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The Coptic Orthodox Hierarchy in 1986

The study of the episcopal lists of the Coptic Orthodox Church serves several purposes. It provides information pertaining to the actual status of the church in certain regions. It also represents the pastoral concern for a possible extension of the influence and work of the church¹. Moreover, it is a testimony to the vitality of the administration and demonstrates the degree of intensity with which the patriarchate serves and administers the local parishes.

His Holiness Anbâ Shenûdah III has pointed out that he hopes to have as many bishops serving the Christians of Egypt today as there were during the Middle Ages, since the percentage of the Christians to the total population of Egypt has remained more or less unchanged for the past 600 years².

This is not the place to repeat the information provided by H. MUNIER in his *Recueil des Listes Episcopales de l'Eglise Copte*³. At the same time, however, we should call attention to the fact that, at least in the past, the number of dioceses has always reflected the numerical strength and the spiritual state of the Coptic Church. When 94 bishops under the jurisdiction of St. Athanasius attended the Council of Alexandria in 320, this number included, of course, not only the dioceses in the Nile Delta and the Nile Valley, but also those of Libya and the Pentapolis. At the time of the reign of Constantine the Great, the Egyptian episcopacy consisted of 70 sees⁴. The First Ecumenical Council in Nicea in 325 was attended by altogether 318 bishops⁵. St. Athanasius represented there the Egyptian Church and was accompanied by 15 bishops⁶. In the following century, the Third Ecumenical Council convened in Ephesus in 431 and was attended by 200 bishops under the chairmanship of Cyril I, the 24th Patriarch of Alexandria,

¹ This is evident from the recent consecration (1971–1985) of 14 bishops for Lower Egypt, where in 1964 the Nile Delta was administered by 4 bishops! As it is well known, the Christian population in the Delta is relatively small in comparison to the Christian presence in the Nile Valley.

² Interview with H. H. Anbâ Shenûdah III on June 13, 1985.

³ MUNIER, H., *Recueil des Listes Episcopales de l'Eglise Copte*. Cairo 1943.

⁴ MUNIER, *op. cit.*, 1.

⁵ HONIGMANN, E., “La liste originale des Pères de Nicée”, *Byzantion*, XIV, 1929, 17–76.

⁶ *Ibid.*

who was accompanied by 40 Egyptian bishops⁷. Eighteen years later, the Emperor Theodosius I called another Council at Ephesus (449), where 15 bishops from Egypt participated. Altogether 500 bishops attended the Fourth Ecumenical Council at Chalcedon in 451, which led to the tragic schism with the Imperial Church. At the first session, Dioscorus, the 25th Patriarch of Alexandria, was accompanied by 16 bishops from Lower Egypt. At the 4th session on October 17, 451, 13 Egyptian bishops presented to the Emperors Valentinian and Marcian their profession of faith⁸.

We do not know whether all bishops always attended the local episcopal synods. For the election of Khâil I in 744 to be the 46th Patriarch of Alexandria the episcopal synod was represented by merely 11 bishops. Thirteen bishops selected Cyril II (1078–1092) to be the 67th Patriarch of Alexandria⁹.

When in 1086 the Amîr al-Guyûs, Badr al-Gemalî, called an episcopal council to settle certain ecclesiastical affairs, altogether 47 bishops attended, 22 from Lower and the same number from Upper Egypt as well as those from Cairo, Gizeh and al-Khandak¹⁰.

It is doubtful that the whole hierarchy of the Coptic Church participated in the Ceremony of the Consecration of the Holy Myron (Tabîkh al-meirûn), which took place either in the Dair Abû Maqâr or in Cairo. In 1257, 12 bishops, eight from Lower and four from Upper Egypt were present, while in 1299 the same number of bishops, though five from Lower and seven from Upper Egypt gathered for the Ceremony of the Coction of the Holy Myron (Chrism) in the Church of Abû 's-Saifain in Old Cairo. In 1305, the Consecration of the Holy Myron took place again in the Dair Abû Maqâr with 18 bishops in attendance, while in 1320 one Metropolitan (of Damietta) and 24 bishops were present at the Ceremony¹¹.

In this respect it is noteworthy that Abû 'l-Makarim, known as Abû Sâlih the Armenian, mentions in the 13th century “sixty bishops in the two provinces of Northern and Southern Egypt”¹² and a list of dio-

⁷ MUNIER, *op. cit.*, 13.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ EVETTS, B. T. A., *History of the Patriarchs of the Coptic Church. Patr. Orient.* 360.

¹⁰ AZIZ S. ATIYA, YASSA 'ABD AL-MASH, O. H. E. BURMESTER, *History of the Patriarchs of the Egyptian Church*. Cairo 1959, II, III, 334f.

