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Episcopal networks and authority in late antique Egypt : bishops of the Theban region at work

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**EPISCOPAL NETWORKS AND AUTHORITY
IN LATE ANTIQUE EGYPT**

Bishops of the Theban region at work



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EPISCOPAL NETWORKS AND AUTHORITY
IN LATE ANTIQUE EGYPT
Bishops of the Theban Region at Work

Proefschrift

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Photograph frontispiece: wall painting of Bishop Pesynthius of Koptos in the Church of the
Holy Virgin Mary at Dayr al-Suryan, Wadi al-Natrun (Courtesy of K.C. Innemée).

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General introduction

A WIDOW'S PETITION TO BISHOP PESYNTHIUS

In 1944 James Drescher published a Coptic letter written on an ostrakon (a limestone flake) at the Coptic Museum in Cairo, which is now kept at the Bibliotheca Alexandrina Antiquities Museum.¹ The letter includes a petition from the desperate wife of the late Pesente to Bishop Pesynthius, whom she addressed by his short name “Pesente”.

The widow started with the conventional greeting formula for addressing a person of high spiritual authority, but added two phrases that express the conviction that the bishop was “our patron who intercedes on behalf of us before God and men”. Then, she explained the reasons for her overwhelming grief. Not only did she lose her husband, but she also suffered from the violence committed by the Persians, who beat up her son and carried off part of her livestock. After that event, her son went away in a depressed state and she had to take a loan, in order that she could pay her tax.² Being unable to repay her loan, the money-lender seized the rest of her livestock and sold it. Now that she was poverty-stricken, the *lashane*, or village headman, of Jeme and an official named Amos still held her responsible for the land-tax.³ She beseeched the bishop to bring these men and to persuade them to let her stay in her house, so that she would not be forced to wander about.

Judging from the contents of the text, the widow lived in or near the town of Jeme, which was located in Western Thebes, on the west bank of the Nile opposite modern Luxor. The town, which developed upon and around the remains of the ancient mortuary temple of Ramesses III (ca. 1155 BC) at Medinet Habu, was one of the main centers of social and economic interaction in the region from the sixth to the eighth centuries.⁴ The letter can be dated to the period of the Persian (Sasanian) occupation of Egypt, between AD 619 and 629.⁵

Apart from its human interest, the letter merits our attention for four reasons. The first reason concerns the identity of the addressee. According to the Copto-Arabic *Synaxarium*, a liturgical calendar compiled before the fourteenth century, there were two prelates called

¹ Bibliotheca Alexandrina Antiquities Museum, no. 0923 (former Coptic Museum, no. 4326): *ed. princeps* Drescher 1944; republished as *SBKopt.* I 295. Recent pictures of the ostrakon are available on the website of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina: <http://antiquities.bibalex.org/Collection/Detail.aspx?lang=en&a=923>.

² The Persians did not murder the son, as Ruth Altheim-Stiehl (1991a, 1939 and 1992, 94) stated.

³ Bagnall and Cribiore 2006, 243. Drescher (1944, 93 n. 2) suggested that she had to carry out an agricultural task. For the office of *lashane*, see Winlock and Crum 1926, 176-77; Steinwenter 1967, 38-60.

⁴ Timm 1984-1992, vol. 3, 1012-35; Wilfong 2002, 1-22 (with more bibliographic references). For the archaeological record of Jeme, see Hölscher 1954; Wilfong 2002, 8-18, Fig. 2; Alston 2002, 119.

⁵ The Oxyrhynchite district and the regions south of it, including Western Thebes, were occupied after July 619, and in June 629, Sasanian troops left the city of Alexandria; cf. Altheim-Stiehl 1991b and 1992, 89, 96. On the Sasanian occupation of Egypt, see Winlock and Crum 1926, 99; Gariboldi 2009; Sängers 2008 and 2011.

Pesynthius during the Persian occupation: the bishops of Hermonthis and Koptos.⁶ Jeme belonged to the diocese of Hermonthis, but Pesynthius of Hermonthis does not fit in the chronological framework created on the basis of documents from the 620s.⁷ It is more likely that the widow addressed her petition to Pesynthius of Koptos (599-632), who withdrew to Western Thebes when the Persians invaded Egypt, and who stayed at the *Topos* of Epiphanius, a semi-anchoretic community, for a while.⁸ After all, he was a monk-bishop, who preferred to live in a monastery instead of in the city of Koptos. He is well known from various kinds of sources: his professional Coptic documents;⁹ the Coptic and Arabic versions of the hagiographic *Encomium*, or speech of praise, dedicated to him;¹⁰ a Coptic circular letter from the time of Patriarch Benjamin I (626-665), in which he is called “thrice blessed”;¹¹ a possibly authentic Coptic homily written by him on the hermit saint Onnophrius, which was still copied in 1031/2;¹² a tenth-century Arabic apocalyptic letter attributed to Pesynthius;¹³ the unpublished Arabic *Life of St Andrew*, in which he is associated with the monk-priest Andrew;¹⁴ a fragmentary Coptic homily on Bishop Pesynthius from Qasr Ibrim in Nubia;¹⁵ pottery lamps with invocations of “Abba Pesynthius” from Faras in Nubia;¹⁶ wall paintings in monastic churches;¹⁷ and the notices on him in the Copto-Arabic and Ethiopic *Synaxaria*¹⁸ and in Coptic lectionaries,¹⁹ which were composed to be read on his feast day (Abib 13, or July 7). Until present, the Coptic Orthodox Church commemorates Pesynthius as a saint.

A second aspect that makes the petition highly interesting is the fact that the widow did not send it to the bishop of Hermonthis, under whose authority Jeme officially fell, but to

⁶ Ed. Basset 1909, 490-491. The beginning of the notice, lacking in Basset’s manuscript, was transmitted by another Arabic manuscript, which was published in Winlock and Crum 1926, 136-137 (text, English summary); cf. Dorese 1949: 338 (French transl.). For the dating of the Copto-Arabic *Synaxarium*, see Coquin 1991c, 2172.

⁷ The chronological conundrum is explained in §3.1.11. For Pesynthius of Hermonthis see Winlock and Crum 1926, 136; Gabra 1984b; and Benaissa 2008, 181-82.

⁸ Winlock and Crum 1926, 223-24; Van der Vliet 2002, 63-64; Dekker 2011a, 37 and 2016a, 759-60.

⁹ Winlock and Crum 1926, 133, 221-24; Van der Vliet 2002; Dekker 2011a; Calament 2012; Van der Vliet 2012, 31-37 and 2013.

¹⁰ Gabra 1984a; Dekker 2010, 2011b and 2016b; cf. Dekker, *The Sahidic Encomium* (unpublished MPhil-thesis).

¹¹ Pap.Berlin P. 11346: ed. Camplani 2012.

¹² British Library, Or. 6800: ed. Crum 1915-1917. For a description of the manuscript, see Layton 1987, 152-53. For recent discussions of the text, see Wilfong 2002, 24-27; Donker van Heel 2014, 70-72, where the contents of the homily is compared with the demotic admonitions of Ankhsheshonqy from the Ptolemaic period.

¹³ Winlock and Crum 1926, 228; Van Lent and Van der Vliet 1996, 207-13; Van Lent 2010.

¹⁴ Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, arabe 4882, fols 1-14v: summarized in Di Bitonto Kasser 1989, 168-70, 173; cf. Troupeau 1974, 60.

¹⁵ Qasr Ibrim, reg. no. 84/746 (eighth century; unpublished). The contents are discussed in Dekker, *The Sahidic Encomium*, 10, 41-42, Appendix 2 (by Joost Hagen, who identified the homily); Dekker 2010, 22 and 2016b.

¹⁶ Gabra 1989.

¹⁷ In the Church of the Virgin at Dayr al-Suryan, Wadi al-Natrun (ca. 800 AD): Innemee and Van Rompay 2002, 2, Fig. 246-47; in the Church of St Anthony in the Monastery of St Anthony (thirteenth century): Van Moorsel 1997, vol. 1, 150-51 and vol. 2, pls 87-88; Bolman 2002, Fig. 8.26.

¹⁸ Copto-Arabic *Synaxarium*: ed. Basset 1923, 649-51; Ethiopic *Synaxarium*: Budge 1913, 331-34 (ed., transl.).

¹⁹ E.g. in the Bohairic Coptic “lectionary of Samuel” (fourteenth century); cf. Zanetti 1985, 116.

the bishop of a neighboring diocese. Perhaps, Abraham of Hermonthis (ca. 590-621), the other protagonist of this book, was still in office at the time. He was bishop as well as abbot of the Monastery of St Phoibammon at Dayr al-Bahri in Western Thebes.²⁰

Thirdly, Pesynthius must have been relatively approachable for petitioners, if a woman could request him to come and bring village officials, rather than ask for an audience. She even dared to call him by his short name. Ewa Wipszycka was the first to observe that both Abraham and Pesynthius “were very close to the faithful”.²¹

Finally, the widow adopted a rhetoric of patronage, expressing great confidence in the efficacy of Pesynthius’ intercession, not only with worldly officials, but also with God, the supreme patron.²² She addressed Pesynthius as “our patron”, “the one whom God made a true high priest”. In the present Western society, which is increasingly secularized and where the concept of episcopal authority is demystified, the spiritual dimension of the episcopal office is often overlooked, but in ecclesiastical canons bishops are presented as Christ’s representatives on earth.²³ Pesynthius’ case appears to be exceptional, given the fact that he is still remembered as a saint, whereas his colleague Abraham was long forgotten until the discovery of his testament in ca. 1856.²⁴

In this book we argue that the monk-bishops Pesynthius and Abraham were in office during a formative period in the history of the Coptic Orthodox Church. They represented a new hierarchy that was created by Peter IV, the anti-Chalcedonian Patriarch of Alexandria (576-578), and successfully organized by Damian (578-607), the patriarch who ordained both bishops.²⁵ In what follows we first discuss the rise of this new, Theodosian hierarchy, and the involvement of Abraham and Pesynthius in a monastic network, which we call the Theodosian network in the Theban region. Then, we will explain the aims of this book, our sources and the adopted approaches. We will conclude with describing the contents of this book and the enclosed CD.

THE RISE OF A NEW, THEODOSIAN HIERARCHY

In the sixth century, the conflict over the Christological formula of the Council of Chalcedon (AD 451) resulted in definitive religious divisions, when anti-Chalcedonian factions started to create their own hierarchies alongside the official Chalcedonian church. The Gaianites were

²⁰ For the revised dating of Abraham’s episcopate, see §3.1.1 and Dekker 2016c.

²¹ Wipszycka 2015, 333.

²² For a study on the rhetoric of patronage and benefaction in antiquity, see Crook 2004, 91-150.

²³ Noethlichs 1973, 31.

²⁴ Garel, *Les testaments*, vol. 1, 13 (unpublished dissertation).

²⁵ The dates are based on Jülicher 1922, 20-23; Grumel 1958, 444.

named after Patriarch Gaianus of Alexandria (February-June 535), whereas the Barsanuphians took their name from Bishop Barsanuphius.²⁶ The hierarchy represented by Peter IV and Damian is sometimes called “Severan” after Patriarch Severus of Antioch (512-538),²⁷ but contemporary Chalcedonian authors used the term “Theodosians” for the followers of Patriarch Theodosius I of Alexandria (535-566), Peter IV’s predecessor.²⁸ Both Severus and Theodosius I were important for the early history of the Coptic Orthodox Church.

Severus, who promoted a moderate Miaphysite theology, fled to Egypt in 518, when he was persecuted by the Byzantine state for undermining attempts to end the Chalcedonian schism.²⁹ In Egypt he got involved in a theological conflict with Julian of Halicarnassus, who believed that the body of Christ was incorruptible before the resurrection, whereas Severus argued that, since Christ had really suffered, his human body must have been corruptible.³⁰ According to the *History of the Patriarchs of Alexandria*, which was compiled in the eleventh century, Severus first stayed at the Enaton, a large conglomeration of monastic communities at nine miles distance from Alexandria. Later, he went “from place to place and from monastery to monastery”, until he found shelter at the house of a certain Dorotheus in Xoïs (Sakha), in the central Nile Delta.³¹ After his death, on February 8, 538, his body was brought to the Enaton and he was commemorated as a saint and a champion of orthodoxy.³²

Theodosius I adopted Severus’ view and is called “one of the most influential of the sixth-century Severan theologians”.³³ In February 535, he was performing the funerary ceremony for the deceased Patriarch Timothy III of Alexandria, when Julianist monks and laymen came in to depose him and to have their own candidate Gaianus ordained.³⁴ After being informed about the revolt, Emperor Justinian (527-565) sent his chamberlain Narses to Alexandria, in order to establish which patriarch had been consecrated first. Narses deposed

²⁶ The various anti-Chalcedonian factions are discussed in Maspero 1923, 182-210. On the Gaianites and their theological views, see Grillmeier and Hainthaler 1996, 45-52; cf. Evelyn White 1932, 228-35, in relation to the Wadi al-Natrun. Epigraphic evidence of Gaianites is provided by a Greek epitaph from a monastic community at Dukhela, near Alexandria (*SB* III 6249; May 22, 601); ed. Łajtar and Wipszycka 1998. On the Barsanuphians, see also Van der Vliet 1991, with further references.

²⁷ Van der Vliet 2012, 29 and 2016, 158.

²⁸ Οἱ Θεοδοσιανοί: Eulogius of Alexandria (581-608), *Contra Theodosianos et Gaianitas*, which is quoted in *Bibliotheca* by Patriarch Photius I of Constantinople (820- 891); ed. Henry 1965, 111-14; cf. Lampe 1961, 625a.

²⁹ Crum 1922-1923; Allen and Hayward 2004, 3-30; cf. Evelyn White 1932, 228-31. His Christology and theological disputes are discussed in Grillmeier and Hainthaler 1995, 21-175; Hovorun 2008, 15-28. For a recent monograph on his life and works, see Youssef 2014.

³⁰ On the conflicting theological views of Julian and Severus, see Grillmeier and Hainthaler 1995, 25-26, 79-111; Hovorun 2008, 15-29; cf. Evelyn White 1932, 228.

³¹ *History of the Patriarchs of Alexandria*: ed. Evetts 1904, 457-58.

³² Allen and Hayward 2004, 30; Gascou 2008, 85. For the Enaton, see Wipszycka 2009a, 119-20, 228-89, 415.

³³ Hovorun 2008, 33.

³⁴ Wipszycka 2011, 273 and 2015, 162, based on the *Breviarium causae Nestorianorum et Eutychianorum*, a polemic work written by Liberatus, an archdeacon of Carthage, in 560-565 (idem 2011, 288 and 2015, 21-22).

Gaianus and restored Theodosius I to his see.³⁵ In 538, Justinian summoned the latter to Constantinople, hoping to convince him to accept the Chalcedonian view on Christ. Since Theodosius I did not comply with the emperor's wish, he was deposed and shortly banished to Derkos in Thrace. In 539 he was allowed to return to Constantinople and placed under house arrest, which lasted until his death in 566, almost thirty years later. All this time, his followers continued to recognize him as their leader,³⁶ which is the main reason why they are called "Theodosians" in this book, and why their hierarchy is referred to as "Theodosian" instead of "Severan". Three more reasons are the mention of "Theodosians" by contemporary authors, the practice of naming anti-Chalcedonian hierarchies after actual leaders (Gaianus and Barsanuphius) instead of theologians, and the fact that the term "Severan" is already in use for those who supported Severus during his life.³⁷

In 538 Justinian arranged the ordination of Paul the Tabennesiote as the new patriarch of Alexandria (the first Chalcedonian one since 482).³⁸ He also issued laws that forbade "heretical" Christians to enter civil or military service, gather for worship and leave inheritances, and women could only benefit from certain property rights if they became "orthodox", but in practice, the Theodosians were not actively persecuted.³⁹ Since the churches in Alexandria were under Chalcedonian control, the Theodosians built two new church buildings: the Angelion and the Church of Cosmas and Damian, which was allegedly finished in 561/2, a few years before Theodosius I died.⁴⁰

According to the Arabic *History of the Patriarchs of Alexandria*, the usual source cited for this period, Peter IV succeeded Theodosius I without an interruption. It merely states that Peter IV was secretly ordained out of fear for the emperor and the Chalcedonian patriarch Apollinaris (551-570), and that he lived at the Enaton, since he was hindered from entering the city of Alexandria.⁴¹ The reliability of the *History of the Patriarchs* as a historical source is questionable, since it was compiled long after the events described, and is strongly biased, pitting the "good" Theodosian patriarch against his "bad" Chalcedonian rival. The editor, the deacon Mawhub ibn Mansur ibn Mufarrig (ca. 1025-1100), based the notices relevant to this

³⁵ Wipszycka 2015, 162-63, based on the *History of the Patriarchs of Alexandria*; ed. Evetts 1904, 460-61.

³⁶ Davis 2004, 104-05; MacCoull 2008, 3, 7-8; Wipszycka 2011, 269-70 and 2015, 144. In Qusur al-Izeila at Kellia two Bohairic-Coptic epitaphs for the priest Ammonius were painted on the walls of an oratory (QIz 90), "while Apa Theodosius, who was in exile, was archbishop"; ed. Bridel 1999, 311 (no. 147), 314 (no. 154). The inscriptions are dated May 11, 549 or 564, according to Luisier 2007, 221 and n. 28.

³⁷ Σευηριανός; Lampe 1961, 1230b; Grillmeier and Hainthaler 1995, 344-84.

³⁸ Wipszycka 2011, 278, 280, 291 and 2015, 153, 158, 440.

³⁹ Alivisatos 1973, 32-39.

⁴⁰ *History of the Patriarchs*: Evetts 1904, 467: "they finished it in the year 278 of Diocletian", i.e. 561/2; cf. McKenzie 2007, 232, 251. On the popularity of Cosmas and Damian, see Gasco 2009, 85-88.

⁴¹ *History of the Patriarchs*: Evetts 1904, 469-71.

study, from Theodosius I to Benjamin I, on a church history composed by the archdeacon George, a secretary of Patriarch Simon I (692-700).⁴² Another problem is that the *History of the Patriarchs* presents a “conveniently coherent and seemingly uninterrupted story”.⁴³

By contrast, contemporary Syriac sources indicate that the course of events was more complex: the *Documenta Monophysitica* (copied after 580/581),⁴⁴ the biography of Jacob Baradaeus in the *Lives of Eastern Saints* by the anti-Chalcedonian Bishop John of Ephesus (late 560s),⁴⁵ and the *Ecclesiastical History* by the same author (after 588).⁴⁶ They reveal that Theodosius I tried to stop the decreasing number of bishops by authorizing Patriarch Paul of Antioch and Bishop Jacob Baradaeus, founder of a new, anti-Chalcedonian hierarchy in Syria, to ordain bishops in Egypt in his name.⁴⁷ The Alexandrian clergy did not want to work with Paul, on account of his difficult personality.⁴⁸ When Theodosius I died in June 566, the Theodosian see of Alexandria was vacant for nine years and there were just six Theodosian bishops left: John of Kellia, Joseph of Metellis, Leonidas, whose see is unspecified, Theodore of Philae, John of Pelusium and Longinus of Nobadia (Nubia).⁴⁹ The new patriarch elected in 575 was not Peter IV, but Theodore, who is ignored by the *History of the Patriarchs*.⁵⁰

The archpriest and the archdeacon of Alexandria took the initiative to restore the Theodosian hierarchy. Since John of Kellia and Joseph of Metellis refused to work together on account of a conflict, the clergymen invited Longinus of Nobadia to come to Egypt and ordain a new patriarch. On his way north Longinus visited Theodore of Philae, who was too old to travel, but authorized Longinus to act in his place.⁵¹ At the *martyrium* of Apa Mena, south of Lake Mareotis, Longinus and the Syrian bishops John of Chalcis and George Urtaya

⁴² *History of the Patriarchs*: Evetts 1904, 455-518. On the editorial history of this work, see Den Heijer 1989.

⁴³ Van der Vliet 2012, 28.

⁴⁴ A collection of forty-five documents, which is preserved in a single Syriac manuscript; Latin transl. Chabot 1933. Documents of particular interest for this introduction are summarized in Van Roey and Allen 1994, nos 2, 19-22, 42-45: the synodical letter of Theodore and the reply from Paul of Antioch; a mandate from Theodosius I to Paul of Antioch to consecrate bishops in Egypt; two letters from Theodosius I to bishops, and one to the clergymen, monks and laity of Alexandria; and a pamphlet by the Syrian hermit Sergius.

⁴⁵ *Life 50*: ed. Brooks 1926, 153-58. For John of Ephesus, see Van Ginkel 1995, 27-37. On the *Lives of Eastern Saints*, see idem, 2, 39-44.

⁴⁶ Part III, Books 1.40 and 4.9-18: Latin transl. Brooks 1936, 141-48; cf. Van Ginkel 1995, 2, 70-85.

⁴⁷ *Life 50* states that Jacob first ordained two bishops, and later twelve more; ed. Brooks 1926, 155-57.

⁴⁸ Wipszycka 2011, 271 and 2015, 145. Later, the Alexandrian clergy disliked Paul even more for trying to become the new patriarch of Alexandria; cf. Van Ginkel 1995, 36; Wipszycka 2015, 165.

⁴⁹ *Documenta Monophysitica*: Van Roey and Allen 1994, nos 19 (signed by John of Pelusium and Longinus, who was still a priest), 20-21 (John of Kellia, Joseph of Metellis, Leonidas, Theodore of Philae), no. 42.6 (on the bishops Longinus and Theodore); cf. Wipszycka 2015, 144-45. Also see Dijkstra 2008, 282-92, 302-04 (on Longinus) 221-222, 324-33, 360 (on Theodore).

⁵⁰ Grillmeier and Hainthaler (1996, 71-88) place the beginning of a new, anti-Chalcedonian hierarchy in 575.

⁵¹ *Ecclesiastical History* III, Book 4.9. The pamphlet of the hermit Sergius also discusses the letters of the Alexandrian clergy and Theodore's mandate to Longinus, and the dispute between John of Kellia and Joseph of Metellis; cf. Van Roey and Allen 1994, no. 42.6; Dijkstra 2008, 285; Wipszycka 2015, 164-65. The omission of Leonidas suggests that he was no longer alive.

consecrated a new patriarch: Theodore, the Syrian abbot of one of the monasteries of Scetis (Wadi al-Natrun).⁵² His ordination took place in secret out of fear for the state authorities, and even without involving the Alexandrian clergy, who had asked Longinus to ordain a patriarch in the first place. When they were informed about it, they rejected Theodore, not just because the ordination had taken place without them, but also because Paul of Antioch, whom they disliked, had nominated Theodore.⁵³ They elected a counter-patriarch, Peter IV, an elderly deacon, who had accompanied Theodosius I in exile. He was consecrated by the Egyptian bishop John (of Pelusium?) and two Syrian bishops called Antoninus at the Enaton.⁵⁴

Both ordinations were contested.⁵⁵ Due to the political situation, they did not take place in the patriarchal church at Alexandria, and since the number of Theodosian bishops was low, Syrian anti-Chalcedonian bishops assisted in the consecration ceremonies. Neither Theodore nor Peter IV was fully accepted by the clergymen, the community and the bishops altogether, as is recommended by ecclesiastical canons.⁵⁶ Various factors contributed to Peter IV's success, at the expense of Theodore: the strong support from the Alexandrian clergy; the passive role of the few remaining Egyptian bishops; Theodore's wish to avoid agitation and his withdrawal to his monastery; the fall of Paul of Antioch, who supported Theodore, but was no longer recognized as a religious leader; and Peter's recognition by Jacob Baradaeus, the actual spiritual leader of the anti-Chalcedonian (Jacobite) church in Syria.⁵⁷

John of Ephesus considered Theodore as the legitimate patriarch and disapproved of Peter IV's ordination. He suspected that the clergymen of Alexandria had deliberately elected an old, incompetent man, in order to gain control over the church revenues. He reported that

⁵² *Ecclesiastical History* III, Book 1.40 and 4.10; cf. Van Roey and Allen, *Monophysite Texts*, no. 46.2, which adds that John of Kellia, who did not attend the ceremony, sent a letter of approval afterwards; cf. Dijkstra 2008, 289; Grillmeier and Hainthaler 1996, 71, n. 70; Wipszycka 2009a, 271, 280, 291 and 2011, 271, 291. On the Syrian bishops, see also Honigmann 1951, 227, 232-37. *Canon* 4 of the Council of Nicaea (325) stipulated that there should be at least three bishops, and those who could not come were expected to confirm their consent by letter; ed. Alberigo, Dossetti et al. 1973, 7 (Greek and Latin), 41* (Latin summary). *Canon* 1 of the *Apostolic Canons* (Antioch, late fourth century) requires two or three bishops; ed. Funk 1905, vol. I, 564 (Greek, with a modern Latin translation); De Lagarde 1883, 209-37 (Sahidic); cf. Riedel 1900, 20-27; Faivre 1977, 138-42.

⁵³ *Ecclesiastical History* III, Book 1.40 and 4.11; cf. Davis 2004, 107-08. According to John (Book 4.10), Paul could not attend the ordination, because he was excommunicated for having communicated with Chalcedonians. On Paul's excommunication, see also Van Ginkel 1995, 35-36.

⁵⁴ *Ecclesiastical History* III, Book 1.40, 4.11; *History of the Patriarchs*: Evetts 1904, 470-71; cf. Wipszycka 2015, 166. On the Syrian bishops, see Honigmann 1951, 227 (where John is identified with John of Kellia), 238.

⁵⁵ Wipszycka 2015, 166: "Considering the presence of the Alexandrian clergy at the consecration ceremony, it is Peter who had the right to the throne". Ecclesiastical sources and imperial law insist that the community is involved in the election, which did not happen in either case; cf. Noethlichs 1973, 32-33, 55.

⁵⁶ *Apostolic Constitutions*, Book 8, 4:2 (Syria/Palestine; ca. 380): ed. Funk 1905, vol. I, 472-73 (uneven numbers: Greek; even numbers: a modern Latin translation); cf. Faivre 1977, 75-96, 204-05; Denzinger, Hünemann and Hoping 2010, 40 (§60). *Apostolic Tradition* attributed to Hippolytus of Rome (d. 235): ed. Funk 1905, vol. 2, 98 (1:1; Latin); Till and Leipoldt 1954, 2 (31; Sahidic). This source was previously known as the *Egyptian Church Order*; cf. Faivre 1977, 47-66, 204-205; Denzinger, Hünemann and Hoping 2010, 22 (§10).

⁵⁷ *Ecclesiastical History* III, Book 4.18; cf. Grillmeier and Hainthaler 1996, 71-72.

they persuaded Peter IV to consecrate a high number of bishops, allegedly seventy at the beginning of his patriarchate, and over eighty in total.⁵⁸ Even if the number is exaggerated, it indicates that Peter IV ordained bishops for practically every diocese in Egypt and created the Theodosian hierarchy in a short period.⁵⁹ It is unclear how many bishops were actually able to go to their dioceses and fulfil their office.⁶⁰ Peter IV lived at the Enaton and is said to have supervised six hundred monastic units and farms. This high number of “monasteries” is hardly imaginable on the narrow strip of land between the Mediterranean Sea and Lake Mareotis, but the statement aims to indicate the success of the new hierarchy.⁶¹

Peter IV was succeeded by his secretary, the Syrian monk Damian, who resided at the Enaton as well.⁶² Upon his accession in 578 he sent Jacob Baradaeus a synodical letter, in which he formulated his theological views. This letter circulated in Egypt and a Coptic version was even copied on a wall of the main hermitage at the *Topos* of Epiphanius in Western Thebes.⁶³ Damian effectively organized the Theodosian church, raised its intellectual and moral standards, and temporarily convinced other anti-Chalcedonian factions to accept his authority.⁶⁴ Several bishops in his days are still remembered as saints, writers and founding fathers of the Coptic Orthodox Church, including John of Hermopolis, Rufus of Hypselis (Shotep), Constantine of Asyut, John of Parallos, and Pesynthius of Koptos.⁶⁵

Here I must emphasize the historical significance of the decision of the Alexandrian clergy to elect Peter IV. If they had accepted Theodore, the Theodosian hierarchy (and the Coptic hagiographic tradition associated with it) would have developed in a much different way, and Damian, Abraham and Pesynthius may not have become major church leaders at all. It is also important to stress that the Theodosian dioceses were still relatively new and needed to be organized, when the bishops ordained by Damian assumed their office.

⁵⁸ *Ecclesiastical History* III, Book 1.40 and 4.11-12.

⁵⁹ Wipszycka 2011, 267 and 2015, 140.

⁶⁰ Wipszycka 2015, 122-23.

⁶¹ *History of the Patriarchs*: ed. Evetts 1904, 472; cf. Wipszycka 2009a, 415-17.

⁶² *History of the Patriarchs*: ed. Evetts 1904, 473-78; Grillmeier and Hainthaler 1996, 75.

⁶³ Syriac version, as transmitted by the *Chronography* of Michael the Syrian (twelfth century): ed. Chabot 1901, 325-34 (transl.); Sahidic Coptic version: Crum and Evelyn White 1926, 148-52 (text), 331-37 (transl.), pl. 15.

⁶⁴ Grillmeier and Hainthaler (1996, 80) mention the Gaianites and tritheists. Damian could not prevent that some of the (anti-Chalcedonian) Acephali created a separate, Barsanuphian hierarchy; cf. Maspero 1923, 191, 290. He also caused a schism between the patriarchates of Alexandria and Antioch, which lasted until 617; cf. §6.1.

⁶⁵ Van der Vliet 2012, 29; cf. *History of the Patriarchs*: ed. Evetts 1904, 477. On Constantine of Asyut (§3.1.3) and his colleagues, see Garitte 1950, 287-304; Coquin 1981; Müller 1991 (John of Parallos).

The Theban region includes all the localities in the Qena bend that extend from modern Huw almost to Esna over a distance of ca. 160 km.⁶⁶ In the late sixth and early seventh centuries, it was part of the Byzantine province of the Thebaid, which was governed by a duke, an official with both civil and military power who resided in the city of Antinoupolis in Middle Egypt.⁶⁷ More specifically, the Theban region belonged to the Upper Thebaid, which had its administrative center at Ptolemais (Psoi, modern Ibsay), a town ca. 40 km south of Panopolis (modern Akhmim).⁶⁸ The region was subdivided into four districts or “nomes”.⁶⁹ Arranged from south to north, they were the Hermonthite district with the cities of Hermonthis (modern Armant) and Thebes (Diospolis Magna, Ape, modern Luxor); the Koptite district with the cities of Koptos (Keft, Justinianopolis, modern Qift) and Qus (Diocletianopolis); the district of Qena with the cities of Qena (Maximianopolis) and Dendera; and the district of Huw with its administrative center at Huw (Diospolis Parva). The cities also served as episcopal sees.⁷⁰

The Coptic and Greek documentary texts relevant to this study focus on the districts of Hermonthis and Koptos (Map 1), and particularly on Western Thebes, on the west bank of the Nile in the Hermonthite district. This deeply Christianized society was physically dominated by ancient monuments, including rock-cut tombs and royal mortuary temples, which had lost their original purposes and were reused for habitation. In the early seventh century, the main centers of social interaction were the town of Jeme, the Monastery of St Phoibammon on top of the mortuary temple of Hatsepsut at Dayr al-Bahri, the *Topos* of Epiphanius, the *Topos* of St Mark the Evangelist at Qurnet Muraï, and the hermitage at T(heban) T(omb) 29 (Map 2).⁷¹

These communities were connected through a close-knit network that included eleven Theodosian bishops and may therefore be called a Theodosian network.⁷² Abraham of Hermonthis lived at the Monastery of St Phoibammon, since he was also abbot of that

⁶⁶ Winlock and Crum 1926, 104: “a stretch of hundred miles or thereabouts”.

⁶⁷ Maspero 1910, 110, 113; Rouillard 1928, 33-34; cf. Palme 2007, 246 fig. 12.1.

⁶⁸ Maspero 1910, 113; Rouillard 1928, 34. The administrative divisions of the Thebaid are recorded by George of Cyprus, *Descriptio orbis Romani*; ed. Gelzer 1890, 39 (Greek text), 133-36 (Latin commentary), based on six Greek manuscripts dating from the eleventh-seventeenth centuries (p. LXIV-LXVII). George composed his work in ca. 605/6 (p. XVI). On Ptolemais, see Timm 1984-1992, vol. 4, 1140-47.

⁶⁹ The ancient nomes still existed in Byzantine Egypt, but their number and boundaries changed repeatedly; cf. Bagnall 1993, 537. For the term νομός/*NOMOC*, see Förster 2002, 549.

⁷⁰ George of Cyprus observed that Koptos is also known as Justinianopolis and called Qena Maximianopolis, Qus Diocletianopolis and Huw Diospolis (Parva) in *Descriptio orbis Romani*; ed. Gelzer 1890, 39-40, ll. 770-77; cf. Timm 1984-1992, vol. 1, 133-36 (Ape); 153-82 (Hermonthis); vol. 2, 544-48 (Dendera); vol. 3, 1120-25 (Huw); vol. 4, 1624-27 (Maximianopolis); vol. 5, 2157-79 (Qena), 2140-54 (Koptos), 2173-80 (Qus); vol. 6, 2904-19 (Luxor); Fournet 2000, 196-215 and 2002a, 56-60 (Koptos/Justinianopolis). For Ape, also see §2.1.1.

⁷¹ On Western Thebes in general, see Winlock and Crum 1926, 3-24, pl. I; Timm 1984-1992, vol. 3, 1012-34 (Jeme); Wilfong 2002, 1-22; O’Connell 2007; Wipszycka 2009a, 171-97; §3.1.1 and 3.2.1-5.

⁷² Dekker 2016c.

monastery, and most of his documents were found there, whereas part of Pesynthius' correspondence was discovered *in situ* at the *Topos* of Epiphanius. Their colleagues were Constantine of Asyut, Pisrael of Qus, Anthony of Ape, Horame of Edfu, Shenoute of Antinoupolis, Ezekiel, Serenianus and probably two bishops called John. Other members of the network were several patriarchs of Alexandria, who are rarely mentioned by name;⁷³ the priest and abbot Victor of the Monastery of St Phoibammon and his secretary, the monk David; the priest Mark of the *Topos* of St Mark; hermits at the *Topos* of Epiphanius, the hermitages at TT 29, TT 1152 and the "Place of Apa Terane"; "the archimandrite", a monastic leader who probably lived at Karnak; and the abbot Cyriacus of the Monastery of Apa Macarius near Pshenhor (Shanhur).

The hermits at the *Topos* of Epiphanius collected writings of Severus of Antioch and Damian, and a Coptic version of the latter's synodical letter was even copied on a wall at the main hermitage (see above), but their doctrinal position is not evident from their documents.⁷⁴ References to religious conflicts are also absent from the episcopal documents, which often deal with practical matters, such as church administration, marital problems and social conflicts.⁷⁵ Nevertheless, the involvement in a common network undoubtedly created a sense of community among the Theodosian bishops, the hermits at the *Topos* and the other monks associated with them. Another factor that strengthened the cohesion of the network and made the *Topos* of Epiphanius a major religious center was the fact that Epiphanius and Pesynthius were both regarded as holy men. On account of their extraordinary spiritual and ascetic authority they received petitions and were once asked to contact the same official.⁷⁶

Being supported by the monastic network, the Theodosian monk-bishops Abraham and Pesynthius fulfilled their episcopal duties, while operating through their social networks and establishing their authority.⁷⁷ As representatives of a new hierarchy that was tolerated but not approved by the Byzantine state, they were still organizing the Theodosian dioceses of Hermonthis and Koptos.⁷⁸ In addition, they had to deal with social unrest, caused by the

⁷³ The timeframe of ca. 590-630 includes the patriarchs Damian (578-607), Anastasius I (607-619), Andronicus (619-626), and Benjamin I (626-665); cf. Jülicher 1922, 23.

⁷⁴ Winlock and Crum 1926, 99; cf. Van der Vliet 2012, 33-34 and 2016, 157-58. Texts relating to Severus: *O.Mon.Epiph.* 59 (letter), 81 (biography); relating to Damian: *O.Mon.Epiph.* 53, 55, perhaps 54 and 77 (Easter festal letters).

⁷⁵ Schmelz 2002, 319.

⁷⁶ The sender of *O.Mon.Epiph.* 165 hoped that Epiphanius and "the bishops", including Pesynthius, would write to master Elias. This text is discussed in §3.2.1 and §7.5.2.

⁷⁷ On monk-bishops, see Rousseau 1971; Sterk 2004; Rapp 2005; Giorda 2009.

⁷⁸ The development of the Theodosian hierarchy in the Theban region is discussed in §2.3.

Persian occupation of Egypt, violence by civil authorities, poverty and disputes.⁷⁹ All these circumstances must have affected their functioning as bishops.

THE AIMS OF THIS BOOK

In order to understand how Abraham and Pesynthius contributed to the rise of the Theodosian church in the Theban region, this book not only analyzes their individual and common social networks, but also the nature of their authority on the basis of their professional documents. The focus necessarily lies on these two bishops, since the number of documents that mention their colleagues is limited, and most of these documents are included in Pesynthius' dossier.

The first aim of this book is to reconstruct the wider social network of the Theban region in ca. 600-630, in order to answer four research questions. Firstly, we would like to know who were the central actors in these networks, which not only included bishops, but also clergymen, monks, civil and military officials and ordinary people. Secondly, by assigning the selected (episcopal and monastic) documents to a particular decade, we can examine how the Theban network developed in the course of time, or rather, when the bishops and other central actors became prominent, and when they were at the background. Thirdly, the analysis of the structural position of Abraham and Pesynthius in these networks will reveal how well they were connected. Finally, the topographical extension of the Theban network will be analyzed, in order to determine whether the Theodosian dioceses were limited to rural localities or included the cities of Hermonthis, Ape, Qus and Koptos as well. Ewa Wipszycka suggested that Abraham and Pesynthius supervised villages, or part of villages, in the countryside only, and that the cities were the domain of Chalcedonian bishops.⁸⁰ Our topographical study will test this hypothesis.

Another aim of this book is to reconstruct the individual networks of Abraham and Pesynthius, which will help us answer five questions. Firstly, we are interested in the basic properties of the networks, such as their size, cohesion and whether they are similar or significantly different. Secondly, the reconstructed networks will reveal who were the central actors other than the bishops themselves. Thirdly, we will examine whether the number of recorded clergymen is large enough to reconstruct the ecclesiastical apparatuses under the supervision of Abraham and Pesynthius. Fourthly, we will compile a similar overview of the civil and military officials in the districts of Hermonthis and Koptos. Finally, we should

⁷⁹ §6.1 and 8.1 examine the social conditions under which the bishops operated.

