

# The Coptic Orthodox hierarchy in 1986

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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 church<sup>1</sup>. 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 years<sup>2</sup>.

This is not the place to repeat the information provided by H. MUNIER in his *Recueil des Listes Episcopales de l'Eglise Copte*<sup>3</sup>. 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 sees<sup>4</sup>. The First Ecumenical Council in Nicea in 325 was attended by altogether 318 bishops<sup>5</sup>. St. Athanasius represented there the Egyptian Church and was accompanied by 15 bishops<sup>6</sup>. 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,

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> Interview with H. H. Anbâ Shenûdah III on June 13, 1985.

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

<sup>4</sup> MUNIER, *op. cit.*, 1.

<sup>5</sup> HONIGMANN, E., "La liste originale des Pères de Nicée", *Byzantion*, XIV, 1929, 17–76.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

who was accompanied by 40 Egyptian bishops<sup>7</sup>. 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 faith<sup>8</sup>.

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 Alexandria<sup>9</sup>.

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-Khandak<sup>10</sup>.

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 ʿs-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 Ceremony<sup>11</sup>.

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

<sup>7</sup> MUNIER, *op. cit.*, 13.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

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

<sup>10</sup> AZIZ S. ATIYA, YASSA ʿABD AL-MASH, O. H. E. BURMESTER, *History of the Patriarchs of the Egyptian Church.* Cairo 1959, II, III, 334f.

<sup>11</sup> MUNIER, *op. cit.*, 33–42.

<sup>12</sup> 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 dioceses<sup>13</sup>.

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 dioceses<sup>14</sup>, 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 Sharqiya, Behaira and the towns of Mahalla, Mansûra, Damietta, Rosetta and Damanhûr<sup>15</sup>. 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 Church<sup>16</sup>. 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 vacant<sup>17</sup>. In the "List of Coptic Bishops in Egypt as of 1977" I provided the names of 32 bishops with their respective diocesan sees<sup>18</sup>.

### **The Coptic Orthodox Hierarchy in 1986**

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

- 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

<sup>13</sup> Ms Copte 53, John Rylands Library, Manchester, MUNIER, *op. cit.* 43.

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

<sup>15</sup> SICARD, CLAUDE, *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses*. Paris 1845, III, 244.

<sup>16</sup> STROTHMANN, R., *Die koptische Kirche in der Neuzeit*. Tübingen 1932, 159.

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

<sup>18</sup> 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 chorbishops 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 chorbishops.

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 chorbishop		
1977	2 chorbishops	1979	4 chorbishops
1978	3 chorbishops		

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

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 ʿn-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 Mîna – 1, Dair Anbâ Samwîl – 1.

<sup>19</sup> 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) March 1963, June 18, 1978	Qalyubiya, Benha	Muhar- raq
2. Metr. Filîbûs (Philippus) 1969, June 2, 1985	Daqaliya	Antûnîûs
3. Bp. Bishoî (Pishoi) September 24, 1972 (Secretary of the Holy Synod)	Damietta, Kafr as- Shekh	Suriân
4. Bp. Bûlâ (Paule) May 29, 1977, May 25, 1980 (Ass. to Bp. Bishoî)	Damietta	Barâmûs
5. Bp. Bakhûm (Pachomius) December 12, 1971	Behaira, Damanhûr	Suriân
6. Bp. Yuhannis (John) December 12, 1971	Gharbiya, Tanta	Suriân
7. Bp. Baniâmîn (Benjamin) June 13, 1975	Minufiya, Shibin al- Kôm	Barâmûs
8. Bp. Angelûs (Angelus) November 14, 1976	Sharqiya	Suriân
9. Bp. Yaqûb (James) May 29, 1977	Zagazig	Barâmûs
10. Bp. Murqus (Mark) June 18, 1979, June 2, 1985	Qalyubiya, Shubra Khema	Bishoî
11. Bp. Tâdrûs (Theodore) November 14, 1976	Port Said	Bishoî
12. Bp. Butrus (Peter) June 10, 1979, June 2, 1985	Ismailiya	Bûlâ
13. Bp. Agatûn (Agathon) May 28, 1972	Ismailiya, D. Bûlâ	Suriân
14. Bp. Ighnatiûs (Ignatius) May 29, 1977	Suez	Bishoî
15. Bp. Mattâûs (Matthew) June 18, 1978, May 25, 1980	Old Cairo	Suriân
16. Chorbp. Ishaq (Isaac) June 18, 1978	Queisna	Suriân

*The Metropolitans and Bishops serving in Upper Egypt and the Fayyûm*

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

*The Metropolitans and Bishops serving as heads of Coptic Monasteries*

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

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

*The Metropolitans and Bishops serving in Foreign Countries*

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



*The Bishops serving Coptic Institutions*

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

*The 'General Bishops'*

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

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