



Therefore, through very many cities, and villages, and in caves and holes in the earth, and in the tabernacles which the monks had in the desert for a distance as far as a man could walk have I (Palladius) gone round about for the sake of the labour of the fear of God, and I have set down in writing with exactness the things which I have seen. And I have also made known unto thee the things which I have heard from the holy fathers concerning the triumphs of great men, and concerning the women who for the sake of the hope which is in Christ performed mighty works which were above nature, and I have sent it to thy hearing which loveth divine words

Excerpts from:

The Paradise Of The Holy Fathers

The History of Abba Ammon

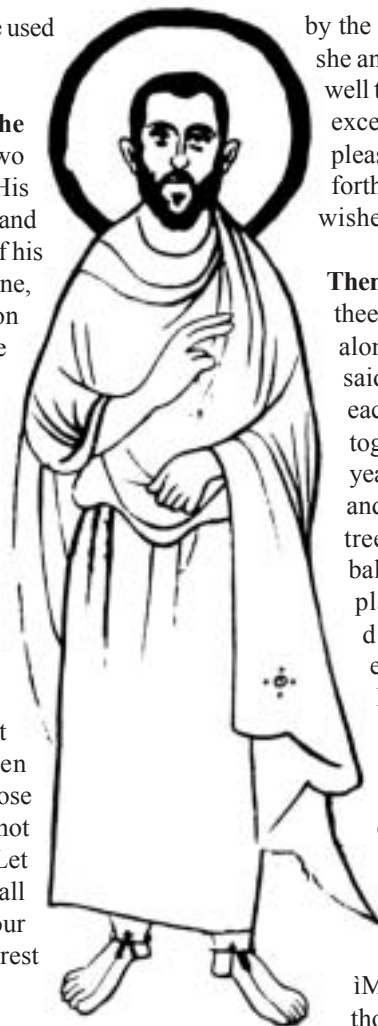
ΑΒΒΑ ΑΜΜΩΝ

ἰThe Father of Egyptian Monasticiamἰ

Concerning the blessed man Ammon, he used to say:

ἰHe became a monk in this way: When he was a young man, and was about twenty-two years old, his parents left him an orphan. His father's brother wanted to give him a wife, and because he was unable to resist the counsel of his uncle he was compelled by force to marry one, and to fasten the crown of bridegrooms upon his head, and to take his seat in the marriage chamber, and to fulfill everything according to the law of the marriage feast. Now, Ammon submitted to everything outwardly, but after every one had gone forth having put Ammon and his wife to bed in the marriage chamber, the blessed man rose up and shut the door and seated himself. And he called to the true and blessed woman his spouse and said to her, ἰHenceforth thou shalt be my lady and my sister; come therefore, and I will relate unto thee concerning a matter which is more excellent than marriage. The marriage which men contract is a perishable thing, but let us choose for ourselves the marriage, which perishes not and the marriage feast which never endeth. Let us each sleep alone, for in this wise we shall please Christ; and let us guard the glory of our virginity unspotted, so that we may take our rest at the marriage feast which is incorruptible.

Then he took out a book from his bosom and read to the maiden passages which were uttered by the Apostles and by our Redeemer, and since she had no knowledge of the Scriptures he added unto their words from his own divine mind. And he read many passages unto her and talked much to her concerning virginity and purity, and at length,



by the grace of Christ, she was persuaded. Then she answered and said unto him, ἰMaster, I know well that a rule of life of purity is very much more excellent than marriage; therefore whatsoever pleaseth thee that do. And I also from this time forth will be persuaded to do whatsoever thou wishest to do.ἰ