⁸⁰ Wipszycka 2009a, 33 n. 20: "L'évêque monophysite Pisentios, qui exerçait ses fonctions en demeurant dans son monastère, n'aurait eu sous son autorité que les villages du diocèse, ou peut-être seulement une partie des villages"; cf. Wipszycka 2007, 344-45 and 2015, 142; O'Connell 2006, 119-20; Van der Vliet 2013, 268-69.

examine the accessibility of Abraham and Pesynthius for different social groups (clergymen, monks, state officials, ordinary people). Wipszycka recently argued that the bishops were remarkably close to their flock, while they watched the needs and conduct of their flock, whereas supplicants could easily present their complaints.⁸¹

The third aim is to examine how Abraham and Pesynthius used their authority while fulfilling their episcopal duties. We will analyze the bishops' activities in the light of various modes of authority, only one of which is based on the episcopal office. Hagiographic sources present Pesynthius as a man with an extraordinary personal charisma, and the present study offers the opportunity to compare this image with our impression of the bishop that is based on his documents. The last question that we intend to answer is whether Abraham and Pesynthius were engaged in all the aspects required by their office, or whether they could only fulfill part of their duties. Recently, Wipszycka argued that at least Abraham's diocese "did not have the same weight as 'normal' episcopal responsibility", in view of the modest size of his residence, the absence of an episcopal steward, who usually assisted the bishop, and Abraham's preoccupation with villages and monasteries, instead of with Hermonthis.⁸² I agree that the bishops started on a modest scale, since they had to organize relatively new dioceses, but if all the aspects of the office are attested in their documents, they were fully bishop.

The embedding of the bishops in their social, spatial and temporal context through the Theban and topographical networks, the analysis of the structure of their social ties through the individual networks, and the study of their agency by examining their use of authority will reveal how Abraham and Pesynthius succeeded in organizing the Theodosian dioceses.

THE SOURCES

The position of the bishops in the social network of the Theban region, the structure of their individual networks, and the nature of their authority are analyzed on the basis of documents, but in Pesynthius' case, the analysis of authority is also applied to literary texts.

The episcopal documents are often called "archives",⁸³ but as they are assembled here, they are in fact "dossiers". A dossier is "a group of texts brought together *today* concerning a particular person or family", whereas an archive is "a *deliberate* collection of papers in antiquity by a single person, family, community or around an office".⁸⁴ It is likely that

⁸¹ Wipszycka 2015, 333-35, based on an episode in the *Encomium* on Bishop Pesynthius.

⁸² Wipszycka 2015, 141-42.

⁸³ Schmelz 2002, 10-13; Van der Vliet 2002; Calament 2010; Dekker 2011a; Wipszycka 2015, 34-41.

⁸⁴ Vanderpe 2009, 219.

Abraham's documents that were found together at the Monastery of St Phoibammon belonged to an actual episcopal archive, but as a whole, the selected documents form a dossier.⁸⁵

It is unique that many original documents of Abraham and Pesynthius have survived, for no other substantial dossiers of Egyptian bishops are known. They are also unique in comparison to the letter collections of well-known late antique patriarchs and bishops, which were compiled and still copied centuries afterwards for the edification of the readers.⁸⁶ The letters of Abraham and Pesynthius often concerned specific individuals and events that were irrelevant to outsiders, but for researchers they are invaluable sources on episcopal activity in late antique Egypt, on the eve of the Arab conquest.

The documentary texts are organized in four datasets, which are available on the CD enclosed with this book. They comprise documents from Western Thebes written on papyrus or ostraca, which are pottery shards or limestone flakes. Although Greek was the official language of state and church, the majority of the selected documents is written in Sahidic Coptic. The few Greek texts – a testament and two prayers – relate to Abraham.

Dataset 1 includes seventy-six papyri and ostraca that feature two or more members of the Theodosian network. It is used for reconstructing the Theodosian and Theban networks, for tracing their development in the course of time, and for determining the structural position of Abraham and Pesynthius in these networks.

Dataset 2 consists of 134 papyri and ostraca that link members of the Theodosian network to localities, including toponyms and archaeological sites in Western Thebes where documents were found. This dataset was created to examine whether the social relations of the Theodosian bishops were limited to villages and monasteries or extended to the cities as well.

Dataset 3 presents an updated overview of the Coptic and Greek documents relating to Bishop Abraham, which are used to analyze his social network and the nature of his authority. Dataset 3 includes the 114 ostraca that were collected and examined by Martin Krause in his unpublished dissertation, *Apa Abraham von Hermonthis. Ein oberägyptischer Bischof um 600* (1956), plus twenty-eight relevant papyri and ostraca that were published separately.

Similarly, Dataset 4 provides an updated overview of the Coptic papyri and ostraca associated with Bishop Pesynthius, on the basis of which his social network and the nature of his authority are analyzed. A large part of his documents, all written on papyrus, is kept in the Musée du Louvre in Paris. Since the original edition by Eugène Revillout (*P. Pisentius*) is

⁸⁵ On Abraham's chancellery, see Godlewski 1986, 46.

⁸⁶ Most letter collections appeared in two series edited by Schaff 1886-1890, vols 1 (Augustine of Hippo) and 9 (John Chrysostom), and by Schaff and Wace 1904-1916, vols 4 (Athanasius of Alexandria), 5 (Gregory of Nyssa), 8 (Basil of Caesarea), 10 (Ambrose of Milan); cf. Schor 2011, 7-8 (Theodoret of Cyrrhus).

unsatisfactory, these documents are being re-edited by an international research project directed by Jacques van der Vliet (Leiden University/Radboud University, Nijmegen) and Florence Calament (Musée du Louvre) since 2007.⁸⁷ From the start of this project I actively participated in the Coptic papyrology seminar in Leiden, first as a graduate student and later as a PhD student. Presently, we are correcting our readings and plan to finalize the edition in 2018. In addition to the Louvre papyri, Dataset 4 includes documents that were published separately as well as texts that are known from Crum's unpublished transcriptions only.

Although the importance of the episcopal documents for the study of ecclesiastical, social and economic history is recognized, researchers have hardly been able to profit from them, since neither of the dossiers has been fully published. Dataset 3 and 4 both include texts that are known from unpublished transcriptions only. In addition, scholars with an interest in the Pesynthius papyri in the Musée du Louvre depend on the edition by Revillout, which is much criticized for its inaccuracies.⁸⁸ The present study does not provide a new edition, since re-editions are being prepared by Krause and the Leiden-Louvre project, but summaries of the selected documents in Datasets 3 and 4 are available on the CD.

The analysis of the nature of Pesynthius' authority is not only applied to episcopal documents, but also to non-documentary texts associated with him: the *Encomium* dedicated to him, the *Homily on St Onnophrius*, the *Life of St Andrew*, the *Letter of Pseudo-Pesynthius* and the Coptic circular letter from the time of Patriarch Benjamin I. The inclusion of literary sources will give us a unique chance to examine how the image of Pesynthius as a social actor based on documents compares with his representation and memory as a holy bishop.

A MIXED APPROACH FOR ANALYZING EPISCOPAL NETWORKS AND AUTHORITY

This book aims to offer an ethnographic study on bishops in late antique Egypt, but unlike ethnologists, the author could not collect data by using participant observation, but has to rely on ancient texts that are preserved and edited. The analyses of the episcopal networks and authority on the basis of ancient sources requires the combination of three approaches: traditional papyrology, social network analysis, and a social model of episcopal authority.

⁸⁷ Van der Vliet 2002 and 2013; Dekker 2011a; Calament 2012.

⁸⁸ Van der Vliet 2002, 64-65 and 2013, 264-65; Wipszycka 2009a, 98; Wilfong 2006, 323-24. For successful studies on church administration in late antique Egypt, which also discuss documents relating to Abraham and Pesynthius, see Wipszycka 1972 and Schmelz 2002.

Papyrology

Papyrology “is a discipline concerned with the recovery and exploitation of ancient artifacts bearing writing and of the textual material preserved on such artifacts”.⁸⁹ A papyrological study is necessary for the selection of the documents that are relevant for the reconstruction of the episcopal and wider social networks, for the identification of the social actors engaged in them (prosopography), and for establishing the nature of the recorded social ties and events.⁹⁰ After collecting the relevant texts and proposing dates for as many of them as possible, the data were organized in a form that is easily imported by programs for social network analysis.

Social Network Analysis

Social Network Analysis (SNA) is the analysis of the structure of social networks by means of their visualization and the quantification of their properties (quantitative network analysis). Scholars can create simple charts themselves or use mathematical formulae to calculate aspects of a network, but special software for SNA is increasingly adopted to process large amounts of data and to perform actions that are too complex to do without a computer. *Ucinet 6* provides tools for calculating the cohesion of networks and the centrality of social actors, among other things, whereas *NetDraw* produces graphs that show which social actors appear in the same network and whether they were directly or indirectly connected.⁹¹ SNA gives us the opportunity to check whether persons of high social status actually occupied a structurally important position in the networks. If many documents can be arranged by date, it is possible to reconstruct subnetworks by period for a chronological study.

In the past decades, SNA is increasingly used for historical research. In the 1990s most research focused on the quality of social ties and agency, but since 2000 some scholars are exploring the potential of quantitative tools and promoting their applicability to historical societies.⁹² I will briefly discuss some studies that provided inspiration for my own research:

- Michael C. Alexander and James A. Danowski were the first to apply network analysis to an ancient network, that of the Roman orator and politician Cicero (68-43 BC), by adopting qualitative and quantitative techniques. The network that they reconstructed on the basis of Cicero’s Latin letters revealed that senators and knights held

⁸⁹ Bagnall 2009a, xvii.

⁹⁰ On prosopography, see Bagnall 2009, 193-94.

⁹¹ Borgatti, Everett and Freeman 2002.

⁹² Ruffini 2008, 14-20; Waerzeggers 2014, Preiser-Kapeller (forthcoming).

structurally similar positions in Roman society, which contradicts the traditional view of a sharp division between the two status groups.⁹³

- Elizabeth A. Clark, who studied the social webs underlying the Origenist controversy in the late fourth and early fifth century, observed that the factions involved in the conflict “lined up precisely on the basis of old friendships and associations”, with few exceptions.⁹⁴ Her Latin sources included letters from Jerome, his supporters and his adversary Rufinus as well as historiographic and hagiographic sources.⁹⁵ Clark applied various concepts from network analysis and calculated the density of the networks of Jerome and Rufinus with a mathematical formula.⁹⁶
- Adam M. Schor analyzed the social dynamics leading up to the Chalcedonian schism in 451 through the network that connected Theodoret of Cyrrhus with the Antiochene clergy.⁹⁷ Schor reconstructed Theodoret’s network by using the Greek minutes made during church councils and Greek letter collections, and by identifying verbal cues that Theodoret and his correspondents frequently exchanged. He tested the importance of potential leaders in the network by removing them from the dataset, and observed that none of them was irreplaceable, for the network did not fall apart without them.⁹⁸
- Margaret Mullet examined the network of the Archbishop Theophylact of Ochrid in present day Bulgaria (1088-1125) on the basis of 135 letters from his Greek letter-collection. She made a distinction between contacts in Theophylact’s first order zone, including relatives, friends and acquaintances, and those in the extended zone, whom he barely knew, and analyzed his network for gender, power relationships and age structure. In addition, Mullett studied Theophylact’s rhetoric and how he activated his network to achieve certain ends.⁹⁹ Recently, Johannes Preiser-Kapeller used quantitative techniques on the data collected by Mullett, in order to demonstrate the applicability of social network analysis in the field of Byzantine epistolography.¹⁰⁰

⁹³ Alexander and Danowski 1990, 317-21, 327-28. The authors used various programs, including *Ucinet 6*, and list the social actors included in their dataset at the end of their article.

⁹⁴ Clark 1992, 16.

⁹⁵ Clark 1992, 16, 20-38 (the sources are listed in the footnotes).

⁹⁶ Clark 1992, 18-19, 39 n. 272-73.

⁹⁷ Schor 2011, 1-5 (on Theodoret’s role in the controversy), 7 (on the sources), 13 and 20-23 (on the selected cultural cues); reviewed by Congrove 2011; Ruffini 2012; Shepardson 2012.

⁹⁸ Schor 2011, 51-56, 130. The author presented his results in numerous charts, but did not describe his dataset or the software used. As Ruffini (2012, 175) observed, it is not always clear which centrality measure he meant.

⁹⁹ Mullett 1997, 59, 178-195, 225; reviewed by Abrahamse 2000, 413-14. Summaries of the texts and data on the social actors appear in appendices, and the results of the analyses are presented in charts and diagrams.

¹⁰⁰ Preiser-Kapeller (forthcoming). The author used the programs *Pajek* and *ORA.5*

- Katja Mueller was the first to apply network analysis to documents from Egypt, when she tested non-metric multidimensional scaling (MDS) as a method for reconstructing the administrative geography of the Fayum in the Graeco-Roman period. Using data drawn from the on-line database *Prosopographia Ptolemaica* and combining MDS with traditional papyrology, Mueller proposed to locate the settlement of Alexandrou Nesos in the district Themistou Meris, and drew a new map of this district.¹⁰¹
- Giovanni Ruffini's study *Social Networks in Byzantine Egypt* is the best example of SNA applied to documents from Egypt.¹⁰² Ruffini demonstrated the applicability of quantitative techniques to the extensive source material from the city of Oxyrhynchus and the village of Aphrodito. For both localities he first presented prosopographical studies, in order to flesh out recorded social ties. Being aware of the limitations of the material and the approach, Ruffini tested the validity of the results of network analysis by checking the impact of distorting factors on the networks. He convincingly showed that SNA can draw our attention to familiar social phenomena that are still easily overlooked, such as the fact that shepherds were well connected.¹⁰³
- In his unpublished PhD dissertation of 2014 Richard Burchfield examined the social, economic and religious interactions in Western Thebes from the late sixth to the eighth centuries, and adopted visualization tools for plotting the West Theban Network.¹⁰⁴ The largest version of this network linked Jeme, the monasteries of St Phoibammon and St Paul, the *Topos* of Epiphanius and the hermit Frange to localities throughout Egypt. Burchfield did not conduct a quantitative analysis, since the limited amount of data would not produce results that could not be achieved by other means.¹⁰⁵

Although these studies demonstrate that SNA can be applied successfully to historical societies, it is not a popular method in papyrology for several reasons. Firstly, it is easy to be impressed by graphs and calculations, but the complexity of the method makes the process look rather misty and does not invite papyrologists or ancient historians to check the data.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰¹ Mueller 2003. The author listed her sources at the end of the article, but did not mention the software used.

¹⁰² Ruffini 2008. The author used *Ucinet 6*, *NetDraw* and *Pajek*, and made his datasets available online (p. 21, n. 67). The book was reviewed by Whately 2009; Sarris 2009; O'Connell 2010; Jördens 2011.

¹⁰³ Ruffini 2008, 207-11, 217-26, 240-41.

¹⁰⁴ Richard Burchfield, *Networks of the Theban Desert: Social, Economic, and Religious Interactions in Late Byzantine and Early Islamic Thebes* (Macquarie University, Sydney, 2014), 231-39, figs 4.4-4.6. The graphs were created with *NetDraw*.

¹⁰⁵ Burchfield, *Networks of the Theban Desert*, 21.

¹⁰⁶ Hickey 2009, 502-03.

Secondly, it is a challenge to collect a large corpus of data and to keep it up-to-date.¹⁰⁷ Thirdly, the reconstructed networks are approximations, not exact renderings of the social networks that once existed, for they are based on preserved and edited texts. Their accuracy, which is difficult to assess, depends on the quality of the dataset, on the researcher's ability to apply SNA in a sensible way, and on his/her interpretation of the results. Some critical readers wonder whether the network approach does more than stating the obvious,¹⁰⁸ but scholars willing to try the approach may ultimately get concrete data to substantiate general impressions or to demonstrate the contrary.

SNA is the only approach that enables us to visualize and analyze the complex social networks of Abraham and Pesynthius, to compare these networks, and to establish the relative importance of the bishops in the Theban society in comparison with other social actors. Even if various episcopal documents are incomplete or do not fully describe social events, they still record enough direct or indirect social relations to form sizeable dossiers. They are “ideally suitable for an approach along the lines of social network analysis (...). Such an approach allows us to shift our attention from individual cases to the ways in which Bishop Pesynthius and the nascent Severan Church were linked to their world”.¹⁰⁹ Therefore, SNA is applied in this study to examine how the new, Theodosian church developed on a local level.

A social model of episcopal authority

Episcopal authority is not a given reality, but the result of a bishop's agency. Although he has the power and right to manage ecclesiastical and social matters by virtue of his office, it depends on his personality, communication skills and the social circumstances whether he can successfully interact with others and earn their respect. For the Theodosian bishops it was particularly necessary to establish good relations with state officials, since they needed to mediate with them on behalf of members of their flock, but were officially regarded as heretics by the Byzantine state, which supported the Chalcedonian Church.

¹⁰⁷ Ruffini (2008, 22-23, 199-200, 211) drew his data from Paola Prunetti's topographical register of Oxyrhynchus (1981) and from V.A. Girgis' prosopography of Aphrodito (1938). The dataset for Oxyrhynchus does not include the volumes of the *Oxyrhynchus Papyri* that appeared after the publication of Prunetti's register, whereas Girgis' prosopography was already seventy years old at the time of Ruffini's analysis and is much criticized by papyrologists. Ruffini was aware of the limitations of his material, but argued that the datasets were large and representative enough, to ensure that the inclusion of new data or errors in the prosopography would have little statistical significance. Nevertheless, updated datasets would include all the available data and result in a closer approximation of the actual networks. For a similar view, see O'Connell 2010.

¹⁰⁸ Sarris 2009, 1572: “But do we really need social network theory to tell us that a city-based archive largely concerned with large estates will primarily reveal vertical ties of dependence, and a village-based archive will primarily reveal horizontal ones? Might an intelligent reader not have guessed as much?”

¹⁰⁹ Van der Vliet 2012, 36.

To understand how Abraham and Pesynthius justified their actions and decisions, why Pesynthius was regarded as a powerful patron and why he is still remembered by the Coptic Orthodox Church, we need a social model that distinguishes several modes of authority. The power based on the episcopal office is important, but a bishop's personal charisma, practical skills and use of legal or official texts could be equally instrumental in convincing people to cooperate and solving problems. Claudia Rapp's model for monk-bishops makes a distinction between spiritual, ascetic and pragmatic authority, but since her definition of pragmatic authority is too broad, it will be subdivided into professional, pragmatic and legal authority.¹¹⁰

A BOOK WITH A CD

The results of my research are presented in the form of a book and a CD. This book comprises eight chapters. Chapter 1 is a methodological chapter that describes how the three adopted approaches were applied: how a papyrological study helped to collect the relevant texts for Datasets 1-4 and to arrange them by period, after which the data could be organized in a form suitable for network analysis; why and how *Ucinet 6* and *NetDraw* were used to conduct the analysis; and how spiritual, ascetic, professional, pragmatic and legal authority are defined and identified in documentary and literary texts.

Chapter 2 examines the division of the Theban region into districts and dioceses, and the likely distribution of Theodosians and Chalcedonians in this region. The study of the topographical and administrative context in which Abraham and Pesynthius operated will help us to better understand the spatial distance and the social interaction between the bishop and his correspondents, particularly if the latter were civil or military authorities.

Chapter 3 introduces the main social actors of the Theodosian network, including eleven bishops and sixteen hermits, monastic leaders and priests in the Hermonthite and Koptite districts, and aims to place them in a common chronological framework. To this end, we need to establish which documents (probably) relate to the social actors involved, and where and when these individuals lived through a prosopographical study.

Chapter 4 presents the quantitative analysis of the social network of the Theban region in ca. 600-630, its development by decade, the structural position of Abraham, Pesynthius and the other bishops in this network, and the topographical extension of the Theodosian network. The topographical analysis reveals whether the Theodosian dioceses were limited to localities

¹¹⁰ Rapp 2005, 16-18. Legal authority, or authority based on (written) sources of authority, is a revision of the concept of legal-rational authority, which was introduced by Weber 1978, 215-16.

in the countryside, as Wipszycka hypothesized, or extended to the cities as well. The chapter starts with a discussion of the documents selected for Datasets 1 and 2.

Chapters 5 and 7 focus on the quantitative analysis of the social networks of Abraham and Pesynthius on the basis of Datasets 3 and 4 respectively. After discussing the documents selected for the datasets, we will analyze the structure of the networks and identify the central actors other than the bishops, after which it is established where and about when they worked. Then, both chapters present a reconstruction of the ecclesiastical apparatuses of Hermonthis and Koptos, and an overview of the contemporary civil and military officials, and end with a study of the relations between the bishops and various social groups, such as clergymen, monks, civil and military officials, women and other social actors. Network analysis must demonstrate whether Abraham and Pesynthius were close to their flock, as Wipszycka argued.

Finally, Chapters 6 and 8 analyze the nature of the authority exercised by Abraham and Pesynthius, while they fulfilled their office and interacted with other social actors. After discussing the social, historical and practical setting in which they worked, we will examine the examples of spiritual, ascetic, professional, pragmatic and legal authority that are recognizable in the episcopal documents and in the literary texts relating to Pesynthius. If a bishop was actively engaged in all the activities required by his office, we may conclude that he bore the full responsibility of his office, even if his diocese was relatively small and his residence modest.

Appended to this book are maps of the districts of Hermonthis and Koptos as well as Western Thebes (Maps 1-2), lists of the selected documents in Datasets 1-4 (Lists 1-4), graphs of the reconstructed networks (Pls 1-15), tables and chronological overviews (Tables 1-10).

The complete datasets, with Excel-files, the tables and graphs created by *Ucinet 6* and *NetDraw*, and the results of the quantitative analyses, are available on the CD.

Chapter 1: The analysis of episcopal networks and authority

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the three approaches outlined in the introduction, namely papyrology, SNA and a social model for analyzing the nature of episcopal authority.

The first section discusses how Datasets 1-4 were prepared for network analysis by means of a traditional papyrological approach. It started with the selection of documents on the basis of their relevance to Abraham, Pesynthius or the social actors associated with them, and the updating of the datasets, when new editions became available. Another major step was to propose absolute or approximate dates for as many documents as possible, in order that the social ties recorded in them could be arranged chronologically, which would enable us to examine the development of the reconstructed networks. To this end, three strategies were devised: the reconstruction of the relative chronology of the *Topos* of Epiphanius, which formed the main connection between Abraham, Pesynthius and the inhabitants of other monastic communities; the dating of documents that include a date according to the indiction system; and limiting the office of a particular *lashane* to a single indiction year. After arranging the documents by dataset and period, the relational data was organized in the form of summaries, schematic representations, lists and special formats in Excel, which were ready to be imported in *Ucinet 6*.¹¹¹ The purpose of the summaries and schematic representations is to make the complex process of identifying social actors and establishing their relations more transparent to the reader, especially in the case of unedited or fragmentary documents.

The second section describes how network analysis was conducted on Datasets 1-4, in order to analyze the social network of the Theban region, the position of Abraham and Pesynthius in this network, the properties of their individual networks, and their closeness to their flock. After explaining the choice for *Ucinet 6* and *NetDraw*, it discusses how the Excel-files prepared in the first section were imported in *Ucinet 6* and which procedure was followed to analyze the networks. The procedure is described as elaborately as possible, in order to give the reader the opportunity to follow the analytical process and to replicate it.

The third section introduces a new model of episcopal authority, which is applied to Abraham and Pesynthius on the basis of Datasets 3 and 4 respectively, and to literary texts relating to Pesynthius, in order to analyze how the bishops established their authority. The

¹¹¹ Borgatti, Everett and Freeman 2002: *Ucinet 6* for Windows (version 6.515) and *NetDraw* (version 2.139). *Ucinet 6* is available at the website: <https://sites.google.com/site/ucinetsoftware/downloads>. *NetDraw* is included in the same package. For tutorials, see Hanneman and Riddle 2005; Prell 2012, 229-37.

model is an adapted version of Claudia Rapp's model of episcopal leadership, and makes a distinction between spiritual, ascetic, professional, pragmatic and legal authority. Special attention is paid to key words attested in the episcopal documents and literary texts that point to a particular form of authority. Since bishops differed with regard to their personality, skills, means and social circumstances, they were successful in varying degrees and different ways, and consequently, the relative weight of the five modes of authority may vary for each bishop. The model of episcopal authority will help us explain why Pesynthius was regarded as an influential patron and a holy man, and reveal what impression Abraham must have made, judging from his documents. When discussing professional authority, we should also examine the various aspects of the episcopal office, in order to distinguish professional tasks from less formal activities. If the bishops fulfilled the various tasks required by their office, we may conclude that they bore full episcopal responsibility, even if their diocese was small.

In order to analyze episcopal networks and authority, we first need to prepare datasets.

§1.1 THE PREPARATION OF DATASETS 1-4

§1.1.1 *Selecting relevant documents*

The present project envisaged the analysis of the social networks of Abraham and Pesynthius only, and started with the collection of their documents (Datasets 3-4). For Abraham's dossier I had access to a digital copy of Martin Krause's unpublished dissertation, *Apa Abraham von Hermonthis. Ein oberägyptischer Bischof um 600*, and added other relevant documents from the available editions and publications of isolated pieces (§5.1.1). The dataset was updated several times, even after the analysis of Abraham's network was thought to have been completed. The last text to be added to Dataset 3 was *P.Saint-Marc* 439, in March 2016.

The reconstruction of Pesynthius' dossier was facilitated by my involvement in the joint Leiden-Louvre project for the reedition of the Pesynthius papyri in the Musée du Louvre, yet complicated by the fragmentary state of these papyri and the dispersal of related papyri from the former Phillipps collection (§7.1.1). Other relevant documents were published in *O./P.Mon.Epiph.* or separate editions. *O.Saint-Marc* 236 was the last text added to Dataset 4.

Early in the process of reconstructing Datasets 3-4, it became clear that Abraham and Pesynthius were indirectly connected through their relations with the hermits at the *Topos* of Epiphanius, particularly Epiphanius himself and his disciple Psan. The latter maintained close ties with other monks, hermits and priests in the Theban region, notably Mark of the *Topos* of St Mark, the Moses and Psate of TT 29, Victor and David, Ezekiel and Djor of TT 1152, and Terane, who were in turn acquainted with Abraham, Pesynthius or other bishops. The dossier

for this regional Theodosian network (Dataset 1) grew gradually during the period of my research, since new editions or preliminary versions of edited texts became available:

- *O.Frangé*, edited by Anne Boud'hors and Chantal Heurtel, which includes letters relating to Moses and Psate (and Bishop Abraham, Epiphanius, Mark and Terane), was published in 2010, but I first got access to it in 2013.
- A preview of the edition of the letters sent by Victor, and written by David, to Ezekiel and Djor, which Esther Garel kindly shared with me in 2014.
- In February 2016, Esther also gave me the opportunity to read her dissertation, *Les testaments des supérieurs du monastère de Saint-Phoibammôn à Thèbes (VII^e siècle). Édition, traduction, commentaire*, which she is preparing for publication. It presents a new edition of Abraham's testament, which is included in Datasets 1-3.
- In March 2016, I got access to *P./O.Saint-Marc*, which is edited by Boud'hors and Heurtel as well, and includes documents relating to the priest Mark (and Epiphanius, Ezekiel, Djor, Abraham and Pesynthius). After updating Dataset 1, the analysis of the social network in the Theban region was redone.

In July 2015, during the first analysis of the Theodosian network, the idea arose to create a fourth dataset, in order to examine the localities associated with the Theodosian bishops and the spatial extension of their social ties (Dataset 2). The underlying idea was that topographical networks could help to delineate the Theodosian dioceses. It did not work, since various localities could not be located, and since the dioceses of Koptos and Qus are difficult to separate, for Pesynthius of Koptos also supervised “the eparchy of Qus” (§2.2.3). The networks did, however, reveal that the social ties of Abraham, Pesynthius and some of their colleagues extended beyond the boundaries of their dioceses, and it is interesting to look at the topographical networks of other members of the Theodosian network as well (§4.5.2-5).

Lists of the selected documents in Datasets 1-4 are included at the end of this book and the selection criteria are discussed in §4.1, 5.1 and 7.1. The Coptic and Greek documents are referred to by the standard papyrological abbreviations introduced by John F. Oates, William H. Willis, and various other scholars in the *Checklist of Editions of Greek, Latin, Demotic, and Coptic Papyri, Ostraca, and Tablets*, which explains the different spellings for the name “Pesynthius” and the corpus *P.Pisentius*.¹¹² New sigla are proposed for recent editions that are not yet included in the *Checklist*.¹¹³

¹¹² The latest digital version of the *Checklist* is available at: <http://papyri.info/docs/checklist>.

¹¹³ *P./O.Saint-Marc*: ed. Boud'hors and Heurtel 2015; *O.Theb.Copt.*: Thompson 1913; *O.ThebIfao*: Calament 2004; O.Berlin P.: Krause, *Apa Abraham*, vol. 2; O.MMA1152. inv.: ed. Garel 2016.

§1.1.2 *Proposing dates for the documents*

Ewa Wipszycka observed that it is impossible to establish absolute dates for Bishop Abraham, since the few documents in his dossier that contain dates refer to the indiction system, which records fifteen-year cycles and offers two or three possible dates within the period of ca. 590-630.¹¹⁴ Pesynthius' dossier contains one letter with an indiction number, Epiphanius received two such letters, and several dated documents relate to Victor and David (§7.1.5, 3.2.1, 3.2.4). During my research I discovered that it is possible to propose approximate and absolute dates for Abraham, Pesynthius and their associates by combining the following three strategies:

- the reconstruction of a relative chronology of the *Topos* of Epiphanius, after which Abraham, Pesynthius and other members of the Theodosian network could be linked to particular leaders of the *Topos* and be placed in the order of appearance;
- the selection of the most likely date proposed for documents with an indiction date by looking at the relative dating of the social actors involved;
- linking the eponymous office of *lashane* to single indiction years.

A. A relative chronology of the *Topos* of Epiphanius

The purpose of reconstructing a relative chronology of the *Topos* of Epiphanius was to establish connections between Abraham and Pesynthius, who both lived in Western Thebes in ca. 620, and whose combined dossiers could help to examine social life in the Theban region. In 2012, I still linked *P.Mon.Epiph.* 466 to Abraham, Pesynthius and Epiphanius, but during the preparation of the datasets, it became clear that the Abraham involved was not necessarily a bishop (§5.1.1). Abraham and Epiphanius were indirectly connected through Paham, the son of Pelish, whereas Pesynthius knew Epiphanius' disciple Psan (§3.1.1-2, 3.2.1). Abraham was also acquainted with John and Isaac, “monks of the mountain of Jeme”, whom I identified as predecessors of Epiphanius and Psan (§3.2.1). If the appearance of John and Isaac could be dated approximately, this would help to refine Abraham's chronology.

The relative chronology was reconstructed by identifying the leaders of the *Topos*.¹¹⁵ *P.KRU* 75, the Coptic testament of Psan's disciples Jacob and Elias I, mentions Epiphanius, Psan, Jacob, Elias I and Stephen (as the future heir and owner of the *Topos*), but does not list Epiphanius' predecessors. Fortunately, some Coptic letters relating to the *Topos* are addressed to several recipients, including Epiphanius. The persons named first, John and Enoch, are identified as “the anchorites of the mountain of Jeme” and apparently were Epiphanius'

¹¹⁴ Wipszycka 2015, 35-36, n. 37. On the indiction system, see Bagnall and Worp 2004, 7-11.

¹¹⁵ Dekker 2013 and 2016.

superiors. John “the anchorite” is also attested as the sole recipient of a letter, which indicates that Enoch was still John’s disciple and not yet a recognized anchorite. Previously, John was the disciple of “the anchorite” Isaac I. In short, the early leaders of the *Topos* were Isaac I, John, Enoch and Epiphanius, and the coherence of the relative chronology was confirmed by letters from Euprepus and Joseph, who corresponded with the *Topos* during several phases of leadership. Assuming that Isaac I and John were the monks associated with Bishop Abraham, their meeting necessarily took place after Abraham’s ordination (ca. 590). By lack of more chronological parameters, a general dating in ca. 600 is plausible for both parties (§3.2.1).

During the reconstruction, “the anchorites” Isaac and Elias appeared as leaders of the *Topos* as well. Like their correspondent Frange, from the hermitage at TT 29, they must have lived in the first half of the eighth century and should be distinguished from the Isaac (I) and Elias (I) mentioned above. Apparently, there were two periods of occupation at the *Topos*.¹¹⁶

O.Frangé, the edition of documents found at TT 29, made it possible to reconstruct the relative chronology of the hermitage at TT 29 in a similar way, at least for the first half of the seventh century, when Papnoute (?), Pesente, Zael, Moses and Psate lived there (§3.2.2). Likewise, Garel’s dissertation about the testaments of the first four abbots of the Monastery of St Phoibammon, namely Bishop Abraham, Victor, Peter and Jacob, was instrumental for the historical reconstruction of this monastery (§3.2.4).

B. Absolute dates

Complete dates according to the indiction system are converted to a date in the Julian calendar by means of the synoptic chronological table compiled by R.S. Bagnall and K.A. Worp, and the Calendar Conversion Program (CALM) developed by Benno van Dalen, a Dutch historian of science who is specialized in Islamic astronomy and methods of computation.¹¹⁷ The table is used to check which Diocletian year corresponded with a particular indiction year, after which the day, month and Diocletian year (“Martyrs era”) are entered in the program.¹¹⁸

Originally, I used the chronological table published by Walter C. Till, who let the indiction year start on August 29 or 30, which corresponded to the beginning of the Egyptian

¹¹⁶ Dekker 2016a, 756-57, 762-63, 765. For the date, see *O.Frangé*, p. 10.

¹¹⁷ Bagnall and Worp 2004, 127-57. The latest version of CALM is freely available as a ZIP-file at Van Dalen’s website, <http://www.bennovandalen.de/Programs/programs.html>, under the header “CALH (Calendar conversion program)”. The program can convert a date according to the Gregorian, Julian, Coptic, French revolutionary, Hebrew, Islamic and Shamsi (Iranian) calendars and also indicates the day of the week.

¹¹⁸ After unzipping and starting the program, the user can select “Coptic calendar” and enter the day in numbers, select the correct month name (in its Arabic form, but written in the Latin script), and enter the year in numbers.

calendar, but in the Thebaid the indiction year started on Pachon 1 or May 1.¹¹⁹ In Till's system documents written between May and August are dated one year later than in the system of Bagnall and Worp.¹²⁰

Dataset 1 and 2 include *SBKopt.* 1238, the only Coptic document with an absolute date that is confirmed by external evidence. It records a solar eclipse on Pamenoth 14 of a fourth indiction year, which corresponds to March 10, 601, as astronomers have confirmed.¹²¹

During the reconstruction of the chronological framework, absolute dates were first proposed for Epiphanius, and then for Abraham and Pesynthius. When Epiphanius headed the *Topos*, Jemean authorities sent him a petition on Parmoute 29 of an eighth indiction year, which could correspond to April 24, 605 or 620 (§3.2.1). In view of Epiphanius' contact with Pesynthius, who stayed in Western Thebes in the 620s, 620 is more likely, also because one of the Jemean officials is identified with the Amos mentioned by the petition that a widow sent to Bishop Pesynthius in the Persian period (General introduction, §7.5.2). When considering the relative chronology of the *Topos*, it is likely that in 605 one of Epiphanius' predecessors headed the community, and that Epiphanius became "the anchorite" at a later date. For these reasons, the date of the petition should be April 24, 620. Following the same reasoning, a letter addressed to Epiphanius and dated Pachon 8 in a seventh indiction year was written on May 3, 618, since an earlier option, May 3, 603, is too early (§3.2.1). These absolute dates enable us to propose ca. 615-620 as the period of Epiphanius' leadership at the *Topos*.

Paham, the son of Pelish, another official who signed the petition to Epiphanius, met Bishop Abraham in about the same period (§3.1.1). Before I proposed 621 as Abraham's date of death, I took 590-620 as the timespan, in which all the dates in Abraham's documents should fall. This timespan corresponded to one complete and two incomplete indiction cycles, and resulted in two possible dates for most indiction years, and three options for a ninth indiction year (590/591, 605/606, 620/621). One strategy to determine the most likely date was to look at Victor's role in dated letters. Abraham's documents create the impression that the bishop increasingly needed Victor's assistance towards the end of his episcopate. If Victor appears as the co-recipient of a letter, or as a co-witness or representative of the bishop, the later date is preferable, but if he is greeted, especially by someone interested in a festal letter from Patriarch Damian (who was in office until 607), the letter is probably early (§3.2.4).

¹¹⁹ Till 1962, 237; Bagnall and Worp 2004, 30.

¹²⁰ In Dekker 2016a, 760 and fig. 4, I stated that *O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* II 16 (Mesore 14 of an eighth indiction year) is dated August 7, 620, but according to the synoptic chronological table an eighth indiction year started in May 619, and the correct date is August 7, 619; cf. Bagnall and Worp 2004, 155; Dekker 2016c. A. Biedenkopf-Ziehner, the editor of *O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* II 16, also followed Till and proposed "7.8.605 (?)".

¹²¹ Gilmore and Ray 2006, 190-92. For a recent edition, see Heurtel 2013, 77-79.

For the analysis of the development of Abraham's social network it is important to use correct dates, since it matters whether a document and the social actors involved are assigned to the period 610-619 or 620-621 (§5.4.3-4). On the basis of Till's system I originally dated *O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* II 16 to August 7, 620, but since the indiction year started in May, the correct date turned out to be August 7, 619 (§3.1.1).

P.Pisentius 22 in Pesynthius' dossier is dated Mechir 9 of an eleventh indiction year. Within the period of his episcopate this date corresponds to February 3, 608 or 623, but the mention of Psan without Epiphanius points to a date when Epiphanius (ca. 615-620) no longer headed the *Topos*, apparently February 3, 623 (§3.1.2).

C. Dates based on the period of office of *lashanes*

SBKopt. I 1238, which records the solar eclipse of March 10, 601 is dated Pamenoth 14 in a fourth indiction year, which was "the year when Peter, the son of Palou, was *lashane* of Jeme". On account of this document various scholars observed that the office of *lashane* was eponymic, and Miriam Lichtheim argued that the dating after the *lashane* is "an additional method of dating which has not been fully recognized".¹²² Walter C. Till hesitated to link the office to a specific year, since the official could be reappointed, and since Jemean magistrates in eight-century Coptic deeds retained their office for several years.¹²³ Although Till has a point, the fact remains that, if a *lashane* of Jeme appears in a text with an indiction date, he was certainly active in (at least part of) that year.

Another important question is whether the period of office coincided exactly with an indiction year. Since the indiction system was introduced for taxation purposes, and since *lashanes* were involved in the tax-collection in their villages, the two are likely to be linked. Therefore, I propose the hypothesis that the office of *lashane* corresponded with one indiction year (ca. May 1-April 30).¹²⁴ This dating strategy is used to propose a new end date for Bishop Abraham, which is linked to the term of the *lashane* Zachariah (§3.1.1).

