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Edited by Dom Cuthbert Butler

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The Lausiac History of Palladius

The church historian and Benedictine monk Cuthbert Butler (1858–1934) was known for his expertise on the monastic life and wrote several books on the subject, including *Benedictine Monachism* (1919) and *Western Mysticism* (1922). Previously he had produced this two-volume edition of Palladius of Galatia's *Lausiac History*. Written in the early fifth century, it records the lives of the Egyptian 'Desert Fathers' and is an important source for early monasticism. In Volume 1 (1898), Butler begins with a general introduction to Palladius' work, followed by a critical survey of the various versions of Palladius' text, which survives in Greek, Latin, Syriac, Armenian and Coptic. The volume includes a contribution by Armitage Robinson, later Dean of Westminster, on the Armenian version. The later part of this volume turns to an exploration of Palladius' theology, other related sources for the history of Egyptian monasticism, and a historical discussion of early monasticism.

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TEXTS AND STUDIES

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THE LAUSIAC HISTORY OF PALLADIUS

A CRITICAL DISCUSSION TOGETHER WITH NOTES ON
EARLY EGYPTIAN MONACHISM

BY

DOM CUTHBERT BUTLER

BENEDICTINE MONK OF THE ENGLISH CONGREGATION
AND OF DOWNSIDE MONASTERY

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PREFACE.

THE Lausiatic History of Palladius is probably the chief document dealing with early Christian monachism in Egypt. Of late years it has been subjected to a searching criticism:—Palladius has been said to have merely plagiarised earlier Greek books; or to have translated Coptic ones; or to have written the work out of his own head, so that it is a mere romance, devoid of all historical worth. No sooner had I set myself to the serious study of the Lausiatic History, than the received text fell asunder into two parts; and this resolution of the text into its components, and the consequent restoration of Palladius' work to its genuine form, seemed to afford the answer to a number of the criticisms, both textual and historical, that have been made against the book.

The first seven sections of the following Study are devoted to this re-establishment of the Lausiatic History in its primitive form. Sections 8—13 consider the question whether the book is a *bona fide* original work of Palladius, containing his own experiences; or was made up out of earlier materials: the discussion turns mainly on the early versions: the result is that the Lausiatic History is accepted as the authentic and original work of Palladius. Its historical character is next considered at some length, and principles are laid down for judging books of the same class; these principles are applied not only to the Lausiatic History, but also to other documents that deal with the early monks of Egypt; the case of St Anthony, who (it has been said) "never existed," is reconsidered, and an attempt is made to delineate the salient features of primitive Egyptian monachism.

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The origins of the monastic system cannot fail to be of interest and importance to the student of ecclesiastical history. In order to clear up the problems that surround the Lausiatic History it has been necessary to discuss elaborately a number of minute and technical questions of literary and textual criticism; but it was impossible to determine the historical position of the whole cycle of documents relating to monastic origins in Egypt, before the numerous questions raised concerning the Lausiatic History had been considered in detail and definitely answered. If in the course of my work I have had frequently to differ from and to criticise the views of several scholars of great and well-deserved reputation, I may be allowed to plead that, though it was only six years ago that I devoted myself to the special study of the Lausiatic History, the literature of early monachism had long been familiar to me.

Before I had advanced far in my labours, I became aware that Dr Preuschen also was at work in the same field. We soon perceived that there was ample room for both of us; and, although we have assisted one another in the supply of what may be called the raw materials, we have otherwise worked quite independently—there has been no interchange of views or discussion of theories. On the main lines of the case we are in entire agreement; but on a number of lesser points, some of no small importance, we differ, as will often appear from the following pages. When Dr Preuschen's *Palladius und Rufinus* was published in last November, Part I of my book (pp. 1—172) was already in type, and §§ 14 and 15 (pp. 173—196) and Appendices I—IV were written. I have been able, however, towards the end of Part I to take account of Dr Preuschen's work, and in Part II I have dealt with it quite freely.

My obligations to various friends are acknowledged in the course of the book. I wish here to thank in a special manner Professor Robinson and Mr F. C. Burkitt, who contributed respectively the section on the Armenian Version and the Note on the Biblical Citations in the Latin Versions: the Rev. Forbes Robinson, Fellow of Christ's College, who has made the translations of the various passages cited from the Coptic Version:

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Dr Budge, for placing at my disposal his fine MS. copy of the Syriac *Paradise* of Anan-Isho: and M. Omont, for the assistance he has given me while working in the Bibliothèque Nationale. My thanks are further due to Professor Robinson and to Mr Edmund Bishop, both of whom have read the entire book in MS., and also in proof; there are few pages that do not bear the marks of their criticisms and corrections. Mr Bishop worked with me in the preliminary comparison of the Latin documents and the investigation of their relations, the results of which are embodied in § 4. Professor Robinson, as Editor of the Series, has thrown himself into the work as if it were his own. In the difficult section on the Coptic Version his help amounted to full collaboration.

As the title indicates, this volume is only of the nature of Prolegomena: it is my intention to proceed at once to the preparation of a second volume in which the Greek text will be edited from the MSS.

CUTHBERT BUTLER.

CHRIST'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

24 May, 1898.

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ERRATA.

p. 47, note 4, line 1, *read* ἀπήκονον.

p. 65, line 9, *read* Benjamin.

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