moses 3: Another time when a council took place in Scetis, the fathers, wanting to put him to the test, disparaged him, saying, “Why did even this Ethiopian come [to live] among us?” When he heard this, he kept silent. After the others were dismissed, the fathers said to him, “Abba, weren’t you upset just now?” He said to them “*I was upset but I didn’t speak* [Ps 76:5 {LXX}].”
- C. Evagrius 7: A council took place in Kellia one time concerning some matter, and Abba Evagrius spoke. The priest said to him, “We’re fully aware, abba, that if you were in your homeland, you would, perhaps, be a bishop and would be in charge of a lot of people. But now you sit here a stranger.” Abba Evagrius, though stung, didn’t get upset; instead, he nodded his head and said to him, “That is the truth, father. *‘I have spoken once; I will not add anything to it’* [Job 40:5].”

V. *Scripture as a source of charity*

- A. Nearly every significant act in the *Sayings* either moved toward or grew out of the commandment to love... This was the ultimate sign of holiness for the desert fathers and was the final act of interpretation—that their lives became transformed by love. (Burton-Christie, *Word*, 262)
- B. Theodore of Pherme 11: A brother asked him, “What sort of work is the work of the soul, which we now consider secondary, and what sort of work is secondary, which we now think comes first?” The elder said, “**Everything that comes through what God commands [τὴν ἐντολὴν τοῦ θεοῦ] is the work of the soul**, but the work we do according to our own reasoning, and gathering together our earnings—this we ought to consider secondary.” The brother said, “Explain this principle to me.” The elder said, “Look, you hear about me that I’m sick. So you ought to come check on me, and you say to yourself, ‘Am I going to abandon my work and leave *now*? No, first I need to finish what I’m doing. *Then* I can leave.’ But then another pretext comes to you, and maybe you don’t go at all. Then again, another brother says to you, ‘Give me a hand, brother,’ and you say, ‘Am I going to drop my work and go away and work for this guy?’ If then you don’t leave, **you’re ‘dropping’ God’s commandment [τὴν ἐντολὴν τοῦ θεοῦ]—that is, the work of the soul—and you’re doing what’s secondary—that is, working with your hands.**”
 - * Mt 22:36–40: “Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?” He said to him, “You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments.”

PACHOMIUS & THE KOINONIA1. *Pachomius' conversion*

Greek Life, 4–6: After the persecution, the great Constantine, the first-fruit of the Christian emperors of the Romans, ruled. Making war against some tyrant, he ordered many conscripts to be impressed. Pachomius himself, who was then about twenty years old, was impressed. As the conscripts were sailing downstream, the soldiers who were keeping them put in at the city of Thebes and held them in prison there. In the evening some merciful Christians, hearing about them, brought them something to eat and drink and other necessities, because they were in distress. When the young man asked about this, he was told that Christians were merciful to everyone, including strangers. Again he asked what a Christian was. They told him, 'They are men who bear the name of Christ, the only begotten Son of God, and they do good to everyone, putting their hope in Him who made heaven and earth and us men.' Hearing of this great grace, his heart was set on fire with the fear of God and with joy. Withdrawing alone in the prison, he raised his hands to heaven in prayer and said, 'O God, maker of heaven and earth, *if you will look upon me in my lowliness* [1 Sam 1:11; Lk 1:48], because I do not *know you, the only true God* [Jn 17:3], and if you will deliver me from this affliction, I will serve your will all the days of my life and, loving all men, I will be their servant according to your command.' After saying this prayer he set sail with them... Constantine defeated his adversaries and the conscripts were then discharged by an imperial edict. Pachomius went to the Upper Thebaid, and came to the church of a village called Chenoboskion. There he was instructed and baptized... Then, moved by the love of God, he sought to become a monk. When he was told of an anchorite called Palamon he went to him to share his anchoritic life.

