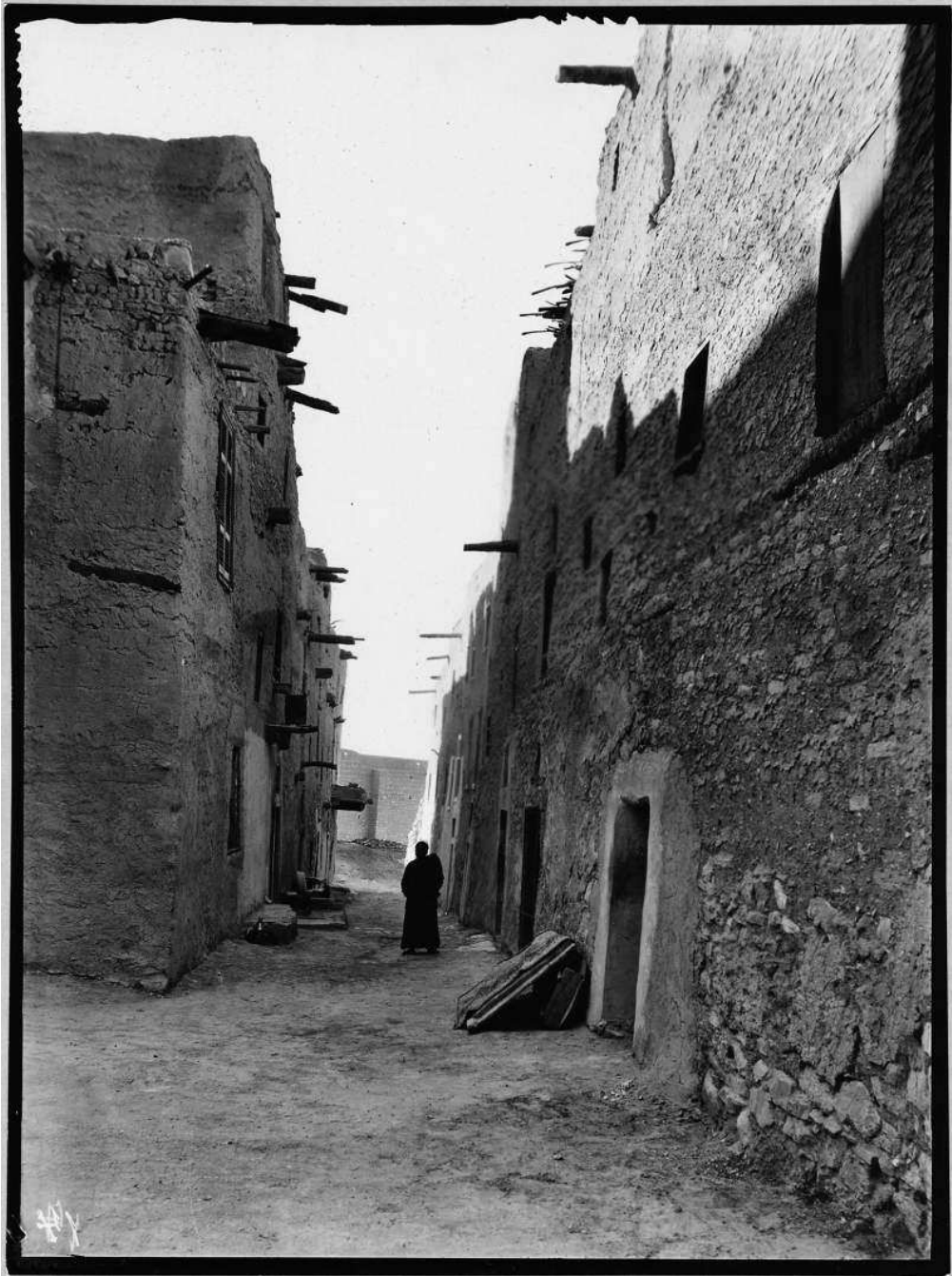


THE MONASTIC LANDSCAPE OF LATE ANTIQUE EGYPT

Darlene L. Brooks Hedstrom offers a new history of the field of Egyptian monastic archaeology. It is the first study in English to trace how scholars identified a space or site as monastic within the Egyptian landscape and how such identifications impacted perceptions of monasticism. Brooks Hedstrom then provides an ecohistory of Egypt's tripartite landscape to offer a reorientation of the perception of the physical landscape. She analyzes Late Antique documentary evidence, early monastic literature, and ecclesiastical history before turning to the extensive archaeological evidence of Christian monastic settlements. In doing so, she illustrates the stark differences between the idealized monastic landscape and the actual monastic landscape that was urbanized through monastic constructions. Drawing on critical theories in landscape studies, materiality, and phenomenology, Brooks Hedstrom looks at domestic settlements of nonmonastic and monastic settlements to posit what features make monastic settlements unique, thus offering a new history of monasticism in Egypt.