§1.1.3 Organizing the data

After the selection of relevant documents for each dataset, the identification of individuals and the chronological reconstruction, the data had to be arranged in such a way that it could

¹²² Winlock and Crum 1926, 176 and n. 15; Lichtheim in *P.Medin.HabuCopt.*, p. 2-3; Steinwenter 1967, 38.

¹²³ Steinwenter 1967, 31, 54. This can be demonstrated for officials who issued tax receipts (including *apeue*) and scribes in eight-century Jeme; cf. Delatre and Fournet 2014, 224-45.

¹²⁴ On the indiction system, see Bagnall and Worp 2004, 7-11. Some *lashanes* asked religious authorities to issue letters of protection, in order that tax-evaders would come home, as in *P.Schutzbrieife* 24, 39, 60: ed. Till 1939.

be easily processed for network analysis. In addition, the presentation of the data should be as transparent as possible, in order that the reader can establish which social actors are identified and on what basis, which background they certainly or probably had, and which relations are actually recorded or hypothetical. The summaries of the episcopal documents, presented in the form of texts and schematic representations, and the lists of documents, social actors and localities were created in Microsoft Word 2010 (§1.1.3.A-C), the overviews with technical data on texts, *edgelist*s and *matrices* in Microsoft Excel 2010 (§1.1.3.D-F).

A. Summaries of the episcopal documents

Since the episcopal documents are still being prepared for publication, Dataset 3 and 4 include summaries,¹²⁵ in order that the reader gets an impression of their contents and is able to follow my interpretation of the social events and ties recorded in them. They also indicate which persons are identified and whether they are attested in other documents as well. In addition, the summaries aim to make explicit which information is actually recorded, and which ties are reconstructed or inferred from the rest of the document. It is important to be as precise as possible, since a different interpretation of social ties and events would result in a different dataset, which would in turn affect the results of network analysis. The summaries were essential for the prosopographical study of the members of the Theodosian network (Chapter 3), the reconstruction of the social networks (Chapters 4-5 and 7), and the analysis of the authority exercised by Abraham and Pesynthius (Chapters 6 and 8).

There are no summaries for Datasets 1 and 2, since the episcopal documents included in them are already summarized and the monastic documents are accessible through editions.

B. Schematic representations

The summaries are followed by schematic representations, which indicate the various social actors or groups involved, their ID numbers, and the recorded or hypothetical relations.

Preferably, a social actor is mentioned by name, with an abbreviation of his or her title (for an overview, see Table 1) and with a unique ID number, but if the name and title are lost, he or she is described. When a document mentions multiple persons, it is not always possible to establish how many people are involved, and to which one of them an action should be attributed. Therefore, ID numbers are assigned to social groups and families as well. Such numbers are introduced, in order to distinguish namesakes, especially if they bear the same

¹²⁵ CD:\Dataset 3\“Textual analysis.pdf” and Dataset 4\“Textual analysis.pdf”.

titles. In addition, when ID numbers replace names and titles in the *edgelist*s and *matrices* (§1.1.3.E-F), the tables and graphs resulting from network analysis are more legible.

Different types of arrows indicate the nature and certainty of a relation. A distinction is made between reciprocal and one-directional ties (black and double-headed or red and single-headed), and between effective and hypothetical or future ties (the tail of the arrow is a continuous or dashed line). When three or more individuals act for a common cause, (for instance, as witnesses), their ties to other actors are combined in a single arrow, and the total number of their ties is added close to the arrow (such as “x 3”). Large brackets are used to enclose the persons who belong to this group.

The distinction between reciprocal and one-directional ties is an important preparation for the reconstruction of the directed networks of the bishops. There are, however, two ways of reconstructing directed networks. Either it is limited to recorded ties, whether written or personal contact, or it also includes probable ties, which are implicit or reconstructed ties that are inferred from the contents. Since the omission of less certain ties would result in an incomplete network that will hardly provide significant insights, I decided to include them in the directed episcopal networks, and to run tests to check the probability of the results of the analyses. The criteria for identifying a tie as reciprocal or one-directional are listed in Table 2.

Creating schematic representations of the episcopal documents was an important exercise in being precise and clear about my interpretation of the data as well as a challenge, since various documents are incomplete, and since part of the social ties is implicit or lost.

C. Lists of documents, social actors and localities

Each dataset includes a list of documents, in which the selected texts are numbered. These numbers replace the *sigla* and inventory numbers in the *edgelist*s and *matrices* (§1.1.3.E-F). Datasets 1, 3 and 4 also comprise lists of social actors, in which individuals are linked to their ID numbers as well as to the documents in which they appear, preceded by their document numbers. Such lists prepare the compilation of *edgelist*s, since they show which document numbers are linked to which ID numbers. The same holds for the list of localities in Dataset 2, which links localities to documents and their document numbers. Dataset 1 includes both a complete list of social actors and lists by decade.

D. Overviews with technical data on the selected documents

Each dataset includes an Excel-file with technical information about the selected documents on the first leaf. The overviews list their document numbers, *sigla* or inventory numbers,

material, provenance and date (if known), the kind of document and other aspects that are relevant for a good understanding of the documents or the analysis of a network.

E. Edgelists

Undirected social networks are prepared in Excel in the form of *edgelists*, which records the ties (*edges*) between social actors in the first column, and documents in the second column. If multiple documents are linked to the same person, each document appears in a separate row, and the name or ID number of the person is copied before each entry.¹²⁶ Usually, personal names and documents are replaced by ID and document numbers respectively, but Bishop Abraham and other well-known individuals keep their names, in order to make them stand out in dense graphs and in the tables produced in *Ucinet 6*. In the relatively small *edgelist* in Dataset 2, which links members of the Theodosian network to localities, personal names and toponyms are used as well, since there is enough room in the graphs for all the names.

Datasets 1, 3 and 4 include separate *edgelists* for complete networks, which include all individuals, for subnetworks that represent a particular period or a network layer (such as a network with clergymen only), or for networks created for testing different scenarios. The analysis by means of multiple *edgelists* offers the opportunity to compare the results and to see whether the general structure of the network and the central actors remain the same.

In preparation for the visualization of the social networks, where colors are used to indicate social status or occupation (§1.2.3.A, Pl. 1), the same colors are used for the cells of the social actors in the first columns of the *edgelists* in Datasets 1, 3 and 4.

F. Matrices

The directed versions of the networks of Abraham and Pesynthius are prepared in Excel as an *adjacency matrix*, or case-by-case matrix, in which the social actors or groups are mentioned by name or ID number both in the first row and in the first column. The *matrix* is completed by entering the effective ties between the social actors that are identified in the schematic representations. Hypothetical or future ties are omitted, since they were not necessarily realized. If person A contacted person B once or several times, this is indicated by entering a numeral that corresponds to the frequency of that contact in the cell where the row of person

¹²⁶ Ruffini (2008, 24, Table 4) and Waerzeggers (2014, 220-21) created *nodelists*, in which all documents relating to a particular social actor (*node*) are listed in a single row. If a large number of documents is linked to one person, an *edgelist* is more concise. Since Bishop Abraham appears in 141 documents (all texts in Dataset 3 except *P.KRU* 105), the largest possible *nodelist* is 142 columns wide and 340 rows long, including the column headings. The largest *edgelist*, for the complete network, only comprises 2 x 536 cells.

A intersects the column for person B. If person B did not reply, the absence of recorded contact is marked by the number 0 in the cell where the row of person B intersects the column of person A. In this way, the *matrix* does not only distinguish reciprocal ties (1 + 1) from one-directional ones (1 + 0), but also registers the frequency of particular ties.¹²⁷

The preparation of a *matrix* is time consuming and errors are easily made and not easy to detect. It is, therefore, essential to be alert and accurate throughout the process.

The *edgelist*s and *matrices* are ready to be imported in *Ucinet 6* for network analysis.

§1.2 THE ANALYSIS OF THE NETWORKS

§1.2.1 *The choice for Ucinet 6 and Netdraw*

Before discussing how the Excel-files are imported in *Ucinet 6*, I should explain why I chose this program and *NetDraw*. In the first year of my research project, Allon Wagner (Tel-Aviv University) and Caroline Waerzeggers (Leiden University) organized a workshop at Leiden University on SNA for ancient historians, which included an introduction to *Ucinet 6* and *NetDraw*. I decided to work with these programs, since they are user-friendly for beginners and offer sufficient tools for quantification and visualization. Nevertheless, it was a challenge to develop a procedure for analyzing networks based on fragmentary texts, and to use the tools for quantification and visualization in such a manner that they would generate useful results. As Johannes Preiser-Kapeller observed, “the user-friendliness of modern software tools sometimes tempts to use them as ‘black boxes’ in order to produce a variety of figures without being aware of the underlying concepts and limitations”.¹²⁸ The use of SNA for approaching historical questions only makes sense, if the researcher identifies social ties in a precise and consistent way, and is aware of the functions and limitations of his tools, and when the analytical procedure is indeed suitable for answering the historical questions.

In the third year of my research, I first tested the program *Gephi* at a workshop organized by Yanne Broux (KULeuven) and Silke Vanbeselaere (King’s College, London). They were invited to give the workshop during the conference “Papyri & Social Networks in a Wider Context” in Leiden,¹²⁹ in order to demonstrate “how to make noodly graphs based on the all-inclusive Trismegistos database”, as they put it on their blog.¹³⁰ They use *Gephi*, which produces colorful graphs and directly shows the effects of quantitative analysis in or next to

¹²⁷ Such an *adjacency matrix* is also a *valued matrix*, since it records the intensity of a tie; cf. Ruffini 2008, 32. On the use of matrices for SNA, see Wasserman and Faust 1994, 150-66; Prell 2012, 13-18.

¹²⁸ Preiser-Kapeller (forthcoming).

¹²⁹ On the conference, see <http://papyrology.blogspot.nl/2015/06/conference-at-leiden-papyri-social.html>.

¹³⁰ The “DataNinjas” draw their data from the online database Trismegistos (<http://trismegistos.org>) and describe their way of applying SNA on their humorous blog at <http://spaghetti-os.blogspot.nl/>.

the graphs.¹³¹ Broux and Vanbeselaere showed that it is easy to draw data from *Trismegistos*, to use typed codes to plot and manipulate networks, and to create a three-mode network with texts, actors and localities. Although *Gephi* certainly produces impressive results, there were four technical reasons to stick to *Ucinet 6* and *NetDraw* for the present project:

- *Trismegistos* and the associated online databases, *Papyri.info* and Alain Delattre's *Banque de données des textes coptes documentaires*, are useful sources of information on published Coptic texts, but do not include all the data needed for my analysis.¹³² Datasets 1-4 also comprise unpublished and recently published documents that are not included in the databases yet. In addition, the online databases often provide technical information on the texts only, and the few digitalized texts in *Papyri.info* and the prosopographical data in *Trismegistos People* are mostly eighth-century documents. Therefore, I need to carefully compile and update datasets myself.
- *Gephi* imports data in the form of Google Spreadsheets, the creation of which requires a Google account, whereas Microsoft Excel was ready to use on my computer.
- *Gephi* creates impressive graphs, but the typed codes and actions are not easy to remember, since the code names do not convey their purposes. This problem can be solved by reading the blog and the walkthrough by Broux and Vanbeselaere,¹³³ but for a beginner it is easier to use the menu or application icons in *Ucinet 6* and *NetDraw*.
- Last but not least, the chapters that involve network analysis were almost completed, and the limited time that remained had to be devoted to the rest of my dissertation.

In sum, it was the most practical option to work with *Ucinet 6* and *Netdraw*, and there was not enough time to experiment with *Gephi* or other programs for SNA, but in a following research project with SNA I should consider testing *Gephi*.

§1.2.2 Importing the data in *Ucinet 6*

*Edgelist*s are imported in *Ucinet 6* and saved in an extension that can be used for quantitative analysis and visualization in *NetDraw* (.*h*, .*d*).¹³⁴ The newly created file is in fact a *two-mode network*, which records ties between two different categories (actor-to-text or actor-to-

¹³¹ The program is freely available at <https://gephi.org/>.

¹³² Available at <http://papyri.info> and <http://dev.ulb.ac.be/philo/bad/copte/base.php?page=accueil.php>.

¹³³ The walkthrough is available at https://www.academia.edu/19574852/Spaghetti_monsters_al_dente.

¹³⁴ To import the file in *Ucinet 6*: Data → Import Excel → DL-type formats. To open the file in the DL editor: File → Open Excel File, where you can browse for the correct file and sheet. To save the file: select as the Data format “Edgelist2 (person to event ties)”, where texts represent events, and check the box before “Col headings”, in order to indicate that the edgelist has column headings (“ID”, “Doc. no.”). File → save Ucinet dataset.

locality networks).¹³⁵ The topographical network is examined as a two-mode network, but the social networks are first converted into *one-mode networks*, or actor-to-actor networks, and saved as files ending in “-Rows”, before tools for quantitative analysis are applied.¹³⁶

Unlike the carefully compiled directed network, which is limited to recorded (reciprocal or one-directional) ties, the automatically created one-mode network reconstructs (reciprocal) ties among all individuals attested in the same text. In other words, such a network presupposes that the social actors were all connected on account of their link to the same “event” (in this case, a document), although in reality, they did not necessarily know each other personally. Automatically generated networks are less accurate than carefully created directed networks, but have two advantages. Firstly, they are easy to compile and network analysis offers a first impression of their general structure and central actors, which can be checked and refined by also analyzing directed versions of the networks. Secondly, they reveal which individuals feature in a set of related documents and apparently were approximate contemporaries, even if they were not directly connected.

Matrices are prepared as actor-to-actor networks and are therefore ready for analysis, once they have been imported.¹³⁷

§1.2.3 *The procedure developed for network analysis*

Social networks can be analyzed on the levels of the entire network, subgroups, actors or ties.¹³⁸ The procedure of analysis developed for the present study comprises seven aspects, three of which are carried out in *Ucinet 6* (cohesion, core/periphery, centrality), and the rest in *NetDraw* (network population, components, tie strength, direction of the ties), if applicable.

A. Network population

The first step in the analysis is to examine the composition of a network by arranging actors into social groups, such as clergymen, monks, civil or military officials, people with other occupations, women and children. The results are presented in a table that indicates the ID

¹³⁵ Prell 2012, 16.

¹³⁶ To convert a two-mode network in *Ucinet 6*: Data → Affiliations (2-mode to 1-mode). The input “Theodosian network” results in the output “Theodosian network-Rows”, which is presented in Notepad as an *valued adjacency matrix*; cf. Ruffini 2008, 25, 29; Prell 2012, 17-18. According to Prell (2012, 162) and Newman (2010, §3.5), *affiliation networks* are two-mode networks that link actors to events or organizations, but Ruffini (2008, 29) accidentally linked the term to the one-mode networks that are extracted from a two-mode network. Burchfield’s West Theban network was created as a one-mode network (locality-to-locality), but one of the nodes is a person, namely the hermit Frange (*Networks of the Theban Desert*, 219-226, 228-239, figs 4.4-4.6).

¹³⁷ To import the file in *Ucinet 6*: Data → Import Excel → Matrices.

¹³⁸ Prell 2012, 95-133 (actor level), 134-50 (“Dyad and Tryad Levels”, or tie level), 151-65 (subgroups level), 166-74 (network level). Waerzeggers (2014, 212-13) lists network, tie and node properties.

numbers of the members of each group and the size of that group, both in absolute numbers and as a percentage of the entire population. Clergymen with a monastic background are marked as clergymen, whereas the category “monks” is restricted to monks and hermits who are not explicitly linked to an ecclesiastical office, although they could have been in reality.

This table can be compiled without using special software, but it is easier to do, when the network is visualized in *NetDraw*,¹³⁹ since the graph presents all actors in a single image and social groups are distinguished by the different colors of the nodes (Pl. 1).¹⁴⁰ In addition, graphs enable the reader to check the numbers presented in the table.

The graphs are saved as jpg-files. When the visualization is replicated, the graph is not always identical, but can be turned or mirrored. This does not matter for the analysis of the network. The *Spring embedding* tool is used to spread the *nodes*, or squares that represent actors or groups, more evenly.¹⁴¹ Overlapping nodes are pulled apart by using the mouse.

In the graphs of the topographical network in Dataset 2, which connect social actors to localities, colors are used to indicate the dioceses to which the actors and localities are linked.

B. Cohesion

A second table records the size of a network, namely the number of actors and ties,¹⁴² and other aspects relating to the cohesion of the network, which are calculated by *Ucinet 6* and presented in an overview in Notepad.¹⁴³ This study focusses on four aspects:¹⁴⁴

- *Density* refers to the proportion of ties in a network that are actually recorded. In general, a high percentage suggests that a network is cohesive, but there are two distorting factors: the density decreases, when the network size increases, and the presence of multiple cohesive subgroups with a high local density causes a higher density score than is actually the case for the rest of the network.
- The *average degree* indicates the average number of ties per actor.

¹³⁹ *NetDraw* is opened via *Ucinet 6*: Visualize → *NetDraw*. To open a file in *NetDraw*: File → Open → Ucinet dataset → Network. The opened file should be a one-mode network ending with “-Rows.##h”.

¹⁴⁰ Attributes, like social position, are assigned to actors in the *Node attribute editor* (in the Transform menu) by selecting Edit → Insert → Columns to the right, and by entering the correct abbreviation for a social group in the second column actor by actor (Table 1). The column header is called “Position” and the data is saved (File → Update & Exit). Colors are linked to particular groups by using the following options: Properties → Nodes → Symbols → Color → Attribute-based → Select attribute (“Position”). The user can select the preferred colors.

¹⁴¹ The tool is found in the menu Layout → Graph-Theoretic layout → Spring embedding.

¹⁴² The numbers are given on the right side of the *NetDraw* screen, at the bottom of the tabs “Rels” and “Nodes”.

¹⁴³ Network → Cohesion → Multiple cohesion measures. The input should end with “-Rows” and results in an output ending with “-Rows-coh”. The (two-mode) topographical network is analyzed by selecting: Network → 2-Mode networks → 2-mode Cohesion.

¹⁴⁴ Wasserman and Faust 1994, 100-01, 110-12; Ruffini 2008, 33, 35-36; Prell 2012, 97-99, 166-72.

- The *average distance* is the average number of steps needed to get from one end of the network to the other. A network is relatively small, when the *average distance* remains under three degrees of separation.¹⁴⁵
- The *diameter* is the distance recorded between the two farthest nodes.

Apart from the fact that an average distance under three degrees of separation implies a relatively small network, there are no fixed values that characterize a network as egalitarian or centralized. Rather, the schematic representations already reveal whether the reconstructed network is relatively egalitarian or centralized, depending on whether horizontal or vertical ties prevail. In addition, the presence of cohesive subgroups, such as cliques of witnesses in deeds, distorts the results of the quantitative analysis: they cause an increased density and a higher average degree. In order to assess the extent of distortion, the cohesion analysis is repeated on a corrected version of the network that does not include cliques (as in §4.2.2).¹⁴⁶

Another strategy to check the reliability of the cohesion scores is to reconstruct core networks alongside complete networks: the Theodosian network in §4, the ecclesiastical network in §5, and the basic network in §7. The smaller the differences between the core and complete networks, the more likely are the results. The analysis of several layers of the same undirected network reveals that the average distance and diameter usually are more stable than the average degree and density (See the quantitative analyses in vol. 2, under B).

There are considerable differences between the undirected and directed versions of a network, which results from the manner in which they are reconstructed. Directed versions based on *matrices* only include effective ties, whereas the undirected networks generated by *Ucinet 6* presuppose interrelations among all actors mentioned in the same text. Compared to undirected networks, their directed versions are less dense and have a lower average degree, whereas their diameter increases considerably, since indirect relations are no longer treated as direct ones and no longer serve as short-cuts.

In §5.2.2 and §7.2.2 the density scores of the undirected and directed versions of the complete networks are used to propose a hypothetical density score for the actual network, assuming that the reconstructed network is the closest approximation of the actual network possible. The directed version only considers recorded direct relations, whereas it is likely that there existed more direct ties that are unrecorded, but are reconstructed by *Ucinet 6* in the

¹⁴⁵ Compare Ruffini 2008, 242: “An average distance through the entire network of under three degrees of separation suggests that Aphrodito’s social world was relatively small”.

¹⁴⁶ According to Prell (2012, 155), a clique consists of three or more actors, who are all interconnected through mutual ties. Waerzeggers (2014, 212) adds that the actors have “a maximum number of ties between themselves but only a minimum with outsiders”.

undirected version. Therefore, the density score of the undirected network is taken as a maximum score, and the one of the directed network as a minimum score. The score proposed for the actual network lies in between. Of course, this estimate cannot be verified, since we do not know the actual number of actors and ties in the episcopal networks, but the better documented a network is (by adding new texts), the closer we can get to the original network.

C. Components

On the subgroup level, the structure of networks is examined in *NetDraw* in three ways. If the researcher wants to divide a complex network in two (or more) partitions, the *Girvan-Newman* algorithm indicates which actors belong to which partition by using different colors.¹⁴⁷ The next step is to examine whether these divisions correspond to periods or areas.

The *Blocks & Cutpoints* algorithm identifies the actors who need to be removed in one round, in order to disintegrate the network. The more rounds it takes to make the network fall apart, the more cohesive the network actually is.¹⁴⁸

The third step is only applied to the episcopal networks. Abraham and Pesynthius are removed from their respective networks, in order to check the number and size of the clusters that they connect.¹⁴⁹ In a highly centralized network the removal of the central actor results in a large number of small components.

D. Core/periphery

The *Core/Periphery* algorithm in *Ucinet 6* identifies the core members of the network on the basis of their structural position.¹⁵⁰ This is a good opportunity to examine whether the persons who were hierarchically important had a structurally important position in the network.

E. Centrality

The *Centrality and Power* algorithm in *Ucinet 6* calculates nine different types of centrality for each social actor or group, both in absolute and normalized scores.¹⁵¹ When comparing the centrality scores of actors in different versions of the network, or those of Abraham and

¹⁴⁷ This tool is found in the menu Analysis → Subgroups → Girvan-Newman; cf. Prell 2012, 160-61.

¹⁴⁸ In *NetDraw* go to Analysis → Blocks & Cutpoints.

¹⁴⁹ To remove an actor, remove the checkmark before his name on the “Nodes” tab on the right side of the screen. The *Spring embedding* tool can be used to separate the components.

¹⁵⁰ In *Ucinet 6* go to Network → Core/periphery → Categorical, and select a file ending in “-Rows”. For the topographical network select: Network → 2-Mode networks → 2-mode Categorical Core/Periphery.

¹⁵¹ In *Ucinet 6* go to Network → Centrality and Power → Multiple measures, select a file ending in “-Rows” and choose “Raw scores” or “Normalized”. The results are presented in a table in Notepad. The topographical network is analyzed by selecting: Network → 2-Mode networks → 2-mode Centrality (normalized scores).

Pesynthius in their respective networks, the normalized scores are used, in order to make networks of different sizes comparable. The analysis focusses on four types of centrality:¹⁵²

- *Degree centrality*, or the number of direct relations, indicates the involvement of an actor in a network. For directed networks a distinction is made between *outdegree*, when the actor contacts others, and the *indegree*, when others contact him.
- *Closeness centrality* measures an actor's independence from other actors. Those who have the lowest absolute scores (and the highest normalized scores) are closest to all other actors and could influence them easily. The analysis of directed networks distinguishes between *outclose* and *inclose centrality*.
- *Betweenness centrality* tests which actors appear often between other actors. When a person forms the only connection between two others, he functions as a bridge over a structural hole and can block the flow of information between the others. The higher his score is, the more control he has over the network. Since this type of centrality focusses on actors, instead of the ties, the direction of the ties does not matter.
- *Eigenvector centrality*, or the sum of the degree centralities of an actor and his direct contacts. Even a socially peripheral actor can have a high score, if he is linked to structurally important people. The directed networks do not have eigenvector scores.

Since Abraham and Pesynthius are the most important actors in their own networks, they get the best centrality scores in each category. Therefore, it is more interesting to identify the other central actors. For each type of centrality the five best normalized scores are presented in tables. Absolute numbers are given, only if the normalized scores are too similar to reveal slight differences in centrality scores. The relative order of the actors matters more than absolute data, for the scores change, when the dataset is adapted, whereas the lists of actors are relatively stable.

A brief prosopographical study is devoted to the central actors, in order to examine where and when they probably lived. By visualizing the complete network in *NetDraw*, by extracting the *ego networks* of each central actor, and by collecting the topographical or chronological data linked to members of these networks, it should be possible to propose locations and approximate dates. *Ego networks* include direct ties only and are extracted from larger networks by means of the *Ego network viewer*.¹⁵³

¹⁵² Wasserman and Faust 1994, 178-92; Ruffini 2008, 34; Prell 2012, 96-113; Preiser-Kapeller (forthcoming).

¹⁵³ The *Ego network viewer* is opened by selecting Layout → Ego Networks (new). The *ego network* of an actor is isolated by checking the box next to his or her name. On ego-networks, see Newman 2010, §3.2.1 ("ego-centered networks"); Prell 2012, 118-22.

F. Tie strength

This part of the analysis is done in *NetDraw* and examines the frequency of ties in undirected and directed networks, by indicating frequent ties as thick lines,¹⁵⁴ and by assigning colors to relations of a particular strength (Pl. 1).¹⁵⁵ Single instances of contact are excluded from the graph and the remaining ties can be rearranged by using the *Spring embedding* tool.¹⁵⁶

The results are processed in two ways. One table presents a top 5 of strongest ties, and a second one lists the actors with the best combination of strong relations. Their relative order is established by taking the number of recorded instances of each tie as the value of that tie, and by calculating the total value for each actor. An actor who is in contact four times with person A, three times with person B, and twice with persons C and D ($4 + 3 + 2 + 2 = 11$) has the same total score as another person who is linked five times with person E, four times with person F, and twice with person G ($5 + 4 + 2 = 11$). Compared to the quantification of centrality measures, which lists results only, the study of strong ties is a more visible approach to establishing the relative centrality of individuals.

Tie strength as it is defined in the present study is different from Mark Granovetter's concept of the "strength of weak ties". He observed that the cohesion of a network depends more on "weak ties", or acquaintances, than on "strong ties", such as family and close friends: "weak ties" offer individuals opportunities to connect with, and integrate in, other networks, whereas "strong ties" create "local cohesion, but lead to overall fragmentation".¹⁵⁷ Granovetter focused on less well-known actors ("weak ties"), whose strength it was to significantly increase the cohesion between different parts of a network, and consequently have a high *betweenness centrality* (§1.2.3.E). By contrast, the present analysis examines the frequency of ties among central actors ("strong ties").

G. Direction of the ties

The last step in the analysis focuses on the direct ties of Abraham or Pesynthius, and on the proportion of their reciprocal and one-directional relations with various social groups. To start with, their *ego networks* are isolated from their directed networks in the *Ego network*

¹⁵⁴ In *NetDraw* go to Properties → Lines → Size → Tie strength, and select the name of the plotted network. To avoid grotesque arrow heads, I removed the checkmark before "Change arrow head sizes to match". In small subnetworks this tool does not work; see Dataset 1, graphs 5-6.

¹⁵⁵ Go to the menu Properties → Lines → Color → Tie strength. The user can select the preferred colors.

¹⁵⁶ Single ties are removed by clicking on the +-sign on the "Rels" tab in the right section of *Netdraw*, after which the relations stronger than 1 (" > 1 ") remain.

¹⁵⁷ Granovetter 1973, 1378; cf. Granovetter 1983, 201-03; Ruffini 2008, 10-11.

viewer,¹⁵⁸ in order to include the persons with whom they were in direct contact (personally or through writing) only. If the *ego network* consists of at least half of the actors of the directed network, this can be used as an argument to confirm Wipszycka's impression that Abraham and Pesynthius were close to the people in their dioceses (General introduction).

The colors of the nodes indicate the social position of the actors (Pl. 1), whereas reciprocal and one-directional ties are marked black and red respectively, as is the case in the schematic representations (§1.1.3.B).¹⁵⁹ Once the nodes are arranged by social group/color,¹⁶⁰ the bishops' relations with each group are divided in three categories: reciprocal (black double arrows), incoming (red single arrows), and outgoing (red single arrows). The ties in each category and group are counted, and the results are presented in a table.

A large proportion of reciprocal ties may indicate that a bishop successfully interacted with many social actors in his ego network, and provide another argument to confirm that he was close to them. One-directional ties are more difficult to evaluate, since the absence of a reply does not necessarily imply that there was no reaction: clergymen could obey written episcopal orders without having to reply, or the bishop could summon supplicants, in order to speak to them personally, or a letter of reply may be lost.

No attention is paid to tie strength, for it would unnecessarily complicate the counting in the case of central actors who are linked to Abraham or Pesynthius on different occasions and through different kinds of ties.

Apart from these seven aspects, the possibilities of three more applications of SNA were considered. Firstly, SNA can facilitate the study of the development of a network, if enough documents are assigned to different periods, and when a subnetwork for each of these periods is visualized and analyzed separately. This is successfully done for the social network of the Theban region and for Abraham's episcopal network (§4.3, 5.4).

The second possibility concerned the study of multiplex ties, which implies that actors may know each other in different social roles. An attempt was made to identify multiplex ties among clergymen with a monastic background, including Abraham and Pesynthius, but in the end, the results focused on their double identity rather than on the ties that they shared with the same contacts in different capacities (§4.2.5).¹⁶¹ In fact, the recorded information is

¹⁵⁸ For the *Ego network viewer*, see n. 153.

¹⁵⁹ For assigning colors to nodes in the *Node attribute editor*, see n. 140. The user can indicate the preferred colors and line thickness via the menu Analysis → Reciprocal ties.

¹⁶⁰ Layout → Graph-Theoretic layout → Group by attribute → Categorical attribute, "Position".

¹⁶¹ For the concept of multiplexity, see Ruffini 2008, 32; Prell 2012, 138-40.

insufficient for making a clear distinction between actions done as a member of a monastic community or as a clergymen, and multiplex ties are hardly attested.

Finally, it was important to test whether the behavior of a social actor could be explained by looking at his structural position in a network. In an analytical sense, networks are “a specific set of linkages among a defined set of persons, with the additional property that the characteristics of these linkages as a whole may be used to interpret the social behaviour of the persons involved”.¹⁶² This can only be done successfully, if the circumstances of all the social events, multiplex ties, actions and the motivations of the actors during these events are recorded, but this is not the case with fragmentary documents.

Since the episcopal networks of Abraham and Pesynthius *record* social relations, but do not *explain* them, we need a third approach – the analysis of their episcopal authority – to understand how the bishops acted in specific situations and on the basis of what authority.

§1.3 THE ANALYSIS OF EPISCOPAL AUTHORITY

In the present, secularizing Western society, episcopal authority often evokes the idea that religious beliefs and models of behavior are imposed on others in an unequal power relationship. However, it is more constructive to see it as a process of interaction, in which bishops – particularly when they represent a new hierarchy – can earn the respect of others by meeting their expectations of what good bishops do. This includes solving their problems, whether they are of a spiritual, social, financial or agricultural nature. “The average man would simply hope that a charismatic bishop would persuade God to grant a good harvest”.¹⁶³

The success of a bishop depends on five factors, each of which relates to a different modes of authority: the recognition of his charisma, which is partly personal and partly related to his office (spiritual authority); the recognition of his integrity and wisdom, which are linked to a lifestyle marked by discipline and personal growth (ascetic authority); the recognition that he represents an established Christian tradition (professional authority); his ability to act to the benefit of others, while using his diplomatic skills, resources and social ties in matters that fall beyond the formal boundaries of his office (pragmatic authority);¹⁶⁴ and his use of written sources as instruments of authority to solve problems (legal authority).¹⁶⁵ Therefore, Rapp’s tripartite model for explaining episcopal leadership is expanded to five modes of authority.

¹⁶² Mitchell 1969, 2.

¹⁶³ Wipszycka 2015, 112.

¹⁶⁴ Rapp 2005, 16-18.

¹⁶⁵ On Abraham’s habit of having important decisions put into writing, see Wipszycka 2015, 318.

Each mode of authority can apply to any bishop, but monk-bishops are more likely to display ascetic authority than colleagues with curial or senatorial backgrounds, on account of their monastic training. Spiritual, ascetic and pragmatic authority can also be recognized in charismatic priests (like Padre Pio), pious laymen and hermits (like Epiphanius), whereas civil and religious officials can display professional, pragmatic or legal authority.¹⁶⁶

This section discusses each mode of authority, while examining the source on which it is based, how it is bestowed or attained, which duties and actions are associated with it, and which keywords in the episcopal documents and literary sources specifically refer to it.

§1.3.1 *Spiritual authority*

According to the early Christian tradition, which recognizes all sacraments, baptized persons receive the Holy Spirit, during the administration of the sacrament of confirmation, which is bestowed by a bishop. Their anointment with the holy Chrism confirms their identity as followers of Christ, the “Anointed One”, and strengthens them in practicing their faith.¹⁶⁷

Pious persons who are reputed for extraordinary qualities, such as the reading of souls, telepathy, foreknowledge, healing or wisdom about the divine, can be regarded by others as true “Spirit-bearers” and attain a personal form of spiritual authority.¹⁶⁸ In that case, their special qualities are then explained as gifts from the Holy Spirit and signs of their purity. They are regarded as holy men and women, who can mediate between God and men through intercessory prayer, and could take the liberty to display a boldness of speech to denounce the abuses and wrongs of civil authorities, including the emperor’s.¹⁶⁹ After death, they may become the object of a cult, as was the case with the hermit Epiphanius (§3.2.1).

A special form of spiritual authority is bestowed upon bishops during their ordination, when the patriarch and fellow bishops lay their hands on the ordinand and pray that God sends the Holy Spirit upon him to prepare him for his ministry.¹⁷⁰ Afterwards, the bishop is regarded as a high priest and Christ’s representative on earth, to the extent that “whoever

¹⁶⁶ On the social backgrounds of late antique bishops, see Rapp 2005, 172-207. Rapp applied her tripartite model to normative texts on sanctified bishops and to the correspondence of holy men, including Epiphanius (pp. 68-73); see also §1.3.1-2, 1.3.4.

¹⁶⁷ Cf. Wipszycka 2015, 328. 1John 2:20 provides the Biblical basis for the rite of confirmation. For the practice in the present Coptic Orthodox Church, see Angaelos 2002, 13, where it is called “Chrismation”.

¹⁶⁸ ΠΝΕΥΜΑΤΟΦΟΡΟΣ (πνευματοφόρος): Förster 2002, 658; cf. Rapp 2005, 16, 56-59.

¹⁶⁹ παρρησία: Brown 2002, 173; Rapp 2005, 67, 260. On the concept of the “holy man”, see Brown 1971 (reprinted in 1982) and 1998, where the author observed himself (on p. 371) that his earlier studies were limited to male anchorites.

¹⁷⁰ ΧΕΙΡΟΤΟΝΙΑ (χειροτονία), the “imposition of hands”, which is the climax of the ordination rite: Lampe 1961, 1523 (B.2). Biblical examples of the laying-on of hands are recorded in Acts 6:6, 8:17, 13:3, 19:6.

hears the bishop, hears Christ, and whoever despises him, despises Christ and Him who sent him”.¹⁷¹ This analogy is a strong impetus for the faithful to obey the bishop.

The bishop’s main sacerdotal duty is the administration of the sacraments, “sacred actions by which believers receive an invisible grace, through invisible means” in Christ’s name for the sake of their souls:¹⁷² the celebration of the Eucharist,¹⁷³ baptism, confirmation, confession, the ordination of clergymen, holy matrimony,¹⁷⁴ and the unction of the sick.¹⁷⁵ Apart from confirmation and ordination, the sacraments can also be administered by priests, who replace the bishop in the local churches. In the eastern tradition, priests can baptize, but it is preferably done by a bishop, since only he could pass the gifts of the Holy Spirit through the imposition of hands during the rite of confirmation directly following baptism.¹⁷⁶

Other episcopal tasks are intercessory prayer for the sake of the living and the dead;¹⁷⁷ blessing persons and livestock; the consecration of churches, altars, baptismal fonts and liturgical objects, in order to reserve them for liturgical use only;¹⁷⁸ and the teaching about the basics of the orthodox faith, such as the belief in God’s omnipresence, the actual presence of Christ in the Eucharist, and the importance of faith and good conduct for the salvation of souls.¹⁷⁹ A bishop could allow a matrimonial bond to be dissolved, in case of adultery,¹⁸⁰ or deprive clergymen from their ordained status, if they made serious transgressions (§1.3.3.E).

Bishops may express their concern about a lack of awareness of God or of Christ’s presence in the Eucharist, and about the harm that misconduct can cause to the souls. They will try to raise the awareness of theological matters and Christian ethics by teaching the faithful through circular letters and sermons, and by promoting the commemoration of saints, who are presented as examples of virtuous conduct. Bishops may insist on repentance and remind people about the sacrament of confession, which aims to restore the bond with God.¹⁸¹

A bishop or priest who is considered as a true Spirit-bearer has both personal and professional spiritual authority. If people believe that he can read souls and detect hidden sins,

¹⁷¹ Translated from Noethlichs 1973, 31.

¹⁷² Angaelos 2002, 12.

¹⁷³ **Ρ** **ΦΑ**, **ΣΥΝΑΓΕ** (**ΣΥΝΑΓΕΙΝ**): Lampe 1961, 1295 (A.2); Förster 2002, 772-73; Winlock and Crum 1926, 153.

¹⁷⁴ **ΠΓΑΜΟΣ** **ΕΤΤΕΒΗΥ** (**ΓΆΜΟΣ**), “the pure marriage”: mentioned in the *Homily on St Onnophrius*: ed. Crum 1915-1917, 54 (p. 29). Nothing is known about the form of the ceremony; cf. Wipszycka 2015, 327.

¹⁷⁵ **ΣΜΟΥ** (**ΕΥΛΟΓΙΑ**) generally means “blessing”: Crum 1939, 335b-36a; Lampe 1961, 569-70. **ΣΜΟΥ** appears in the context of last rites in *O.Crum* 66 (§ 6.4.A).

¹⁷⁶ Wipszycka 2015, 328.

¹⁷⁷ **ΦΑΛΗ** (**ΕΥΧΗ**): Lampe 1961, 584 (I); Crum 1939, 559b; cf. Rapp 2005, 67, 70-71. For the prayers on behalf of the dead, see Henner 2009; Van der Vliet 2011, 192-97.

¹⁷⁸ For liturgical objects, vestments and church inventories, see Schmelz 2002, 89-125.

¹⁷⁹ Pap.Berlin P. 11346 insists on the reality of Christ’s presence in the Eucharist: ed. Camplani 2012.

¹⁸⁰ Divorce on account of adultery is permitted on the basis of Matthew 5:32.