11. *Pachomius and Scripture*

- A. Greek Life, 9: ...The good old man was amazed at him, because he not only eagerly endured the open intensive *ascesis* but applied himself to cleanse his conscience perfectly to fulfil the law of God, looking to the greater *hope in heaven* [Col 1:5]. When he began to read or to write by heart the words of God, he did not do this in a loose way or as many do, but worked over each thing to assimilate it all with a humble mind in gentleness and in truth, as the Lord says, *Learn from me, for I am gentle and humble of heart* [Mt 11:29].
- B. Greek Life, 17: Instructed by the holy Scriptures and especially by the Gospel, he endured many temptations from the demons.
- C. Greek Life, 18: In his period of withdrawal before the Community was formed, he paid great attention to the Beatitudes, striving especially to be found *pure in heart* [Mt 5:8].

111. *Pachomius founds the Koinonia*

- A. Greek Life, 12: Once, journeying through that desert a considerable distance, he came to a deserted village called Tabenessi. There he prayed to express his love of God. And as he protracted his prayer a voice came to him—until that time he had not yet had a vision—and the voice said to him, 'Stay here and build a monastery; for many will come to you to become monks'. **When he heard this and in purity of heart discerned according to the Scriptures that the voice was holy**, he returned to his father and told him about it.

B. *Greek Life*, 24–25: Then he began to receive those who came to him... And so, *speaking the word of God [Ac 16:32] to them, he edified them and led them to the zeal of good works.* And even when he kept silent, they saw his conduct and it was for them a word... They lived a cenobitic life. So **he established for them in a rule an irreproachable life-style and traditions profitable for their souls. These he took from the holy Scriptures:** proper measure in clothing, equality in food, and decent sleeping arrangements.

1V. *Scripture in the Rule*

A. *Precepts*, 49: When someone comes to the door of the monastery, wishing to renounce the world and be added to the number of the brothers... He shall remain outside at the door a few days and be taught the Lord's prayer and as many psalms as he can learn.

B. *Precepts*, 139: Whoever enters the monastery uninstructed shall be taught first what he must observe; and when, so taught, he has consented to it all, they shall give him twenty psalms or two of the Apostle's epistles, or some other part of the Scripture. And if he is illiterate, he shall go at the first, third, and sixth hours to someone who can teach and has been appointed for him. He shall stand before him and learn very studiously with all gratitude. Then the fundamentals of a syllable, the verbs, and nouns shall be written for him, and even if he does not want to, he shall be compelled to read.

C. *Precepts*, 140: There shall be no one whatever in the monastery who does not learn to read and does not memorize something of the Scriptures. [One should learn by heart] at least the New Testament and the Psalter.

D. *Institutes*, Preface: [This is] how [the brothers] shall assemble daily in the house for prayer and fasting, in the light of the Scriptures. Those who minister well are those who follow the norm of the Scriptures.

V. *Pachomius' legacy, according to Antony*

A. *Greek Life*, 125: Concerning your father, I often heard how *well he walked* [Heb 13:18] according to the Scriptures...

B. *Bohairic Life*, 126: For the fact that he gathered souls about himself in order to present them holy to the Lord reveals that he is superior to us and that it is the path of the apostles he took, that is, the *Koinonia*.

VI. *Pachomius' legacy, according to Theodore*

A. *Bohairic Life*, 189: I assure you before God and his Christ that a single psalm is possibly enough to save us if we understand it well, act on it, and observe it. But, above all, we have always at hand the holy Gospels of our Lord Jesus Christ and all the rest of the holy Scriptures and their thoughts. According to the parable which he himself told about the precious stone of great value, *the merchant sells everything he owns so that he can buy it* because of its value [Mt 13:46].

JOHN CASSIAN

1. *The biblical origins of cenobitic monasticism*

18.5.1: The discipline of the cenobites took its rise at the time of the apostolic preaching. For such was the whole multitude of believers in Jerusalem, which is described thus in the Acts of the Apostles: ‘The multitude of believers had one heart and one soul, and none of them said that what he possessed was his own, but all things were common to them [Acts 4:32]. They sold their possessions and their belongings and distributed them to all as each had need’ [Acts 2:45]. And again: ‘Nor was there anyone needy among them, for as many as owned fields or houses sold them and brought the price of what they sold and laid it at the feet of the apostles, and this was distributed to each just as each had need’ [Acts 4:34–34].