Darlene L. Brooks Hedstrom is Professor of History and Director of Archaeology at Wittenberg University. A fellow in Byzantine Studies, her research on Byzantine monastic Egypt has earned her awards from the Fulbright Binational Commission in Egypt, the American Research Center in Egypt, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Erasmus Institute, and Project Grants in Byzantine Studies from Dumbarton Oaks. Her publications center on the archaeology and history of monastic settlements in the Byzantine Near East with a particular focus on Egypt. She is currently Senior Archaeological Consultant for the Yale Monastic Archaeology Project in Wadi al-Natrun and former Director of Archaeology for the Yale Monastic Archaeology Projects also in Wadi al-Natrun and in Sohag, Egypt.

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-16181-8 — The Monastic Landscape of Late Antique Egypt
Darlene L. Brooks Hedstrom
Frontmatter
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Cover. Kazazian. Black-and-white photograph taken during the Byzantine Institute's expedition to the Red Sea Monastery of St. Antony of Egypt, c. 1929–1931. MS.BZ.004-A14. "View of street from the south."

THE MONASTIC
LANDSCAPE OF LATE
ANTIQUAE EGYPT

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL
RECONSTRUCTION

DARLENE L. BROOKS HEDSTROM

Wittenberg University, Ohio

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
4843/24, 2nd Floor, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, Delhi – 110002, India
79 Anson Road, #06-04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107161818

DOI: 10.1017/9781316676653

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First published 2017

Printed in the United States of America by Sheridan Books, Inc.

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Brooks Hedstrom, Darlene L., author.

Title: The monastic landscape of late antique Egypt: an archaeological reconstruction / Darlene L. Brooks Hedstrom, Wittenberg University, Ohio.

Description: Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2017. |

Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2017007185 | ISBN 9781107161818 (hardback)

Subjects: LCSH: Monasteries – Egypt. | Coptic monasteries. | Cultural landscapes – Egypt. | Christian antiquities – Egypt. | Egypt – Antiquities. | Monasticism and religious orders – Egypt – History.

Classification: LCC BR133.E31 B76 2017 | DDC 271.00932–dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2017007185>

ISBN 978-1-107-16181-8 Hardback

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For my teacher and mentor
Alfred J. Hoerth

CONTENTS

<i>List of Figures</i>	page x
<i>Preface</i>	xv
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xix
<i>Notes on the Text</i>	xxiii
<i>List of Abbreviations</i>	xxv
INTRODUCTION	I
1 MONASTIC ARCHAEOLOGY IN THE NINETEENTH AND EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURIES	7
Early Perceptions of Egyptian Monasticism	9
Recognizing the Value of Coptic Remains	20
The Advent of Byzantine Archaeology in Egypt in the Early Twentieth Century	24
Excavations at Bawit	26
Excavations at Saqqara	28
Excavations at Thebes	31
Excavations at Wadi Sarga	33
Conclusion	36
2 ARCHAEOLOGY AND TWENTIETH-CENTURY PERCEPTIONS OF THE MONASTIC LANDSCAPE	40
Publishing Monastic Archaeology, 1914–1945	42
Monastic Archaeology from 1945 to the 1980s	45
Approaches to the Field of Coptic and Byzantine Archaeology	53
Theoretical Shifts in Archaeology, 1960s–2000s	60
Theoretical Models for Monastic Archaeology	62
Theorizing Space	64
Theorizing Landscape	70
Theorizing Things	72
Conclusion	74

3	AN ECOHISTORY AND GEOHISTORY OF THE EGYPTIAN LANDSCAPE	76
	The Physical Landscape	77
	The Monastic Desertscape	79
	Details of the Landscape	85
	Materials for Building	92
	The Historical Context for Building Monastic Communities	101
	Theoretical Analysis	109
	Conclusion	117
4	LATE ANTIQUE DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE AND THE MONASTIC LANDSCAPE	118
	Diversity in Language for Identifying a Monastic Settlement	119
	Within the Monastic Settlement	125
	Idealized and Actual Spaces	128
	Legal Spatial Configurations	131
	Conclusion	137
5	TELLING STORIES ABOUT THE EGYPTIAN MONASTIC LANDSCAPE	139
	The Impulse to Move to the Fringes	140
	Relocation Traditions in Roman Egypt	142
	Displacing Demons in the Byzantine Desert	145
	Monks Civilizing the Deserted Places of Late Antique Egypt	147
	The Desert of Macarius in Sketis	149
	The Quiet Retreat of Amoun at Kellia	155
	Pachomius's Community of Village Monasteries	157
	Apollo Builds a Monastery for Phib in Bawit	165
	Shenoute's Monastic Community in Sohag	170
	Conclusion	178
6	THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF LATE ANTIQUE BUILDINGS IN EGYPT	180
	Built Environments	181
	Building Roman, Byzantine, and Islamic Houses	185
	Kom el-Dikka: An Urban Residential Neighborhood	188
	Jeme: A Town Reclaims an Abandoned Mortuary Temple	191
	Tebtunis: Mud Brick Houses Remodeled	194
	What Does a Monastic House Look Like?	198
	Monastic Residences at Bawit	200
	Reading the Archaeology of Bawit	209
	Looking at the Built Environment	213
	Conclusion	221