¹¹ MUNIER, *op. cit.*, 33–42.

¹² EVETTS, B. T. A., *The Churches and Monasteries of Egypt*. Oxford 1895, 30.

ceses of the 14th century goes even beyond that and enumerates 95 dioceses¹³.

By the 17th century, the number of bishoprics had considerably decreased. JOHANN MICHAEL VANSLEB writing his *History of the Church of Alexandria* in 1672/73 listed merely 17 dioceses¹⁴, and the Jesuit C. SICARD (1714) referred to 15 diocesan bishops including the bishop of Alexandria, who served as grand-vicar of the Patriarchate and whose jurisdiction entailed the provinces Shargiya, Behaira and the towns of Mahalla, Mansûra, Damietta, Rosetta and Damanhûr¹⁵. Throughout the following years the number of dioceses remained more or less stable. R. STROTHMANN, writing in 1932, listed 18 bishoprics including Jerusalem and the Sudan for the Coptic Church¹⁶. In the “List of Coptic Bishops in Egypt as of 1964” I mentioned 31 episcopal sees (including the monasteries), of which six sees were temporarily vacant¹⁷. In the “List of Coptic Bishops in Egypt as of 1977” I provided the names of 32 bishops with their respective diocesan sees¹⁸.

The Coptic Orthodox Hierarchy in 1986

The hierarchy of the Coptic Orthodox Church as of June 1986 consists of altogether 59 metropolitans, bishops and chorarchs.

- a) The Pope and Patriarch Anbâ Shenûdah III is also bishop of Alexandria and Cairo. He was consecrated bishop of Theological Institutions of the Coptic Church in September 1962 and enthroned Pope and Patriarch in November 1971.
- b) There are 9 metropolitans of whom Anbâ Kîrillûs VI advanced 4 and Anbâ Shenûdah III five to the above mentioned rank. Four metropolitans serve in Upper, two in Lower Egypt. Three metropolitans occupy metropolitan sees outside of Egypt, in the Middle East and Africa.
- c) There are 43 bishops of whom 13 serve dioceses in Lower Egypt and the Canal Zone and 14 in Upper Egypt and the Fayyûm. Two

¹³ Ms Copte 53, John Rylands Library, Manchester, MUNIER, *op. cit.* 43.

¹⁴ VANSLEB, J. M., *Histoire de l'Eglise d'Alexandrie*. Paris 1677, VII, 26–27.

¹⁵ SICARD, CLAUDE, *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses*. Paris 1845, III, 244.

¹⁶ STROTHMANN, R., *Die koptische Kirche in der Neuzeit*. Tübingen 1932, 159.

¹⁷ MEINARDUS, O., *Christian Egypt Ancient and Modern*. Cairo 1965, 32/33.

¹⁸ MEINARDUS, O., *Christian Egypt Ancient and Modern*. Cairo 1977, 67/68.

bishops are in charge of dioceses outside of Egypt. Six bishops are heads of Coptic monasteries and 9 bishops serve Coptic institutions or are assigned to special duties by the Pope and Patriarch.

d) There are at present three chorarchs serving as assistant bishops.

During his office as Pope and Patriarch of the Coptic Church from 1971–1985, Anbâ Shenûdah III has advanced to the rank of Metropolitan three bishops in 1978, two bishops in 1985, and two bishops in 1986. He consecrated altogether 40 bishops and 10 chorarchs.

| | | | |
|------|-------------|------|-------------|
| 1971 | 2 bishops | 1976 | 6 bishops |
| 1972 | 2 bishops | 1977 | 6 bishops |
| 1973 | 2 bishops | 1980 | 10 bishops |
| 1974 | 1 bishop | 1985 | 6 bishops |
| 1975 | 3 bishops | 1986 | 2 bishops |
| 1974 | 1 chorarch | | |
| 1977 | 2 chorarchs | 1979 | 4 chorarchs |
| 1978 | 3 chorarchs | | |

There are at least three diocesan sees vacant, Sohâg, Dairût and Manfalût. “Perhaps some of these may be divided”.¹⁹

The references to the monastic origin of the hierarchs explain the degree of importance and the significance which the respective monasteries have at a given time. Thus, for example, from the 7th to the 13th century 25 out of 36 Patriarchs used to be monks at the Dair Abû Maqâr in the Wâdî 'n-Natrûn. From the 17th to the 19th century, 10 out of 12 Patriarchs came from the Dair Anbâ Antûnîûs. In the middle of the 20th century, 16 bishops had served as monks in the Dair as-Surîân. In the last ten years, the Dair Anbâ Bishoî provided 15 monks for the Coptic episcopacy.