11. *The end and the goal of the monk*

1.4.1: The end of our profession is the kingdom of God or the kingdom of heaven; but the goal of scopos is purity of heart, without which it is impossible for anyone to reach that end.

1.5.2–3: Thus, indeed, the end of our chosen orientation is eternal life, according to the very words of the Apostle: ‘Having your reward, indeed, in holiness, but your end in eternal life’ [Rom 6:22]. ... When he was teaching us about our immediate goal the same blessed Apostle significantly used the very term ‘scopos’ when he said: ‘Forgetting what is behind, but reaching out to what is ahead, I press on to the goal, to the prize of the heavenly calling of the Lord’ [Phil 3:13–14]. This appears more clearly in Greek: *κατα σκοπον διωκω*, which means: I press on to the goal. It is just as if he had said: By way of this goal I forget what is behind—namely, the vices of my earlier life—and I strive to attain to the end, which is the heavenly prize.

111. *Purity of heart and contemplation of God*

What one contemplates at the summit of the monastic journey is what one began to memorize and recite on the first day of the monastic life: the Word of God... Cassian's exalted conception of Scripture as being a direct means of encountering the ultimate divine realities joins the beginning of the Christian journey to its consummation. (Columba Stewart, “Cassian on Scripture and Contemplation,” 459–460)

1V. *“O God, come to my assistance...”*

10.10.2–14: This, then, is the devotional formula proposed to you as absolutely necessary for possessing the perpetual awareness of God: ‘O God, incline unto my aid; O Lord, make haste to help me’ [Ps 70:1]. ... Not without reason has this verse been selected from out of the whole body of Scripture. For it takes up all the emotions that can be applied to human nature and with great correctness and accuracy it adjusts itself to every condition and every attack. It contains an invocation of God in the face of any crisis, the humility of a devout confession, the watchfulness of concern and of constant fear, a consciousness of one’s own frailty, the assurance of being heard, and confidence in a protection that is always present and at hand... You should, I say, meditate constantly on this verse in your heart. You should not stop repeating it when you are doing any kind of work or performing some service or are on a journey. Meditate on it while sleeping and eating and attending to the

least needs of nature. This heart's reflection, having become a saving formula for you, will not only preserve you unharmed from every attack of the demons but will also purge you of every vice and earthly taint, lead you to the *theoria* of invisible and heavenly realities, and raise you to that ineffably ardent prayer which is experienced by very few.

✓. *Interpretation of Scripture*

A. 14.8.1: The *πρακτική* is dispersed among many professions and pursuits. The *θεωρητική*, on the other hand, is divided into two parts—that is, into historical interpretation and spiritual understanding... Now, there are three kinds of spiritual knowledge—tropology, allegory, and anagogy—about which it is said in Proverbs: ‘But you describe those things for yourself in threefold fashion according to the largeness of your heart’ [Prv 22:20 LXX].

B. 14.8.2–3: **History** embraces the knowledge of past and visible things, which is repeated by the Apostle thus: ‘It is written that Abraham had two sons, one from a slave and the other from a free woman. The one from the slave was born according to the flesh, but the one from the free woman by promise’ [Gal 4:22–23]. The things that follow belong to **allegory**, however, because what really occurred is said to have prefigured the form of another mystery. ‘For these,’ it says, ‘are two covenants, one from Mount Sinai, begetting unto slavery, which is Hagar. For Sinai is a mountain in Arabia, which is compared to the Jerusalem that now is, and which is enslaved with her children’ [Gal 4:24–25]. But **anagogy**, which mounts from spiritual mysteries to certain more sublime and sacred heavenly secrets, is added by the Apostle: ‘But the Jerusalem from above, which is our mother, is free. For it is written: Rejoice, you barren one who do not bear, break out and shout, you who are not in labor, for the children of the desolate one are many more than of her who has a husband’ [Gal 4:26–27]. **Tropology** is moral explanation pertaining to correction of life and to practical instruction, as if we understood these same two covenants as *πρακτική* and as theoretical discipline, or at least as if we wished to take Jerusalem or Zion as the soul of the human being, according to the words: ‘Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem; praise your God, O Zion’ [Ps 147:12].