CONTENTS

ix

7	LOOKING AT EGYPT'S MONASTIC BUILT ENVIRONMENTS	223
	The Monastery of Apa Jeremias in the Mountain of Memphis	225
	The Holy Topos of Epiphanius the Anchorite	237
	The Holy Monastery of Apa Thomas in Wadi Sarga	245
	The Topos of Apa Phoibammon in the Rock	252
	The Cells at Kellia and Pherme	255
	Dwelling Places at Esna	263
	The Mountain of Cells at Jabal Naqlun	265
	Conclusion	272
	CONCLUSIONS	274
	Monastic Things and Monastic Spaces	276
	The Materiality of the Natural Environment	278
	The Design of the Monastic Built Environment	280
	Building in Underutilized Landscapes	284
	Monastic Mindscales, Desertscales, and Landscapes	289
	<i>Notes</i>	291
	<i>List of Illustrations: Credits and Information</i>	355
	<i>References</i>	359
	<i>Index</i>	413

FIGURES

Cover. Kazazian. Black-and-white photograph taken during the Byzantine Institute's expedition to the Red Sea Monastery of St. Antony of Egypt, c. 1929–1931. MS.BZ.004-A14. "View of street from the south."

- | | | |
|---|--|--------|
| 1 | Mud brick remains by the Grand Temple of Isis at Philae, c. late nineteenth century | page 2 |
| 2 | Engraving of Wadi Shu'eib showing St. Catherine's Monastery in 1881 | 8 |
| 3 | Egypt, Sinai, and Jerusalem: A series of twenty photographic views, with descriptions by Mrs. Poole and Reginald Stuart Poole: Fallen Statue at the Ramesseum, Thebes, 1857. Francis Frith (British, 1822–1898), William Mackenzie Albumen print from wet collodion negative; image: 38.30 × 48.20 cm (15 1/16 × 18 15/16 inches); matted: 60.96 × 76.20 cm (24 × 30 inches). The Cleveland Museum of Art, Andrew R. and Martha Holden Jennings Fund 1992.236. © The Cleveland Museum of Art | 12 |
| 4 | Column in Festival Hall of Tuthmosis III at Karnak Temple showing a vertical column of hieroglyphs with the black outlines of two halos for monastic saints painted directly over the pharaonic bands for the nave of a small church. Luxor, Egypt | 14 |
| 5 | <i>Egypt and Nubia</i> , Volume II: <i>Medinet Abou, Thebes</i> , 1847. Louis Haghe (British, 1806–1885), F.G. Moon, 20 Threadneedle Street, London, after David Roberts (British, 1796–1864). Color lithograph; sheet: 43.80 × 60.20 cm (17 3/16 × 23 11/16 inches); image: 32.90 × 49.10 cm (12 15/16 × 19 5/16 inches). The Cleveland Museum of Art, bequest of John Bonebrake 2012.173. © The Cleveland Art Museum | 15 |
| 6 | Interior second court of the Mortuary Temple of Ramesses III at Medinet Habu in Thebes in 2008. All of the columns of the church had been removed, which were still present in 1847 | 16 |
| 7 | Map of Egypt illustrating locations of monastic and nonmonastic settlements discussed in the text | 25 |
| 8 | View of the south side of Bawit in 1901 | 26 |
| 9 | View of the Main Church of the Monastery of Apa Jeremias at Saqqara looking east toward the Nile with a footpath visible across the inundated fields connecting the site to the village to the east | 29 |

FIGURES

xi

10	View south toward Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qurnah with the Tomb of Daga and the monastic settlement known as the Monastery of Epiphanius in the center	33
11	View of the Monastery of Apa Thomas at Wadi Sarga during excavation with two-story mud brick walls visible. AES Ar. 1260. Courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum	35
12	J. Pierpont Morgan sitting on the raised seat of Apa Jeremias found at the Monastery of Apa Jeremias at Saqqara in 1909. ARC 1425. Album of photographs of J. Pierpont Morgan’s 1909 trip through Egypt and Greece, 1909. Morgan on the throne. Courtesy of the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York. ARC 1425. Purchased in 2003	38
13	Stone walls of a monastic settlement at the Topos of Phoibammon in the Rock, south of Thebes. The footpath through the wadi to the community is visible in the upper left of the photograph	46
14	Mud brick construction of an excavated monastic residence, or dwelling place, at Kellia with the crests of other, unexcavated residences on the horizon	50
15	Map of the desert west of the Nile by Esna showing the locations of the fifteen residences in relationship to the two Coptic churches: Dayr al-Shuhada’ and Dayr al-Fakhuri	51
16	Plans of Hermitages at Esna	52
17	Coptic dipinto, Inscription 48, painted between two geometric designs on the north wall of Hermitage 4 at Esna	66
18	The Inner Desert of Egypt in Upper Egypt with modern pilgrims making a journey to a monastic cave	78
19	The Nile, its banks, and the desert near Aswan in southern Egypt	80
20	The Egyptian landscape in Middle Egypt showing the movement from the agricultural fields, the Outer Desert, and the plateau to the Inner Desert, which is beyond the visible landscape	81
21	The entrance to a small monastic residence in a natural cave in the Inner Desert near Sohag, Egypt	82
22	Quarried area at the site of Dayr al-Dik in Middle Egypt. Inhabitants of the space on the right cut a door, windows, and sockets for a wood frame for both	83
23	Inner Desert visible from the crest of a ridge of the Outer Desert on the West Bank west of the St. Shenoute’s White Monastery in Sohag, Egypt	84
24	Mud brick buildings of Jeme north of the Great Temple of Medinet Habu before excavation, Thebes, Egypt	85
25	Sand barrier made of mud bricks before the entrance to Hermitage 5 at Esna	88
26	View of a quarry region at Dayr al-Dik in Middle Egypt	94
27	Mud brick buildings at the monastic settlement of Dayr al-Bala’yzah in Middle Egypt	95
28	Mud brick walls and mud mortar from the monastic settlement at Gurnat Mari in Thebes, Egypt	96