¹⁸¹ John 20:23 provides the Biblical basis for the sacrament of Confession.

they may adjust their behavior and confess more readily, hoping that he will not expose their faults unexpectedly and in public. Particularly during the administration of oaths, his presence could work as “a powerful spiritual lie-detector test”.¹⁸² Examples of monk-priests reputed for their clairvoyant abilities are Shenoute of Atripe and Padre Pio of Pietrelcina.¹⁸³

In Coptic documents bishops were frequently addressed as “holy fatherly lord”, “your holiness” and “most holy”,¹⁸⁴ but the keywords “high priest”, “God-bearer”, “beatitude” or “spiritual” point to extraordinary spiritual abilities.¹⁸⁵ Bishop Ananias of Hermonthis was even called a “Spirit-bearer” and “son of the Apostles”.¹⁸⁶ The hermit Epiphanius was also revered as a holy man with special spiritual authority, judging from the fact that he was called “the temple of God”, “spiritual” and “Spirit-bearer” (§3.2.1).

Bishops and holy men were variously addressed in the second person singular or plural. Although no systematic distinction was made, it is striking that the plural appears much more often in letters sent to Pesynthius and Epiphanius, who were regarded as Spirit-bearers, than in letters to Abraham, who is not reputed for his extraordinary spiritual charisma (§6.2, 8.2.1). Either the plural was used to be particularly polite, or the sender referred to the bishop and “the Holy Spirit who dwells within you”.¹⁸⁷

§1.3.2 *Ascetic authority*

Ascetic authority implies the public recognition of an individual’s spiritual abilities as a result of his personal efforts, for instance the subjection of his body to a strict regime and a high ethical standard in imitation of Christ. Strict ascetics are recognizable by a frail body and a piercing gaze, resulting from a lack of food and sleep, a neglect of the body, a preference for modest clothing and a simple dwelling, an inner state of detachment from the world and a firm control over their emotions. Holy men were believed to actively collaborate with the Spirit through intercessory prayer, reinforced by their ascetic practices. On account of their

¹⁸² Rapp 2005, 251-52, when referring to Bishop Pesynthius.

¹⁸³ On Shenoute’s clairvoyant abilities, see *The Life of Shenoute attributed to Besa*, ch. 15: transl. Bell 1983, 47; cf. Brakke 2007, 50-51, 70. For Padre Pio, see Lesourd and Benjamin 1970, 152-59.

¹⁸⁴ **ΧΟΕΙΣ ΝΕΙΩΤ ΕΤΟΥΛΑΒ, ΤΕΤΝΑΓΙΩΣΥΝΗ** (ἁγιωσύνη), **ΠΟCΙΩΤΑΤΟC** (ὁσιώτατος). For the Greek terms, see Förster 2002, 10-11, 591-92; Lampe 1961, 19, 976; Hornickel 1930, 29-30 (on ὁσιώτατος).

¹⁸⁵ **ΑΡΧΙΕΡΕΥC** (ἀρχιερεύς), **ΘΕΟΦΟΡΟC** (θεοφόρος), **ΜΑΚΑΡΙΩΤΗC** (μακαριότης), **ΠΝ(ΕΥΜΑΤ)ΙΚΟC** (πνευματικός): Förster 2002, 107, 335-36, 496, 658; Lampe 1961, 239, 643, 823, 1105; Feissel 1989, 815 (on ἀρχιερεύς).

¹⁸⁶ *O.Crum* 85.

¹⁸⁷ *P.Pisentius* 3, ll. 10-11, 52-53. The “Spirit-bearer” Epiphanius is addressed in the plural in *P.Mon.Epiph.* 163 and 200, and in the singular in *P.Mon.Epiph.* 106. The plural also occurs in letters sent to the “Spirit-bearer” Paul (*O.CrumVC* 54) and a “spiritual” leader, probably Pesynthius (*O.CrumST* 179). The sender of *P.Pisentius* 8 wrote to Bishop Pisrael, who is not known as a holy man, in the plural and singular. Psan was often addressed in the singular, and once in the plural, when he became “the anchorite” (*O.Mon.Epiph.* 165, 172, 177 versus 281).

willingness to bear other people's burdens, they attracted supplicants who sought mental relief, the restoration of health, or more concrete benefits.¹⁸⁸

Persons recognized as holy men were called "Christ-bearers" or "(men) who truly bear the Christ", "who are perfect in all virtues".¹⁸⁹ The hermit Epiphanius, who was revered for his extraordinary ascetic authority, was addressed as "the anchorite" and "the recluse", although he was not literally closed in (§3.2.1).¹⁹⁰

There are several reasons why persons may choose a monastic lifestyle, including a religious experience; a sense of guilt and the wish to atone for one's sins in this world instead of the next; the wish to imitate Christ; the belief that asceticism is a surer path to salvation than a worldly life; the wish to serve the church; ambition, if the status of monk is seen as a means to become a bishop (in late antiquity this office was increasingly reserved for monks); dissatisfaction with the worldliness of the Church; or economic and adjustment problems.¹⁹¹

Bishops, and monk-bishops in particular, are supposed to lead a virtuous life, in order to set an example for the faithful and to convince as leaders, teachers and intercessors with God.¹⁹² On account of their lifestyle, it is likely – but hard to prove – that monk-bishops insist more on self-control and modest conduct than other bishops with different backgrounds.

Monk-bishops or monk-priests whose appearance displays signs of strict asceticism, such as a piercing gaze, could inspire awe and unsettle people's minds, particularly when they have a bad conscience, and when he has the reputation of a reader of souls (§8.2.2). It is said about Shenoute that he was emaciated and had sunken eyes on account of rigorous fasting, a lack of sleep and frequent weeping, which he did in order to atone for other people's sins.¹⁹³

¹⁸⁸ Rapp 2005, 6, 16-17, 56-60, 81-85, 270; cf. Brown 1971, 87, 96-98 and 1982, 105-06.

¹⁸⁹ ΕΤΦΟΡΕΙ ΗΠΕΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ ΖΗ ΟΥΜΕ (Χριστοφόρος), ΕΤΧΗΚ ΕΒΟΛ ΖΗ ΑΡΕΤΗ ΝΙΜ (ἀρετή): Förster 2002, 93, 855; Lampe 1961, 225, 1533; cf. Rapp 2005, 56-60, 71.

¹⁹⁰ ΑΝΑΧΩΡΙΤΗΣ (ἀναχωριτής), ΕΓΚΛΗΣΤΩΣ (ἐγκλειστός): Wipszycka 2009, 294-303, 306-08; cf. Lampe 1961, 129, 402; Förster 2002, 54-55, 224.

¹⁹¹ Meinardus 2006, 190-92. Literary sources suggest that rural bishops in AD 325-700 normally had a monastic background, but Wipszycka (2015, 113) rightly observes that such sources are about exceptional individuals, and that there must have been pious candidates with practical abilities in the local or provincial elite as well. She adds that it is impossible to determine the social backgrounds of the bishops with certitude (ibidem, 113). It is not unlikely that – regardless of their doctrinal position – patriarchs residing in monasteries, like Damian and Benjamin, more frequently ordained monks, and that candidates from influential families had more luck with patriarchs living in Alexandria, like John the Almsgiver (Chalcedonian) and Andronicus (Theodosian).

¹⁹² Rapp 2005, 278: bishops should be "men of outstanding integrity, bound by their own code of moral conduct".

¹⁹³ *The Life of Shenoute attributed to Besa*, ch. 10, 12: transl. Bell 1983, 45-46; cf. Rapp 2005, 81. Padre Pio is said to have had "the gift of tears", which manifested itself during holy Mass; Lesourd and Benjamin 1970, 161.

§1.3.3 *Professional authority*

Professional authority is the authority that bishops exercise by virtue of their office as the religious leaders of their communities and administrators of their dioceses. When the patriarch of Alexandria ordained a new bishop, he gave him a letter of episcopal appointment, which confirmed that the newly ordained was appointed to a particular see.¹⁹⁴

The episcopal office comprises seven aspects, which are not strictly separate from each other, nor from the other modes of authority, namely the organization of worship, mission, church administration, care for the underprivileged, education and discipline, giving directions for daily life and intercession with civil authorities.¹⁹⁵

A. The organization of worship

This aspect comprises the practical tasks that make the administration of sacraments and other religious activities possible. They include the ordination of priests and deacons for particular churches, or the appointment of readers;¹⁹⁶ the appointment of archpriests and archdeacons to the episcopal church and other major churches, in order that they supervise the priests and deacons of these churches respectively;¹⁹⁷ the sending of priests to places where no other priest is available; ensuring the correct celebration of the liturgy and Christian festivals; the consecration of church buildings, baptisteries, liturgical objects and vestments; the provision of bread and wine for the liturgy and oil for the altar lamps for churches with insufficient resources;¹⁹⁸ the supervision on the preparation of prospect monks and nuns for their clothing with the habit; and making sure that the patriarch's Festal Letter, which announces the period of Lent and the day of Easter, is read in every church in his diocese.¹⁹⁹

B. Mission

In late antique Egypt, missionary activities were aimed at promoting a particular ("orthodox") view on Christ, at strengthening the church hierarchy associated with it, and at the expansion

¹⁹⁴ The Sahidic *Life of Aaron* mentions the letters of episcopal appointment (συστατική) of three bishops of Philae, namely Mark, Isaiah and Psoulousia; ed. Dijkstra and Van der Vliet (forthcoming), ch. 69, 76, 81; cf. Dijkstra 2008, 239, 258. In 1371 a letter of appointment was drawn up for Bishop Timotheos of Pachoras (Nubia), in Bohairic and Arabic; ed. Plumley 1975; reviewed by Coquin 1977.

¹⁹⁵ The seven aspects are based on the definition of pastoral care proposed by Allen and Mayer (2000, 393; cf. Mayer 2002, 60), and some of them are renamed. The original terms were: ritualized forms of care, mission, church administration, social welfare, education, direction for daily life and intercession respectively.

¹⁹⁶ ΧΕΙΡΟΤΟΝΙΑ (χειροτονία, as in n. 59), ΠΩΦΗ: Crum 1939, 279. On the appointment (κατάστασις) of lower clergymen, see Faivre 1977, 48-50; Lampe 1961, 720 (A.); Schmelz 2002, 38, 42.

¹⁹⁷ Lampe 1961, 237, 240; Wipszycka 2015, 115, 331-33; Schmelz 2002, 37; Förster 2002, 106-07, 109.

¹⁹⁸ Wipszycka 2015, 111, 356, 343-48 (on the lighting of churches by Tomasz Górecki).

¹⁹⁹ ΚΗΡΥΓΜΑ (κήρυγμα): Lampe 1961, 751-52; Förster 2002, 412; cf. Schmelz 2002, 33-34.

of the area that fell under the jurisdiction of its leaders. As for the Theodosian bishops, it implied the promotion of Severus of Antioch's Christology, the consolidation of the new-fangled Theodosian hierarchy and the gradual expansion of their dioceses, while being in competition with Chalcedonians and other anti-Chalcedonian factions. Their success depended on the ability of individual bishops to build extensive social networks and attract a following.

C. Church administration

The administration of the church required various activities that should ensure the proper management and distribution of its economic resources, including the appointment of priests or deacons as stewards to specific churches or chapels;²⁰⁰ the appointment of estate managers for the financial administration of land belonging to the church;²⁰¹ the collection of contributions for the patriarch and for the bishop himself, which were drawn from the offerings and donations brought in by the faithful;²⁰² making arrangements to receive bequests from deceased benefactors in return for commemoration services;²⁰³ the payment of the land tax;²⁰⁴ the payment of costs relating to the liturgy, the sustenance of poor clergymen, if they cannot live from their share of the offerings that the faithful bring to the church;²⁰⁵ the payment of workmen employed by the church and the care for the underprivileged;²⁰⁶ and the inspection of churches, to check if no liturgical objects were missing.²⁰⁷

D. Care for the underprivileged

One of the best appreciated duties of bishops is to provide for the poor, or rather, people who could successfully claim to be poor. According to Peter Brown, vulnerable persons who feared poverty could adopt the position of the "poor", that is, of persons in need of a protector on account of their social situation, but who were not necessarily destitute. In other words, they were plaintiffs, rather than beggars.²⁰⁸ Canonical texts of the early church recommend that deacons visit persons who claim, or are said, to be poor and to report their situation and

²⁰⁰ ΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΟΣ (οἰκονόμος): Lampe 1961, 944 (A.3); Förster 2002, 563-65; cf. Alivisatos 1973, 91-92; Wipszycka 1972, 128, 134-36 and 2015, 111, 199, 256-58, 367-68; Schmelz 2002, 163-64.

²⁰¹ ΠΡΟΝΟΗΤΗΣ (προνοητής): Lampe 1961, 1157; Förster 2002, 683. Estate managers collected the land tax and were subordinate to the steward; cf. Winlock and Crum 1926, 178; Schmelz 2002, 163; Heurtel 2010, 83.

²⁰² ΚΑΝΩΝ (κωνών): Förster 2002, 376-77; cf. Wipszycka 1972, 64-92 and 2015, 111-12, 214.

²⁰³ Wipszycka 1972, 76-77 and 2015, 110-11, 216.

²⁰⁴ Wipszycka 1972, 35, 37-38, 119 and 2015, 192.

²⁰⁵ On the income of clergymen, see Wipszycka 1972, 93-98 and 2015, 195-98, 307, 356.

²⁰⁶ Wipszycka 1972, 35, 103-05, 109-19 and 2015, 111-12, 356.

²⁰⁷ Wipszycka 2015, 367-68.

²⁰⁸ Brown 2002, 59, 69-70; cf. Harries 1999, 184-86. The Coptic term for "poor" is **ⲫⲏⲕⲉ**; cf. Crum 1939, 664a.

needs to the bishop, in order that he could decide whom he should help.²⁰⁹ The people who could usually count on charity from the bishop were widows, orphans, the sick, prisoners, strangers and persons in acute need, who were not supported by kin. The church promoted the notion that Christ is invisibly present among men, particularly among the underprivileged, and that acts of charity during life positively influenced the judgement of one's soul.²¹⁰

The Church considered all widows (women who lost their husbands) as vulnerable persons requiring special care and support, regardless whether they were rich or poor, but in the mid-fifth century, and possibly still later, there was also a special category of widows, who received a regular allowance. It was recommended that they were middle-aged, had a good reputation, and were prepared to renounce their right to remarry and to devote the rest of their lives to praying and charity work.²¹¹ In case of orphans who were not adopted by their kin, the bishop should ensure their sustenance and education.²¹² The daily care of the sick was entrusted to the doctors and deacons, but the bishop was expected to visit them and to pay the costs of their treatment.²¹³ They also had to show compassion for prisoners by visiting them and by trying to redeem the unjustly convicted.²¹⁴ One of the most heroic things that a bishop could do was ransoming captives taken in barbarian raids, to avert the danger of their enslavement.²¹⁵ The hospitality to strangers is motivated by Biblical idea that "by doing so people have entertained angels without knowing it" (Hebr. 13:2; cf. Gen. 18:1-8). In practice, however, bishops had to be careful, for if they received an excommunicated refugee, they ran the risk of being excommunicated themselves. Therefore, travelling clergymen had to carry travel permits from their bishop to prove that they were not excommunicate or criminal.²¹⁶

According to an undated dedicatory inscription from the Monastery of St Hatre, Bishop Abraham of Aswan and Elephantine established a pious foundation and decided that half of its income should be spend on "the poor of Aswan [and Elephantine]". The other half should be used to cover the costs "for the [fields] and the animals" and other expenditures.²¹⁷

²⁰⁹ *Didascalia/ Apostolic Constitutions*, Book 3, 13:7: ed. Funk 1905, vol. 1, 216-17; Brock and Vasey 1982, 23.

²¹⁰ Brown 2002, 73. The notion is based on Matthew 25:35-40.

²¹¹ *Didascalia/ Apostolic Constitutions*, Book 3, 1:1, 5:2-3, 6:2: ed. Funk 1905, vol. I, 182-83, 188-91; Brock and Vasey 1982, 18-19. Cf. Wipszycka 1972, 114-15 and 2015, 176-78, 181, 186, 357-59.

²¹² *Didascalia* 2:1, 5:1/ *Apostolic Constitutions*, Book 4, 2:1, 5:1; cf. Funk 1905, vol. 1, 218-19, 222-23. Cf. Wipszycka 1972, 113-14.

²¹³ *Canons of Hippolytus*, canons 24 and 55: ed. Riedel 1900, 216; *Canons of Athanasius*, canon 15: ed. Riedel and Crum 1973, 26; cf. Wipszycka 2015, 355.

²¹⁴ *Canons of (Pseudo-)Athanasius*, canon 15: ed. Riedel and Crum 1973, 26.

²¹⁵ Brown 2002, 62-63; cf. Schmelz 2002, 259-60; Wipszycka 2015, 229, in relation to John the Almsgiver.

²¹⁶ Council of Nicaea, canon 5, 11, 15: Alberigo 1973, 8, 13, 92, 41*-42*; Council of Chalcedon, canons 5 and 13: ed. Alberigo 1973, 90, 93, 43*; Price and Gaddis 2005, 96, 98-99; cf. Wipszycka 2015, 312-14.

²¹⁷ De Morgan 1894, 139 n. 1 (the Coptic text); cf. Dekker 2015, 22.

E. Education and discipline

Another important task of the bishop was to give religious and moral instruction to the faithful in his diocese and to individuals who were prepared for baptism. Although late antique Egypt was a predominantly Christian society, and infant baptism was increasingly practiced, it is likely that “adult baptism continued throughout antiquity”, since adults could postpone the ceremony until old age or death, in order to receive forgiveness for all their sins at once.²¹⁸

Teaching came in the form of preaching, catechism, circular letters addressed to the clergy or the faithful, letters addressed to particular recipients, and personal instruction. When the bishop preached, he held the Gospel in his hand,²¹⁹ in order to give more authority to his teachings. Therefore, the Gospel became an important element in the iconography of bishops.

Moral instruction was aimed at educating the faithful on proper Christian conduct, in order that they would repent their sins and avoid making new ones, and be pious, faithful and charitable. Bishops were particularly concerned about proper marital relations, and tried to prevent marriages among close kin, the abduction and rape of girls, adultery and divorce. To ensure that young men would not give in to their sexual drive in an unworthy manner, parents were instructed to find their sons a wife, for “if a youth is fit for marriage, but his parents do not marry him with a woman and he falls into sin, the judgement comes upon them”.²²⁰

Clergymen were obliged to report transgressions to the bishop, who made inquiries, summoned the accused or witnesses, and could impose disciplinary measures, depending on the nature of the misconduct. Ecclesiastical sanctions included:

- Excommunication: a person was temporarily excluded from the holy Communion, until he or she was readmitted by the bishop after showing repentance.²²¹
- Interdict: an entire community was temporarily not allowed to take part in liturgical services, including baptism, on account of serious transgressions.²²²
- Exclusion from the clergy: a clergyman was not allowed to perform liturgical services and to receive a share from the offerings of the faithful, until he was readmitted by the bishop after showing repentance.²²³

²¹⁸ Wipszycka 2015, 328-29 and n. 31, where Roger Bagnall is quoted. On the development of infant and adult baptism, and differences in the western and eastern churches, see also Rousseau 1999.

²¹⁹ Wipszycka 2015, 327, based on the *Canons of (Pseudo-)Basil*, canon 97.

²²⁰ *Canons of (Pseudo-)Athanasius*, canon 94: ed. Riedel and Crum 1973, 60, 139; cf. Wipszycka 2015, 41, 334.

²²¹ ΖΙΒΟΛ ἸΠΠΑ, ΑΦΟΡΙΖΕ (ἀφορίζεσθαι): Crum 1939, 543a; Lampe 1961, 279; Schmelz 2002, 141-51.

²²² ΠΑΡΑ ΣΩΤΕΡ ΕΠΤΟΠΟΣ: Crum 1939, 543a; cf. Schmelz 2002, 151-52; Wipszycka 2015, 328.

²²³ ΑΠΟΚΛΗΡΟΣ (ἀπόκληρος), “without a share”: Lampe 1961, 196; Förster 2002, 80-81; cf. Winlock and Crum 1926, 172; Schmelz 2002, 154-59, 160, 323-24; Wipszycka 2015, 324-25.

- Degradation or laicization: a clergyman's ordained status was annulled, after which he had to take part in the services as laymen.²²⁴
- Expulsion from the church on account of heresy or the refusal to change one's conduct or lifestyle, until the expelled person showed repentance and was readmitted.²²⁵

The sanctions were public punishments, intended to warn others and to subject transgressors to a psychodrama, in the hope that they would repent and ask the bishop to be readmitted. Their exclusion implied a devaluation of their symbolic capital and prestige.²²⁶

By imperial law late antique bishops were required to act as judges in episcopal courts (*episcopalis audientia*), certainly in ecclesiastical matters, but also in secular cases, under the condition that both parties agreed on his adjudication and promised to abide by his decision. The episcopal court provided a faster and cheaper resolution of conflicts than secular courts, since the outcome could not be appealed against or annulled, and since no fees were normally collected. It was another advantage that the outcome was usually less violent than in secular courts, even if bishops ordered officials to execute corporeal punishments.²²⁷

In the early fifth century, the episcopal court was popular, judging from the complaints of bishops like Augustine of Hippo on the large amount of time that it required from them, but remarkably little is known about how it actually functioned.²²⁸ Lamoreaux imagined that the bishop's court took place at the episcopal residence and resembled the qadi's court in modern Sefrou (Marocco), "redolent not of religious awe but of secular functionality": the (islamic) judge allowed the parties to vent their anger, considered all the facts and the options for mediation and reconciliation, and quickly took a decision, while addressing multiple cases per hour.²²⁹ As for late antique Egypt, Wipszycka observed that the papyrological evidence on the episcopal court is very scarce, and that bishops often acted as arbiters and even more often intervened, not as judges but simply as bishops, in order to end morally scandalous affairs.²³⁰ In this study it will turn out that Abraham did take decisions that point to lawsuits in an episcopal court, such as the imposition of fines (§6.4.E).

²²⁴ **ΚΑΘΑΙΡΗCΙC** (καθαίρεσις): Lampe 1961, 681 (3.b); Förster 2002, 358; cf. Schmelz 2002, 154-55.

²²⁵ O.NMEC 117, l. 15: **ἔξωθεν τοῦ ἀριθμοῦ τῶν Χριστιανῶν**, "outside the number of the Christians": ed. Eissa 2015, 3 (on a case of unmarried cohabitation); **ἀναθεμα** (ἀνῶθεμα), "separated": Lampe 1961, 102 (2); Förster 2002, 94; cf. Schmelz 2002, 142-43.

²²⁶ Karabélias 2003, 232-33; cf. Wipszycka 2015, 117.

²²⁷ Lamoreaux 1995, 149, 152-3, 158, 163, 165.

²²⁸ Lamoreaux 1995, 146, 150-51.

²²⁹ Lamoreaux 1995, 156, 165-67 (the quote appears on p. 167).

²³⁰ Wipszycka 2015, 117, without giving examples. Lamoreaux (1995, 156-58) lists likely examples of episcopal adjudication in papyri from Hermopolis, Oxyrhynchus and Antinoe from the fourth and fifth centuries.

Some Coptic documents from the Theban region record councils, where bishops and monastic leaders convened, in order to examine the case of clergymen-and-abbots accused of transgressions, at the patriarch's order. Apparently, the dismissed abbots did not accept the sanction imposed by their bishop and appealed to a higher authority, the patriarch, who then decided that a council should be held (§8.4.3).²³¹

To modern readers, it may seem that a bishop who insisted on being obeyed enjoyed exerting his authority, but bishops themselves could find adjudication burdensome. Augustine of Hippo did not mind helping the obedient faithful, who readily submitted to his judgements, but complained that “those who fight each other with great obstinacy, and ... condemn the sentences which we have passed” made him “waste precious time which ought to be dedicated to divine things”.²³² When the topic of education and discipline is discussed with regard to Abraham and Pesynthius, we should remember that they probably preferred to spend their time differently as well.

F. Giving directions for daily life

Bishops could be engaged in private counseling for people in need of advice, guidance or moral support, such as persons who had to stand trial and prisoners. To give another example, Theodoret of Cyrrhus (d. 457) coached curial women and gave orphan girls marital advice.²³³

G. Intercession with state authorities

On account of his duty to take care of the underprivileged, a bishop occasionally needed to mediate with state authorities, in order to protect members of their flock against unjust actions by civil or military officials. Supplicants seeking protection may address him as their “patron” or “protector”.²³⁴ In this study a distinction is made between intercession with authorities for the sake of persons in the bishop's diocese, which is a formal episcopal duty, and mediation with authorities on behalf of others, which is an act of patronage (§1.3.4).

Expecting them to be men of outstanding integrity, Emperor Justinian decreed that (Chalcedonian) bishops should be actively involved in the urban administration, in order to strengthen the state's control on the provinces and counterbalance civil authorities.²³⁵

²³¹ *P.Mon.Epiph.* 133: the patriarch ordered bishops and the hermit Epiphanius to assemble, in order to “judge (ΝΤΝΚΡΙΝΕ) their affair”; *P.Pisentius* 10: the patriarch decided that a synod (ΟΥΓΥΝΖΟΔΟC) should take place, in order to investigate (ΝCΜΟΥΨ[Τ]) the case of Elisaius, a “monk” who was excluded from the clergy.

²³² Lamoreaux 1995, 145.

²³³ Mayer 2001, 60. The example is drawn from Schor 2011, 154.

²³⁴ ΠΡΟΣΤΑΤΗΣ (ΠΡΟΣΤΑΤΗΣ): Lampe 1961, 1182b; Förster 2002, 693; cf. Schmelz 2002, 256-60.

²³⁵ Rapp 2005, 227, 249, 277-78, 288-89.

Originally, the public defender was appointed to protect citizens against high exactions by state officials, but in practice, he was unsuccessful in opposing abuse and was sometimes engaged in it himself.²³⁶ Therefore, Justinian authorized bishops to take part in the nomination of urban officials, particularly the public defender, and to check the financial administration of the city.²³⁷ They were also expected to supervise the maintenance of public buildings and test whether the measures and weights had not been tampered with.²³⁸ John the Almsgiver, the Chalcedonian patriarch of Alexandria, is indeed said to have checked measures.²³⁹

Wipszycka suggested that at least Bishop Abraham did not experience the full weight of his office.²⁴⁰ By analyzing the exercise of authority by him and Pessynthius, we will get an impression of the number, variety and complexity of the matters in which they were engaged. If all seven aspects linked to the episcopal office are attested for a bishop, and if he was actively involved in all or most of these spheres of activity, with or without success, it implies that he bore the full responsibility of his office.

§1.3.4 *Pragmatic authority*

The pragmatic authority of a bishop is defined here as the recognition of his ability to act to the benefit of others in practical matters, while using his social status, diplomatic skills, means and ties, which he (partly) owes to his office, although the action is not required by his office. Although a bishop or his beneficiary may justify the action by linking it to a formal episcopal duty, such as the care for the underprivileged or intercession with authorities, it is a favor done on account of personal reasons in the context of patronage, benefaction or friendship.

Though clear as the theoretical distinction between a duty and a favor may seem, it can be difficult to decide to which category a recorded episcopal activity belongs. Firstly, the formal boundaries of the office were flexible in late antiquity. The canonical tradition of the church and imperial laws did not provide binding sets of regulations that were known and

²³⁶ ἑκδικητής (Lat.: *defensor civitatis*): Lampe 1961, 427a; Förster 2002, 236 (rare in Coptic documents). On the office, see Rouillard 1928, 65-66; Rees 1952; Kramer 1990, 324.

²³⁷ *Codex Justinianus* 1.55.8 (January 21, 409): ed. Krueger 1892, 91; transl. Blume 1920-1952c, 5; and *Novella* 128.16: ed. Schoell and Kroll 1895, 641-42; cf. Rouillard 1928, 66-67; Rapp 2005, 288-89. The English translation and annotation of the *Justinian Code* by F. H. Blume were published posthumously by T.G. Kearley on the website of the George W. Hopper Law Library at the University of Wyoming, at <http://www.uwyo.edu/lawlib/blume-justinian/>. On Blume's translation, "the only known English translation of the *Justinian Code* made from the standard Latin edition", see Kearley 2007 (the quote is found on p. 525).

²³⁸ *Codex Justinianus* 1.4.26 (June 24, 530): ed. Krueger 1892, 42-44; transl. Blume 1920-1952a, 10-12; cf. Rouillard 1928, 67; Alivisatos 1973, 116-17; Wipszycka 2015, 116.

²³⁹ *Life of John the Almsgiver* by Leontius of Neapolis: ed. Gelzer 1893, 9-10 (ch. 3); cf. Rouillard 1928, 67.

²⁴⁰ Wipszycka 2015, 142.

applied anywhere and at all times throughout the Byzantine empire, but rather compilations of precepts that reflected the wishes of church leaders and emperors respectively. Bishops could select the precepts that seemed relevant to them in a particular situation or follow an unwritten local tradition.²⁴¹ Secondly, it is not always clear why and how a bishop is involved in a social matter, and what the exact circumstances of this case are, either since important aspects are left implicit, or since the document is incomplete.

Pragmatic authority is evident, when a bishop acts out of the ordinary:

- He organizes the construction of secular buildings, like Daniel of Philae, who financed the renovation of a quay wall at Philae in 449-450 or 464-465.²⁴²
- He acts out of compassion, just as Flavian of Antioch (381-404) offered his hospitality to strangers “not as a result of his episcopal status”, “but rather as a personal act of philanthropy by a wealthy private individual”.²⁴³
- He intervenes in matters outside of his diocese, like Theodore of Philae, who stayed in the neighboring country of Nobadia for missionary activities in ca. 550.²⁴⁴
- His care for the underprivileged is considered extraordinary even for a church leader, as in the case of the Chalcedonian patriarch John the Almsgiver (609-619), who built hospitals and hostels, distributed alms regularly, and provided for Syrian refugees.²⁴⁵

These examples represent acts of patronage or benefaction, two concepts that are often confused with one other, and with the episcopal duty to intercede with civil authorities on behalf of individuals in need in the bishop’s own diocese.²⁴⁶ Patronage and benefaction are indeed hardly distinguishable in textual sources, “since the language ostensibly of the one is frequently used in settings having to do with the other”.²⁴⁷ In addition, the real difference lies in the intentions and degree of altruism of the patron or benefactor, which are not always recorded or recorded in an unbiased manner.

Theoretically, patronage implies a voluntary and informal exchange relation between a patron, usually an office-holder, and his client.²⁴⁸ The patron can provide land, economic aid, a better job or protection, whereas the client, who needs these goods and services, offers less

²⁴¹ Therefore, Wipszycka (2015, 27) refers to “normative texts” instead of “canonical texts”, since canon law was not yet standardized in late antiquity.

²⁴² Dijkstra 2008, 57-58, 326-27.

²⁴³ Mayer 2001, 65.

²⁴⁴ Dijkstra 2008, 299-304.

²⁴⁵ Wipszycka 2015, 221-28.

²⁴⁶ Sterk (2004, 66-67) called Bishop Basil of Caesarea a “*prostates*” (“patron”), when referring to his capacity to mediate with civil authorities.

²⁴⁷ Crook 2004, 60, on account of which the author introduces a model of patronage and benefaction.

²⁴⁸ Chow 1992, 30-32. The term *προστασία*, “patronage, protection”, rarely appears in Coptic documents: Forster 2002, 693; cf. Lampe 1961, 1182; Schor 2011, 135 (“*prostasia*”).

tangible services in return, such as gratitude, loyalty, obedience, good publicity, information, and – in case of religious patronage – piety. Their exchange is not fully legal, but subtle and based on mutual understanding, and often results in a long-term relationship and a sense of solidarity and interpersonal obligation between the patron and the client, usually at the exclusion of other potential patrons. Benefaction, whether public or private, differs from patronage in that it implies a generous gift, for which the benefactor cannot expect a concrete service in return from the community or the individuals who benefit from it other than honor, gratitude and loyalty.²⁴⁹ Benefaction is not always free from self-interest. A rich land-owner may offer his grain on the market, in order to make a profit, while hoping to attain additional glory as the benefactor who saved his city from imminent famine.²⁵⁰

When the Jemean authorities requested the hermit Epiphanius to intercede with the *lashane* of Toout on behalf of prisoners, they relied on his pragmatic authority.²⁵¹

§1.3.5 *Legal authority*

The sociologist Max Weber introduced the concept of legal authority to indicate legitimate power that rests “on a belief in the legality of enacted rules and the right of those elevated to authority under such rules to issue commands”, and added that “obedience is owed to the legally established impersonal order”.²⁵² In this study the concept is applied, when a bishop used written sources, such as the Bible and ecclesiastical canons, as instruments of authority in case of inspections, transgressions or social conflicts, or when he kept records of declarations, promises and guarantees. During the recording, the people involved were aware that they should keep their promises, and afterwards, the bishop could look up the document and use it as evidence, if problems arose.

The written sources that can be used as instruments of authority include:

- Biblical sources, which are usually introduced by “as it is written”.²⁵³
- Ecclesiastical canons in documents relating to church administration.²⁵⁴
- Imperial laws, which are referred to in a general way in official deeds.²⁵⁵
- Official deeds written on papyrus, including testaments.²⁵⁶

²⁴⁹ Crook 2004, 58.

²⁵⁰ Brown 2002, 4.

²⁵¹ *P.Mon.Epiph.* 163. On the holy man as “*prostates*”, see Brown 1982, 115-18; Rapp 2005, 155-56.

²⁵² Weber 1978, 215-16.

²⁵³ On behalf of Bishop Abraham, the priest Victor urgently requests clergymen to settle a conflict. To exhort them, he quotes Mt 5:9: “For it is written as follows: Blessed are the peacemakers” (*SBKopt.* II 906, ll. 24-25).

²⁵⁴ **ἸΚΑΝΩΝ** (ΚΑΝΩΝ): Lampe 1961, 701 (C.1); Förster 2002, 377. For the various meanings of the term **ΚΑΝΩΝ** in Coptic texts (tax, ration, lesson, ordinance, monastic rule), see Schiller 1950, 177-80.

²⁵⁵ **ἸΝΟΜΟC** (νόμος): Lampe 1961, 920 (B); Förster 2002, 548.

- Patriarchal letters, episcopal orders or warrants that authorized clergymen to inspect churches and impose sanctions in case of irregularities.²⁵⁷
- Protocols that recorded as accurately as possible what someone accused of misconduct said or did, and declarations.²⁵⁸
- Transcripts of oaths sworn in the presence of a bishop.²⁵⁹
- Agreements with the bishop.²⁶⁰
- Guarantees given to the bishop.²⁶¹
- Letters of protection issued by a clergyman, such as a bishop, in order to convince refugees, who had fled to evade civil authorities, to return to their homes. Such documents were issued at the request of officials, after they had sworn by God that they would not persecute the refugees or ask the full amount of tax, which often was the reason why they had fled in the first place.²⁶²

If a bishop frequently used written texts as sources of authority, it may indicate that he did not feel taken seriously, or that he had difficulty in convincing other social actors to be cooperative, to keep their word or to see his point just by speaking to them.

CONCLUSION

The contribution of Abraham and Pesynthius to the rise of the Theodosian church can be evaluated after collecting the relevant data, analyzing the structure of the social networks, in which they were engaged, and examining their agency when they established their authority.

A papyrological study was necessary for preparing Datasets 1-4, on the basis of which the Theodosian network, the social network of the Theban region, the individual networks of the bishops and the topographical network are analyzed. The preparation implies the selection of relevant documents for each dataset, proposing dates for as many texts as possible, in order to refine the study of the development of the networks, and organizing the relational data in

²⁵⁶ **ΕΓΓΡΑΦΟΝ** (ἐγγράφον), “official document”; **ΧΑΡΤΗΣ** (χάρτης), “papyrus”, “official document”; **ΔΙΑΘΗΚΗ** (διαθήκη), “testament”; cf. Lampe 1961, 398 (A.2), 1519, 348.

²⁵⁷ *SBKopt.* III 1379, ll. 3-4: “Please bring the ostrakon (**ΠΛΑΞ**, which bears the warrant) and visit the churches”. Patriarchal or episcopal letters often include the noun **ΚΕΛΕΥΣΙΣ** (κέλευσις) or the verb **ΚΕΛΕΥΕ**, “command”; cf. Lampe 1961, 741; Förster 2002, 402-03.

²⁵⁸ On protocols, see Krause, *Apa Abraham*, vol. 2, 254.

²⁵⁹ **ΩΡΚ**, “swear”; **ΑΝΑΦ**, “oath”: Crum 1939, 12, 529-30.

²⁶⁰ **ΣΥΜΦΟΝΟΝ** (συμφώνον), “agreement”: Förster 2002, 771-72; Lampe 1961, 1293.

²⁶¹ **ΑΣΦΑΛΙΑ** (ἀσφάλεια), “security”; **ΕΓΓΥΗ** (ἐγγύη), “guarantee”: Förster 2002, 118-20, 221-23.

²⁶² Letters of protection often start with **ΕΙΣ ΠΛΟΓΟΣ ΉΠΝΟΥΤΕ**, “Behold the assurance by God”: Förster 2002, 478-79. For this kind of document, see Till 1939; Schmelz 2002, 261-68. Noetlichs (1973, 50) reports contradicting laws on the question whether state officials were allowed to make a bishop or steward pay on behalf of public debtors.

Excel-files that are ready to be imported in *Ucinet 6*. Since part of the episcopal documents is still unedited or difficult to access, and since many texts are damaged, Datasets 3-4 includes summaries and schematic representations of the relational data, in order that the reader can check how the social ties are interpreted and which ties are hypothetical. The summaries also formed the basis for the study of how Abraham and Pesynthius exercised their authority.

The programs *Ucinet 6* and *NetDraw* are adopted for the analysis and visualization of the networks, since they are user-friendly and offer enough tools for the study that we wish to conduct. The procedure developed for network analysis comprises seven aspects: *Ucinet 6* offers tools for calculating their cohesion and for identifying their core members and central actors, whereas *NetDraw* shows the various social groups (or persons linked to localities), components, tie strength and the direction of the ties. The concept of centrality is particularly useful for determining whether Abraham and Pesynthius held a structurally important position in the social network of the Theban region, since it compares their structural position with that of their colleagues, monastic leaders and priests. Whether the bishops were close to various social groups in their dioceses will be established on the basis of their directed *ego networks*. The episcopal networks are analyzed in multiple layers, resulting in several graphs, on the basis of which we reconstruct the ecclesiastical apparatuses of Hermonthis and Koptos as well as overviews of state officials, arranged by location and – if possible – by decade.

The social model of episcopal authority presented in this book is not a static model, but an analytical tool for examining how Abraham and Pesynthius used their authority, when they fulfilled their episcopal duties, and how their authority can best be characterized. By assessing the relative weight of different modes of authority (spiritual, ascetic, professional, pragmatic and legal), it should be possible to describe what impression the two bishops made, and explain what made Pesynthius so exceptional that he is still remembered by the Coptic Orthodox Church. To establish whether the bishops experienced the full weight of their office, we will check how many aspects of the episcopal office are attested in their documents.