C. 14.8.4: One and the same Jerusalem can be understood in a fourfold manner. According to **history** it is the city of the Jews. According to **allegory** it is the Church of Christ. According to **anagogy** it is that heavenly city of God ‘which is the mother of us all’ [Gal 4:26]. According to **tropology** it is the soul of the human being, which under this name is frequently either reproached or praised by the Lord.

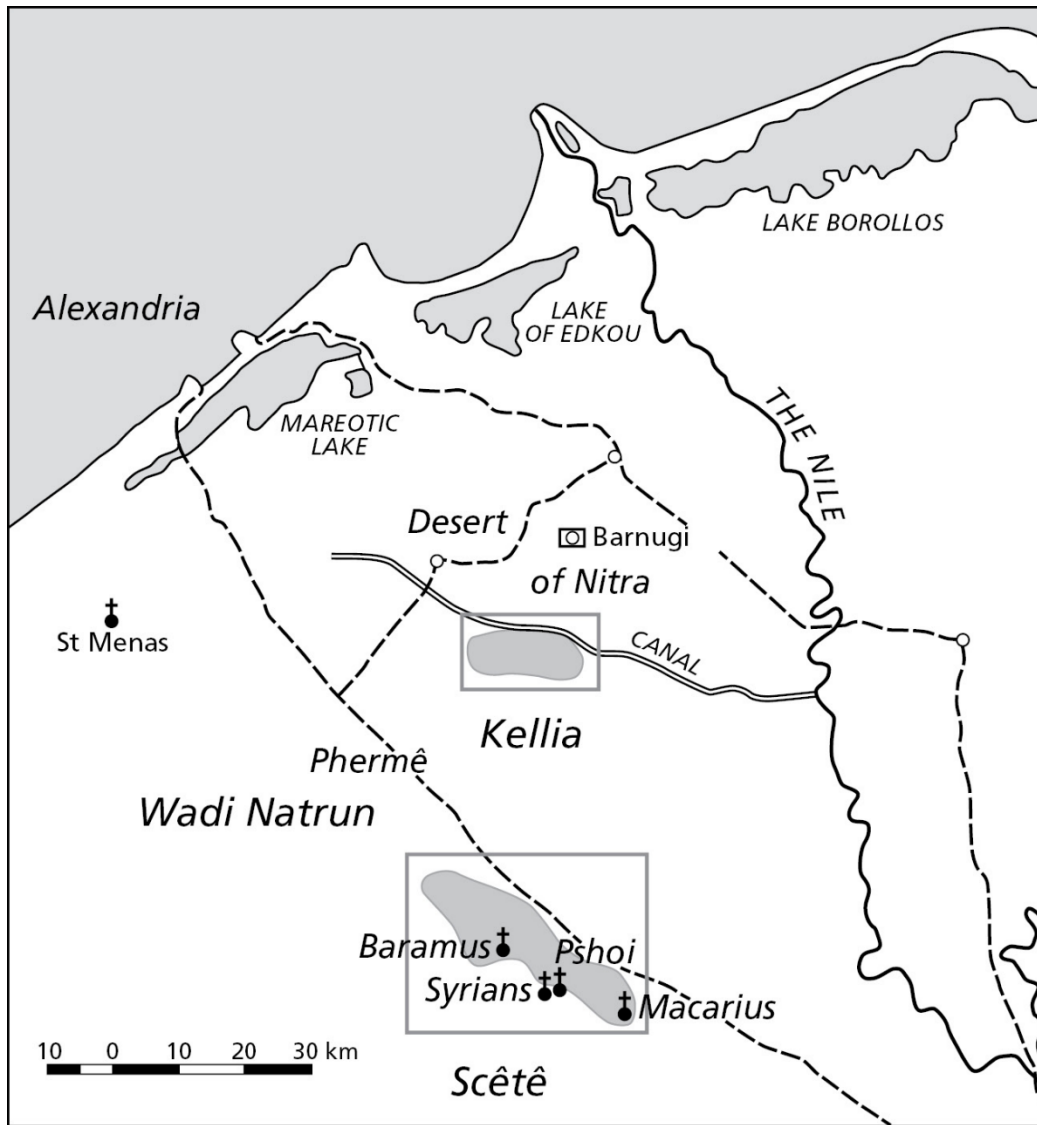
✓1. *Effects of Scripture study*

- A. 14.10.4: Hence the successive books of Holy Scripture must be diligently committed to memory and ceaselessly reviewed. This continual meditation will bestow on us double fruit. First, inasmuch as the mind's attention is occupied with reading and with preparing to read, it cannot be taken captive in the entrapments of harmful thoughts. Then, the things that we have not been able to understand because our mind was busy at the time, things that we have gone through repeatedly and are laboring to memorize, we shall see more clearly afterward when we are free from every seductive deed and sight, and especially when we are silently meditating at night.