29	Roofing made of palm trunks, sugar stalks, and plaster at Dayr Anba Bisada in Akhmim, Egypt. The ceiling has a small oculus to provide both direct and indirect light to the room	99
30	View toward the boundary wall at the monastic site of Dayr al-Bala'yazah in Middle Egypt, looking toward the settlement, which is located beyond the wall, and the cultivated fields below	110
31	Stone structures made on the terraces by the pharaonic tombs at Amarna in Middle Egypt	115
32	Remains of the mud brick buildings of the Late Antique town of Jeme at Medinet Habu in Thebes, Egypt	132
33	General plan of the Topos of Apa Epiphanius at Shaykh 'Abd al-Qurnah in Thebes, Egypt. The hashed line indicates the territory outlined in the Late Antique monastic will of the land that belonged to the community	135
34	Salt accumulation by one of the shores of a lake in Wadi al-Natron, Egypt	150
35	Map detailing the possible location of Pachomian monastic establishments in relationship to other monastic sites in Upper Egypt	162
36	Wall painting from Chapel 56 at Bawit showing three monks: Apa Makarios, Apa Moses the Freeman, and Apa Jeremias	166
37	The church of St. Shenoute at the White Monastery in Sohag, Egypt	171
38	Monastic settlement at the site of Dayr al-Bala'yazah in Middle Egypt showing the various terraces leading up to the desert escarpment	183
39	Plaster and organic flooring at the Monastery of Apa Jeremias at Saqqara	184
40	Modern wood frame window insert at a contemporary mud brick house in Minya, Egypt	185
41	Mud brick niche built into the wall at a Late Antique construction at Ansina, near Antinoöpolis, Egypt	186
42	Plastered staircase made of mud brick. Stairs lead from the ground floor to the roof of the monastic dwelling at Kellia-Pherme	187
43	The Late Antique residential and commercial area of Kom el-Dikka in Alexandria	189
44.	Detail of the three-story mud brick residences at the Late Antique town of Jeme at Medinet Habu in Thebes, Egypt	192
45	Monastery of Apa Apollo, Chapels 1–15 excavated by Jean Clédat. Asterisks indicate rooms described in the publication because they were decorated with painted scenes. The other rooms were not discussed by Clédat	205
46	A chapel excavated by C. Palanque in 1903 on the west side of the monastic settlement at Bawit. The rooms show the connecting barrel vault over the chambers, a low bench or bed built against the wall, and an east niche	206
47	Peacocks adorn the south tympana of Chapel 43 with two windows at Bawit	207
48	Row of equestrian saints with St. Thekla in Chapel 56 on the west wall at Bawit	207

FIGURES

xiii

- 49 Row of monks painted above a niche in Chapel 17 on its north wall at Bawit. The second monk from the left is holding keys and is identified as the “Father of the Manshōpe/Dwelling Place” 212
- 50 Three monastic saints from Chapel 28 at Bawit. Lazaros, the central monk, holds a censer and the monk on the right holds keys 215
- 51 Chamfered windowsills along the south wall of Chapel 19 at Bawit 217
- 52 Paintings with peacocks flanking a cross on the west wall of Chapel 19 at Bawit. The Coptic inscription on the right of the far peacock includes the expression “John, Father of the Cell” 218
- 53 South wall of Hall 40 excavated by Jean Maspero at Bawit. The wall is pierced by several niches and cupboards, which have grooves for some type of wooden framing. The room may be part of the women’s community at Bawit 221
- 54 Three of the Virtues from Cell 709 from the Monastery of Apa Jeremias at Saqqara. The Virtues may be holding the holy bread (*eulogia* or *qurban*) that was baked nearby the church. Photo by Gertrude Bell, 1909, J_032. Photo courtesy of the Gertrude Bell Archives, Newcastle University 226
- 55 Plan of the Monastery of Apa Jeremias showing all the excavated buildings at the site. The Nile is to the east of the settlement 227
- 56 View west toward the steps for the Main Church at the Monastery of Apa Jeremias at Saqqara. The pathway shows the combination of stone and mud brick for construction and repairs. Photo by Gertrude Bell, 1909, J_017. Photo courtesy of the Gertrude Bell Archives, Newcastle University 228
- 57 East end of Chapel D excavated at the Monastery of Apa Jeremias with an east niche with Apa Jeremias (on the left), the Virgin (in the center), and Apa Enoch (on the right). Built-in shelving flanks the right side of the niche along with a small lamp niche underneath the central niche 229
- 58 Excavated monastic residences at the Monastery of Apa Jeremias. The near room shows an east, central niche flanked by chamfered windows with Coptic dipinti around the room 230
- 59 Apa Jeremias’s pulpit or “ambon,” now in the Coptic Museum in Cairo. Photo by Gertrude Bell, 1909, J_019. Photo courtesy of the Gertrude Bell Archives, Newcastle University 231
- 60 Gertrude Bell’s January 1909 photograph of the Main Church looking east across the cultivated fields. Compare her photograph with Quibell’s photograph during the inundation, Fig. 9. Photo by Gertrude Bell, 1909, J_006. Photo courtesy of the Gertrude Bell Archives, Newcastle University 233
- 61 Mud brick storage rooms at the Monastery of Apa Jeremias at Saqqara showing similar building techniques with nonmonastic architecture. Photo by Gertrude Bell, 1909, J_015. Photo courtesy of the Gertrude Bell Archives, Newcastle University 235
- 62 Coptic letter #198 on papyrus from the Holy Topos of Apa Epiphanius 240