Chapter 2: The Theban region

INTRODUCTION

In her recent book *The Alexandrian Church: People and Institutions* Ewa Wipszycka wrote that the network of bishoprics “coincided as a rule with administrative divisions” and that there were seventy-five dioceses in Egypt in the late fourth and early fifth centuries. Episcopal sees were usually established in district capitals, but some of them were created in localities that did not have civic status, for instance towns in the feebly urbanized frontier areas of the western and eastern Delta, and Philae in the southern frontier region of Egypt.²⁶³

The rise of the Theodosian hierarchy alongside the official Chalcedonian church led to the creation of two distinct networks of bishoprics. Peter IV allegedly ordained over eighty bishops in total, for practically all the dioceses in Egypt, whereas most sees were surely not vacant.²⁶⁴ Some bishops were prevented by state authorities from going to their dioceses and lived in monastic centers in the area of Alexandria or the western Delta, and it is unclear how many of their colleagues got the chance to actually take up their office.²⁶⁵ Local officials and the Chalcedonian bishops still in place may have tried to prevent them from getting started.

Once a Theodosian bishop finally established his residence in the diocese that he was appointed to, he had to create a new ecclesiastical apparatus, to get a following, to find ways to interact with local civil officials, and to avoid conflicts with his Chalcedonian counterpart. Wipszycka proposed the hypothesis that the dioceses were divided between Chalcedonian bishops, whose jurisdiction extended to the cities and probably part of the countryside, and Theodosian prelates, who lived in monasteries and supervised villages or parts of villages only.²⁶⁶ It is true that both Abraham and Pesynthius resided in monasteries and that most localities mentioned in their documents were rural, but Pesynthius’ supervision was not restricted to villages and monasteries only, and his authority extended beyond the diocese of Koptos (§4.5.3). Unfortunately, the networks of the two hierarchies cannot be compared, since the available documentary and non-documentary sources do not explicitly record contemporary Chalcedonian bishops in the Theban region.²⁶⁷

²⁶³ Wipszycka 2015, 108. For Philae, see Dijkstra 2008, 55-56, 63. The Greek term for “diocese” is “*paroikia*”; cf. Lampe 1961, 1042a (D.1); Feissel 1989, 812. It is not attested in Coptic documentary texts.

²⁶⁴ Introduction; Wipszycka 2007, 344 and 2015, 123, 141.

²⁶⁵ Wipszycka 2007, 344 and 2015, 122-23.

²⁶⁶ Wipszycka 2009a, 33 n. 20; cf. idem 2007, 344-45 and 2015, 142.

²⁶⁷ The Greek *Life of John the Almsgiver* by Leontius of Neapolis mentions Bishop Troilus, who was at Alexandria (610s); ed. Gelzer 1893, 57 (ch. 27); transl. Dawes and Baynes 1948, 237. Another Greek biography of John the Almsgiver lists Gregory of Rhinocourou (ca. 615); comm./ ed. Delehaye 1927, 15, 23 (ch. 9).

The network of Theodosian bishoprics did not coincide with the administrative divisions, for the districts of Hermonthis and Koptos comprised two dioceses each, namely the dioceses of Hermonthis and Thebes/Ape, and Koptos and Qus respectively (Map 1). The sees of Hermonthis and Koptos already existed in 325 and the see of Thebes was created before 339,²⁶⁸ whereas a bishop of Qus (Diocletianopolis) is first attested in 553: in that year, (the Chalcedonian) Bishop Elias attended the second ecumenical council of Constantinople.²⁶⁹

This chapter examines the organization of state, army and church in the Theban region in the period when Abraham and Pesynthius were in office. The first section focusses on the division of the Theban region into districts, the topography of each district and the presence of civil and military officials. The second one aims to determine the size of the Theodosian dioceses of Hermonthis, Thebes/Ape, Koptos and Qus by identifying the localities that fell under the jurisdiction of Abraham, Anthony, Pesynthius and Pisrael respectively. The final section discusses the likely division between Theodosians and Chalcedonians in the region.

§2.1 THE DISTRICTS

The Theban region was part of the province of the Thebaid, which extended from Antinoopolis (Ansina) in Middle Egypt to Syene (Aswan) in the southern frontier region, and was governed by the duke of the Thebaid (*dux et augustalis Thebaidis*), who resided in Antinoopolis. Since Justinian's administrative reform of 539, he was the highest civil and military official and judge in the province and headed a single office for both administrative domains.²⁷⁰ The duke commanded the *limitanei*, the soldiers stationed permanently in garrisons (*castra*).²⁷¹ His responsibilities included the maintenance of public order in the cities, assistance to tax collectors in case of reluctant tax payers, and above all the annual collection and transport of grain (the *annona civica* or *embole*) to Alexandria in September, from where it was shipped to Byzantium.²⁷² Only two dukes in office during the episcopates of Abraham and Pesynthius are known by name, namely Gabriel (June 13, 581 or 596)²⁷³ and

²⁶⁸ Munier 1943, 2, 9-10; Timm 1984-1992, vol. 1, 160; vol. 5, 2141, vol. 6, 2905.

²⁶⁹ Chrysos 1966, 112; cf. Timm 1984-1992, vol. 5, 2173; Van der Vliet 2012, 28. On the name Diocletianopolis, see also Fournet 2002, 198 and 2002, 54. For the council, see Grillmeier and Hainthaler 1995, 438-62.

²⁷⁰ *Edict* 13.23: ed. Schoell and Kroll 1895, 792; trans. Blume 1920-1952d, 20. For the unpublished English translation and annotation of the *Justinian Code* by F. H. Blume, see §1.3.3.G, n. 126. On the date of the edict, see Rémondon 1955. On the office of duke and augustal of the Thebaid, see Rouillard 1928, 33-34, 36-47; Steinwenter 1967, 7; Förster 2002, 210; Zuckerman 2004, 147-50; Palme 2007, 246, 250; Dijkstra 2008, 32.

²⁷¹ Palme 2007, 247; cf. Steinwenter 1967, 6.

²⁷² *Edict* XIII.24-26: ed. Schoell and Kroll 1895, 792; transl. Blume and Kearly (date unknown), 20-23; cf. Rouillard 1928, 39, 124, 126-27; Rémondon 1955, 120-21.

²⁷³ Lefebvre 1907, no. 562, re-edited by Gasco 1994, 331-32 (Upper Egypt, Pauni 19, fourteenth indiction). For the provenance and date, see Gasco 1994, 325-29; cf. Maspero 1910, 109.

Flavius Ammonius (June 6, 594).²⁷⁴ Dukes do not appear in the episcopal documents, but a “*meizoteros* of the duke” does appear in a letter about a delivery of white wine and salted fish.²⁷⁵ *Meizoteroi* were involved in the collection of the *embole*,²⁷⁶ and issued receipts of payment of the land tax in money,²⁷⁷ while being assisted by tax collectors.²⁷⁸ Some of them were addressed as “Lords”.²⁷⁹ The “*meizoteros* of the duke” perhaps was a high-ranked military commander, whose troops were mobilized to protect the shipment of taxes.²⁸⁰

On a lower level, the Theban region belonged the eparchy of the Upper Thebaid, which comprised the southern part of the Thebaid, and had its capital at Ptolemais (Psoi, at present Ibsay), ca. 40 km south of Panopolis (present Akhmim).²⁸¹ It was governed by a *praeses*, a civil official subordinate to the duke, who is called a “magistrate” or “ruler” in Greek papyri.²⁸² Ptolemais does not appear in Datasets 1-4, and the “magistrates” (*archontes*) in episcopal documents were urban officials rather than a *praeses* (§2.1.1-2).²⁸³

The Theban region comprised four districts or “*nomes*”. Arranged from south to north along the Qena bend, they were the districts of Hermonthis, Koptos, Qena and Huw. Roads in the Western Desert, such as the Luxor-Farshut Road and the Alamat Tal Road, which started north of modern Qurna in Western Thebes, connected the districts of Hermonthis and Huw.²⁸⁴

§2.1.1 District of Hermonthis

The Hermonthite district comprised Tbebe in the south and at least Timamen in the north. Crum identified Tbebe with modern al-Dababiya, on the east bank of the Nile ca. 30 km north of Esna, and Stefan Timm located Timamen (Damamin) on the east bank at al-Mufarragiya, 9

²⁷⁴ *I.Philae* 2 224: ed. Bernand 1969 (= Lefebvre 1907, no. 596; Philae, Epep 12, twelfth indiction).

²⁷⁵ *P.Pisentius* 33. *P.Pisentius* 58 refers to deliveries to be sent to “the place of the *meizoteros*”.

²⁷⁶ *P.Oxy.* 16 2018, ll. 1-2 (Oxyrhynchus); *P.Oxy.* 16 2021, ll. 1, 4 (Oxyrhynchus); cf. Hickey 2012, 110, n. 86. *O.Medin.Habu Copt.* 150 does not mention the *embole*, but upon Peter’s request for wheat Kyra replies that she will ask him to send the camel, in order that she can load it with wheat for him, when the *meizoteros* leaves.

²⁷⁷ *P.Lond.Copt.* I 1051 (Hermopolite district). For the land tax (*chrysikon*), see Förster 2002, 887.

²⁷⁸ *P.Lond.Copt.* I 1160 (provenance unknown), where the tax collectors are called *boethos*; cf. Förster 2002, 139.

²⁷⁹ *P.Lond.Copt.* I 1160: Lord Sarapion; *P.Rainer Cent.* 159 (Arsinoite nome): Lord Theodore; *P.MoscowCopt.* 3 (Hermopolite nome): Lord George.

²⁸⁰ Hickey 2012, 110: “The *meizoteros* might be a commander whose soldiers (*buccellarii*) are protecting the shipment; otherwise, he is likely to be a village headman”, 118. A *meizoteros* and soldiers appear together in *P.Laur.* V 198 (Hermopolite nome); cf. Derda and Wipszycka 1994, 42, n. 57, where the title “*meizoteros*” is translated with “foreman”. Rouillard (1928, 69) describes the *meizoteros* as a kind of steward employed by a private person, or a functionary subordinate to another official. According to Crum (*P.Ryl.Copt.* 178, n. 3), Steinwenter (1967, 41) and Förster (2002, 509), *lashane* (ΛΑΦΑΝΕ) is the Coptic equivalent of *meizoteros*, but *P.KRU* 10 indicates that the *meizoteros* was the equivalent of the *dioiketes*; cf. Cromwell 2013, 220.

²⁸¹ George of Cyprus, *Descriptio orbis Romani*; ed. Gelzer 1890, 39; cf. Timm 1984-1922, vol. 4, 1140-47.

²⁸² Rouillard 1928, 34, 48 (“*archon*”, “*hegemon*”), and 47-52 on the office of *praeses* in general.

²⁸³ Ἀρχων: Förster 2002, 112-13; cf. Rouillard 1928, 65, n. 4.

²⁸⁴ For the Luxor-Farshut desert road, see Darnell and Darnell 2002, 105, fig. 8.1.

km south of Qus, on account of a nearby locality called Hod Damamil.²⁸⁵ For various reasons, however, the identification with al-Mufarragiya is unsatisfactory. Firstly, Timamen belonged to the district of Hermonthis,²⁸⁶ and a natural boundary between the districts of Hermonthis and Koptos on the east bank could be at modern Khozam, where the strip of arable land is the narrowest (Map 1). Timamen is expected south of that boundary, but al-Mufarragiya lies north of it. Secondly, Frederik Ludvig Norden locates Damamin opposite al-Qurna, south of a small group of islands, where crocodiles attacked his boat, and a little north of Medinet Habu and Karnak.²⁸⁷ Thirdly, the Sahidic *Encomium* on Bishop Pesynthius mentions a ferry-place at Timamen, relatively close to the Church of Tsenti, where the bishop officiated and which is located in the area between modern Naqada and Qamula.²⁸⁸ This ferry-place could have been south of Qamula and west of a group of islands in the bend of the Nile, perhaps at the modern village of al-Ashi on the east bank. Finally, Bishop Abraham went to Timamen with a group of clergyman, but the villagers threw the clergymen in the canal, destroyed a book on canon law and shouted at the bishop (§2.3.1, 6.4.B). Abraham did not just encounter disrespect from some trouble makers, but the open hostility of an entire village that reacted as if he had come to establish his authority at Timamen, although it probably fell under the jurisdiction of a bishop of Thebes. If Abraham was engaged in a missionary activity, Timamen must have been relatively close to Western Thebes, for if the location were at al-Mufarragiya, it would have been much easier for Bishop Pesynthius or a bishop of Qus or Ape to go there. These observations suggest a more southern location. Al-Qurna, opposite Karnak, lies too far south, but a location between Khozam and Karnak, such as al-Ashi, seems plausible.

The district capital Hermonthis (Armant), Jeme (Medinet Habu), Western Thebes and Terkot (al-Razeqat) were located on the west bank of the Nile, whereas Petemout (Medamud), Thebes (Diospolis Megale, Ape, Ne, Luxor/Karnak), Timamen, and Toout (Tud) lay on the east bank. Patoubasten, Piohe, Pshamer and Ramau still need to be localized.²⁸⁹ It is likely that the Tabennese mentioned in Theban documents does not refer to the location of the famous Pachomian monastery in the district of Huw, but to a locality in the Hermonthite

²⁸⁵ Winlock and Crum 1926, 105; Timm 1984-1992, vol. 2, 505-07 (Timamen), vol. 6, 2555-56 (Tbebe). Ait-Kaci, Boud'hors and Heurtel (2010, 5-6, fig. 1) locate Timamen south of Pshenhor, that is at al-Mufarragiya.

²⁸⁶ *Brit.Mus.Copt.* I, pl. 73 (EA 26209, l. 4).

²⁸⁷ Norden 1755, 162, pl. 98.

²⁸⁸ Sahidic *Encomium* on Bishop Pesynthius, S, Budge 1913, fol. 76a. For the Church of Tsenti, see §3.1.2.

²⁸⁹ Winlock and Crum 1926, 106 (Ne/Thebes); Timm 1984-1992, vol. 1, 133-35 (Ape), 153-82 (Hermonthis), vol. 3, 1012-34 (Jeme), vol. 4, 1503-05 (Petemout), 1762-63 (Ne); 1856-58 (Patoubasten), 1941-42 (Piohe), 2054-56 (Pshamer); vol. 5, 2195-96 (Ramau), vol. 6, 2590-91 (Terkot), 2862-65 (Tud), vol. 6, 2904-19 (Luxor); Wilfong 2002, 2, fig. 1 (map of Western Thebes); Moawad 2010, 93-94 (Petemout). The Arabic version of the *Encomium* (A, O'Leary 1930, fol. 103b) states that Bishop Pesynthius' father came from Pshamer.

district, since it is often associated with toponyms in this district. Perhaps, it can be identified with modern Tafnis al-Matanah on the west bank between Toout and Esna.²⁹⁰

The location of Ape has been much debated. It lay in the Hermonthite district and was called a “city” with a *castrum*, a description that fits with the city of Thebes (Luxor), where a Roman *castrum* existed around the ancient temple of Amun.²⁹¹ The existence of Bishop Anthony of Ape implies that it was also an episcopal see and must correspond to the see of Thebes (§2.2.2). Nevertheless, Crum distinguished Ape from Pape (modern Luxor), which appears as an episcopal see in medieval lists, and proposed an identification with the town of Jeme (Medinet Habu) on the west bank, although it was not a city.²⁹² Timm is also inclined to localize Ape on the west bank, but does not exclude the possibility that it was a settlement on the east bank preceding modern Luxor.²⁹³ Finally, L. Aït-Kaci, Anne Boud’hors and Chantal Heurtel proposed the hypothesis that it extended on both river banks: the town, a *castrum* and the administrative center were situated on the east bank in the area of Karnak and Luxor, whereas the Monastery of St Papnouthius “in the mountain of Ape” possibly stood on the west bank.²⁹⁴ The implicit argument for locating the monastery on the west bank is that most monasteries in the Hermonthite and Koptite districts lay on the west bank. In my view, however, the diocese of Ape comprised the east bank only, whereas the diocese of Hermonthis was limited to the west bank, and the Monastery of St Papnouthius could well have been located on the east bank, like the Monastery of St Macarius (cf. §3.2.7).

Like Ape, Ne is usually equated with Thebes and more specifically with Luxor,²⁹⁵ but Katelijn Vandorpe and Richard Burchfield proposed to identify it with the temple complex at Karnak.²⁹⁶ Vandorpe observed that Karnak used to be the main religious center on the east bank, that it was called *N(i)w.t-Imn* or the “City of Amun” in the New Kingdom and Diospolis Megale or the “City of Zeus” in the Greco-Roman period, and that the name Ne was derived from the abridged form *N(i)w.t*.²⁹⁷ Since the proposed identification of Ne with Karnak is purely based on etymology, and not confirmed by epigraphical evidence, I prefer to take Thebes, which comprises both Luxor and Karnak, as its general location.

²⁹⁰ *P.Mon.Epiph.* 163, n. 8; Timm 1984-1992, vol. 6, 2443-44; Burchfield, *Networks of the Theban Desert*, 173 n. 150, 283-85. Tabennese is associated with Jeme and Toout (*P.Mon.Epiph.* 163), and with Thone and Timamen (*O.Mon.Epiph.* 519, 526).

²⁹¹ Timm 1984-1992, vol. 1, 134-35; Wilfong 2002, 8. On the *castrum* of Luxor, see Grossmann 1991a, 465-67.

²⁹² Winlock and Crum 1926, 105-06. Previously (in *O.Crum*, p. xvi), Crum identified Ape with Luxor.

²⁹³ Timm 1984-1992, vol. 1, 133-36, and vol. 6, 2907, 2910.

²⁹⁴ Aït, Boud’hors and Heurtel 2010, 6-8; *O.Frangé*, p. 24.

²⁹⁵ *O.Mon.Epiph.* 151, n. 3; Timm 1984-1992, vol. 4, 1762-63; Wilfong 2002, 8 n. 28.

²⁹⁶ Vandorpe 1995, 211; Burchfield, *Networks of the Theban Desert*, 168, 262-63. In modern Arabic dialect “Karnak” means “fortified town”, which recalls the term *castrum*; cf. Timm 1984-1992, vol. 3, 1225.

²⁹⁷ Vandorpe 1995, 211-18. The Biblical name for Thebes is No-Amon (Nahum 3:8) or No (Ezechiel 30:14, 16).

The administration of the district of Hermonthis was the responsibility of the pagarch appointed to that city by the emperor, but this office is first attested in Coptic deeds from the eighth century only.²⁹⁸ Instead, Bishop Abraham referred to a magistrate (*archon*), to whom Menas would have to pay a fine, if he did not comply with the outcome of adjudication.²⁹⁹ The same functionary is perhaps called “*comes*” in a letter to Bishop Pesynthius (§7.5.2). Other officials at Hermonthis attested in the episcopal documents are a councilor (*politeumenos*), a public defender (*ekdikos*) and a notary, who acted as witnesses in Abraham’s testament,³⁰⁰ and a lawyer (*nomikos*), whom Bishop Pesynthius had to summon (§7.5.2). If the Greek archive of Theopemptos and Zacharias originates from Hermonthis, their documents record officials at Hermonthis during the Persian period. Theopemptos and Zacharias were tax collectors (*apaitetai*) from May 624 to at least August 626, and received orders to deliver barley from the financial administrators (*dioiketes*) Augustus or Theon. The beneficiaries were the donkey driver of the public bath house³⁰¹ and Persian officials (*sellarion*) and cavalry (*kaballarion*).³⁰²

In ca. 620 *lashanes* were active at Jeme, Toout and Ne/Thebes.³⁰³ That Strategius identified himself as “the *lashane* of Ne” is remarkable: *lashanes* usually were town or village headmen, whereas Thebes had urban status, and it is even more surprising that a Byzantine official adopted the ancient name of this city. He did so during the Persian period, when a Persian commander established his headquarters at Ne.³⁰⁴ If Strategius was cooperative with Persian authorities, he could be the Lord Strategius who sent jars (filled with wine, oil or water), like Lord Liberius, to a Persian called Astragatour, judging from a Greek account by the latter’s secretary Cosmas.³⁰⁵ This account and another one on the recto of the same

²⁹⁸ Timm 1984-1992, vol. 1, 172-73. For the office of *pagarch*, see Rouillard 1928, 52-62; Steinwenter 1967, 8-10; Wilfong 2002, 7-8.

²⁹⁹ *O.Crum* 43, l. 7: ΠΑΡΧΩΝ. See also *O.Crum* 282.

³⁰⁰ *P.Lond.* I 77, ll. 84-89. Peter’s title is lost, but since he drew up Bishop Abraham’s testament, he must have been a notary. For the public defender, see §1.3.3.G. On the various offices in the urban administration, see Rouillard 1928, 62-67. The councillor of *P.Lond.* I 77 is accidentally omitted in Worp 1999, 127-29.

³⁰¹ Hickey 2014, with an edition of *O.Ashm. D.O.* 810. Foss (2002, 172) preferred the province of Arcadia as the place of provenance, but Hickey (2014, 45) argues that various ostraca from the archive were purchased at Armant (Hermonthis), and that the chronological formula *O.Ashm. D.O.* 810 points to an origin in the Thebaid. Nikolaos Gonis is reediting the pieces from the archive at Oxford.

³⁰² *O.Bodl.* 2 2125-27 (April 2-9, 626), 3231 (April 15, 626). For the dates, see Hickey 2014, 49. In Pahlavi any high-ranking Persian officer was called a *salar* (ΣΕΛΛΑΡΙΟΣ, ΣΕΛΛΑΡΙΗΣ); cf. Foss 2002, 169; Sängner 2011, 659-60 and 665, on the various Persian officials at different administrative levels.

³⁰³ *P.Mon.Epiph.* 163: Shenoute of Jeme, Victor of Toout (Dataset 1); *O.Mon.Epiph.* 151: Strategius of Ne (Datasets 1, 4).

³⁰⁴ *O.Mon.Epiph.* 324, n. 2. “The Persian at Ne” is likely to have been among the *sellarioi* who received barley from Theopemptos and Zacharias. According to Maspero (1912, 145), was no longer a city.

³⁰⁵ *P.CtYBR inv.* 72, verso, ll. 1-2, 5: ed. Kruit and Worp 2002, 47, 52-53. A similar, possibly Persian name is “[...]astrepheal” in *P.Mon.Epiph.* 517. This text also lists Lord Aspar, who wrote to Bishop Abraham, signing as

papyrus supposedly came from Edfu, since the papyrus was purchased there, and since Lord Liberius is tentatively identified with the Liberius who was pagarch of Edfu in 649.³⁰⁶ If Strategius of Ne/Thebes is indeed mentioned in both accounts, the one on the recto could represent a list of contributions by the leading officials of cities in the Upper Thebaid, and Astragatour was a Persian official at a provincial level.³⁰⁷ Strategius reappears in two Coptic documents that report foreign marauders, but his role in the events remains unclear.³⁰⁸

As for the organization of the Byzantine army, an important but early source is the *Notitia Dignitatum*, a register of civil and military offices of the Byzantine empire that was composed before Justinian's military reform. It records Vandal cavalry at "Nee"/Thebes (*ala VIII Vandilorum*) and legions at Thebes (*legio III Diocletiana*) and Hermonthis (*legio II Valentiniana*).³⁰⁹ In the 620s, Thebes/Ape was still a military base, considering the mention of a lieutenant (*vicarius*) at Ape, the deputy of the commander (*primicerius*) at the *castrum* of Ape, who was in turn subordinate to the duke of the Thebaid.³¹⁰ Earlier and later documents reveal the presence of a second lieutenant, who was appointed to Hermonthis, but may have dwelled at the *castrum* of Toout (Qasr Tud), opposite Hermonthis.³¹¹ Coptic documents reveal that lieutenants made arrests, sent wagons for the transport of goods, or were requested to act as arbiters.³¹² A third military official was the *actuarius*, who was responsible for the payment of the soldiers, but also collected payments. Bishop Abraham warned the priest Papas that he should not go to the *actuarius* or any other financial official to wreck a case.³¹³

There was no garrison at Jeme, but it was nevertheless called "the *castrum* of Jeme" or "*castrum* Memnonion", apparently on account of the massive walls of the mortuary temple of

Lord Asper, son of Lord Toabethe (*O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* II 34). On the unclear origin of his name (Gothic or Alan?), see *P.Mon.Epiph.* 517, n. 2; Kortenbeutel 1939, 183 and n. 5.

³⁰⁶ *P.CtYBR* inv. 72, recto, ll. 7, 10; ed. Kruit and Worp 2002, 47-51, the commentary to l. 10. Pagarch Liberius also occurs in *SBKopt.* I 242 (dated 649) and perhaps in *P.Apollo* 61; cf. Gasco and Worp 1982, 84.

³⁰⁷ Assuming that the officials are listed from north to south, there may have been a Lord [...]erios at Hermonthis or Esna and a Lord Aristius at Aswan (*P.CtYBR* inv. 72, recto, ll. 8-9, 11).

³⁰⁸ *P.Pisentius* 1, on the arrest of possibly Syrian brigands ("the Atsoor") by the *lashanes* of Pallas; *P.CrumST* 178, on a "barbarian" and brigands who illused a man in the mountain of Ape for money; cf. §8.4.D.1.

³⁰⁹ *Notitia Dignitatum*, § 28, l. 25 and 31, ll. 38-39; ed. Seeck 1876, 59, 64; cf. Worp 1994a, 463 (where the original composition is dated to the late fourth century), 469 (map of military units).

³¹⁰ *P.Mon.Epiph.* 460 (Dataset 4). The *primicerius* in *O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* II 16 was identified by Delattre 2002, 332. On the office of lieutenant, see Steinwenter 1967, 7. Wilfong (2002, 8) suggests that the *castrum* of Ape was probably abandoned by 630.

³¹¹ *P.Münch.* I 14, ll. 17: Kallinikos (February 15, 594), *O.CrumST* 183: Lord John, pagarch and lieutenant (early Arab period, considering the mention of an *amir* in l. 6); cf. Maspero 1912, 146; Steinwenter 1976, 7. On the *castrum* of Toout (Qasr Tud), see Timm 1984-92, vol. 6, 2862-63.

³¹² *O.Crum* 209 (on the lieutenant Paul, perhaps the future commander of *O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* II 31); *O.Mon.Epiph.* 156 and n. 3; *P.Mon.Epiph.* 458 and 460.

³¹³ *O.Crum* 79. On the *actuarius*, see Maspero 1912, 105; Winlock and Crum 1926, 174; Jones 1964, 674; Cervenka-Ehrenstrasser and Diethart 1996, 63-66; Kazhdan 1991, 50.

Ramesses III that surrounded it.³¹⁴ However, a contact of the priest Moses of the hermitage of TT 29 stayed at a military outpost “in the mountain” (of Jeme; cf. §3.2.2).³¹⁵ He probably wrote to Moses in ca. 620, for his question whether Epiphanius had already sent letters to Toout, recalls the petition of April 620, in which the Jemeans asked Epiphanius to contact the *lashane* of Toout for the sake of prisoners at Jeme, Toout and Tabennese (§3.2.1). These events happened at the beginning of the Persian conquest of Egypt, but it is unclear why they were placed in custody and by whom: by the Persians or the *lashanes* of the respective towns?

Lashanes held people in custody, such as family members of persons who still had to pay taxes or a debt. People in prison complained that they were neglected: they were hung backwards by their hands, polluted themselves, could not cover themselves, were dying from hunger and felt abandoned by the debtors, for whom they gave their lives.³¹⁶ Having lost their patience, two women sent a letter demanding two men (their husbands?) to send food and pay their debts, or else the women would come north together with six soldiers and hand the men over to them, in order to force them to pay.³¹⁷ A fragmentary letter that is probably addressed to Bishop Pesynthius reports the arrest of several individuals and also mentions Epiphanius in relation to a prison.³¹⁸ Interestingly, this letter also refers to an agent of the Empress. Given the likely dating of the letter in ca. 620, the Empress must have been Martina, Heraclius’ second wife (613-641). The mention of her agent suggests that she owned property in the Theban region, and that he was responsible for its administration.³¹⁹

§2.1.2 District of Koptos

The district of Koptos started north of Timamen in the south and still included Pallas (Ballas) in the north. The district capital Koptos (Justinianopolis, Qift), the city of Qus, Pshenhor (Shanhur), Temraut and Trekatan lay on the east bank of the Nile, whereas Pallas, Tohe

³¹⁴ Timm 1984-1992, vol. 3, 1014-18; Steinwenter 1967, 7; Wilfong 2002, 8 and n. 29. Łajtar (1997, 44-45) observed that in Coptic documents the term *castrum* often refers to quasi-urban settlements enclosed by the massive walls of a pharaonic temple.

³¹⁵ *O.Frangé* 774. The editors translate **ⲛⲥⲁⲭⲟ ⲙⲁⲩⲟⲓ** (ll. 25-26) as “maîtres-soldats”, but add that the expression is obscure. **ⲥⲁⲭⲟ** can be translated as “great scribe” or “official”; cf. Crum 1939, 384a. However, **ⲛⲥⲁⲭⲟ ⲙⲁⲩⲟⲓ** is preceded by the phrase “I am staying in ...”, which introduces a location rather than persons.

³¹⁶ *O.Mon.Epiph.* 176, 177. For *lashanes* making arrests, see *O.Crum* 61 (Dataset 3); *P.Pisentius* 1 (Dataset 4).

³¹⁷ *O.Mon.Epiph.* 177.

³¹⁸ *P.Mon.Epiph.* 466 (Datasets 1, 4).

³¹⁹ On Empress Martina, see Martindale 1992, 837-38. Crum in *P.Mon.Epiph.* 466, n. 8 considers Theodora (d. 548) with hesitation. Greek documents from the Thebaid, and especially from the Antaiopolite district, record private property of members of the imperial family (*domus divina*) in the Thebaid in the fifth and sixth centuries, but later records are scarce; cf. Azzarello 2012, 5, 44.

(Tukh) and the Monastery of Apa Samuel of Phel (Dayr al-Gizaz) lay on the west bank.³²⁰ Kratos, Papa, Pampane, Pmilis, Ptene and Tabiou were probably situated on the west bank as well, and Bishop Pesynthius' residence and the Monastery of the Cross supposedly stood in the area between Naqada and Qamula.³²¹ Phanemoun, Sarf, Tse and Zoile are still to be located.³²²

Information about the administration of the Koptite district during the early seventh century is fragmentary and often implicit, particularly on a district level. The pagarchy is only mentioned in a bilingual Greek-Arabic register from Aphrodito as an indication where Trakan (Trekatan?) was situated.³²³ Certain magistrates of Koptos appear in a letter addressed to Bishop Pesynthius, but their title is lost.³²⁴ Urban magistrates are attested, though not explicitly in relation to Koptos.³²⁵ Urban officials included a head physician, who is tentatively linked to Koptos for prosopographical reasons,³²⁶ and the lawyer Theopemptos, who worked at Qus (Diocletianopolis) in March 603.³²⁷

Various documents relating to Bishop Pesynthius mention financial administrators (*dioiketes*) in the region of Koptos or Qus,³²⁸ whereas an indirectly relevant text features the estate managers (*pronoetes*) Patche, Gideon and Paham.³²⁹ *Lashanes* are recorded for Pallas, Pmilis, Pshenhor, Trekatan and Zoile.³³⁰ There was a local tax office at Trekatan, considering

³²⁰ *P.Mon.Epiph.* 433, n. 13 (Temraut), 468, n. 4 (Trekatan); cf. Winlock and Crum 1926, 111, 117, 123; Timm 1984-1992, vol. 1, 306-07 (Pallas), vol. 5, 2140-54 (Koptos), 2173-80 (Qus), 2292-94 (Pshenhor), vol. 6, 2845-46 (Trekatan); vol. 6, 2724-26 (Tohe); Fournet 2000, 201 and 2002, 56-58 (Justinianopolis); Kuhn and Van der Vliet 2010, 83, n. 3 (Trekatan); Verreth 2013 (localities in the Coptite nome attested in the Graeco-Roman period); Eissa 2015, 4 (Pshenhor, "in the Koptite nome"). On the identification of the Monastery of Apa Samuel with Dayr al-Gizaz, see Doresse 1989, 153-63. Soldati (in Gariboldi 2009, 351) localizes Temraut in the Pathyrite district, the area of modern Gebelein, but the mention of Temraut together with the fields of Qus (*P.Pisentius* 5) points to a location in the Koptite district. See also Dataset 2.xlsx, spreadsheet "Localities".

³²¹ Worp 1994a, 465, 469 (Papa, Pampane); Van der Vliet 2013, 266 (Kratos); Van der Vliet 2014, 258 (Pmilis); Timm 1984-1992, vol. 3, 1406-07 (Ptene); vol. 4, 1822-24 (Pampane, Papa), 1984-85 (Pmilis); vol. 6, 2452 (Tabiou); cf. Winlock and Crum 1926, 114-15, 117. On the monasteries, see §3.1.2.

³²² Winlock and Crum 1926, 119, 121; Timm 1984-1992, vol. 3, 1205-06 (Itsa), vol. 4, 1914-15 (Phanemoun), vol. 5, 3208 (Sarf); vol. 6, 3000 (Zoile).

³²³ *P.Lond.* IV 1460, l. 172; cf. Timm 1984-1992, vol. 5, 2149.

³²⁴ *P.Mon.Epiph.* 152, n. 1, where Crum suggests: "Perhaps [λαϥνηγ]". If the magistrates were *lashanes*, the title must have been abbreviated, as is demonstrated in the reconstruction in §7.5.1, n. 89.

³²⁵ *P.Pisentius* 9, l. 7: **παρχων**.

³²⁶ *P.Pisentius* 24. The link with Koptos is discussed in §7.5.1. For the office of head physician (**ἀρχιατρός**), see Rouillard 1928, 64; Förster 2002, 105-06.

³²⁷ *P.Rein.* II 107: for the date, see §3.1.2, n. 65. Theopemptos' abbreviated title could stand for νομικ(ός), "lawyer", or νομικ(άριος), "legal advisor", but the second option is rare and less likely in a notarial setting; cf. Fournet 1997, 170. In Coptic the abbreviation **νομικ(oc)** is common as well; cf. Förster 2002, 545.

³²⁸ *P.Pisentius* 3, 21; *dioiketai* associated with Bishop Pisrael of Qus: *P.Pisentius* 8, *O.Mon.Epiph.* 150. On the *dioiketes*, see Steinwenter 1976, 19-25, 34-37; Förster 2002, 201-02.

³²⁹ O.Bâle Lg Ae BfJ 31d: ed. Heurtel 2013, 81-83. On the *pronoetes*, see Steinwenter 1967, 34-36; Förster 2002, 683; Schmelz 2002, 34; Azzarello 2012, 9-11.

³³⁰ *P.Pisentius* 1, 15; O.APM inv. 3871: ed. Van der Vliet 2014, 257-58; *P.Pisentius* 5, *P.Mon.Epiph.* 129, verso; *P.Pisentius* 37; *P.Pisentius* 50.

the fact that Hello, a monk or clergymen, required camels to bring grain for the tax to Trekatan.³³¹ Abraham of Trekatan is listed as a person of authority and a reliable witness to what happened at Pshenhor, where cattle was stolen at night several times (§7.3.3).³³² He was possibly involved in the tax administration as an estate manager. In another letter relating to the same problem he is mentioned as a witness (without his place name) together with Gideon, Papa, Georgios and Lord Christodote from Esna.³³³ Gideon could well be the estate manager and colleague of Patche, who was active in the area of Pshenhor (§7.3.4). If this identification is correct, all witnesses listed in the second letter possibly were estate managers or at least notables on a local level. It is unlikely that Abraham was a financial administrator, for the first letter refers to multiple such officials, and if they were recommended as witnesses, the sender would have provided more names. In addition, financial administrators were supposedly active on a district level.³³⁴

Most information concerning the army in this district predates the period under study, but it is briefly discussed, in order to show how prominent the military presence in the Koptite district used to be, and how little we know about it in later times. The *Notitia Dignitatum* records a legion (*legio I Valentiniana*) and Egyptian archers on horseback at Koptos, and heavily armed cavalry (*ala I Iouia catafractariorum*) at Pampane, which lay somewhere west of Koptos.³³⁵ The army was well represented at Koptos, since the city used to be a major portal to desert routes to the Red Sea, particularly the Myos Hormos-Koptos road and the Wadi Hammamat, between Koptos and the coastal city of Quseir (Leukos Limen). However, in the late sixth and seventh centuries the mines and the coastal city of Berenike were abandoned.³³⁶ Greek orders from this period mention “the troops of Koptos”³³⁷ and “the private soldiers” from Koptos,³³⁸ whereas two different *actuarii* appear in two Coptic letters, from the seventh and eighth century respectively.³³⁹ Pahlavi documents do not record military installations at Koptos or Qus, but this does not necessarily imply that there were none.³⁴⁰

³³¹ *O.Alexandria* 28373: ed. Kuhn and Van der Vliet 2010, 82-83.

³³² *P.Pisentius* 3, ll. 61-62.

³³³ *P.Pisentius* 4, ll. 71-72.

³³⁴ Azzarello 2012, 13-14.

³³⁵ *Notitia Dignitatum*, §31, ll. 26, 36, 52: ed. Seeck 1876, 64-65. For the location of Pampane, see Worp 1994a, 465-66, 469 (map).

³³⁶ Fournet 2000, 199-200; Sidebotham 2001, 131-32, 279-82.

³³⁷ *SB* 6 9613, l. 9 (Edfu, sixth/ seventh century), featuring Theodore, son of George. He reappears in similar Greek orders edited by Fournet and Gascou (1998, 186-91), which date to the sixth/ seventh century.

³³⁸ *Buccellarii* in *SB* 20 14559-64 (Aphrodito; sixth century), ed. *princeps* Gascou and Worp 1990, 223, 235-40.

³³⁹ Early seventh century: Paris, Louvre, R49 + Phil.16402.7, in Crum's *Notebook 84* (Dataset 4); eighth century: *P.CrumST* 352 (= *P.Schutzbrief* 71), a letter of protection issued by Bishop Menas of Koptos.

³⁴⁰ Altheim-Stiehl 1991a, 1940.