Then Ammon said unto her, ἰI beg and entreat thee to let each of us from this time forth dwell alone.ἰ But she would not agree to this and said, ἰLet us live in the same house, and let each of us have a separate bed.ἰ So they dwelt together holily in the same house for eighteen years. In the morning Ammon used to go forth and pass the whole day in cultivating balsam trees which he had in his garden; now the balsam tree is like unto the vine and must be planted and pruned and cultivated and it demandeth great attention and in the evening he entered into his house, and recited his prayers, and then ate with her. And he also rose up to say the praises of the night and as soon as the dawn had come he would depart to the garden. Now as they were doing these things they both removed themselves from passions, and attained unto impassibility, and the prayers of Abba Ammon helped his wife. And at length the blessed woman said to him, ἰMaster, I have something to say unto thee, if thou wilt harken unto me, and I am convinced

that for God's sake thou lovest me.ἰ The blessed man said unto her, ἰTell me what thou wishest to say.ἰ And she said unto him, ἰIt is not right seeing that thou art a God fearing man and one who liveth a life of righteousness, and that thou hast also made me, outwardly, to yearn for this path of life and by the help of divine grace I have gotten purity to



live with me. It is not good that, for my sake, thou who dwellest with me in purity for our Lord's sake, shouldst hide the spiritual excellence of thy philosophy; for it is not seemly that thy fair deeds should be hidden, and should not be known. Let thy dwelling be apart from me and thus thou shalt benefit many. ⲓ

Then Ammon praised God and said unto her, iO lady, this mind is beautiful and if it be acceptable unto thee do thou remain and abide in this house in peace and I will go and make another for myself. ⲓ And having gone forth from her Ammon departed and entered into Mount Nitria, where as yet the monasteries were not numerous, indeed up to that time there were no monasteries at all there; and he built himself a habitation there, and dwelt therein for two and twenty years. And having attained unto the highest practice of the labors of the ascetic life he ended his days that is to say, the holy man Ammon went to his rest and slept when he was sixty-two years of age. Twice in the year he used to go and see his spouse; and he died in his virginity, and his wife likewise brought the years of her life to an end in purity.

Now the blessed Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, tells the following wonderful thing concerning him in the book, which he composed about the life and deeds of the blessed Anthony. Once when he was about to cross the river, which is called i the wolfi with Theodore his disciple, he was ashamed to take off his clothes lest he might see the nakedness of his person. And being doubtful in his mind and thoughts how he should cross over wonder fell upon him, and through an angel he crossed the river without any boat whatsoever on his part. It was the same Ammon who saw the blessed man Anthony, who lived and died in such wise that his souls was taken to Heaven by angels, and it was he who passed over the waters by the might of the Holy Spirit. Now as concerning this river, which is called i the Wolfi, I myself was once in great fear when I was crossing in a boat, because it is filled with overflow of the waters of the Nile. ⲓ✠

Budge, E.A., 1994, The Paradise of the Holy Fathers, p. 100-102



Hymn Terminology

“SEVEN AND FOUR” RITUAL

Hymns that are recited at the vigils of the month of Kiahk. It comprises seven Theoteons and four Hooses (interpretations).

TONES OF HYMNS

Our church is rich in different melodies of the hymns (praises):

1. Adams: Used starting on Sunday up until Tuesday.
2. Watis: Used on the rest of the week's days.
3. Special melodies for feasts and fastings, such as “Hossana's Melody, “Kiahk's Melody,” etc.

TRISAGION

A Greek word meaning “thrice Holy,” a hymn used in Coptic worship.

The refrain “Holy God, Holy and mighty, Holy and immortal, have mercy upon us” is a characteristic feature of Orthodox worship. It is solemnly chanted in all our Divine Liturgies.

The whole hymn is understood as being addressed to the Lord Jesus Christ.

DOXOLOGY

An ascription of glory to the Holy Trinity.

In the Divine Liturgy of St Basil the celebrant recites the “Gloria in Excelsis, the “Angelic Hymn,” or what the western church calls the “Greater Doxology (Glory be to God on high...)”

Almost all our prayers includes the “Gloria Patri,” or the “Lesser Doxology (Glory be to the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit...)”

DIVINE OFFICE

(Evening and Morning Incense or Vesper and Matins)

These are prayers, hymns and thanksgiving that are presented in the evening preceding the Divine Liturgy and in the early morning before the Divine Liturgy.