63	Mud brick and stone walls in the West Court of the Holy Topos of Apa Epiphanius	241
64	Mud brick buildings in the East Court showing an open courtyard (center) and a small, enclosed oven in the foreground	242
65	View south toward the Holy Topos of Apa Epiphanius with the large tower on the left and the boundary wall for the settlement built around Daga's tomb	243
66	One of three sunken loom pits built against a wall with mud brick and plaster	244
67	Site map of the Monastery of Apa Thomas at Wadi Sarga. Published in 1922 for the W. Crum and H. I. Bell <i>Wadi Sarga: Coptic and Greek Texts from the Excavations Undertaken by the Byzantine Research Account</i> . Courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum	247
68	View east across the monastic settlement of the Monastery of Apa Thomas at Wadi Sarga with a view toward the cultivated fields. AES Ar. 720. Courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum	247
69	Plan of Rooms 1–33 at the North Houses at Wadi Sarga. Redrawn by Ross I. Thomas. Courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum	249
70	In-progress excavation of the North Houses at Wadi Sarga. Note the combination of small boulders and cobbles used with mud brick and plaster. AES Ar. 719. Courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum	250
71	Cleft that encompasses the stone buildings of the Topos of Apa Phoibammon in the Rock, south of Thebes, Egypt	253
72	Ceramic body sherds disposed at the site after excavation in 1948 and 1949 at the Topos of Apa Phoibammon demonstrating the range of transport vessels used at the community	255
73	Stone walls of monastic rooms at the Topos of Apa Phoibammon in the Rock	256
74	Excavated monastic dwelling place at Kellia showing the multiroom expansion after the sixth century	259
75	Plan of the site of Dayr al-Naqlun with various locations of the hermitages, the current monastery, and the early buildings of Dayr al-Banat	266
76	Plan of Hermitage 1 at Naqlun. The residence is entered by a courtyard with three radiating sets of rooms cut into the surrounding hillside. Rooms A and B are thought to belong to two different individuals and Room C is the private kitchen with a two-burner stove	269
77	Details of a private kitchen and oven in Hermitage 87, Room 12 at Naqlun made of stone, mud bricks, and ceramic sherds	271
78	Wall painting of a monastic scribe from Chapel 42 at Bawit	275
79	William Flinders Petrie outside of his tomb residence near Great Pyramid in Giza, c. 1881. He described this dwelling in his autobiography <i>Ten Years' In Egypt</i> . Notice the wood framing for the window and the entrance, which is closed by a wooden door	285
80	Coptic home in Dayr Abu Hinnis in Middle Egypt with the residents' religious identity carved onto wooden doors and painted on the exterior of the home	287

PREFACE

The cover of this volume shows a photograph of a monk walking down a main corridor at the St. Paul Monastery by the Red Sea in 1931. The photograph was part of the documentation of the Byzantine art and architecture at the Red Sea monasteries in Egypt for the Thomas Whittemore Expedition, which was sponsored by the Byzantine Institute in America in Washington, DC. The artwork, photographs, text, and silent film were not published extensively but are all available for study at the Image Collections and Fieldwork Archives at Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection in Washington, DC.

The monastic landscape in this photograph, taken by Kazazian, does not contain buildings from the Late Antique period for the buildings were not dated at the time. We see a monk carrying something unknown as he walks down a row of monastic residences. We see the cobblestones used to make a wall, the palm trunks jutting out of the walls at various lengths, the plaster that encases the doors, and the wooden frames of windows. We also see the clutter in the path filled with various items whose function is unknown to us as presented in the photograph. Read together, these various items are the same, main elements of this archaeological study of Egyptian monasticism. This is a book about buildings, materials, and monks and how they worked together to create a new landscape in Late Antique Egypt. Like this photograph that pulls the various details together in a single frame, this book pulls together a variety of different sources to create an impression of a similar image in Late Antique monasticism.

Historians and papyrologists are sometimes better equipped with their resources to repopulate the ancient landscape with the activities of the elites through their writings and archives. Archaeologists, on the other hand, work with the artifacts of unnamed and unknown individuals who built foundations, plastered walls, and cooked meals. Archaeology can provide a wider range of materials that allow one to see the ways in which humans have transformed and responded to the natural environment. This book seeks to illustrate how both material remains and the written sources may be woven together to blur the methodological divisions that have traditionally separated history, art history, papyrology, and archaeology.