A Coptic contract from Jeme records a *stolarch* of Qus and Koptos, an official who was in charge of river traffic and levied taxes on ships sailing through the Koptite district.³⁴¹

§2.1.3 *District of Qena*

Dendera (Nikentore) on the west bank of the Nile was the antique district capital, but in late antiquity Qena (then called Maximianopolis or Kainepolis) on the east bank became more prominent, since it was another portal to desert routes to the Red Sea and to the quarries at Mons Claudianus and Mons Porphyrites.³⁴² For practical reasons, the military troops at Qena not only comprised Egyptian archers on horseback, but also a unit of camel riders (*ala III dromedariorum*), whereas the unit at Dendera consisted of Egyptian archers on horseback only.³⁴³ This probably changed in the mid-sixth century, when the quarries were abandoned, but the available Greek and Coptic documents hardly provide specific information about the later civil and military organisation. The presence of a Persian military installation at Qena indicates that this city remained important at least from a strategic point of view.³⁴⁴

Both Dendera and Qena were episcopal sees already in the early fourth century.³⁴⁵

§2.1.4 *District of Huw*

The district of Huw included the district capital Huw (Diospolis Parva) and Farshut (Tbercot) on the west bank, and Chenoboskion (Sheneset, Qasr wa'l-Sayyad), Pbow (Faw) and Tabennese, where the Pachomian monastery stood, on the east bank. Pgog and Tmonchonsis (Tmoushons) still need to be located.³⁴⁶

The *Notitia Dignitatum* records a Frankish cohort (*cohors VII Francorum*) and Egyptian archers on horseback at Huw, and cavalry (*ala Neptunia*) at Chenoboscion.³⁴⁷ Little is known about Huw and Chenoboscion in later times, but Huw was one of the locations where a Persian military unit was stationed in the 620s.³⁴⁸

³⁴¹ *O.Med.Habu Copt.* 82 and p. 17. For this official, see Till 1955, 151-52; Bacot and Heurtel 2000, 32-34.

³⁴² Timm 1984-1992, vol. 2, 543-48 (Dendera), vol. 4, 1624-27 and vol. 5, 2157-59 (Maximianopolis/ Qena); Fournet 2000, 198 and 2002, 54 (Maximianopolis/ Qena); Sidebotham 2001, 130-31. For a discussion of Coptic hagiographic texts and the Copto-Arabic *Synaxarium* on Dendera, see Moawad 2010.

³⁴³ *Notitia Dignitatum*, §31, ll. 25, 29, 48: ed. Seeck 1876, 64-65; cf. Worp 1994a, 666, 649 (map).

³⁴⁴ Altheim-Stiehl 1991a, 1940. *O.CrumST* 250 features a magistrate (*archon*) of Kainepolis, that is, Qena.

³⁴⁵ Munier 1943, 2; Timm 1984-1992, vol. 2, 544 and vol. 4, 1625.

³⁴⁶ Timm 1984-1992, vol. 2, 945-46 (Farshut), 947-57 (Pbow), vol. 3, 1120-25 (Huw, Pgog), vol. 5, 2113-18 (Chenoboscion), vol. 6, 2438-51 (Tabennese), 2717-20 (Tmoushons).

³⁴⁷ *Notitia Dignitatum*, §31, ll. 27, 47, 67: ed. Seeck 1876, 64-66; cf. Worp 1994a, 649 (map).

³⁴⁸ Altheim-Stiehl 1991a, 1940.

Huw was already an episcopal see in 325 and is stated to have belonged to the district of Ptolemais at the time.³⁴⁹ The Copto-Arabic *Synaxarium* lists Bishop Abraham of Huw as a colleague of the bishops Pesynthius of Koptos and Pesynthius of Hermonthis, but since the existence of the latter in the 620s is contested, the mention of Abraham of Huw is regarded with caution as well (§3.1.12).

§2.2 THE THEODOSIAN DIOCESES

Now that the administrative units of the Theban region have been discussed, we will take a look at the four ecclesiastical units recorded by Theban documents, to wit the Theodosian dioceses of Hermonthis, Ape, Koptos and Qus. The following section discusses the localities that fell under the jurisdiction of Abraham, Anthony, Pesynthius or Pisrael, and aims to establish the size of their dioceses. To start with, various aspects need to be considered.

The dioceses of Hermonthis and Koptos were smaller than the districts to which they belonged, since the districts traditionally comprised two dioceses each. In ca. 600 the Theodosian dioceses would have been even smaller, for they probably had to compete with an established Chalcedonian hierarchy and were still in development. The dioceses of both factions are best imagined as areas with fluid boundaries that could expand or shrink, depending on the patriarch's decision to appoint bishops to vacant sees or to reorganize dioceses, the success of bishops to establish and expand their authority, and the religious loyalties of the faithful. Bishops had to respect the territories of their colleagues and were not allowed to interfere in other dioceses than their own without the patriarch's permission. If a bishop acted without permission, not only he but also those consecrated by him ran the risk of being deposed.³⁵⁰

As for the internal organization of the dioceses, the Theodosian hierarchy is regarded as a network that connected bishops with specific churches, chapels and monasteries through the clergymen appointed to these places of worship. This section focuses on localities, and the reconstruction of the ecclesiastical apparatuses is postponed to §5.4 and §7.4.

§2.2.1 *The diocese of Hermonthis*

The Nile formed a natural boundary between the diocese of Hermonthis on the west bank, and that of Thebes/Ape on the east bank, and Bishop Abraham's jurisdiction was limited to the west bank. The center of his diocese was not the city of Hermonthis, but his residence at the

³⁴⁹ Munier 1943, 2; Timm 1984-1992, vol. 3, 1120-21.

³⁵⁰ *Apostolic Canon 35*: ed. Funk 1905, vol. 1, 574-75; cf. Schmelz 2002, 69.

Monastery of St Phoibammon, from where he fulfilled his episcopal duties, and from where his authority spread, first in Western Thebes and later at Hermonthis (§3.1.1; Pls 1-2).

The first recorded contact between the Monastery of St Phoibammon and the town of Jeme is a Coptic deed predating 600, in which the *lashane* Papnoute and the clergymen of Jeme acknowledge the right of the monks to choose their superior (§3.1.1). Bishop Abraham is not explicitly mentioned, but he benefitted from the deed, for he became the first abbot of the monastery. The clergymen of Jeme listed in the deed were priests and deacons associated with the Church of the Apostles, the Church of St Victor and the Church of the Virgin Mary, and the archpriest Jeremiah, who must have officiated in the principal church of the town, considering his title.³⁵¹ In the seventh century, the principal church was the Parochial Church of Jeme.³⁵² Other churches, chapels or monasteries in the area of Jeme in this period were dedicated to the saints Cyriacus,³⁵³ Daniel,³⁵⁴ Michael,³⁵⁵ Theodore,³⁵⁶ Ananias, George, Leontius, Mark the Evangelist (at Qurnat Murraï), Menas and Phaustus (cf. §5.4.5).

U. Hölscher, who excavated Medinet Habu, discovered four churches in and around the mortuary temple of Ramesses III at Medinet Habu, where Jeme once was. The five-aisled basilica in the second courtyard of the mortuary temple was presumably built in the fifth century, and the three-aisled basilica outside the main gate of the temple complex (the so-called Small Church) was built among the remains of a Roman bath house at the end of the sixth century.³⁵⁷ These two churches certainly existed during Abraham's episcopate. No dating has been proposed for the second church within the temple complex, at the Small Temple near the eastern gate (the church with murals depicting the life of St Menas), and a funerary chapel at the mortuary temple of Ay and Horemheb north of the northern gate.³⁵⁸

The church in the second courtyard is likely to have been the principal church of the town, considering its size and central location. Hölscher and Terry G. Wilfong identified it as

³⁵¹ *P.KRU* 105, ll. 27-38. The Church of the Virgin reappears in *P.KRU* 75, l. 142. A Church of the Twelve Apostles is mentioned in *O.Saint-Marc* 6 and perhaps in 27, 40, 128. The clergymen are discussed in §5.4.1.

³⁵² *P.Saint-Marc* 18, ll. 4-5: ΤΑΘΟΛΙΚΗ ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑ ΜΧΗΜΕ (letter ascribed to the priest Mark; ca. 600-630); *P.KRU* 75, ll. 140-41: John, archpriest of the Parochial Church of Jeme (after 630); *O.Crum* 292; cf. Winlock and Crum 1926, 116; Timm 1984-1992, vol. 3, 1019-20. On the parochial churches, where masses were held regularly, see Wipszycka 1994, 202-03 and 2015, 108-09, 115, 307, 335-36; Schmelz 2002, 35.

³⁵³ *O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* II 16, following the correction proposed by Delattre 2002, 332; cf. Winlock and Crum 1926, 116; Timm 1984-1992, vol. 3, 1021-22.

³⁵⁴ *O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* II 16, following the correction proposed by Delattre 2002, 332. Not attested elsewhere.

³⁵⁵ *Brit.Mus.Copt.* II 7 (§5.4.2).

³⁵⁶ *O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* II 16; cf. Winlock and Crum 1926, 117.

³⁵⁷ Hölscher 1954, 51-56, fig. 57-59, pls 45-46; Wilfong 2002, 12-13, Fig. 2, 1 and 9; Grossmann 2002, 454-57, fig. 72-73; cf. Timm 1984-1992, vol. 3, 1025-26; Wipszycka 2015, 338-39, fig. 4.

³⁵⁸ Hölscher 1954, 56-57, fig. 60, pl. 2; Wilfong 2002, 12-13, Fig. 2, nos 7 and 5 respectively; cf. Timm 1984-1992, vol. 3, 1026, where the Menas murals are erroneously located in the church on the site of the Roman bath house (the Small Church) instead of in the church in the Ptolemaic temple.

the Holy Church of Jeme, but the Parochial Church is another possibility.³⁵⁹ Since both churches appear in various Coptic documents from the period 720-760, they must have been two distinct buildings, for if the Parochial Church was renamed “Holy Church”, the new name would have replaced the old one.³⁶⁰ The association of an archpriest with the Parochial Church before 600 is not a reliable indication for later times, for in the first half of the eighth century, archpriests were active at no less than three churches: the Parochial Church, the Holy Church of Jeme and the Church of St Isidore at Dayr al-Medina.³⁶¹ Within a few decades, each of these churches apparently became prominent enough to have multiple priests and an archpriest to head them. To come to the point, it is plausible, but impossible to confirm, that the church in the second courtyard was the Parochial Church, where the archpriest Jeremiah worked before 600.

The Holy Church was located at “the *castrum* of Jeme”, within or near the enclosure wall of the temple complex. If Timm is correct in identifying the Holy Church with the Church of the Holy (Virgin) Mary, which already existed before 600, the latter may have been one of the smaller churches at Medinet Habu, perhaps even the Small Church, which was built at the end of the sixth century.³⁶² According to an eighth-century Coptic deed, the Church of St Cyriacus, which existed in Abraham’s time, was located at the *castrum* as well.³⁶³

The Church of Apa Menas, which appears in relation to Bishop Abraham and was also called “Holy *Topos* of Apa Mena”, should not be identified with the church with the Menas murals, since the former was located “in the mountain of Jeme”. In addition, the murals in the latter were financed by a woman called Elizabeth, who presumably lived in the early eighth century.³⁶⁴ It is unknown whether the church was already in use for a long time.

Bishop Abraham’s contact with the city of Hermonthis, the nominal see of his diocese, is first attested by his Greek testament (610s). His witnesses included three urban magistrates and clergymen associated with the Holy Church of Hermonthis, namely the archpriest Dioscorus, the priest Joseph and a deacon called Paul.³⁶⁵ Dioscorus features in other episcopal documents as well (§5.3.9), whereas the Holy Church reappears in Greek orders relating to

³⁵⁹ Wilfong 2002, 12, Fig. 2, no. 1; Timm 1984-1992, vol. 3, 1020, where the second option is suggested.

³⁶⁰ For relevant documents, see Timm 1984-1992, vol. 3, 1019-21; cf. Winlock and Crum 1926, 116.

³⁶¹ *P.KRU* 9, ll. 107-09: Stephen, archpriest of the Holy Church of the Saint Apa Isidore (715 or 730; cf. Heurtel 2004, 83 and inscription no. 29 = *SBKopt.* I 468); *P.KRU* 66, l. 72 + 76, l. 81: Zacharias, archpriest of the Holy Church of the *castrum* of Jeme (before 722; cf. Cromwell 2013, 220); *P.KRU* 60, ll. 21-22: Moses, archpriest of the Parochial Church (ca. 730-750; cf. Till 1962, 26).

³⁶² *P.KRU* 3, l. 72: the holy Church of the *castrum* of Jeme; cf. Timm 1984-1992, vol. 3, 1020-21.

³⁶³ *P.KRU* 37, l. 15-16: the Church of St Cyriacus “at this very *castrum*”; cf. Timm 1984-1992, vol. 3, 1021-22.

³⁶⁴ *O.Crum* 45 (Dataset 3); *P.KRU* 75, l. 137 (after 630); cf. Timm 1984-1992, vol. 3, 1022. See also Wilfong 2002, 12, 47-68 on Elizabeth from Jeme, among others, and 95 - 99 on the murals financed by Elizabeth.

³⁶⁵ *P.London* I 77, ll. 80-87.

the archive of Theopemptos and Zacharias, which probably came from Hermonthis.³⁶⁶ Other churches that were explicitly linked to the city of Hermonthis were the Holy *Topos* of the Forty Martyrs and St Theodorus, where the woodwork was done in October 627,³⁶⁷ a Holy *Topos* of the Twelve Apostles, and a *Topos* of St Michael.³⁶⁸

Archaeological remains of churches at Hermonthis are hardly preserved. A large, five-aisled basilica, one of the largest Christian buildings in Egypt (46 x 36.5 m), was still visible in the time of the Napoleonic expedition, but no longer exists. On the basis of older ground plans Grossmann suggested that it could have been built in the first half of the fifth century.³⁶⁹ In view of its size, it must have been the principal church of Hermonthis, probably even the Holy Church, in which case the large basilica was the Theodosian cathedral in the 610s.

Churches at Patoubasten, Piohe, Pkoh, The, Thone and Tmenke certainly fell under Bishop Abraham's jurisdiction, as did various monastic communities in Western Thebes and in the desert west of Hermonthis, such as the *Laura* of St Phoibammon, Dayr al-Saqiah, Dayr al-Miseikra, Dayr al-Nasara and Dayr al-Matmar.³⁷⁰ Chantal Heurtel and Anne Boud'hors proposed to locate the dwelling of Apa Terane at Dayr al-Nasara (§3.2.6), and a Monastery of Pesynthius at Dayr al-Miseikra. Both localities appear in letters addressed to the priest Moses, a member of the Theodosian network in ca. 615-620 (§3.2.2).³⁷¹

§2.2.2 *The diocese of Ape*

The diocese of Ape was located on the east bank of the Nile and comprised the city of Ape (Thebes/Luxor), Karnak, Petemout and Timamen (§2.1.1). The first recorded Theodosian bishop was Anthony (§3.1.9). No churches are known for the seventh century, but eighth-century Coptic documents record a Holy *Topos* of St Stephen in the city of Ape, a Monastery of St Sergus at the *castrum* of Ape and a Monastery of Paphnuthius in the desert of Ape.³⁷²

There were at least five churches at Luxor Temple: east of the alley of sphinxes and in front of the monumental entrance gate or pylon (outside the temple), and below the mosque of Abu al-Haggag, south of the southwest corner of the court built by Ramesses II, and

³⁶⁶ *O.Bodl.* II 2136, l. 3; *O.Bodl.* II 2487, l. 2; cf. Hickey 2014, 47, n. 11.

³⁶⁷ *P.Pisentius* 49 + *P.CrumST* 46, l. 10 (Hathor 4, first indiction); transcr. Crum, *Notebook* 84, 53. 627 is a more likely date than 612 or 642, considering the association of this contract with Pesynthius' episcopal documents.

³⁶⁸ Timm 1984-1992, vol. 1, 170-71. The Church of the Holy Virgin (listed on p. 168, on the basis of *P.KRU* 105 and 75) was in fact the one at Jeme and should not be equated with the Holy Church of Hermonthis.

³⁶⁹ *Description de l'Égypte*, vol. I, re-edited by Sidhom 1988, 15-16, 409-39, Pl. 97; Timm 1984-1992, vol. 1, 173-74; Grossmann 2002, 458-59, fig. 74; Grossmann 2007, 14-17; Wipszycka 2015, 338, fig. 3.

³⁷⁰ For the villages, see §5.4.3 and 5.4.5; for the *Laura* of St Phoibammon §3.1.1. For the monasteries, see Mond and Myers 1937, pls I-2 (maps); Boutros and Décobert 2000, 86-87; Grossmann 2007, 6-14, with a map.

³⁷¹ *O.Frangé*, p. 26. The Monastery of Pesynthius was named after an early bishop of Hermonthis; cf. §3.2.1.

³⁷² Timm 1984-1992, 134.

southwest to the previous church (inside the temple).³⁷³ The one near the court of Ramesses II appears to be the oldest and is known as the find spot of the “silver treasure of Luxor”, a group of liturgical objects discovered between the baptistery of the church and the wall south of the Ramesses II’s court. Since one of the silver plates bears a Greek inscription mentioning a bishop called Abraham, the find is often linked to Abraham of Hermonthis and the church is placed in the early seventh century.³⁷⁴ However, Ape/Luxor did not belong to the diocese of Hermonthis, but had its own bishop, and the other persons mentioned on this plate, the benefactress Eulogia, the priest Praepositus and Gregory, do not appear in the network of Abraham of Hermonthis. The same holds for a second plate, offered to Bishop Besammon by (the late) Theonikas through the mediation of the same priest Praepositus and the care of Isidore, son of Apa Mikros.³⁷⁵ It cannot be established when Abraham and Besammon were in office as bishops of Thebes, nor is a dating of the church proposed on the basis of its architecture. Nevertheless, it is likely that the plates were produced in the sixth century, and that the church to which they were donated was an episcopal church.³⁷⁶

Little can be said about the other churches. The one below the mosque has not been examined. The church in front of the entrance gate was built at the end of the sixth century, judging from the plasterwork.³⁷⁷ Peter Grossmann placed the construction of the other two churches in the 620s.³⁷⁸ He argued that the one east of the sphinx alley was burnt, supposedly during the Persian conquest of Egypt, and that the southernmost church was built during the Persian period, since the Byzantine troops, which previously occupied the *castrum*, did not need multiple churches. Another factor that could have played a role is the likely presence of separate churches for Chalcedonians and Theodosians at the *castrum* (§2.3.2).

There were at least three churches at Karnak: one in the temple of Khonsu, the second one in the small temple of Amenhotep II between the ninth and eighth pylon, and the largest one in the festival temple of Thutmose III (*Akh-Menou*). The latter certainly belonged to a Theodosian community, for Severus of Antioch was depicted on one of the columns.³⁷⁹ It was

³⁷³ Grossmann 2002, 488-454, figs 68-72. The church north of the entrance gate and those southwest of the court are visible on the plan of the *castrum* in Grossmann 1991a, 467.

³⁷⁴ Grossmann 2002, 452-53, fig. 68. On the Luxor treasure, see Bénazeth 2001, 375-90; cf. Krause 1971, 109-111 and idem 1994; Wipszycka 2015, 374-75; Fluck 2010, 215. For the plate, probably an incense holder (*SB* 3 6009), see Bénazeth 2001, 381-84; Cuvigny 2004, 195-98 (edition and elaborate commentary).

³⁷⁵ *SB* 3 6010; cf. Bénazeth 2001, 377-78; Cuvigny 2004, 198.

³⁷⁶ Cf. Bénazeth 2001, 384, for the datings proposed by J. Strzygowski (fifth/sixth century), J. Maspero (sixth century) and H. Messiha (fourth century, but reused in the sixth century).

³⁷⁷ Grossmann 2002, 448-50, fig. 70.

³⁷⁸ Grossmann 2002, 452, 454, figs 69, 71.

³⁷⁹ Munier and Pillet 1929, 61-74. For the image of Severus of Antioch, see fig. 1 and pp. 72. Coquin (1972, 177-78) reports two Greek inscriptions at the temple of Khonsu and an oratory at the temple of Opet.

a monastic community that linked its tradition to Shenoute and Besa, the archimandrites of the so-called White Monastery at Sohag, and was headed by local archimandrites, judging from a Greek inscription inside the sanctuary, in which they are listed.³⁸⁰ One of them, or a later archimandrite, appears in letters addressed to members of the Theodosian network (§3.2.7).

At Petemout a church with a baptismal font was built on the causeway to the ancient temple of Montu, supposedly in the early seventh century, and another one in the temple.³⁸¹

§2.2.3 *The diocese of Koptos and “the eparchy of Qus”*

The boundary between the dioceses of Koptos and Qus is not clear-cut, since the episcopal sees were both located on the east bank. The Wadi Hammamat, which started south of Koptos and ran eastward, could have formed a possible natural boundary on the east bank.

Pesynthius resided in a monastery on the west bank between Naqada and Qamula (§3.1.2), and the entire west bank from Pallas in the north to Qamula in the south appears to have been his area of jurisdiction. It also comprised Tohe, the Monastery of the Cross, the Monastery of Apa Samuel of Phel and probably Kratos, Papa, Pampane and Pmilis.³⁸² Pesynthius’ authority on the east bank extended to the city of Koptos, Pshenhor, the nearby Monastery of St Macarius, Trekatan and “the eparchy of Qus”, where a scandal happened, about which Pesynthius wanted to be informed (§7.4.3).³⁸³ Since the term “eparchy” appears in an ecclesiastical context, it probably refers to the diocese of Qus as a vacant see, and Bishop Pesynthius could have acted as its administrator, until Pisrael became bishop of Qus in ca. 620 (§3.1.8).³⁸⁴ If this was indeed the case, Pesynthius was in the same position as the fourteenth-century bishops Athanasius of Qus and Mark of Qift, who were administrators of the sees of Hermonthis and Dendera respectively. In this capacity, Athanasius and Mark were the “deputies” (*diadochos*, *na’ib*) of the patriarch of Alexandria.³⁸⁵ According to the Upper Egyptian version of the Copto-Arabic *Synaxarium*, patriarchal vicars in Pesynthius’ days were the Constantine of Asyut and Shenoute of Antinoopolis (§3.1.3, 3.1.7), but Pesynthius does

³⁸⁰ Ed. Coquin 1972, 173-76; cf. Munier and Pillet 1929, 86-87.

³⁸¹ Grossmann 2002, 446-47, Fig. 66-67.

³⁸² See §2.1.2. Boutros and Décobert (2000, 90, n. 51) identify Dayr Ishaq with the monastery near Tohe that is mentioned in *P.Pisentius* 32.2, and argue that it was founded in the early seventh century, in Pesynthius’ days.

³⁸³ *P.Pisentius* 19. For Trekatan see §7.5.1, and for the other localities, see §7.4.2-3.

³⁸⁴ The term “eparchy” usually refers to the province of an empire, but it could also indicate the sphere of jurisdiction of a metropolitan or that of the apostles; see Lampe 1961, 511A, under 1.

³⁸⁵ The commendatory letter for Bishop Timothy of Pachoras, sections C-D: ed. Plumley 1975, 15 and 21 (Coptic version, where Mark is incorrectly linked to the see of Hermonthis in C), 32-33 and 36 (Arabic version); cf. Timm 1984-1992, vol. 5, 2147-48, 2176. On Athanasius of Qus, see Youssef 2010.

not appear in this role in the hagiographic tradition. Nevertheless, his involvement in the eparchy of Qus suggests that the patriarch authorized him to do so.

Few late antique churches in the diocese of Koptos are known by name. A fragmentary papyrus lists a Church of St Sansno at Pallas and a Church of St Onnophrius, where Bishop Pesynthius probably delivered his homily on St Onnophrius (§8.3.2).³⁸⁶ The Copto-Arabic *Synaxarium* is the first to mention a church at Koptos, which was dedicated to the hermit saint Peter the Elder and housed the remains of several hermit saints from the Koptite west bank.³⁸⁷

The ruins of a large basilica with a baptistery were found west of the temples of Min and Isis at Koptos. According to Peter Grossmann, the baptistery was constructed in the sixth century, and the church in the fifth century at the earliest.³⁸⁸ It cannot be established whether this building was in use by Theodosian or Chalcedonian clergymen.

§2.2.4 *The diocese of Qus*

From ca. 620 onward, Bishop Pisrael's diocese included at least the city of Qus and the Chapel of St John at Phello (§7.4.3). It would have been logical if all the localities south of Qus were assigned to Pisrael's area of jurisdiction, including Pshenhor and the Monastery of St Macarius, which apparently fell under Bishop Pesynthius' jurisdiction. Unfortunately, Pisrael's dossier is too small for establishing the actual size of his diocese.

So far, the remains of two churches at Qus have been recorded. One stood near the temple of Haroeris and Heket and was probably built in the early middle ages. For the other church, near the tomb of Shaykh Ali Daqiq al-Abd, no date has been proposed.³⁸⁹

§2.3 THE LIKELY DIVISION BETWEEN THEODOSIANS AND CHALCEDONIANS

If it is true that Peter IV consecrated bishops for practically every Egyptian diocese, at least in number, there possibly were Theodosian prelates for the Theban dioceses already during his patriarchate (576-578). Abraham of Hermonthis and Pesynthius of Koptos were ordained in ca. 590 and 599 by Patriarch Damian, whereas Anthony of Ape and Pisrael of Qus first appear in ca. 620 (§3.1.8-9). This section presents the possible predecessors of Abraham, Pesynthius, Anthony and Pisrael, and discusses the likely distribution of Theodosians and Chalcedonians in the Hermonthite district in the late sixth/early seventh centuries. Although Theban

³⁸⁶ *P. CrumST* 156. It is linked to the homily in *Crum* 1915-1917, 40-41; cf. Boutros and Décobert 2000, 90.

³⁸⁷ Basset 1909, 300 (Hub of Tukh), 302 (Paul of Danfiq), 498 (Samuel of Gabal Banhadab); cf. Timm 1982-1992, vol. 5, 2148. To my knowledge, there are no earlier, Coptic sources on these hermits.

³⁸⁸ Reinach 1910 [1988], 25-27, the map opposite 58, pl. 5-6; Weill 1911, 131-34; Grossmann 1991e, with a ground plan (see also the corrective note in Grossmann 2002, 146, n. 148).

³⁸⁹ Grossmann 2002, 446, Fig. 65 (the church near the temple) and n. 186 (the church near the tomb).

documents do not explicitly record Chalcedonians, the presence of multiple churches with baptisteries and the likely isolation of the hermit Cyriacus from the Theodosian network seem to indicate the presence of distinct religious communities.

§2.3.1 Possible predecessors of the Theodosian bishops

It is likely that Abraham of Hermonthis is listed as the fourteenth bishop in the Greek Moir Bryce diptych (*SB* III 6087, ca. 665) in the British Museum, and that Andrew, the thirteenth bishop was his predecessor.³⁹⁰ The diptych lists the patriarchs of Alexandria acknowledged by the Theodosian church, from St Mark to Agathon (665-681), and the bishops of a particular diocese. Since the diptych was purchased at Luxor, it is assumed to originate from the Theban region. It cannot relate to the dioceses of Qus or Ape, for neither Pisrael, nor Anthony appear among the deceased. A connection with Pesynthius of Koptos is also dismissed, for he died in 632, whereas the Bishop Pesynthius, in whose days the diptych was corrected, was in office in the time of Patriarch Agathon. Consequently, the bishops in the diptych have been identified as incumbents of the see of Hermonthis.

Abraham's appearance in a continuous list of names may seem contradictory to my statement that he was organizing a relatively new Theodosian diocese (General introduction). However, just as the diptych and the *History of the Patriarchs of Alexandria* present Peter IV as the direct successor of Theodosius I and ignore Theodore,³⁹¹ Abraham – or whoever was the first Theodosian bishop of Hermonthis – was directly linked to an earlier tradition.

The *Encomium* states that the clergymen of Koptos brought Pesynthius to Patriarch Damian,³⁹² which implies that there were Theodosian clergymen in the diocese already. The direct predecessor of Pesynthius could have been Bishop Timothy of Koptos, who is known from a notice on Samuel of Gabal Banhadab in the Copto-Arabic *Synaxarium*. According to this late liturgical source, Timothy ordained Samuel priest and appointed him as abbot of a monastic community, which became known as the Monastery of Apa Samuel of Phel and is identified with Dayr al-Gizaz (§3.1.2).³⁹³ The Arabic *Life of Andrew* indicates that Samuel headed the monastery, when Andrew became a monk there,³⁹⁴ and the Arabic version of the *Encomium* adds that Andrew was in contact with Bishop Pesynthius, when the latter stayed in

³⁹⁰ *SB* III 6087, l. 55-56: ed. Crum 1908, 262, 265; Winlock and Crum 1926, 135.

³⁹¹ *SB* III 6087, l. 30-31; *History of the Patriarchs*: Evetts 1907, 469.

³⁹² *Q*, fols 21-22 = *S*, Budge 1913, fol. 28b.

³⁹³ Basset 1909, 497 (notice for or 21 Kihak); cf. Timm 1984-1992, vol. 5, 2141.

³⁹⁴ Bibliothèque nationale, arabe 4882, fols 1-14v (unpublished): summarized in Di Bitonto Kasser 1989, 168-70.

Western Thebes in the Persian period.³⁹⁵ If the chronological connections based on the Arabic sources are historically correct, Timothy was bishop not long before Pesynthius and he must have been ordained between 576 (by Peter IV) and 599 (before Damian ordained Pesynthius).

The bishops Ezekiel and Serenianus, who were members of the Theodosian network in ca. 615-620, are likely to have been the predecessors of Anthony of Ape and Pisrael of Qus respectively (§3.1.4-5). There was no Theodosian bishop of Ape, when Abraham went to Timamen and faced the hostility of its inhabitants.³⁹⁶ He would not have tried to establish his authority there, if there was already a Theodosian colleague at Ape, since his interference would have been an infringement upon the latter's jurisdiction and could have provoked a conflict with that bishop and sanctions imposed by the patriarch. Instead, it was Abraham who threatened with sanctions, if his correspondent – apparently a local official – did not send the villagers to him, which implies that Abraham did have some authority over Timamen. Just as Pesynthius seems to have been administrator of “the eparchy of Qus” temporarily, Abraham was perhaps authorized to act as the administrator of the vacant see of Ape by the patriarch. Unfortunately, Abraham's letter does not explicitly state why he came to Timamen, but he probably did so, before Ezekiel (or Serenianus) became bishop of Ape in ca. 615.

§2.3.2 *Multiple churches, different religious factions*

The Theodosian and Chalcedonian dioceses were administratively distinct units, but their networks could have overlapped topographically, if they had separate cultic buildings in the same localities. As we observed above, there were multiple churches at Jeme/Medinet Habu, Ape/Luxor and Karnak, and the one in the festival temple of Thutmoses III at Karnak was certainly in Theodosian hands, judging from an image of Severus of Antioch (§2.2.1-2).

At Luxor, there were two church buildings with baptismal fonts at about one hundred meters distance from each other, namely the one southwest of the court of Ramesses II, where the silverware was found, and the church outside the entrance gate (§2.2.2). The first one is the oldest of the two, and the second one was built at the end of the sixth century, the very period when the Theodosian hierarchy started to organize itself under Patriarch Damian.³⁹⁷ The building of a second church with a baptismal font indicates that its intended users did not wish to be baptized in the earlier church, since they belonged to a different religious faction,

³⁹⁵ A. O'Leary 1930, fol. 201a.

³⁹⁶ O.Berlin, P.12491: ed. Krause 1956, vol. 2, 271-76 (= Dataset 3, no. 76).

³⁹⁷ Grossmann 2002, 448, 452.

and apparently doubted the validity of baptisms by the clergymen of the earlier church.³⁹⁸ It is plausible that Theodosians built the church just outside the *castrum*, and that the one within the *castrum* – the church where the silverware was found – was in Chalcedonian hands.

At Medinet Habu the situation is less clear than at Luxor, since no mention is made of baptisteries, but there was a parallel: a large fifth-century church stood within the temple, also called the “*castrum* of Jeme”, and a later church was built outside the main gate of the temple at the end of the sixth century (§2.2.1).³⁹⁹ It cannot be verified whether the location in or outside the *castrum* coincided with a religious division, but since many churches at Jeme were associated with Abraham (§5.4.5), it appears that Jeme was mainly Theodosian in his days.

§2.3.3 *The hermit Cyriacus of TT 65-66*

Epiphanius, the leader of the *Topos* of Epiphanius, and the priest Moses of the hermitage at TT 29 lived on the hill of Shaykh Abd al-Qurna and were both active in the well-documented Theodosian network of the Theban region (§3.2.1-2). It is remarkable that Cyriacus, the hermit at TT 65-66, dwelled between Epiphanius and Moses in ca. 620, but does not have a demonstrable link with any member of the Theodosian network. Instead, he corresponded with the *lashane* Strategius of Ne, a contemporary of Pesynthius, who did not have a direct link with the Theodosian network either (§2.1.1, 7.5.2).⁴⁰⁰ Cyriacus’ apparent isolation from his neighbors suggests that he could have been Chalcedonian, or at least non-Theodosian. A Greek-Coptic glossary of found at TT 65 lists catechetical terms, including “unconfused” and “unchanging”,⁴⁰¹ which recall the Chalcedonian creed that proclaims the two natures of Christ, “unconfusedly and unchangeably”.⁴⁰² It must be added that a different Greek word for “unchanging” is used in the creed, and that the other term is not exclusively Chalcedonian.⁴⁰³ Be that as it may, if there were Chalcedonian hermits living on that hill, this would explain why a Coptic version of Damian’s synodical letter to Jacob Baradaeus was copied on a wall in Epiphanius’ dwelling: it was a clear theological statement, and the monks could cite the patriarch during theological discussions, if necessary (General introduction, §3.2.3).

³⁹⁸ Wipszycka 2015, 123: “The rapidity of the growth of a Monophysite hierarchy parallel to the Chalcedonian one proves that Monophysites were coming to believe that the rites of the Chalcedonian Church were not valid. People persuaded themselves that they were living without baptism and the Eucharist, and therefore going towards inevitable eternal damnation”.

³⁹⁹ Grossmann 2002, 455, 457. According to Hölscher (1954, 54), the “baptismal font” in the central nave of the church in the second courtyard was in fact a basin used on the day of Epiphany for the renewal of baptism.

⁴⁰⁰ *O.Mon.Epiph.* 151.

⁴⁰¹ O.TT 65.1, ll. 3, 5: **ΤΟ ΑΣΥΓΧΗ[ΤΟ]Ν** (ἀσύγχυτον) = **ΠΑΤΤΩΣ, Ο ΑΝΑΛΛΟΙΩΤΟΣ** (ἀναλλοίωτος) = **ΠΑΤΩΙΒ**: ed. Hasznos 2013, 37-41; cf. Lampe 1961, 249b (C.2), 110b (1); not in Förster 2002.

⁴⁰² Denzinger, Hünemann and Hoping 2010, 131 (§302): ἐν δύο φύσεσιν ἀσυγχύτως, ἀτρέπτως.

⁴⁰³ Lampe 1961, 250a (C.1, C. 4).

CONCLUSION

Unlike what was stated by previous scholarship, the network of bishoprics did not coincide with the administrative divisions of the Theban region, for there were seven sees, divided over four districts. Instead, there was a correlation between bishoprics and military units: in the early fourth century, the sees of Hermonthis, Thebes, Koptos, Dendera, Qena and Huw were created in localities that were often associated with legions (Hermonthis, Thebes, Koptos), Vandal cavalry (Thebes), a Frankish cohort (Huw), Egyptian archers on horseback (Koptos, Dendera, Qena, Huw), or camel riders (Qena). In the early seventh century, there were still Byzantine military officials or Persian military installations at Hermonthis, Thebes/Ape, Koptos, Qena and Huw. The diocese of Qus, which is first attested in 553, was probably created relatively late and roughly corresponded with the military unit at Pampane.

Greek and Coptic documents record four Theodosian dioceses, namely those of Hermonthis and Thebes/Ape in the Hermonthite district, and Koptos and Qus in the Koptite district. The topographical survey of these districts is an important preparation for the analysis of the topographical sub-networks of the Theodosian bishops (§4.5.2-4). Likewise, the discussion of state authorities attested for the Theban region helps to place civil and military officials in the networks of Abraham and Pesynthius in a spatial setting (§5.5, 7.5), and to analyze the social ties between the bishops and these social groups (§5.6.3-4, 7.6.3-4).

The Nile formed a natural boundary between the diocese of Hermonthis, which lay on the west bank, and the diocese of Thebes/Ape, located in the area of modern Luxor on the east bank. This division suggests that not Abraham of Hermonthis, but a bishop of Thebes/Ape is mentioned in an inscription on a silver plate that was found with other liturgical silverware near a church at the Luxor temple. This is also likely, since none of the people mentioned on this plate (and on a second one) appear in the documents of the bishop of Hermonthis.

Abraham resided at the Monastery of St Phoibammon, instead of in the city of Hermonthis, and under normal circumstances, his area of jurisdiction would have been limited to the west bank. Nevertheless, he and some of clergymen went to Timamen, a village on the east bank, and was violently opposed by the villagers, as if he had come to establish his authority over them. His warning that he would impose sanctions, if a local official did not act, suggests that he had some authority over the village and that there was no Theodosian bishop of Thebes/Ape at the time. Perhaps, Abraham temporarily acted as the administrator of the vacant see, until the ordination of Ezekiel (?) in ca. 615.

Likewise, Pesynthius lived in a monastery on the west bank, between modern Naqada and Qamula, and appears to have been bishop and administrator of a vacant see, namely “the

eparchy of Qus”, before Pisrael of Qus made his first appearance in ca. 620. Even after Pisrael’s ordination, the dioceses of Koptos and Qus are hard to distinguish on a map, since both cities were located on the east bank and there is no clear natural boundary between them. On the east bank the desert route that started a little south of Koptos and ran eastward through the Wadi Hammamat to the coastal city of Quseir may have served as a natural boundary, but it seems as if the entire west bank was under Pesynthius’ authority.

The church in the festival temple of Thutmoses III at Karnak certainly belonged to a Theodosian community, as the image of Severus of Antioch on a column indicates. Although the Theban documents do not explicitly mention Chalcedonians, it is likely that the two religious factions coexisted at Jeme/Medinet Habu, Ape/Luxor and Karnak, judging from the presence of multiple churches. At Luxor there were even two churches with baptismal fonts at about one hundred meters distance from each other: one within the temple walls and a later building just outside the gate. Since the later church was supposedly built at the end of the sixth century, the period when the Theodosians started to organize themselves, it is plausible that this church belonged to Theodosians, and that the earlier church, where the silverware was found, was in Chalcedonian hands. A final interesting point is the impression that the hermit Cyriacus of TT 65-66, a contemporary of Epiphanius and Moses, was isolated from the Theodosian network and may have been Chalcedonian, or at least non-Theodosian.

Chapter 3: The Theodosian network in the Theban region

INTRODUCTION

As we observed in the introduction, Abraham and Pesynthius were ordained by the Theodosian Patriarch Damian, and are therefore called Theodosian bishops. Together with other bishops, priests, abbots and hermits they formed a close-knit Theodosian network, one of the main centers of which was the *Topos* of Epiphanius, where a Coptic translation of Damian's synodical letter to Jacob Baradaeus was copied on a wall.

This chapter introduces the main social actors in the Theodosian network, and places them in a common chronological framework that covers about forty years (ca. 590-632). While doing so, it is important to establish which documents actually or probably relate to the persons involved, and which textual sources are linked to them without good reason.