In 1964, there were altogether 32 episcopal sees of which 6 were vacant. The 26 hierarchs originated from the following monasteries: Dair Anbâ Antûnîûs – 7, Dair al-Muharraq – 5, Dair al-Barâmûs – 5, Dair as-Surîân – 5, Dair Anbâ Bûlâ – 2, Dair Abû Maqâr – 2.

The monastic origins of the Coptic hierarchy as of 1985 are as follows: Dair as-Surîân – 16, Dair Anbâ Bishoî – 15, Dair al-Barâmûs – 7, Dair Anbâ Antûnîûs – 5, Dair al-Muharraq – 5, Dair Abû Maqâr – 3, Dair Anbâ Bûlâ – 2, Dair Mârî Mînâ – 1, Dair Anbâ Samwîl – 1.

¹⁹ Interview with H. H. Shenûdah III, Cf. Note 2.

*The Metropolitans, Bishops and Chorbishops serving in Lower Egypt
and the Canal Zone*

(Wherever two consecration dates appear, the first date stands for the consecration, the second for the advancement either from Chorbishop to Bishop or from Bishop to Metropolitan.)

| | | |
|---|----------------------|----------|
| 1. Metr. Maksîmûs (Maximus) | Qalyubiya, Benha | Muhar- |
| March 1963, June 18, 1978 | | raq |
| 2. Metr. Filîbûs (Philippus) | Daqaliya | Antûnîûs |
| 1969, June 2, 1985 | | |
| 3. Bp. Bishoî (Pishoi) | Damietta, Kafr as- | Surîân |
| September 24, 1972 (Secretary of the Holy Synod) | Shekh | |
| 4. Bp. Bûlâ (Paule) | Damietta | Barâmûs |
| May 29, 1977, May 25, 1980 (Ass. to Bp. Bishoî) | | |
| 5. Bp. Bakhûm (Pachomius) | Behaira, Damanhûr | Surîân |
| December 12, 1971 | | |
| 6. Bp. Yuhannis (John) | Gharbiya, Tanta | Surîân |
| December 12, 1971 | | |
| 7. Bp. Banîâmîn (Benjamin) | Minufiya, Shibin al- | Barâmûs |
| June 13, 1975 | Kôm | |
| 8. Bp. Angelûs (Angelus) | Sharqiya | Surîân |
| November 14, 1976 | | |
| 9. Bp. Yaqûb (James) | Zagazig | Barâmûs |
| May 29, 1977 | | |
| 10. Bp. Murqus (Mark) | Qalyubiya, Shubra | Bishoî |
| June 18, 1979, June 2, 1985 | Khema | |
| 11. Bp. Tâdrûs (Theodore) | Port Said | Bishoî |
| November 14, 1976 | | |
| 12. Bp. Butrus (Peter) | Ismailiya | Bûlâ |
| June 10, 1979, June 2, 1985 | | |
| 13. Bp. Agatûn (Agathon) | Ismailiya, D. Bûlâ | Surîân |
| May 28, 1972 | | |
| 14. Bp. Ighnatîûs (Ignatius) | Suez | Bishoî |
| May 29, 1977 | | |
| 15. Bp. Mattâûs (Matthew) | Old Cairo | Surîân |
| June 18, 1978, May 25, 1980 | | |
| 16. Chorbp. Ishaq (Isaac) | Queisna | Surîân |
| June 18, 1978 | | |

The Metropolitans and Bishops serving in Upper Egypt and the Fayyûm

| | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|----------|
| 1. Metr. Dumadîûs (Domitius) | Gizeh | Surîân |
| March 1963, June 2, 1985 | | |
| 2. Metr. Athânâsîûs (Athanasius) | Beni Suef, Bahnasa | Suriân |
| September 1962, June 18, 1978 | | |
| 3. Metr. Mikhâîl (Michel) | Asyût, D. Maqâr | Maqâr |
| August 1946 | | |
| 4. Metr. Mînâ (Menas) | Girga | Maqâr |
| August 1962 | | |
| 5. Bp. Bûlûs (Paul) | Helwân, Masara | Antûnîûs |
| 1967 | | |
| 6. Bp. Bafnûtîûs (Paphnutius) | Samalût | Suriân |
| June 13, 1976 | | |
| 7. Bp. Arsanîûs (Arsenius) | Minya, D. Barâmûs | Barâmûs |
| June 13, 1976 | | |
| 8. Bp. Kîrillûs, Ass. to Bp. | Minya | Barâmûs |
| Arsanîûs | | |
| July 20, 1986 | | |
| 9. Bp. Andarâûs (Andrew) | Abû Tîg | Bishoî |
| May 25, 1980 | | |
| 10. Bp. Fam (Epiphanius) | Tîmâ | Bishoî |
| May 25, 1980 | | |
| 11. Bp. Ishai'a (Isaiah) | Tahta | Bishoî |
| May 25, 1980 | | |
| 12. Bp. Bisada (Pisada) | Akhmim | Bishoî |
| May 25, 1980 | | |
| 13. Bp. Wissa (Beza) | Balyana | Bishoî |
| June 22, 1975 | | |
| 14. Bp. Kîrillûs (Cyril) | Nag Hammadî | Bûlâ |
| May 29, 1977 | | |
| 15. Bp. Makârîûs (Macarius) | Qena | Barâmûs |
| September 19, 1965 | | |
| 16. Bp. Amûnîûs (Ammonius) | Luxor, Esna | Bishoî |
| June 13, 1976 | | |
| 17. Bp. Hadra (Hadra) | Aswân, Kom Ombo, | Suriân |
| June 22, 1975 | D. Bakhûm | |
| 18. Bp. Abrâam (Abraham) | Fayyûm | Bishoî |
| June 2, 1985 | | |