As a study of the monastic landscape in Egypt, I am addressing the fact that much of the archaeological study of Late Antique Egypt is in need of a theoretical turn. Since the 1970s, archaeology has moved away from a descriptive, culture-based study of the remains to one that seeks to address major questions about how archaeology reflects ideas and beliefs. Theoretical developments in landscape, materiality, ecohistory, and cultural geography offer effective models for looking at evidence in new ways. As I demonstrate, even asking the question of what makes a site monastic has not been clear. One of the advances in archaeological theory is the recognition of the role that excavators had and do have in the interpretation of the evidence. Therefore, my study of the Egyptian landscape begins not with Late Antiquity, but rather with the nineteenth and twentieth centuries during which perceptions of the monastic built environment, as evinced by the 1931 photograph, created a *mindscape* of monasticism. The mindscape was one in which the intellectual and scholarly engagement with monastic material was shaped by the adoption of the mythologized desert of the Egyptian Desert Fathers present in a number of Christian and monastic literary works. The mindscape painted a portrait of monasticism that was remote, severe, and isolationist in a harsh and other-worldly landscape. Yet, the mindscape was in fact not grounded in the physical reality of the actual Egyptian desertscape, and thus the monastic landscape was one that was, until now, poorly reconstructed. The monastic mindscape was one of simple constructions, located in pharaonic spaces or in the desert as a way to retreat from the world and to destroy Egypt's pagan past. Viewers anticipated structures reflecting poor craftsmanship, grafted into an unforgiving landscape, and one very separate and segregated from the civilization by the Nile.

In reality, the Egyptian Late Antique desertscape was nearby the Nile and its prominent canals. In many cases the sharply rising desert cliffs framed and protected the cultivated fields, and both were easily accessible by boat and by foot. Egypt's Late Antique landscape was also dynamic with changing authorities and a slew of new construction and remodeling efforts. The Late Antique desert was therefore an occupied landscape filled with a variety of spiritual beings, of migrant communities of laborers, and of entrepreneurs building monastic villages. While early and medieval monastic literature may cast the changing landscape as the work of divine architects, the actual monastic landscape as found in documentary and archaeological sources is quite different.

In the chapters that follow I argue for a shift in methodological focus from a *mindscape* of monasticism, to a *desertscape* of monasticism, to conclude with a *landscape* of monasticism reconstructed from the extensive and highly diverse Egyptian monastic communities. The monk on the cover is a reminder that it

is possible to recreate the living monastic community through reading materials, objects, and text together. By employing archaeological theories for understanding space, landscape, materials, and community identity we can come closer to reconstructing late antique monastic communities in a more sophisticated and comprehensive way that moves us closer to having a new frame to encompass Egyptian monastic landscapes.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This project began as a desire to better understand how Egypt's landscape transformed with the building activities sponsored by monastic communities. This is my effort to get a sense of the past through the bricks, rooms, and spaces made by monks and *why* they built what they did. As an archaeologist I have always worked with the aim to understand spaces by examining how those spaces were built, used, and regarded in the past. Our ability to deeply understand the social, cultural, and religious factors influencing how monastic space is made is severely hampered by our distance from these worlds, but the combination of buildings, documentary evidence, and monastic literature makes it possible to examine these topics. Fortunately, I have benefited from the tremendous support and encouragement of a variety of institutions, colleagues, friends, and family as I explored these topics.

The majority of the research for this volume came through several seasons of permission from the Supreme Council of Antiquities in Egypt. The support of this institution has facilitated my excavation work in Egypt since 1996 and granted permission for me to visit sites to study the landscape of monastic Egypt. During many of my trips I was given lodging and food at a variety of Coptic monasteries; I am grateful for the many modern monastic communities that opened their doors to me. Financial and logistical support for many site visits came from the Binational Fulbright Commission in Egypt, when I was a Fulbright Scholar in 2007–2008, and the United States Department of State, Bureau of Educational & Cultural Affairs (ECA) Fellowship with the American Research Center in Egypt in 1998–1999. A recent fellowship in Byzantine Studies at Dumbarton Oaks in Washington, DC provided an ideal space to consider the entirety of the project in its final stages. Wittenberg University, my home institution, has generously supported my work and travel to Egypt in numerous ways through sabbatical leave, small grants, and support for this research.

A variety of institutions provided library access for research, permissions for images included in this book, and inspiring spaces for writing – I do have a fondness for space, after all. For permission and assistance with archival material and access to images for publication I appreciate the support from the following library and museum institutions: American Research Center in

Egypt; British Museum; Cleveland Art Museum; Deutsches Archäologisches Institut Kairo; École Pratique des Hautes Études; Egypt Exploration Society; Franklin Pierce University; Gertrude Bell Archives at Newcastle University; Image Collections and Fieldwork Archives at Dumbarton Oaks Research Center and Library; Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale du Caire; Keene State College; Louvre Museum; Metropolitan Museum of Art; Netherlands-Flemish Institute in Cairo; New York Public Library; Oriental Institute at the University of Chicago; Pierpont Morgan Library; Rare Book Library at the American University in Cairo; and University of Virginia Special Collections. The Thomas Library staff at Wittenberg University deserve special recognition for their heroic efforts to acquire numerous articles and volumes I needed in order to undertake my work. I am grateful that they pursued my requests with professionalism and speed. Over the course of writing, several student faculty aides have assisted me; I appreciate their willing enthusiasm and diligence for a job that at times must have been onerous.