In the first of three sections eleven bishops in and beyond the Theban region are introduced in an approximately chronological order, starting with Abraham of Hermonthis and Pesynthius of Koptos, the main characters of this book. Constantine of Asyut, Ezekiel, Serenianus and probably two bishops called John were in office in ca. 615-620; Shenoute of Antinoopolis, Pisrael of Qus and Anthony of Ape first appear in ca. 620; and Horame of Edfu is attested in February 623. Seven Theban bishops – Ananias, Andrew, Moses and Pesynthius of Hermonthis, Abraham of Huw, Moses of Koptos and Peter – cannot be convincingly linked to the Theodosian network and are therefore excluded from the network analysis.

The second section presents the other seventeen members of the network, arranged by the monastic community to which they belonged (Pls 1-2):

1. The hermits Isaac I, John, Enoch, Epiphanius and Psan at the *Topos* of Epiphanius, on the north side of the hill of Shaykh Abd al-Gurna in Western Thebes.
2. The hermits Pesente, Zael, the priest Moses and Psate of the hermitage at TT 29, in the southern part of the same hill.
3. The priest Mark of the *Topos* of St Mark the Evangelist, a shrine or a small monastic establishment on the hill of Qurnet Muraï, south of Shaykh Abd al-Gurna.
4. The priest and abbot Victor and the monk David at the Monastery of St Phoibammon at Dayr al-Bahri, northwest of Shaykh Abd al-Gurna.
5. The hermits Ezekiel and Djor of the hermitage at TT 1152, west of Shaykh Abd al-Gurna.
6. The hermit Terane at the Place of Apa Terane, which is probably to be identified with Dayr al-Nasara, in the desert northwest of Hermonthis (modern Armant).

7. “The archimandrite”, who probably headed a large monastic community at Karnak, which lay in the Hermonthite district, but belonged to the diocese of Ape.
8. Cyriacus, the priest and abbot of the Monastery of Apa Macarius, son of Patoure, near Pshenhor (modern Shanhur), which lay in the Koptite district.

The final section aims to place the members of the Theodosian network in a common chronological framework by combining the absolute and approximate dates proposed for the episcopal and monastic documents and the social events discussed in this chapter.

§3.1 THE THEODOSIAN BISHOPS

§3.1.1 *Abraham of Hermonthis*

Little is known about Abraham’s background, apart from the fact that his parents were called Sabinus and Rebecca, and that he was bishop of Hermonthis, anchorite of the mountain of Jeme and abbot of the Monastery of St Phoibammon, when he drew up his testament.⁴⁰⁴ He dictated his testament in Coptic, but ordered that it was written in Greek, thinking that it was prescribed by imperial laws, and the notary translated the contents into Coptic again, in order that Abraham could confirm that it corresponded with what he had said.⁴⁰⁵ Garel argued that imperial laws made it possible, but not obligatory, to draw up a will in Greek. In other words, it was Abraham’s own choice to have the testament written in this language, although he had little or no knowledge of Greek.⁴⁰⁶ By contrast, he knew the Scriptures and ecclesiastical canons well and possessed administrative skills, which he needed as a bishop and abbot.⁴⁰⁷

The Monastery of St Phoibammon, or “holy little *Topos* of the holy victorious martyr Abba Phoibammon”, used to stand upon the upper terrace of the ancient mortuary temple of Queen Hatshepsut at Dayr al-Bahri.⁴⁰⁸ At the end of the nineteenth century, its ruins were demolished, in order to uncover the pharaonic monument, unfortunately without being documented. Nevertheless, Włodzimierz Godlewski was able to reconstruct the general lay-

⁴⁰⁴ Based on *P.Lond.* I 77, ll. 25-27, 76-77; transl.: MacCoull 2000, 55 [3.], 57 [Subscriptions]. Esther Garel prepared a re-edition of Abraham’s testament in her dissertation *Les testaments des supérieurs du monastère de Saint-Phoibammôn à Thèbes (VII^e siècle). Édition, traduction, commentaire*, vol. 2, 5-56 (École Pratique des Hautes Études, Paris, 2015). See also Krause, *Apa Abraham*, vol. 1, 25-29.

⁴⁰⁵ *P.Lond.* I 77, ll. 13-15, 69; transl. Garel, *Les testaments*, vol. 2, 20, 22. MacCoull (2000, 55) and Wipszycka (2015, 120, n. 22) understood that Abraham “enjoined that it be also written in Greek words”, in other words, that there were two versions of the testament, but Garel’s translation suggests that there was just a Greek version.

⁴⁰⁶ Garel, *Les testaments*, vol. 2, 32: “Il ne s’agit pas d’une obligation mais bien d’une possibilité”, “Abraham, ne sachant sans doute pas le grec”; cf. Wipszycka 2015, 120, n. 22: “... he does not choose Greek out of conviction that such a document will be more effective in the eye of the law; it gives satisfaction to him to have two versions. We do not learn whether he knows Greek; the possibility cannot be excluded”.

⁴⁰⁷ Krause, *Apa Abraham*, vol. 1, 27-29.

⁴⁰⁸ *P.Lond.* I 77, ll. 26-27: “*Topion*”, a diminutive for *Topos*; cf. Garel, *Les testaments*, vol. 2, 38. For the various names of the monastery, see also vol. 1, 109-11 and *P.KRU* 105, l. 3-4: “*Topos* of Apa Phoibammon”.

out of the monastery and to localize the episcopal residence in the northernmost part of the upper terrace on the basis of sketches made by Western travelers and old black-and-white photographs.⁴⁰⁹ According to Abraham's testament, the monastery housed a *martyrium* with an actual relic of St Phoibammon, the location of which is still debated (§6.4.B).⁴¹⁰

The monastery appears to have been a continuation of the *Laura* of St Phoibammon, a semi-anchoretic community in a valley in the desert plateau west of Medinet Habu (Map 1).⁴¹¹ Since a Coptic graffito at the *Laura* mentions "Apa Abraham, steward of the *Laura* of St Phoibammon", some scholars suggested that he possibly was the future bishop.⁴¹²

Abraham's double capacity as bishop and abbot raises the question which of the two functions came first. The answer depends on the interpretation of *P.KRU* 105 and *O.Crum Ad. 59* (= *O.Lips.Copt.* 10).⁴¹³ In *P.KRU* 105, an incomplete Coptic deed, a village represented by the *lashane* Papnoute and clergymen recognize the right of the founders of the Monastery of St Phoibammon to choose their leader, under the condition that he would take care of the poor.⁴¹⁴ Scholars agree about the identification of the village with Jeme, but the identity of the beneficiary or beneficiaries of the deed is a matter for debate.

Martin Krause was the first to link the deed to *O.Crum Ad. 59*, a Coptic letter from the Monastery of St Phoibammon. The sender of this letter wrote that he received an Easter festal letter from Patriarch Damian, and also stated that he and his following moved to their new location recently, since Damian considered their original residence insufficiently accessible. Krause identified the sender with Bishop Abraham on account of the provenance of the letter and its contents, particularly the greeting and blessing formulae, which often appear in Abraham's letters.⁴¹⁵ He proposed the hypothesis that Abraham first resided at the *Laura* of St Phoibammon after being ordained, but transferred his residence to the newer Monastery of St

⁴⁰⁹ Godlewski 1986, 13-50, pl. 1. On Abraham's residence and chancellery, once located above the ancient chapel of the Nocturnal Sun, see 46, 58, 64-65.

⁴¹⁰ According to Godlewski (1986, 33-38, 44), the original church was located in the ancient rock-cut chapel to the west, but when it became unstable after an earthquake, a new church was built in the ancient chapel of Queen Hatshepsut in the southern part of the upper terrace. Room G, in the northeast part of the upper terrace, contained large recipients of stone and terracotta, and was therefore identified as a kitchen by Godlewski (1986, 32-33) and as a *martyrium* with basins for ritual ablutions by Papaconstantinou (2002, 88). Papaconstantinou (2002, 89) was aware that Room G did not have the usual form of a chapel, but suggested that this was the location of the later sanctuary, instead of Hatshepsut's chapel. Wipszycka (2009a, 181) agreed that the room did not have the typical form of a chapel, and Garel (*Les testaments*, vol. 1, 110, 113) did not discuss the location of the *martyrium*.

⁴¹¹ Bachatly, Khater and Khs-Burmester 1981. On the relationship between the two sites, see Krause 1985, 31-44 and 2010, 73-74; cf. Wipszycka 2009a, 182-84, fig. 38. For the location of the *Laura*, see the map published in Grossmann 2007 ("Phoibammon K.").

⁴¹² Graffito no. 18: ed. Bachatly et al. 1965, 40; cf. Godlewski 1986, 62-63; Krause 2010, 74.

⁴¹³ A re-edition of both texts is included in Garel, *Les testaments*, vol. 2, 180-91.

⁴¹⁴ *P.KRU* 105, ll. 1-9, 15-19.

⁴¹⁵ Krause 1985, 33, based on *O.Crum Ad. 59*, ll. 1-3: "Before everything, I greet your sonship. The Lord blesses you". For these formulae in Abraham's correspondence, see Krause, *Apa Abraham*, vol. I, 29-31.

Phoibammon, in order to comply with the patriarch's wish. According to this theory, Abraham was the founder and first abbot of the Monastery of St Phoibammon, and he and his future successors were the beneficiaries of the *P.KRU* 105.⁴¹⁶ Krause added that both Abraham and Jacob, the fourth abbot of the Monastery, expressed their concern for poor passers-by in their testaments, and recently, Garel revealed that the same holds for Victor and Peter, the second and third abbot.⁴¹⁷ Nevertheless, she added that the care for the poor was not a strict condition for the Jemean authorities to recognize the superior's rights of ownership.⁴¹⁸

Ewa Wipszycka argued that *P.KRU* 105 was addressed to the prior, "the monk who founded the monastery on a ground that had formerly been desert", and did not mention Abraham.⁴¹⁹ Leslie MacCoull dismissed the possibility that Abraham was involved and argued that the deed was addressed to a monastic community, since the second person plural is used consistently. On account of the penalty clause that "our lords the Christ-loving emperors" established, she proposed to date *P.KRU* 105 to the end of the reign of Justin II, since oath clauses dated to his reign occasionally mention two rulers, often the emperor and his empress. This early dating would place *P.KRU* 105 "in the context of Peter IV's consolidation activities", and point to the *Laura* rather than the Monastery.⁴²⁰ However, the penalty of six ounces was established by the Emperors Arcadius and Honorius in 398,⁴²¹ and consequently, the reference to emperors cannot be used to propose a date for the deed.

I accept Krause's hypothesis that Abraham was already bishop, when he moved to the Monastery of St Phoibammon, and that he did so after receiving Damian's complaint. I also agree that Abraham benefitted from *P.KRU* 105, for he was the first abbot of the monastery, as the later abbot Jacob confirmed in his testament.⁴²² However, MacCoull correctly observed that the second person plural is used to address a corporate entity, whereas Bishop Abraham is rarely addressed in the second person plural (§6.2).⁴²³ In my analysis the beneficiaries of *P.KRU* 105 are identified with the monks who founded the Monastery of St Phoibammon,

⁴¹⁶ Krause 1985, 32, 35, 39 and 2010, 73-74; cf. Garel, *Les testaments*, vol. I, 79.

⁴¹⁷ Krause 2010, 73, based on *P.Lond.* I 77, l. 38-39, 75 (610s) and *P.KRU* 65, l. 66 (ca. 695); Garel, *Les testaments*, vol. I, 82, based on *P.KRU* 77 + P.Sorb.inv. 2680, ll. 90, 126 (December 4, 634) and *P.Lyon*, ll. 9-10 (May 3, 675 or 660).

⁴¹⁸ *Les testaments*, vol. I, 82-83: "Il n'y a en tout cas pas de preuve formelle qui l'indique".

⁴¹⁹ Wipszycka 2009b, 237-38.

⁴²⁰ MacCoull 2010, 453.

⁴²¹ Garel, *Les testaments*, vol. I, 190 and vol. 2, 185, on the basis of *Codex Justinianus* 1.54.6.1 (Garel does not mention Honorius): ed. Krueger 1892, 90; transl. Blume 1920-1952b, 2.

⁴²² *P.KRU* 65, l. 35: Garel, *Les testaments*, vol. 2, 148, 155 (edition) and vol. I, 7, 79; cf. Krause 1969, 57.

⁴²³ MacCoull 2010, 449. See also Garel, *Les testaments*, vol. I, 64: "le P.KRU 105, document dans lequel les autorités du village de Djémé reconnaissent aux moines le droit de propriété du monastère de Phoibammôn", but vol. I, 79: "Le village de Djémé, représenté par les prêtres et les officiels, reconnaît donc à Abraham et à ses successeurs le droit (...)".

probably at Abraham's orders. It is unclear whether he was present when *P.KRU* 105 was signed, and whether the Jemean authorities knew that a Theodosian bishop would become the first abbot. At any rate, they addressed the beneficiaries of the deed in plural, without singling out their leader. As a bishop of a relatively new hierarchy, which was tolerated, but not officially recognized, Abraham may have kept a low profile, until the Jemean authorities acknowledged the rights of the monks to own the monastery and to choose their leader.

Garel observed that the place where the monastery was built belonged to nobody, since the desert belonged to nobody. However, the monks possibly required the recognition of the Jemean authorities, since the monastery was built in an area that used to be a cemetery at least in the fourth and fifth centuries and could still be claimed by the village.⁴²⁴

The foundation of the monastery and the drawing up of *P.KRU* 105 took place shortly before 600, in an indiction year when Papnoute was *lashane* of Jeme. One of the witnesses, the deacon Peter, reappears in a declaration made before Bishop Abraham and the *lashane* Peter,⁴²⁵ who is identified with the *lashane* Peter, the son of Palou, who witnessed the solar eclipse of May 10, 601 (§5.3.5).⁴²⁶ Peter was in office in a fourth indiction year, in ca. May 600-April 601 (§1.1.2.C).⁴²⁷ In his days, Abraham's authority was already recognized, which was not yet the case when Papnoute signed the deed, which suggests that the latter was active before Peter, in ca. 595. Since it probably did not take many years after Abraham's ordination, before Damian asked him to move to a more accessible location, and before the Monastery of St Phoibammon was founded, I propose ca. 590 as a likely date for Abraham's ordination.⁴²⁸

When Abraham was still in good health, he had his testament drawn up, probably in ca. 615-620, in order that the priest Victor, his secretary and adviser, would later inherit all his property, including the Monastery of St Phoibammon.⁴²⁹

Krause placed the end of Abraham's episcopate and death between 610 and 620, partly on the basis of Coptic documents that record an indiction year, and partly on the basis of the image of a homonymous bishop on a wooden panel (see below).⁴³⁰ In a recent article, where I still followed Till's practice to let indiction years start at the end of August, I argued that

⁴²⁴ Garel, *Les testaments*, vol. I, 79. For the cemetery, see Godlewski 1986, 47-49.

⁴²⁵ *BKU* I 70.

⁴²⁶ *SBKopt.* II 1238: *ed. princeps* Stern 1878, 11-12; Heurtel 2013, 77-79; cf. Gilmore and Ray 2006, 190-92.

⁴²⁷ On the eponymic office of *lashane*, see Winlock and Crum 1926, 176 and n. 15; *P.Medin.HabuCopt.*, p. 2-3; Steinwenter 1967, 38. A fourth indiction year started in May 600; cf. Bagnall and Worp 2004, 154.

⁴²⁸ Cf. Garel, *Les testaments*, vol. I, 102. Krause (1969, 59 and 1971, 110) proposed 590/600.

⁴²⁹ Cf. Krause 1969, 66: "um 610"; MacCoull 2000, 51: "first quarter, 7th c."; Harrauer 2010, 470-1, no. 270: "ca. 610 n. Chr."; Garel, *Les testaments*, vol. I, 108 and vol. 2, 6: "la seconde moitié des années 610". Garel (*idem*, 6, n. 7) adds that testament must predate the Persian invasion, since Abraham refers to imperial laws.

⁴³⁰ Krause 1969, 59, 66 and 1971, 109-10.

Abraham is last attested in *O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* II 16, and that the date of this text, Mesore 14 of an eighth indiction year, corresponded to August 7, 620.⁴³¹ However, if the eighth indiction year started in May, the correct date is August 7, 619. An earlier date (August 7, 604) is unlikely, since the priest Victor features as a co-witness, a prominent position that he could only obtain at a later stage in his career (§3.2.4). Another indication for ca. 620 is Abraham's indirect tie with Epiphanius through a common acquaintance, Paham, the son of Pelish. The latter had to appear before Abraham on account of a financial mistake, but was also one of the Jemean authorities who sent Epiphanius a petition on April 24, 620 (§3.2.1, 4.3.3).⁴³²

It can even be argued that Abraham died in 621. Judging from *SBKopt.* II 906, “our father the bishop” (Abraham) ordered Victor to request the local clergymen to arbitrate in a conflict, since the *lashanes* Peter and Zachariah (of Jeme) did not have time.⁴³³ Abraham was apparently unable to arbitrate himself, and Victor could not replace him. It is significant that Zachariah became *lashane* of Jeme, when Abraham was still alive, and that he also contacted Victor, without Abraham being involved. In the letter dated Paope 20 of a tenth indiction year, or October 17, 621, the *lashane* Zachariah promised to lease Victor a field in return of part of the produce. The second letter is similar in content, but was sent by Zachariah and other village authorities.⁴³⁴ The letters create the impression that Victor had already succeeded Abraham as abbot of the Monastery of St Phoibammon and was increasing its arable land. Assuming that the three letters refer to the same *lashane* Zachariah, and that his period of office coincided with a tenth indiction year, or May 1, 621-April 30, 622, Zachariah was appointed in about May 621 (§1.1.2.C). Abraham was still alive when Zachariah started, but died before October 17, 621.⁴³⁵ He witnessed the Persian invasion of Egypt, and must have known that Pesynthius stayed in his diocese.

Although Abraham's body was not found, Godlewski proposed to localize his tomb in a niche in the north wall of the funerary chapel of Queen Hatshepsut, in the southern part of the monastery, which was reused as a church. In front of the niche there once was a wooden arcosolium on two pillars.⁴³⁶ Arietta Papaconstantinou suggested that this niche contained the relics of St Phoibammon, but also considered the possibility that it was Abraham's tomb.⁴³⁷

⁴³¹ Dekker 2016a, 760, 767 fig. 4, based on the chronological table in Till 1962, 237. A. Biedenkopf-Ziehner, the editor of *O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* II 16, also followed Till and proposed “7.8.605 (?)”.

⁴³² *O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* II 2 (Abraham), *P.Mon.Epiph.* 163 (Epiphanius); cf. Dekker 2016a, 760, 767 fig. 4.

⁴³³ *SBKopt.* II 906; ed. *princeps* Krause 1972, 101-07.

⁴³⁴ *O.Crum* 139 and 308 respectively.

⁴³⁵ Cf. Esther, *Les testaments*, vol. I, 103. There are no alternative dates for *SBKopt.* II 906 than 621: 606 is too early for a prominent role for Victor, and 636 is too late for Bishop Abraham.

⁴³⁶ Godlewski 1986, 33-34 (Room K).

⁴³⁷ Papaconstantinou 2002, 86, 89.

Abraham of Hermonthis is probably the Bishop Abraham mentioned on the Greek Moir Bryce diptych, but the silver plate from the church southwest of the court of Ramesses II at Luxor temple is not related to him (§2.3.1, 2.2.2). Some scholars argue that he is the Bishop Abraham depicted on the famous wooden panel in the Museum for Byzantine Art in Berlin, but their arguments are not very convincing.⁴³⁸ The panel was purchased on the antiquities market in 1904. Originally, the Monastery of Apa Apollo at Bawit was proposed as the likely provenance on account of stylistic criteria, but the image is also comparable to wall paintings at the Monastery of Apa Jeremias at Saqqara and Dayr Anba Bishoi.⁴³⁹ Other examples of panel paintings on wood came from the Fayum, Bawit and Antinoopolis, far north of the Theban region.⁴⁴⁰ The identification of the bishop on the panel as Abraham of Hermonthis is based on the low number of Late Antique or early Islamic bishops known by that name.⁴⁴¹ In addition, Cecilia Fluck discarded the Monastery of Apa Apollo as the provenance of the panel, arguing that “[t]he name Abraham definitely does not occur in the preserved episcopal lists among the bishops of Hermopolis Magna, the see to which Bawit once belonged”.⁴⁴² However, the list of bishops of Hermopolis Magna is far from complete, and there could have been more bishops called Abraham, who are not attested by the available textual sources.

§3.1.2 *Pesynthius of Koptos*

My research on the hagiographic tradition on Bishop Pesynthius is mainly based on the short Sahidic version of the *Encomium* dedicated to him, since I consider it as the version closest to the lost original text.⁴⁴³ In a recent article, however, I argue that the extensive Arabic version, known from a nineteenth-century copy of an unidentified manuscript, includes biographical information that is too specific to be ignored merely on account of the late date of the copy.⁴⁴⁴ In fact, the generally accepted dates of Pesynthius’ birth (569) and ordination (599) are based on a passage in the Arabic version that was partly misread, and many scholars use this version

⁴³⁸ Cat. Hamm 1996, 259, no. 287; Krause 1971; Fluck 2010, 211-23, Fig. 19.1.

⁴³⁹ Fluck 2010, 212-15, 220-21.

⁴⁴⁰ For an overview, see Auth 2005, 33-34.

⁴⁴¹ Krause 1971, 109; Fluck 2010, 222, n. 6: Abraham of Ostrakine (431), the bishop of Hermonthis, Abraham of Hou (§3.1.11), Abraham of Phelbes (744), a bishop of Arsinoe (740) and “Abraham I of Phelbes”, who was not a bishop, but a monk; cf. Evelyn White 1932, 270, 278-80; Timm 1984-1992, 402: “Bischof (?)”. The list can be supplemented with Abraham of Aswan and Elephantine, who is attested by an undated Coptic dedicatory inscription from Dayr Anba Hadra; ed. de Morgan, Bouriant et al. 1894, 139, n. 1; Crum 1902, no. 8322.

⁴⁴² Fluck 2010, 214. For a list of known bishops, see Worp 1994, 300; Timm 1984-1992, vol. 1, 199-203.

⁴⁴³ Dekker 2010, 21 and 2011a, 331-34. The manuscripts representing the short Sahidic version are called by the sigla *Q* and *S*. *S* (British Library, Or. 7026): ed. Budge 1913, 75-127 (text), 258-321 (transl.). I am preparing the edition of *Q* (Shaykh Abd al-Qurna, Field Inv. No. Coptic MS 2; ex-National Museum of Alexandria; presently in the Coptic Museum).

⁴⁴⁴ Dekker 2016b, 78-80, which refers to *A* (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, arabe 4785, fols 97r-215r): ed. O’Leary 1930, 317-487; cf. Troupeau 1974, 35.

as a historical source on the bishop's childhood and early years as a monk.⁴⁴⁵ Additional information is provided by the Arabic *Life of St Andrew*, which is known from an unpublished nineteenth-century copy of an unknown Arabic manuscript.⁴⁴⁶ It is a hagiographical text on the priest Andrew, who was abbot of the Monastery of the Cross in Pesynthius' days.

Provided that the biographical information in the extensive Arabic version is based on historical facts, it presents the following picture: Pesynthius was born in ca. 549, came from the village of Pshamer in the district of Hermonthis and went to school in Hermonthis at the age of seven.⁴⁴⁷ As a youth he allegedly shepherded his father's sheep and adopted an ascetic lifestyle, but this is also said about other monastic saints and could just be a literary *topos* prefiguring his spiritual leadership.⁴⁴⁸ He lived with his father from his fourteenth until his twentieth, and then entered the Monastery of St Phoibammon south of the mountain of Jeme and was clothed in the habit by the abbot Elias.⁴⁴⁹ The Arabic text can only refer to the *Laura* of St Phoibammon (§3.1.1), considering the location of this community, the name of its abbot (there was no abbot Elias at the Monastery of St Phoibammon *in* the mountain of Jeme), and the period when Pesynthius became a monk: in ca. 569, thirty years before his ordination and long before the monastery at Dayr al-Bahri was founded.⁴⁵⁰ Pesynthius is said to have lived as a monk for thirty years: sixteen years in the mountain of Jeme (Western Thebes), three years in the mountain of Tsenti (Gabal al-Asas) and apparently eleven years at the *Laura*.⁴⁵¹ In 599, "when he had completed *thirty years as a monk*, God called him to the dignity of a bishop over the city of Koptos", at the age of ca. fifty, and he fulfilled the office for thirty-three years, until the age of ca. eighty-three.⁴⁵² The short Sahidic version stresses that he "did not

⁴⁴⁵ Winlock and Crum 1926, 225-28; Gabra 1984a, 304-19; Wilfong 2002, 23; Wipszycka 2009a, 30-31. The listed dates were established by Gabra 1984a, 306.

⁴⁴⁶ Paris, Bibliothèque nationale arabe 4882, fols 1-14; cf. Troupeau 1974, 60. For an Italian summary of the text, see di Bitonto Kasser 1989, 168-70.

⁴⁴⁷ Gabra 1984, 38, 309; Dekker 2016b, 84, 86. It is likely that Pesynthius learnt Greek. One of his classmates became a philosopher and must certainly have learnt Greek; cf. *A*, fol. 106a.

⁴⁴⁸ According to the Bohairic version of his *Life*, Shenoute of Atripe was a shepherd and started doing ascetic practices before becoming a monk as well; ed. Leipoldt and Crum 1906, 8-9; transl. Bell 1983, 42-43, nos. 3-4.

⁴⁴⁹ *A*, fols 98a, 102b-104a; cf. Dekker 2016b, 84-85.

⁴⁵⁰ Dekker 2016b, 84-86; cf. Wipszycka 2015, 39-40, n. 44. Following Crum (1914, 180), several scholars assumed that Pesynthius became a monk at the Monastery of St Phoibammon at Dayr al-Bahri. *O.Phoeb.Copt.* 4 and 10, found at the *Laura*, record a fugitive and a priest called Elias; ed. Bachatly et al. 1965, 110-11, 115.

⁴⁵¹ *A*, fols 106a, 107a-b, 199a. The Sahidic and Bohairic versions of the *Encomium* only mention his period in the mountain of Tsenti; cf. Dekker 2016b, 84-86.

⁴⁵² *A*, fol. 199a (the translation and italics are mine). Crum, who examined the text before it was published, misread the phrase and understood that Pesynthius was *ordained bishop at the age of thirty*. On the basis of this reading, Crum (1914, 179) thought that he was born in 568/9, and ordained in 598; cf. Winlock and Crum 1926, 225, 227. O'Leary correctly translated the passage in his edition, but did not correct Crum's date. Likewise, Gawdat Gabra (1984, 306) relied on Crum's reading, but chose the dates 569 and 599.

pursue the honor, but it was the honor that pursued him”: Pesynthius allegedly fled to Western Thebes to prevent his ordination, but the clergymen of Koptos found him there.⁴⁵³

Pesynthius is remembered as an ideal bishop, who gave uncountable alms to the poor, and was an excellent but strict preacher, who repeatedly exhorted his flock to repent their sins (§8.4.D.2, E.2-3). In addition, he was believed to be a Spirit-bearer, who knew what happened or was about to happen, and who could read other people’s minds. It is said that his sanctity was impressive to such an extent that nobody dared to look into his face (§8.2.2).⁴⁵⁴

Before and after his ordination, Pesynthius lived in a monastery in the mountain of Tsenti (Gabal al-Asas), which scholars often call “the Monastery of Tsenti”, since the Coptic term for “mountain” can also indicate a monastery or community of hermits (in the desert).⁴⁵⁵ However, it is likely that the bishop’s residence was named after a saint or a sacred object, like most monasteries, and that Tsenti refers to a village or the hills between modern Naqada and Qamula, where there could also be monastic communities.⁴⁵⁶ The Coptic and Arabic versions of the *Encomium* reveal that Pesynthius stayed at the Monastery of the Cross (Dayr al-Salib),⁴⁵⁷ but officiated in “the Church of Tsenti”, at least on the feast day of Severus of Antioch.⁴⁵⁸ After he died in “the place of the large cell” in his monastic residence, his body was taken to the sanctuary of the Church of Tsenti for the vigil and the funerary service.⁴⁵⁹ Elisaius, the priest and “abbot of the *Topos*”,⁴⁶⁰ was active in the Monastery of the Cross as well as in the Church of Tsenti, for at both locations Pesynthius asked him to enter the sanctuary and fetch holy water or oil.⁴⁶¹ It is my impression that the Church of Tsenti stood in the village of Tsenti and was open to laymen, including women,⁴⁶² whereas the Monastery of the Cross was a place “which a woman may not enter or pass through”, not even to visit the monastic church.⁴⁶³ It appears that Pesynthius resided at the Monastery of the Cross, when it

⁴⁵³ *S*, fols 39b-40a (= *Q*, fols 52-53); cf. Dekker 2011b, 337-38.

⁴⁵⁴ *S*, fol. 56.

⁴⁵⁵ The monastery is mentioned in *S*, fols 36a, 65b (ΘΕΝΕΤΕ), and the mountain of Tsenti on fol. 79a (ΤΟΟΥ ΝΤΣΕΝΤΕΙ). For ΤΟΟΥ in a monastic sense, see Kahle 1961, 27-28; Wipszycka 2009, 110-11, 283. For “the Monastery of Tsenti”, see Winlock and Crum 1926, 111, 227; Gabra 1984a, 317-19; Dekker 2010, 21.

⁴⁵⁶ Amélineau 1893, 62-64 (about the village of Tsenti); Winlock and Crum 1926, 108, 230; Timm 1984-1992, vol. 3, 970. The “mountain of Tsenti” is the provenance of the priest Petronius (*O.Crum* 248), the headman Pahan (*O.CrumST* 435) and Pjoui (*O.CrumST* 446).

⁴⁵⁷ *A*, fol. 180b; cf. Winlock and Crum 1926, 114, 230-31; Timm 1984-1992, 797-98.

⁴⁵⁸ *S*, fol. 75b (ΠΣΦΟΥΖ ΕΤΟΥΛΑΒ ΝΤΣΕΝΤΕΙ; this episode is not available in *Q*).

⁴⁵⁹ *S*, fol. 82a (ΠΣΦΟΥΖ ΝΤΣΕΝΤΕΙ). Compare *B*, Amélineau 1887, 161: “the church of Tsenti (†ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑ ΝΤΕ ΤΣΕΝΤ†)”; *A*, fol. 211a: “the holy church, which is in Gabal al-Asas”.

⁴⁶⁰ *S*, fol. 67b; not available in *Q*.

⁴⁶¹ *A*, fol. 184b: at the Monastery of the Cross; *S*, fols 67a-b: at the Church of Tsenti.

⁴⁶² In *A*, fols 191a-192a, a woman unable to feed her baby is healed from the constipation in her mammary glands near a church, and the result is visible for all to see, which is hardly thinkable at the Monastery of The Cross. The admission of the adulteress to the courtyard of the monastery is an exception (*A*, fol. 183b).

⁴⁶³ *A*, fol. 180b.

was headed by Elisaius, and that they held mass in the church in the village of Tsenti, where the faithful could contact them. During the Persian period, when Pesynthius stayed in Western Thebes, the priest Andrew was abbot of the Monastery of the Cross (Dayr al-Salib).⁴⁶⁴

The extensive Arabic version of the *Encomium* and the *Life of St Andrew* indicate that the Monastery of Apa Samuel was another important monastery in Pesynthius' days and that its history is linked to that of the Monastery of the Cross. When Samuel, the founder and abbot of the community (§2.3.1), died, the priest Andrew refused to succeed him and Jacob was appointed instead. After the monks Joseph and Moses reported Jacob's excessive expenditures, Pesynthius deposed Jacob, ordained Joseph and Moses priests, and appointed them as abbots of the monastery. Andrew took care of Jacob, who got ill and died, and then went to the Monastery of the Cross, where he did accept the office of abbot.⁴⁶⁵ In the *Encomium* Moses reappears without Joseph as the abbot of the Monastery of Apa Samuel, also called Dayr al-Sanad.⁴⁶⁶ Interestingly, the Monastery of Apa Samuel "of Phel" and abbot Jacob are attested by Coptic documents,⁴⁶⁷ and Jacob was even the beneficiary of the Greek contract *P.Rein.* II 107, which is dated March 27, 603.⁴⁶⁸ Jean Doresse located the Monastery of Apa Samuel at Dayr al-Gizaz, at the foot of the desert plateau west of Naqada.⁴⁶⁹

Doresse also proposed to identify the Monastery of Apa Samuel/Dayr al-Gizaz as the "Monastery of Tsenti", since he took the sender of a letter from Dayr al-Gizaz for Bishop Pesynthius, as did the editor, Anna di Bitonto Kasser.⁴⁷⁰ However, Pesynthius' residence is not identical with the Monastery of Apa Samuel/Dayr al-Gizaz, for he did not live in the community of Jacob, Joseph and Moses, but at the monastery headed by Elisaius (the Monastery of the Cross). More importantly, the Monastery of Apa Samuel/Dayr al-Gizaz lay seven kilometers west of Naqada, in the Western Desert, which was too far away for Pesynthius to receive the crowds that he attracted, according to the hagiographic tradition.⁴⁷¹

⁴⁶⁴ *A*, fol. 201a.

⁴⁶⁵ Di Bitonto Kasser 1989, 168-69.

⁴⁶⁶ *A*, O'Leary 1930, fols 194b, 201a.

⁴⁶⁷ *O.CrumST* 340. Jacob appears in *O.CrumVC* 61; *O.Dayr al-Gizaz* 1, ed. Di Bitonto Kasser 1989, 173-77; perhaps *O.Alexandria* 28372, cf. Kuhn and Van der Vliet 2010, 84; *P.Stras.Copt.* 16, ed. Davidson 2014.

⁴⁶⁸ *P.Rein.* II 107, ed. Fournet 1997, where the dates March 27, 573, 588 and 603 are proposed. The identification of the beneficiary with the abbot Jacob of the *Life of St Andrew* implies that the date should fall within the period of Pesynthius' episcopate. March 27, 618 is less likely, since the replacement of Jacob and the disappearance of Joseph would have happened in the short timespan between March 618 and the Persian invasion in 619/20.

⁴⁶⁹ Doresse 1989; Wipszycka 2009a, 167-168 and 2015, 39; Sadek 2010, 273.

⁴⁷⁰ Doresse 1989, 159-60, based on *Deir el-Gizaz* 1: ed. Di Bitonto Kasser 1989, 173-77. This text and *O.CrumVC* 61 are omitted from Dataset 4, since the sender of both texts could have been a monastic leader.

⁴⁷¹ Winlock and Crum 1926, 113; Sadek 2010, 273. On the massive crowds, see *A*, fols 189b, 194a-b.

According to the Sahidic version of the *Encomium*, John, surnamed “Matoi”, assisted Pesynthius from the beginning of his episcopate, but he is not attested by documents.⁴⁷² By contrast, the priests Elisaius and Moses appear in documents and in the *Encomium* (§7.4.1).

When the Persians invaded Egypt and were about to capture the city of Koptos in 619 or 620, Pesynthius and John fled to Western Thebes and allegedly concealed themselves.⁴⁷³ The extensive Arabic version of the *Encomium* even states that the bishop remained hidden for ten years, in other words, as long as the Persians were in Egypt.⁴⁷⁴ Coptic documents found *in situ* at the *Topos* of Epiphanius confirm that Pesynthius stayed there, but not necessarily for ten years on end (§7.1.1.C, 7.1.4). As Wipszycka correctly observed, there was no need to be concealed in Western Thebes for a decade, since it was a relatively safe area.⁴⁷⁵ Hiding would also have prevented Pesynthius from managing his diocese and “the eparchia of Qus”, and from contacting the clergymen and civil officials in the districts of Koptos and Hermonthis as well as he did (§2.2.3, 7.4-5). It is more likely that the author meant that Pesynthius fled to Western Thebes, was concealed for four months and stayed outside his diocese for ten years.⁴⁷⁶

If the biographical information in the extensive Arabic version is historically correct, the bishop was in his seventies when he went to Western Thebes. At such an advanced age, his flight to the Theban mountains, the life in the desert, and the fulfillment of his episcopal duties from a distance was quite exacting. A letter addressed to Pesynthius reveals that he had an urological problem, a discomfort that may have been related to his age (prostatitis?).⁴⁷⁷ Once, someone in his retinue replied on his behalf, creating the impression that Pesynthius was not fit enough to reply himself.⁴⁷⁸ The bishop’s age and health should be taken into consideration, when we discuss the circumstances in which he worked (§8.1).

The only dated document in Pesynthius’ dossier is *P.Pisentius* 22, a letter addressed to him, which was written on Mechir 9 of an eleventh indiction year, or February 3, 623.⁴⁷⁹ The scribe is identified as the priest Mark (§3.2.3).

⁴⁷² *S*, fols 46a-b (= *Q*, fols 68-69), 70b; cf. Winlock and Crum 1926, 229. John is called “Matoi” in *Q*, fol. 1 and a priest in *S*, fol. 20a.

⁴⁷³ *S*, fol. 46a (= *Q*, fols 68); *B*, ed. Amélineau 1887, 137-28; *A*, fol. 136b; cf. Winlock and Crum 1926, 229. The fall of Koptos must postdate the conquest of Oxyrhynchus, which took place between July 5, 619 and January 12, 620; cf. Altheim-Stiehl 1991a, 1938.

⁴⁷⁴ *A*, fol. 201a.

⁴⁷⁵ Wipszycka 2015, 40-41.

⁴⁷⁶ Wipszycka 2015, 40. The few people who knew where Pesynthius was, included his disciple John, Andrew of the Monastery of the Cross, and Moses and Elias of the Monastery of Apa Samuel (*A*, fols 194b, 201a).

⁴⁷⁷ *P.Pisentius* 24; cf. Dekker 2016b, 86, n. 62. Till (1951, 26) proposes an inflammation of the bladder.

⁴⁷⁸ *P.Mon.Epiph.* 129. The senders of *P.Mon.Epiph.* 152-153 received good news concerning the bishop’s health.

⁴⁷⁹ *P.Pisentius* 22, l. 31: + 2N CO]Y Φ[ι]C M[H]EΧ[Ε]IP ENΔΕΚΑΤΗ(C) ΙΝΔ(ΙΚΤΙΩΝΟC) +.

The statement that Pesynthius lived outside his diocese for ten years suggests that he returned after the Persian period, and that a letter from the priest Mark to Psan is to be dated ca. 630. Mark informed Psan that “Bishop Pesynthius, him of Koptos” told him that he would go south and visit Psan very soon for the Summer holidays.⁴⁸⁰ In other words, the bishop did not stay with Psan at the *Topos*, when Mark wrote the letter.