The Metropolitans and Bishops serving as heads of Coptic Monasteries

(The bishops with “§” are also in charge of a diocese)

| | | |
|------------------------------|----------------|----------|
| 1. §Metr. Mikhâîl (Michael) | D. Maqâr | Maqâr |
| August 1946 | | |
| 2. Bp. Tawfîlûs (Theophilus) | D. Suriân | Suriân |
| July 1948 | | |
| 3. §Bp. Arsâniûs (Arsenius) | D. Barâmûs | Barâmûs |
| June 13, 1975 | | |
| 4. Bp. Sarabâmûn (Serapion) | D. Bishoî | Suriân |
| June 17, 1973 | | |
| 5. Bp. Diusqûrûs (Dioscurus) | D. Antûnîûs | Antûnîûs |
| June 10, 1979, May 25, 1980 | | |
| 6. §Bp. Agatûn (Agathon) | D. Bûlâ | Suriân |
| May 28, 1972 | | |
| 7. Bp. Sawirûs (Severus) | D. Muharraq | Muharraq |
| May 29, 1977, June 2, 1985 | | |
| 8. Bp. Mînâ Apa Mînâ (Menas) | D. Mînâ | Mînâ |
| May 25, 1980 | | |
| 9. Bp. Mînâ Samwîlî (Menas) | D. Samwîl | Samwîl |
| June 2, 1985 | | |
| 10. §Bp. Amûnîûs (Ammonius) | D. Mârî Girgis | Bishoî |
| June 13, 1975 | | |
| 11. §Bp. Hadra (Hadra) | D. Bakhûm | Suriân |
| June 22, 1975 | | |

The Metropolitans and Bishops serving in Foreign Countries

| | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------|----------|
| 1. Metr. Basilius IV | Jerusalem | Antûnîûs |
| June 1959 | | |
| Metr. Istafânûs (Stephen) | Ummdurhmân, At- | Muhar- |
| 1963 | bara | raq |
| 2. Metr. Danîâl (Daniel) | Khartûm/Sudan | Antûnîûs |
| December 1968, 1978 | | |
| 3. Bp. Antûnîûs Murqus | Nairobi/Africa | Barâmûs |
| June 13, 1977 | | |
| 4. Bp. Murqus (Mark) | France | Bishoî |
| June 2, 1974 | | |
| 5. Chorbp. Athanasius | France | Bishoî |
| June 2, 1974 | | |

The Bishops serving Coptic Institutions

| | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------|---------|
| 1. Bp. Ighregorîûs (Gregory) | Theol. Studies | Muhar- |
| 1967 | | raq |
| 2. Bp. Mûsâ (Moses) | Youth Work | Barâmûs |
| June 18, 1979, May 25, 1980 | | |
| 3. Bp. Sarabion (Serapion) | Social Affairs | Bishoî |
| June 2, 1985 | | |
| 4. Bp. Bimbû (Pambo) | Ancient Monaster- | Bishoî |
| June 18, 1978 | ies | |

The 'General Bishops'

| | | |
|------------------------------|---|--------|
| 1. Bp. Dumâdîûs (Timotheus) | – | Maqâr |
| June 17, 1973 | | |
| 2. Bp. Barsûm (Barsum) | – | Muhar- |
| May 29, 1977 | | raq |
| 3. Bp. Ruwais | – | Suriân |
| May 29, 1977 | | |
| 4. Bp. Misâîl (Misael) | – | Suriân |
| May 25, 1980 | | |
| 5. Bp. Bisantiûs (Pisentius) | – | Bishoî |
| July 20, 1986 | | |

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