I am deeply grateful to the following colleagues who provided access to images or offered support throughout the writing process: Dominique Bénazeth, Deb Brown, Marica Cassis, Drew Cayton, Judith de Luce, Georgia Frank, Gawdat Gabra, Włodzimierz Godlewski, Charlotte Goldy, Matthew Gordon, Susan Ashbrook Harvey, Fotini Kondyli, Kostis Kourelis, Margaret Mullett, Donald Reid, Philip Rousseau, Alice-Mary Talbot, and Edwin Yamauchi.

Throughout my excavation work in Egypt I have benefited from friendships and engaging colleagues, whose counsel and numerous conversations about the material remains of monasticism have enriched my ability to think deeply about the issues facing the study of monastic archaeology. I wish to thank Heather Badamo, Louise Blanke, Elizabeth S. Bolman, David Brakke, Doug Burton-Christie, Stephen J. Davis, Gawdat Gabra, James Goehring, Peter Grossmann, Tomasz Herbich, Salima Ikram, Karel C. Innemée, Chrysi Kotsifou, Dawn McCormack, Elisabeth R. O'Connell, Gillian Pyke, Caroline Schroeder, Agnes Szymanska, Hany Takla, Janet Timbie, Tim Vivian, Nelly van Doorn-Harder, Bastiaan Van Elderen, Nicholas Warner, and Jennifer Westerfeld.

I wish to thank friends and colleagues who have helped nudge this project along at various stages. Derek Alvarado, Ginta Carlson, Margaret DeButy, Laura Harrison, Melissa Heston, Natalie Koukis, Cheryl Levine, Amy Livingstone, Mike Mattison, Kent McConnell, Nancy McHugh, Dan McInnis, Tammy Proctor, Scott Rosenberg, Thomas T. Taylor, Teresa Troyer, Cy Wilkerson, and Molly Wood have enthusiastically encouraged my work and spent many hours offering good humor to balance the demands of life, writing, and research. In particular, both Maged S.A. Mikhail and Christian Raffensperger deserve special recognition for offering a constant supply of insightful advice and patience;

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

xxi

they have both endured long conversations about what makes monastic space monastic, and I deeply appreciate their friendship and historical insight.

My family has generously sustained me over the years as the book emerged slowly from several seasons of fieldwork. My mother, Alyce L. Brooks, my in-laws, Herbert and Louise Hedstrom, and my extended family (Elizabeth Hedstrom, Matthew Hedstrom, Sarah Mullen, and Scott Ward) have provided much-needed refreshment from the work over the years and kindly created spaces for me to work during many family gatherings. In particular, the lion's share of my gratitude is for my husband, Mark, and my lovely son, Silas, who continues to see soccer as far more important than mud bricks. They have traveled with me to projects in Egypt, have withstood my needed absences from family life with patience, and have waited for me to finally finish. Their love, laughter, and support has provided a wonderful refuge from work when I needed it most.

Finally, I dedicate this work to my mentor, colleague, and friend, Alfred J. Hoerth. As my undergraduate advisor in archaeology at Wheaton College he opened my eyes to the Middle East in ways that always welcomed my interests in the archaeology of daily life. As a well-seasoned field archaeologist for the Oriental Institute and a first-rate teacher at Wheaton, he always encouraged me to pursue work in Egypt. Over the years he has offered keen advice and support. His continued friendship is a treasure that has sustained me in numerous ways. As his student, I offer this book as recognition of my appreciation for all he has given me as a blessing.

NOTES ON THE TEXT

In large part I follow the nomenclature for sites found in Roger S. Bagnall and Dominic W. Rathbone's *Egypt From Alexander to the Early Christians: An Archaeological and Historical Guide* (Los Angeles: John Paul Getty Museum, 2004) and Peter Grossmann, *Christliche Architektur in Ägypten* (Leiden, the Netherlands: Brill, 2002). In the listing of monastic settlements in the index I provide a site's Arabic name as found in A. Atiya's *Coptic Encyclopedia*, now updated and available at Claremont Graduate School (<http://ccdlibraries.claremont.edu/cdm/landingpage/collection/cce>), and edited by Karen J. Torjesen and Gawdat Gabra.

In the cases of the monastic sites I discuss, I introduce their names as they appear in the literature and also supply the site names that the communities had for themselves, when known.

ABBREVIATIONS

Papyri are referenced according to the standardized abbreviations found in John F. Oates, et al., *Checklist of Editions of Greek, Latin, Demotic and Coptic Papyri, Ostraca and Tablets* (Oxford: Oxbow, 2001). For digital images and/or transcriptions of many of the papyri referenced, see Papyri.info (<http://papyri.info>).