- B. 14.11.1: But as our mind is increasingly renewed by this study, the face of Scripture will also begin to be renewed, and the beauty of a more sacred understanding will somehow grow with the person who is making progress.

THE FINAL WORD

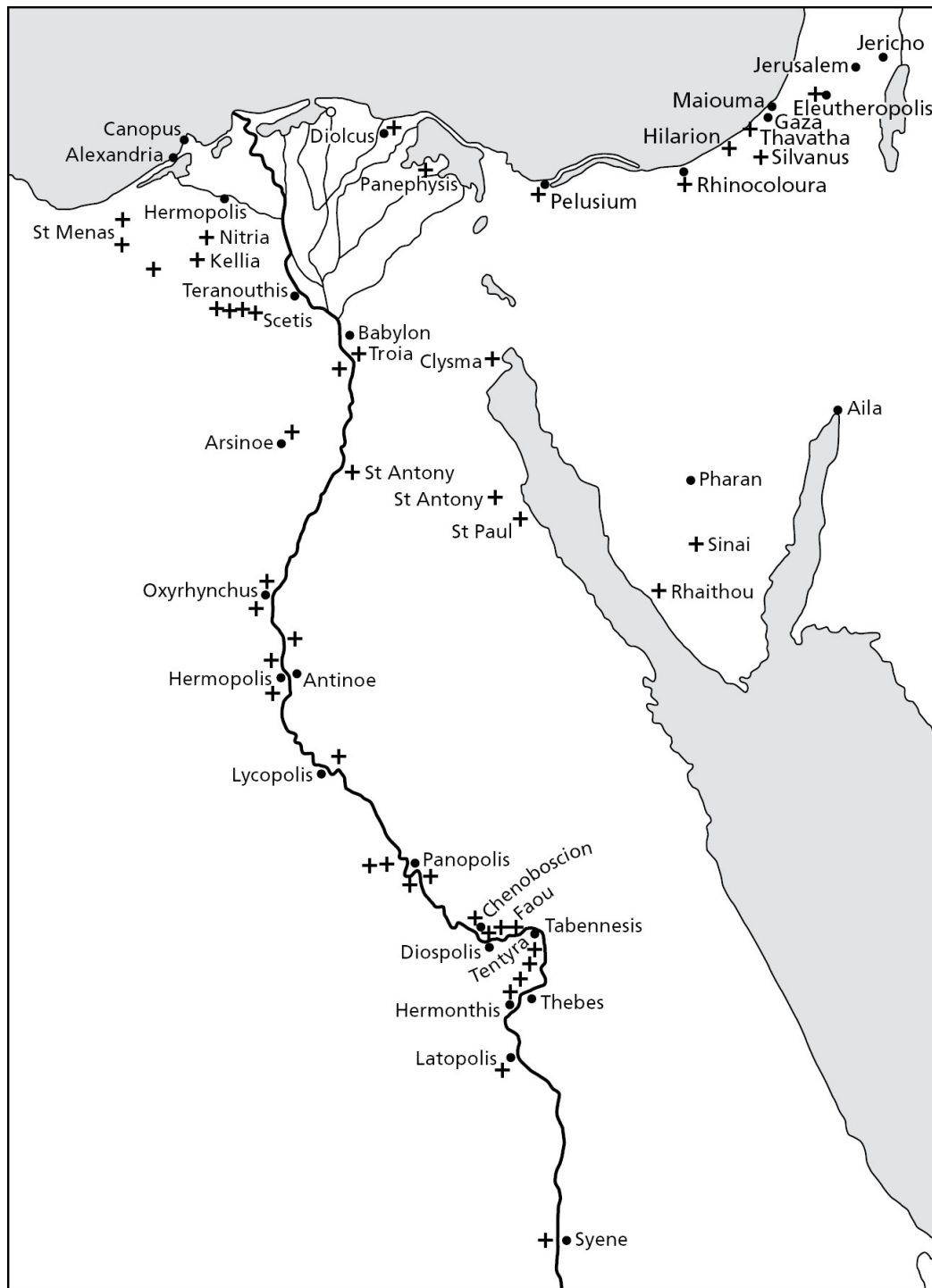
1. Col 3:12–17: Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving one another, if one has a grievance against another; as the Lord has forgiven you, so must you also do. And over all these put on love, that is, the bond of perfection. And let the peace of Christ control your hearts, the peace into which you were also called in one body. And be thankful. **Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly**, as in all wisdom you teach and admonish one another, singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or in deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

MAP 1: THE NITRIAN DESERT



John Wortley, *An Introduction to the Desert Fathers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), xxiii.

MAP 11: MONASTIC EGYPT



John Wortley, *An Introduction to the Desert Fathers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), xxiv.

TIMELINE OF MONASTIC HISTORY

- 251: Antony is born
- 271: Antony becomes a monk
- 292: Pachomius is born
- 305: Antony assembles disciples
- 311: Antony retreats to the “Inner Mountain”
- 313: *Edict of Milan* (establishes Imperial toleration of Christianity)
- 313: Pachomius is baptized
- 316: Pachomius becomes a monk under the anchorite Palamon
- 323: Pachomius establishes the first cenobitic community at Tabennesi
- 325: *Council of Nicaea* (affirms full divinity of Christ; promulgates Nicene Creed)
- 328: Athanasius becomes archbishop of Alexandria
- 325: Ammonas (a disciple of Antony) founds Nitria
- 330: Macarius of Egypt (a disciple of Antony) founds Scete; Basil is born
- 338: Ammonas founds Kellia
- 345: Jerome, Rufinus, and Evagrius are born
- 348: Pachomius dies
- 354: Augustine is born
- 356: Antony dies
- 357: Athanasius writes the *Life of Antony*
- 357: Basil is baptized; visits monks in Egypt; assembles disciples on his family estate (358)
- 360: John Cassian is born
- 373: Jerome becomes a monk
- 370: Basil becomes bishop of Caesarea
- 379: Basil dies
- 380: Rufinus & Melania the Elder found monasteries in Jerusalem
- 381: *Council of Constantinople* (affirms full divinity of the Holy Spirit; expands Nicene Creed)
- 383: Evagrius becomes a monk in Jerusalem; migrates to Nitria, then to Kellia (385)
- 386: Augustine is baptized by Ambrose of Milan; Palladius becomes a monk in Jerusalem
- 388: Palladius migrates to Alexandria, then to Nitria (390), then to Kellia (391)
- 394: Quarrel between Jerome and Rufinus (especially over Origen [c. 185–253] and his legacy)
- 399: Evagrius dies; outbreak of first Origenist controversy (instigated by Epiphanius of Salamis and taken up by Jerome and Theophilus of Alexandria)
- 404: The anonymous *History of the Monks in Egypt* is written
- 405: John Cassian migrates to Rome, then founds two monasteries in Marseille (410)
- 408: First devastation of Scete (resettlement is followed by subsequent devastations)
- 411: Rufinus dies
- 419: Palladius writes the *Lausiac History*
- 420: Jerome dies
- 425: John Cassian writes the *Institutes and Conferences*
- 430: Augustine dies
- 435: John Cassian dies
- 431: *Council of Ephesus* (affirms Mary as “mother of God”)
- 451: *Council of Chalcedon* (affirms Christ as one person in two natures: human and divine)
- 480: Benedict is born...

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