<i>AA</i>	<i>Archäologischer Anzeiger</i>
<i>AI</i>	<i>Annales islamologiques</i>
<i>AJA</i>	<i>American Journal of Archaeology</i>
<i>AN</i>	<i>Analecta Bollandiana</i>
<i>ANRW</i>	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt</i>
<i>ARA</i>	<i>Annual Review of Anthropology</i>
<i>AS</i>	<i>Ancient Society</i>
<i>ASAE</i>	<i>Annales du service des antiquités de l'Égypte</i>
<i>AW</i>	<i>Antike Welt</i>
<i>BARCE</i>	<i>Bulletin of the American Research Center in Egypt</i>
<i>BASOR</i>	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
<i>BASP</i>	<i>Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists</i>
<i>BIFAO</i>	<i>Bulletin de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale</i>
<i>BJMES</i>	<i>British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies</i>
<i>BSAC</i>	<i>Bulletin de la société d'archéologie copte</i>
<i>BSFE</i>	<i>Bulletin de la société française d'Égyptologie</i>
<i>BSGE</i>	<i>Bulletin de la société de géographie d'Égypte (Cairo)</i>
<i>ByzF</i>	<i>Byzantinische Forschungen</i>
<i>ByzZ</i>	<i>Byzantinische Zeitschrift</i>
<i>BZG</i>	<i>Baseler Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Altertumskunde</i>
<i>CAJ</i>	<i>Cambridge Archaeological Journal</i>
<i>CCR</i>	<i>Coptic Church Review</i>
<i>CdE</i>	<i>Chronique d'Égypte</i>
<i>CE</i>	<i>The Coptic Encyclopedia, Aziz Atiya, ed.</i>
<i>CH</i>	<i>Church History</i>
<i>CRAIB</i>	<i>Comptes rendus de l'Académie des inscriptions et Belles-Lettres</i>
<i>CSQ</i>	<i>Cistercian Studies Quarterly</i>
<i>DOP</i>	<i>Dumbarton Oaks Papers</i>

<i>EA</i>	<i>Egyptian Archaeology</i>
<i>ECA</i>	<i>Egyptian Christian Art</i>
<i>GM</i>	<i>Göttinger Miszellen</i>
<i>GRBS</i>	<i>Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies</i>
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
<i>IFAO</i>	<i>Institut français d'archéologie orientale</i>
<i>JAAR</i>	<i>Journal of the American Academy of Religion</i>
<i>JAC</i>	<i>Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum</i>
<i>JAR</i>	<i>Journal of Archaeological Research</i>
<i>JARCE</i>	<i>Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt</i>
<i>JAS</i>	<i>Journal of Archaeological Science</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JCS</i>	<i>Journal of Coptic Studies</i>
<i>JCSCS</i>	<i>Journal of the Canadian Society for Coptic Studies</i>
<i>JEA</i>	<i>Journal of Egyptian Archaeology</i>
<i>JECS</i>	<i>Journal of Early Christian Studies</i>
<i>JEH</i>	<i>Journal of Ecclesiastical History</i>
<i>JESHO</i>	<i>Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient</i>
<i>JFA</i>	<i>Journal of Field Archaeology</i>
<i>JHS</i>	<i>Journal of Hellenic Studies</i>
<i>JJP</i>	<i>Journal of Juristic Papyrology</i>
<i>JJSEA</i>	<i>Journal of the Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities</i>
<i>JLA</i>	<i>Journal of Late Antiquity</i>
<i>JMEMS</i>	<i>Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies</i>
<i>JNES</i>	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
<i>JNG</i>	<i>Jahrbuch für Numismatik und Geldgeschichte</i>
<i>JOAI</i>	<i>Jahreshefte des Österreichischen Archäologischen Instituts</i>
<i>JOB</i>	<i>Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik</i>
<i>JRA</i>	<i>Journal of Roman Archaeology</i>
<i>JRS</i>	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>
<i>JSA</i>	<i>Journal of Social Archaeology</i>
<i>JSAH</i>	<i>Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians</i>
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
<i>MDAIK</i>	<i>Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Cairo</i>
<i>MIFAO 12</i>	Clédat 1906
<i>MIFAO 13</i>	Chassinat 1911
<i>MIFAO 39</i>	Clédat 1916
<i>MIFAO 59</i>	Maspero/Drioton 1931
<i>MIFAO 111</i>	Clédat 1999
<i>MS</i>	<i>Mediaeval Studies</i>
<i>OA</i>	<i>Oriens Antiquus</i>
<i>OAth</i>	<i>Opuscula Atheniensia</i>

ABBREVIATIONS

xxvii

OC	<i>Oriens Christianus</i>
OJA	<i>Oxford Journal of Archaeology</i>
OLA	<i>Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta</i>
ORom	<i>Opuscula Romana</i>
OSAPh	<i>Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy</i>
PAM	<i>Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean</i>
Par Or	<i>Parole de l'Orient</i>
PCPhS	<i>Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society</i>
RA	<i>Revue archéologique</i>
RAC	<i>Rivista di archeologia cristiana</i>
RB	<i>Revue biblique</i>
REByz	<i>Revue des études byzantines</i>
RRE	<i>Religion in the Roman Empire</i>
SAC	<i>Société d'archéologie copte</i>
Saqqara II	Quibell, 1908
Saqqara III	Quibell, 1909
Saqqara IV	Quibell, 1912
VChr	<i>Vigiliae Christianae</i>
WA	<i>World Archaeology</i>
ZAS	<i>Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde</i>
ZATW	<i>Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
ZPE	<i>Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik</i>