Pesynthius died in “the place of the large cell” in his monastic residence on July 7, 632. He was laid in state in the Church of Tsenti, and buried in the mountain, in a grave dug at a location that he had chosen himself, in order that he would “stay in our vicinity”.⁴⁸¹ In other words, he was not buried in a monastery or a church, but at a place in the desert that was accessible for visitors. His tomb is described as a building with a cross, “its shaft standing at the door”, and the bishop’s name was written under the cross.⁴⁸² According to local tradition, Dayr Anba Bisintaus, a small monastery north of Qamula, was built in 1904 on the location of a practically demolished domed tomb that was believed to house the bishop’s remains.⁴⁸³ If this was indeed the case, it is plausible that Dayr al-Majma‘ (also called Dayr Mar Girgis), the large monastery at ca. 400 m further north, stands on the remains of his residence (Map 1).⁴⁸⁴

Bishop Pesynthius is mentioned posthumously in a Coptic circular letter from the time of Patriarch Benjamin I (626-665) and a bishop called Peter. During Benjamin’s patriarchate, the theological question arose whether it was liturgically valid to consecrate more bread after the actual consecration by pronouncing an abbreviated form of the *anaphora*.⁴⁸⁵ Through the letter a local ecclesiastical authority, probably a bishop, supported Benjamin and Bishop Peter in their belief that Christ is truly present at the Eucharist, even when a priest consecrates extra bread by using an abridged liturgical formula. The bishop confirmed his belief also by referring to the spiritual authority of the “thrice blessed” Bishop Pesynthius, in other words, the deceased bishop of Koptos. The letter was probably written after Benjamin’s return to the

⁴⁸⁰ *O.CrumVC* 76, reedited in Heurtel 2013, 81-83.

⁴⁸¹ *S*, fol. 82b, cf. fol. 81a: “Do not let anyone take my body away from the place that I caused to be dug for myself”. Compare *A*, O’Leary 1930, fol. 211a: “that he might remain watching (over us)”.

⁴⁸² *A*, O’Leary 1930, fols 212b-14a.

⁴⁸³ Coquin and Martin 1991a, 757; Monneret de Villard 1927, 41–42: “la tomba del vescovo Pesunthios demolita da non molto e sostituita da un piccolo monastero”. Monneret de Villard (p. 41, n. 4) also quotes from the unpublished notes by the architect Herz in French; cf. Winlock and Crum 1926, 230 n. 15.

⁴⁸⁴ Coquin and Martin 1991a, 757: “It seems then that the Dayr al-Majma‘ is indeed the monastery of Tsenti”, the monastery where Pesynthius lived; cf. Coquin and Martin 1991b; Grossmann 1991b; Sadek 2010, 274-76. Winlock and Crum (1926, 230-31) did not conjecture which of the monasteries southwest of Naqada it was.

⁴⁸⁵ Pap.Berlin P. 11346: ed. Camplani 2012; cf. Beltz 1978, 96 (I 593). According to Camplani (2012, 382), “the writer is a simple priest”, but “this holy encyclical epistle” (l. x+3) was addressed to a wider audience that was gathered “in his holy churches” (l. x+35), instead of in a local church headed by a priest. Camplani (2012, 383) and Wipszycka (2015, 143, n. 21) suggest that Peter could have been the patriarch’s vicar for the Thebaid. He is perhaps the Bishop Peter who received a Greek letter, *P.Grenf.* II 91 (Thebaid, sixth/seventh century).

capital in 643/4,⁴⁸⁶ that is, between 643/4 and 665. The fact that Pesynthius was called “thrice blessed” indicates that he was already becoming an object of veneration. He was more than just “blessed” like most deceased,⁴⁸⁷ and not yet officially recognized as a “saint”,⁴⁸⁸ but a venerable person in between, comparable to the beatified in the Roman Catholic tradition.

In the second half of the seventh century, the short Sahidic version of the *Encomium* on Bishop Pesynthius was composed, in order to commemorate him on his feast day, to edify the audience, and to confirm that he was truly a saint.⁴⁸⁹

§3.1.3 *Constantine of Asyut*

According to the notices in the Upper and Lower recensions of the Synaxarium for 9 Amshir, Constantine was a monk, before Damian ordained him bishop, which must have happened before 607. It is also stated that Damian appointed him vicar for the Thebaid and would only ordain candidates to the episcopate, if Constantine had given him a commendatory letter.⁴⁹⁰ Constantine was still in office during the patriarchate of Andronicus (619-626), and allegedly wrote two panegyrics on St Athanasius, two on St Claudius, two on John of Heraclea and another one on St George, in addition to various other works.⁴⁹¹

In ca. 620 Shenoute of Antinoopolis officially replaced Constantine as patriarchal vicar for the Thebaid, but the two men worked together in case of important ecclesiastical matters. Allegedly, the patriarch (Andronicus?) only agreed to ordain new bishops, after Shenoute and Constantine had officially approved the candidate.⁴⁹² Constantine was buried in the monastery where he lived, Dayr al-Hanada, which stood in the mountain of Asyut.⁴⁹³

Bishop Constantine appears in two Theban documents. Once, he forwarded a letter from the patriarch to Epiphanius, possibly in his role of patriarchal vicar. His contact with

⁴⁸⁶ For the date, see Jülicher 1922, 12; Müller 1956, 330; Evelyn White 1932, 269. According to the *History of the Patriarchs*, the Arab conqueror ‘Amr Ibn al-As invited Benjamin to leave his hiding place, where he stayed to evade persecution by the state authorities; ed. Evetts 1907, 495-96.

⁴⁸⁷ During his life, Bishop Pesynthius was sometimes called **ΤΕΤΝΗΜΑΚΑΡΙΩΤΗΣ**, “your blessedness” (*P. Pisentius* 20, 29; *O. Mon. Epiph.* 254). After death, he is referred to as **ΜΑΚΑΡΙΩΤΑΤΟΣ** or “most blessed” (in the title of *Q*, fol. 1). For **τρισμυκάριος**, used for saints or bishops, see Lampe 1961, 1409-10.

⁴⁸⁸ Pesynthius is called a saint (**ΠΕΤΟΥΛΑΒ**) in *Q*, fol. 4 *et passim* (*S* reads “revered father”); cf. Crum 1939, 488a.

⁴⁸⁹ *S*, fol. 20b (“the day of his glorious commemoration”), 21a (= *Q*, fol. 3: “all should happen in an edifying way”), 39b (= *Q*, fol. 51: “Little Pesynthius is truly a saint”). For the date, see Dekker 2010, 23.

⁴⁹⁰ On Constantine’s monastic background, see the Lower Egyptian version of the *Synaxarium*: Paris, BN Arabe 4895 (seventeenth century), ed. Garitte 1950, 300-01. His appointment as patriarchal vicar is mentioned in the Upper Egyptian version, known from a manuscript from Luxor; cf. Coquin 1981, 157-58; Coquin 1991a, 591.

⁴⁹¹ Garitte 1950, 298. On Constantine’s hagiographic works, see Garitte 1950, 287-97; Samir 1991, 592-93.

⁴⁹² The notice on Pesynthius of Hermonthis for 20 Kihak in the Upper Egyptian version of the Copto-Arabic *Synaxarium*: ed. Basset 1909, 490, to be supplemented with Winlock and Crum 1926, 137; Doresse 1949, 338.

⁴⁹³ Coquin 1981, 158, 168-69 and 1991, 591.

Epiphanius (without Psan) suggests that this happened in ca. 615-620 (§3.2.1).⁴⁹⁴ The second time, he is mentioned in a letter from Bishop Shenoute to the monk Elisaius, on whose account a council should be held. Shenoute wrote that he was waiting for Bishop Constantine to decide on what was going to happen.⁴⁹⁵ The cooperation between Shenoute and Constantine, and the mention of Bishop Pisrael suggests that the letter was written in ca. 620, at any rate after Shenoute had succeeded Constantine as vicar of the Thebaid (§3.1.7-8).

§3.1.4 *Ezekiel (of Ape?)*

Bishop Ezekiel sent Coptic letters to his colleague Pesynthius, when the latter stayed at the *Topos* of Epiphanius, and to the hermits Zael and Moses of the hermitage at TT 29 (§3.2.2).⁴⁹⁶ He perhaps sent another Coptic letter, without using his title, to the same Moses and Psate, and is possibly referred to in a letter from Pisrael of Qus to Pesynthius of Koptos.⁴⁹⁷ His ties with Zael and Pesynthius indicate that Ezekiel was in office in ca. 615-620.

Bishop Ezekiel requested Zael to go to the Place of Apa Terane, in the desert west of Hermonthis, and to ask Pses whether he still planned to spend a year at the episcopal residence and to take care of the camels (§3.2.6).⁴⁹⁸ Wherever Ezekiel resided, he was closer to Zael and Moses than to Apa Terane. He could not have been bishop of Hermonthis or Koptos, since Abraham and Pesynthius were still in office in 615-620, and if Pisrael referred to him in the letter to Pesynthius, Ezekiel could not have been a bishop of Qus either. It is, therefore, plausible that he was Anthony's predecessor as bishop of Ape.

§3.1.5 *Serenianus (of Qus?)*

Bishop Serenianus requested Epiphanius, "the anchorite", to come to the "place (ⲙⲁ) of Apa Phoibammon" on the first Sunday of Lent, in order to mediate between him and Papas. The latter, apparently a priest and a monk, had profaned their monastery by bringing in a large group of women and giving them from the holy Communion.⁴⁹⁹ The letter was found in an

⁴⁹⁴ *P.Mon.Epiph.* 131 and *P.Pisentius* 10, recto.

⁴⁹⁵ *P.Pisentius* 10, recto, l. 13: "And the decision that he [Bishop Constantine] will take for me, will happen".

⁴⁹⁶ *P.Mon.Epiph.* 153; *O.Frangé* 761.

⁴⁹⁷ *O.Frangé* 760; *P.Pisentius* 7, l. 3: "father Apa Ezekiel"; cf. *P.Mon.Epiph.* 153, n. 1. According to the editors, *O.Frangé* 760 was probably sent by Bishop Ezekiel, since the sender, Ezekiel, addressed Moses "the anchorite" as a social equal ("our beloved pious brother"), which suggests that he was a bishop or monastic leader himself.

⁴⁹⁸ *O.Frangé* 761 and the commentary to this text.

⁴⁹⁹ New York, O.Col. inv. 1903 (MMA 23.3.702); ed. Winlock and Crum 1926, 134 and n. 5. For a more recent description, see <http://www.papyri.info/apis/columbia.apis.1903> (accessioned at April 6, 2016). The meaning of ⲛⲉⲕⲣⲓⲛⲟⲓ ⲛⲓⲛ ⲡⲁⲡⲁⲥ is unclear; cf. Winlock and Crum 1926, 134, n. 6; Crum 1939, 778b. ⲭⲙⲓⲟ means "to blame", but since the reading "to blame me and Papas" seems unlikely, I propose "to mediate between me and Papas". "The first Sunday of the Pascha" is the first Sunday of Lent; cf. Winlock and Crum 1926, 171 and n. 4.

ancient tomb in the cliff opposite the *Topos* of Epiphanius, and east of the Monastery of St Phoibammon, which Epiphanius possibly used as a place of retreat (§3.2.1).

Serenianus' direct contact with Epiphanius (without the involvement of Psan) suggests that he was in office in ca. 615-620 (§3.2.1). Since the dioceses of Hermonthis, Koptos and probably Ape were not vacant during this period (if Ezekiel was already bishop of that see), he could have been bishop of Qus and Pisrael's predecessor. The diocese of Esna is another possibility, but does not appear in Theban documents.⁵⁰⁰

The letter raises several questions. Apparently, a bishop outside Western Thebes asked Epiphanius to intervene in a conflict between him and Papas, which is remarkable, not only because of the probable distance, but also because it was the bishop's responsibility to deal with problems such as the desecration of places of worship. Serenianus complained that Papas profaned "his" monastery, but if this monastery was an episcopal residence, where was Serenianus when it happened?

The identification of the "place of Apa Phoibammon" and Serenianus' monastery raises questions as well. It is plausible, but far from certain that they were one and the same. The term **μα** is sometimes interchangeable with **τόπος**, which can designate a monastery, church or chapel,⁵⁰¹ but it often refers to the "place" of a living person, like a hermit's dwelling or a civil official's office.⁵⁰² In theory, Apa Phoibammon could be the military saint or a monk or clergyman. With hesitation I propose two possible scenarios. Either "the place of Apa Phoibammon" was a monastery dedicated to St Phoibammon in Serenianus' own diocese, rather than in the diocese of Hermonthis.⁵⁰³ Or: Papas stayed with a certain Apa Phoibammon, after being expelled from the monastery, and Serenianus hoped that Epiphanius, who was generally recognized as a holy man, could convince Papas to be reconciled with the bishop.

A Bishop Serenianus is also mentioned in a letter from Ananias of "the rock" to the deacon Peter. Ananias requested Peter to deliver a letter to "our holy father Apa Serenianus, the bishop".⁵⁰⁴ Walter E. Crum suggested that Ananias could be Bishop Ananias (§3.1.11), but the re-edition of the letter by P.V. Jernstedt reveals that Peter was a deacon, which implies

⁵⁰⁰ The Upper Egyptian recension of the Copto-Arabic *Synaxarium* states that a bishop of Esna died during the Persian period: Basset 1909, 491.

⁵⁰¹ *O.Crum* 32: "the place of St George"; cf. Winlock and Crum 1926, 108-09; Wipszycka 2009a, 290-91.

⁵⁰² *O.Frangé* 761, l. 6: "the place of Apa Terane"; *P.Pisentius* 22, l. 12: "the place of Psan and the priest Moses"; *P.Pisentius* 58, l. 6: "place of the *meizoteros*" (**μα νημιζοτερος**; cf. §2.1).

⁵⁰³ The monastery at Dayr al-Bahri is an unlikely location, since Bishop Abraham or Victor should have been involved, which does not appear to have been the case. The same holds for the *Laura*.

⁵⁰⁴ *O.MoscowCopt.* 67, ll. 6-8: ΠΕΝΠΕΤΟΥΛΛΕ ΝΕΙΩΤ · ΑΠΑ ΣΕΡΗΝΟΣ ΝΟΣ ΠΕΠΙΣΚ(ΟΠΟΣ). The name should be read **ΣΕΡΗΝΙΑΝΟΣ**.

that Ananias, who addressed Peter as a social equal, was not a bishop, but rather a deacon or a monk associated with a monastic community that was referred to as “the rock”.⁵⁰⁵

§3.1.6 *Two bishops called John*

Probably two bishops called John are involved in a letter to Epiphanius, “the anchorite”, from ca. 615-620 (§3.2.1).⁵⁰⁶ John and Pesynthius informed Epiphanius that the patriarch had ordered them to hold a council, in order to judge a certain ecclesiastical affair, and they invited him, Bishop John and “the archimandrite” to attend it. Since such councils were attended by bishops and, to a lesser extent, monastic leaders, it is likely that Pesynthius was the bishop of Koptos, and that his co-sender, John, was a bishop as well.⁵⁰⁷

Bishop John reappears as the sender of a letter from a group of Coptic papyri that “were stated to have come from Edfu”.⁵⁰⁸ Since another letter is addressed to Horame of Edfu, it is likely that one of the bishops called John officiated in Edfu (§3.1.10).

§3.1.7 *Shenoute of Antinoopolis*

Shenoute informed the monk Elisaius, who was excluded from the clergy, that the patriarch had sent letters instructing him and Bishop Constantine to hold a council, in order to examine Elisaius’ case. The letters had been delivered by Bishop Pisrael (of Qus). Since Shenoute referred to Pisrael of Qus as his social equal, he probably was a bishop himself.⁵⁰⁹ His contact with Constantine and Pisrael indicates that Shenoute was in office in ca. 620 (§3.1.3).

According to the Upper Egyptian version of the Copto-Arabic *Synaxarium*, Shenoute was the patriarchal vicar for the Thebaid, and the patriarch would only ordain a new bishop, if Shenoute and Constantine of Asyut had formally recommended him. Constantine was the previous vicar, but retained a vicar-like role after Shenoute replaced him (§3.1.3).⁵¹⁰

The title of the second *Encomium* on St Claudius states that Constantine delivered a speech of praise on St Claudius in the presence of an unnamed vicar for the Thebaid, who brought a transcript of the speech to Patriarch Andronicus (619-626).⁵¹¹ If the title can be taken at face value, this vicar was none other than Shenoute. He was still in office in

⁵⁰⁵ Winlock and Crum 1926, 134, n. 1. For communities called “the Rock”, see idem, 113; Kahle 1954, 28-29.

⁵⁰⁶ *P.Mon.Epiph.* 133.

⁵⁰⁷ Winlock and Crum 1926, 214. In the address John is mentioned before Pesynthius, which suggests that he was at least of the same rank. Therefore, he cannot be identified with Pesynthius’ disciple John (§3.1.2, 7.4.1).

⁵⁰⁸ *P.Lond.Copt.* I 468, verso and 223, n. 1.

⁵⁰⁹ *P.Pisenti* 10, recto, ll. 6-7: “our most pious brother Apa Pisrael the bishop”.

⁵¹⁰ Benaissa 2008, 182-83. According to Coquin (1981, 161), Constantine could only have been appointed vicar after Shenoute’s death, between 598 and 607.

⁵¹¹ Ed. Godron 1970, 592-93 [170-71]; cf. Garitte 1950, 290-92, 298; Coquin 1981, 162.

628/629.⁵¹² A postscript to *P.Pisentius* 22 reports that Horame of Edfu received a letter for Pesynthius of Koptos in Antinoopolis. Shenoute is not mentioned by name, but in view of the date (February 3, 623; §3.1.2), Horame may have received the letter from him.⁵¹³

§3.1.8 *Pisrael of Qus*

Being a contemporary of Epiphanius and Psan, Pisrael was in office in ca. 620 (§3.2.1). Like Pesynthius, Pisrael stayed at the *Topos* of Epiphanius for some time. He appears in two Coptic letters from the *Topos*, and is probably referred to in a third letter as one of “the bishops” who were closely associated with Psan.⁵¹⁴ Pisrael is one of the bishops greeted in another Coptic letter, which is addressed to a monastic leader whose name is lost (Psan?).⁵¹⁵

Pisrael was one of the three bishops who attended the council held on account of the priest and abbot Cyriacus (§3.2.8). He also delivered letters from the patriarch to Shenoute of Antinoopolis and Constantine of Asyut, when another council was to be organized to investigate the case of the monk Elisaius, who was excluded from the clergy.⁵¹⁶

Crum and Heike Behlmer proposed to identify Bishop Pisrael with the homonymous companion of the anchorite Ananias from the hermitage at TT 85, near TT 29 on the hill of Shaykh Abd al-Gurna. In their view, Ananias could be Bishop Ananias, who is listed as one of Abraham’s predecessors on the Moir Bryce diptych.⁵¹⁷ From a chronological point of view this double identification is unlikely, for the Ananias of the diptych was the fourth predecessor of Bishop Abraham and must have been in office long before 600,⁵¹⁸ whereas Bishop Pisrael first appeared in ca. 620. Rather, the Ananias of TT 85 was an anchorite and “a Christ-bearer”,⁵¹⁹ and the monk Pisrael was his disciple. Neither of them was called bishop by their correspondents, nor did they perform episcopal functions.

§3.1.9 *Anthony of Ape*

Like Pisrael, Anthony of Ape was a contemporary of Epiphanius and Psan, which indicates that he was in office in ca. 620, and he attended the council held on account of Cyriacus. He had an agent, Elias, who is called “the brother of our holy father the bishop” and “steward (?)

⁵¹² *CPR* XXII 2 (Hermopolis Magna; 628/9 or – less likely – 643/4); cf. Benaissa 2008, 181-82, no. 2.

⁵¹³ *P.Pisentius* 22, l. 28-29. Pesynthius’ network does not include other ties associated with Antinoopolis.

⁵¹⁴ *O.Mon.Epiph.* 150 (sender), 426 (recipient) and 165 (implicit reference).

⁵¹⁵ *O.CrumST* 255.

⁵¹⁶ *P.Pisentius* 11 and 10, recto, respectively.

⁵¹⁷ Winlock and Crum 1926, 133-35; Behlmer 2007, 167-68, fig. 10.1 (map of TT 85 and surrounding tombs). The hypothesis is accepted by Salah El-Din 2016, 178-79.

⁵¹⁸ *SB* III 6087, l. 52: ed. Crum 1908, 265. Timm (1984-1992, 161) proposes ca. 510.

⁵¹⁹ Ostrakon TT 85.77, 85.100, 85.129: Behlmer 2007, 165.

of the bishop”, and who was the co-recipient of a third letter.⁵²⁰ A letter probably addressed to Bishop Pesynthius reports an assault by a “barbarian” and brigands in the mountain of Ape, and contains the request to inform “Papās Anthony”, probably the bishop, in whose area of jurisdiction the assault took place.⁵²¹

§3.1.10 *Horame of Edfu*

According to a postscript to *P.Pisentius* 22, which is dated February 3, 623, Bishop Horame of Edfu received a letter addressed to Bishop Pesynthius in Antinoopolis (§3.1.2). Horame, or Oramius, reappears as the recipient of a letter from a group of Coptic documents “that were stated to have come from Edfu”.⁵²²

§3.1.11 *Bishops excluded from the analysis*

Ananias, Andrew, Moses and Pesynthius of Hermonthis, Abraham of Huw, Moses of Koptos, and Peter are excluded from the analysis, since they do not fit within the period 590-632, or cannot be linked directly or convincingly to members of the Theodosian network.

Assuming that the Moir Bryce diptych commemorates the bishops of Hermonthis, arranged in a chronological order, Abraham’s predecessors included Ananias, Peter, Michaias and Andrew, and his successors were Moses and Pesynthius. Scholars suggested to equate some of them with homonymous bishops attested in Coptic Theban documents or the Copto-Arabic *Synaxarium*, but the proposed identifications are often incompatible with the common chronological timeframe as reconstructed in this chapter or difficult to confirm.⁵²³

It appears that there were two bishops called Ananias. One of them sent a letter of apology to his “beloved sons” for not having found the opportunity to come.⁵²⁴ He is unlikely to be the bishop of the Moir Bryce diptych, since the latter was probably in office long before 600 (cf. §3.1.8), whereas most Coptic Theban documents date from ca. 600 onward. The other one was remembered as a saint and could have been the bishop of the diptych indeed. *O.Crum* 85 contains “the canons of our holy father, Apa Ananias, the bishop of Hermonthis”, who is called a Christ-bearer, a Spirit-bearer and “the son of the Apostles”. Crum observed that the text was presumably copied from a manuscript and identified the scribe as “Hand A”, who is

⁵²⁰ *P.Pisentius* 11; *O.Mon.Epiph.* 277, ll. 9-10; *O.Crum* 344 (co-recipient), 343: the ΠΡΜΝΖΟΥΝ of the bishop, who distributes vinegar; cf. Crum 1939, 687a. For Anthony and Elias, see also Winlock and Crum 1926, 135.

⁵²¹ *P.CrumST* 178. The title *papas* is used for bishops and priests; cf. Derda and Wipszycka 1994, 54-55.

⁵²² *P.Pisentius* 22, l. 28: ἀπα ὀραμῆ; *P.CrumST* 192 (= *P.Lond.Copt.* I 467): ἀββα ὀραμιος.

⁵²³ *SB* III 6087, ll. 3-5, 52-57: ed. Crum 1908, 265; cf. Winlock and Crum 1926, 134-36; Timm 1984-1992, vol. 1, 159-64.

⁵²⁴ *O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* I, p. 63, no. 2, pl. 48 (EA 21174); cf. Behlmer 2007, 167.

often the priest Victor (§3.2.4).⁵²⁵ In other words, *O.Crum* 85 is an early seventh-century copy of a text ascribed to a predecessor of Bishop Abraham. Already in Abraham's days, a church was dedicated to Apa Ananias, and before May 30, 763, a quarter of Jeme was named after "the illuminator among the saints, the saint Apa Ananias, the bishop".⁵²⁶ One of two bishops is mentioned together with one or two priests in a list of names and "days", which possibly served a commemorative purpose, and a Bishop Ananias appears in a Coptic graffito in the royal tomb of Ramesses IV in the Valley of the Kings (KV 2).⁵²⁷

A bishop called Andrew is known from Coptic documents from the Theban region, but his diocese is never specified. Since two of the documents are tentatively dated to the seventh/eighth century on the basis of the handwriting, the bishop involved cannot be equated with the bishop of the diptych, Abraham's direct predecessor (before ca. 590).⁵²⁸

Perhaps, the Moses of the diptych is attested as the "bishop, confessor and ascetic" Moses who appears in a fragmentary Coptic deed that was written on the back of a Greek document dated AD 508. Since the deed seems to refer to the *Topos* of Epiphanius, which was located in the diocese of Hermonthis, it is plausible that the Moses involved was the bishop of Hermonthis, instead of his colleague, Moses of Koptos (see below).⁵²⁹ Moses of Hermonthis may have been ordained in 621 at the earliest. He is excluded from the analysis, since there is no record of personal contact between him and any member of the Theodosian network.

Bishop Pesynthius of Hermonthis is excluded from the analysis, since he does not fit in the historical reconstruction of the Theodosian network. According to the Upper Egyptian version of the Copto-Arabic *Synaxarium* for Kihak 20, which is preserved in a two late Arabic manuscripts,⁵³⁰ he was ordained before the Persian invasion of Egypt, after being approved by Constantine of Asyut and Shenoute of Antinoopolis. Pesynthius of Koptos and Abraham of Huw allegedly assisted during his consecration. When the bishop of Esna died during the Persian period, the patriarch ordered Pesynthius of Hermonthis to supervise the vacant see, since the Persians would have prohibited the ordination of new bishops – a statement that is not confirmed by other sources, and even contradicted by the appearance of new bishops,

⁵²⁵ *O.Crum*, p. 8: "The script shows him to have been prob. a predecessor of Abraham".

⁵²⁶ O.Berlin, P.12488: the steward to the church of Apa Ananias; *O.Crum* 212: "the steward of Apa Ananias"; the quarter is mentioned in *P.KRU* 24, ll. 67-68. For the date of *P.KRU* 24 (+ *SB* I 5567), see Ziegler 1999, 170.

⁵²⁷ *O.Mon.Epiph.* 565 and n. 1; *I.Syring.* 141: ed. Baillet 1920-1926, vol. 4; cf. Winlock and Crum 1926, 19, 133; Worp 1994, 289, n. 37. Crum suggested that the Ananias of *O.MoscowCopt.* 67 (1926, 133-34) was a bishop, but see §3.1.5.

⁵²⁸ *O.Crum* 288; *O.CrumST* 325; *O.Vind.Copt.* 373 and 383 (seventh/eighth century). For the proposed date, see Förster 2002, 284. On Bishop Andrew, see also Winlock and Crum 1926, 135; Timm, vol. 1, 162.

⁵²⁹ *O.CrumST* 405. The deed is linked to Moses of Koptos in Till 1962, 146 and Winlock and Crum 1926, 135.

⁵³⁰ Paris, BN arabe 4869 (seventeenth century; incomplete) and a manuscript in Luxor (undated): ed. Basset 1909, 490-91, which is supplemented by a section in Winlock and Crum 1926, 136-37; cf. Doresse 1949, 338.

namely Shenoute, Pisrael and Anthony, in ca. 620. After living in Esna for seven years, Pesynthius fell ill, was brought to the monastery near Toout, where he once lived as a monk, and died. Attempts to link him to the Theodosian network creates chronological problems:

1. He cannot have been ordained before the Persian invasion in 619/620, since Abraham of Hermonthis was still in office in 621.
2. If he succeeded Abraham in the course of 621 and replaced the bishop of Esna before 629, he would have died before 636. This course of events is incompatible with the order of names in the Moir Bryce diptych, which lists Moses as Abraham's successor, and Pesynthius as Moses' successor. Pesynthius was a contemporary of the patriarchs Benjamin I (626-665) and Agathon (665-681), judging from the fact that Benjamin I was first mentioned to as the patriarch in office. When he died, in 665, his name was added to the list of deceased bishops, and Agathon was presented as the current patriarch, whereas the reference to Pesynthius remained unchanged. It implies that Pesynthius was still bishop, when Agathon became patriarch of Alexandria, and that he was in office in ca. 665.⁵³¹
3. If there was a saintly Bishop Pesynthius in the 620s, between Abraham and Moses, it is strange that he is commemorated by the *Synaxarium*, a late Arabic liturgical source, but not by the seventh-century diptych.

In short, the notice on Pesynthius of Hermonthis in the *Synaxarium* presents us with a chronological conundrum that cannot be solved presently, since we do not know how the text was composed, and which of the information is historically correct.⁵³² Nevertheless, it would be a pity to discard the notice as an unreliable source, for some details are too specific to ignore, such as the collaboration between Constantine and Shenoute.

Documents from the Theban region relating to a Bishop Pesynthius are all linked to the bishop of Koptos, as will be explained in the discussion of Dataset 4 (§7.1). The only hint that there may have been a second Bishop Pesynthius, in ca. 630, is the reference to “our holy fatherly lord, the Bishop Apa Pesynthius, him of Koptos” in a letter from the priest Mark to Psan.⁵³³ Since Mark and Psan both knew the prelate of Koptos, Mark did not need to specify that he meant “him of Koptos”, unless there was a homonymous bishop.

Abraham of Huw supposedly was a contemporary of Pesynthius of Koptos, Shenoute of Antinoopolis and Constantine of Asyut, and would have been in office in the 620s. In that

⁵³¹ *SB* III 6087, ll. 1-5, 35, 57: ed. Crum 1908, 259-60, 263-65. Pesynthius and Patriarch Agathon both appear in Pap.Berlin P. 9447 (unedited); cf. Winlock and Crum 1926, 228, n. 5; Schiller 1950, 178-79.

⁵³² The chronological complexities are also discussed in Gabra 1984b, 27-29.

⁵³³ *O.CrumVC* 76, ll. 1-4.

case, he is to be distinguished from the homonymous bishop of Huw who consecrated the monastic church founded by the sixth-century abbot Manasse.⁵³⁴ He is excluded from the Theodosian network as well, since he does not appear in documentary texts.

The theory that Pesynthius' successor was named Moses is based on the titles of the early Sahidic and Bohairic versions of the *Encomium*, which state that Bishop Moses of Koptos delivered a speech of praise on Pesynthius, after the latter's disciple John, also called "Matoi", agreed with him about the contents.⁵³⁵ The collaboration between Moses and John suggests that Moses directly succeeded Pesynthius, in 632 at the earliest. Direct contact between Pesynthius and the future Bishop Moses is also suggested by the identification of the latter with the priest Moses who was present at the bishop's deathbed. Before he died, Pesynthius allegedly said to him: "Moses, Moses, Moses, direct your life well. You know in what manner you have lived your life under me (that is, under my supervision). Take good care of my documents, for you will need them, and you will not escape that burden".⁵³⁶ It was the "burden" of the episcopal office, which Pesynthius had tried to escape himself (§3.1.2).

Bishop Peter is mentioned in the Coptic circular letter, in which the late Bishop Pesynthius is reverently called "thrice-blessed" (§3.1.2). Peter was a contemporary of Patriarch Benjamin I, and was in office sometime between 643/4 and 665. The reference to Pesynthius may indicate that Peter was a Theban bishop, and that either he or the sender of the circular letter was a bishop of Koptos and successor of Pesynthius.

§3.2 OTHER MEMBERS OF THE THEODOSIAN NETWORK

§3.2.1 *Isaac I, John, Enoch, Epiphanius and Psan of the Topos of Epiphanius*

The hermitage that evolved around the ancient tomb of Daga (TT 103) on the northern slope of Shaykh Abd al-Gurna is named after its best known inhabitant, the anchorite Epiphanius, who lived there in the first quarter of the seventh century. Two periods of settlement can be distinguished: the first one in the first half of the seventh century, and the second one in the first half of the eighth century.⁵³⁷ Unlike the Monastery of St Phoibammon it was carefully excavated and documented by a team from the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.⁵³⁸

⁵³⁴ Winlock and Crum 1926, 230; Timm 1984-1992, vol. 4, 1120, 1124, n. 5. For Manasse, see the *Life of Manasse* in Amélineau 1895, 673; cf. Coquin 1991b, 1518.

⁵³⁵ *Q*, fol. 1; *B*, Amélineau 1887, 73. For Moses, see also Winlock and Crum 1926, 135, 228-29.

⁵³⁶ *S*, fol. 78b: ed. Budge 1913, xlix, 123 (for $\pi\epsilon\kappa\bar{\rho}$ read $\bar{\pi}\eta\kappa\bar{\rho}$); the translation is my own.

⁵³⁷ Dekker 2016a, 765, fig. 1.

⁵³⁸ Winlock and Crum 1926, 25-50, pl. I; cf. Timm 1984-1992, vol. 3, 1336-38; Wipszycka 2009a, 184-87, fig. 46. On the development of the site, see Thirard 1999, 389-92, figs 1-2 and 2006, pl. VIII.

The earliest known inhabitants of the *Topos* were the anchorite Isaac I and his disciple John, who witnessed a declaration made in the presence of Bishop Abraham. On account of the relative chronology of the *Topos*, this event is placed in ca. 600 (§1.1.2.A).⁵³⁹ After Isaac disappeared from the stage, John and his disciple Enoch became “the anchorites of the mountain of Jeme”. Together with Andrew, Moses, Victor and Epiphanius they formed a small community of hermits. In that period Epiphanius went to a doctor for an eye problem.⁵⁴⁰ It appears that Andrew and Victor left the community, and that Moses lived and worked at the outlying Cell A, where he copied Biblical, homiletic and other texts.⁵⁴¹ At any rate, it was Epiphanius who inherited the *Topos* from his spiritual fathers (Enoch and Moses?).⁵⁴²

In the Arabic version of the *Encomium* on Pesynthius, Epiphanius is remembered as “a leading saint (...), who served God without ceasing with all his heart and was celebrated everywhere”.⁵⁴³ Coptic letters addressed to him confirm that he was considered as a holy man by bishops, clergymen and civil officials alike,⁵⁴⁴ on account of his remarkable spiritual and ascetic authority.⁵⁴⁵ Epiphanius’ charisma must have been extraordinary and appears to be unequaled by that of any other Theban hermit.⁵⁴⁶

Epiphanius received letters from a patriarch and from the bishops Constantine of Asyut, John of Edfu and Pesynthius of Koptos, and Serenianus (§3.1.3, 3.1.5-6). The letter from Serenianus was found in an ancient tomb in the cliff opposite the *Topos* and east of the Monastery of St Phoibammon, together with three more letters addressed to Epiphanius. It is likely that he used the tomb as a place of retreat.⁵⁴⁷ I propose to date all documents that are exclusively addressed to Epiphanius to the period before the Persian occupation, ca. 615-620.

Two Coptic letters addressed to Epiphanius are dated according to the indiction cycle. He received a declaration from (the notary?) Nonnus, dated Pachon 8 in a seventh indiction year, or May 3, 618, and a petition from the *lashane* Shenoute and “the whole community of

⁵³⁹ Dekker 2016, 757-58, fig. 1 (phases 1a-2b) and 2013, 11, Table 1 (“*O.CrumCO* 313” in phase 1b should be *O.Crum* 310). Isaac I is distinguished from Isaac II, who lived at the *Topos* in the early eighth century (phase 9).

⁵⁴⁰ *O.Crum* 379.

⁵⁴¹ Dekker 2016a, 758, fig. 1 (phase 3). On Moses, the scribe of *O.Mon.Epiph.* 3, 598, etc. (Coptic and Greek texts), see Winlock and Crum 1926, 42 and n. 2; Bucking 2007, 27-36.

⁵⁴² Dekker 2016a, 759, fig. 1 (phase 4a). On Epiphanius, see Winlock and Crum 1926, 209-20.

⁵⁴³ *A*, fol. 192b. Fols 192a-194a describe a visit from Pesynthius to Epiphanius.

⁵⁴⁴ *P.Mon.Epiph.* 133 (the bishops John and Pesynthius), 162 (the archdeacon Joseph), 163 (Jemean officials).

⁵⁴⁵ *P.Mon.Epiph.* 131 (“anchorite”), 133 (“spiritual [father] who truly bears Christ”, “anchorite”), 123 and 144 (“who truly bears Christ”), 142 (“anchorite, who truly bears Christ”), 162 (“God’s temple”, “prophet and anchorite”), 163 (“Spirit-bearer and recluse”), 164, l. 4 (“perfect in all Christ’s virtues”), 184 (“anchorite”).

⁵⁴⁶ His successor Psan (or Pson) was generally acknowledged as an anchorite, in *O.Mon.Epiph.* 172, 193, 199, 277, 281, 404 and *P.Mon.Epiph.* 431, but he is called “who truly bears the Christ” in *O.Mon.Epiph.* 123 and 193 only. The *lashane* Strategius of Ne recognized the anchorite Cyriacus of TT 65-66 as a “most holy spiritual father” and “anchorite” in *O.Mon.Epiph.* 151.

⁵⁴⁷ *O.Col.inv.* 1903 (MMA 23.3.702) from “Site XX”; cf. Winlock and Crum 1926, 20, 218-19, pl. 1.

the *castrum* of Jeme”, written on Parmoute 29 of an eighth indiction year, or April 24, 620.⁵⁴⁸ In this petition the Jemean authorities asked Epiphanius to intercede with the *lashane* of Toout, on behalf of prisoners in Toout, Jeme and Tabennese, at the start of the Persian period.

From ca. 620 onward, Psan is greeted in letters addressed to Epiphanius or mentioned as the co-recipient.⁵⁴⁹ In this period, the priest Mark was closely associated with the *Topos*, for both he and the “headstrong traitor” Psan are greeted by Elisaius.⁵⁵⁰

When the relations between the *Topos* and Theodosian bishops intensified, Psan’s role became increasingly important. As “the disciple of Apa Epiphanius”, he attended the council held on account of the priest Cyriacus, that also involved Pesynthius of Koptos, Pisrael of Qus and Anthony of Ape.⁵⁵¹ Psan’s appearance as Epiphanius’ disciple and representative suggests that the anchorite was still alive, but for some reason could not come himself. In addition, Psan’s participation in a council may indicate that the event took place at the *Topos*, where Pesynthius and Pisrael stayed for some time (§3.1.2, 3.1.8). In the same period, Apa John sent Psan a request on behalf of the husbandman Abraham, who had to sell his cattle on account of the tax.⁵⁵² Apa John, who did the buying and selling, pitied the man and asked Psan to entreat “my lord father” (Epiphanius) and “the bishops” (Pesynthius and Pisrael?) to contact a civil official and the priest Mark.

Another inhabitant of the *Topos* was Jacob, who claimed to have assisted Epiphanius and Psan with the building of a tower. He refers to the “First Tower”, a massive mud brick construction that comprised grain bins on the ground floor and living apartments and latrines on the two upper floors.⁵⁵³ The Coptic documents that were found under the floor of this building include a letter addressed to Pesynthius of Koptos and another one sent by Pisrael of Qus,⁵⁵⁴ which predate its construction. They apparently stayed at the *Topos* already before the

⁵⁴⁸ *P.Mon.Epiph.* 142, 163; cf. Dekker 2016a, 759, fig. 766.

⁵⁴⁹ *P.Mon.Epiph.* 106, 144, 482, *O.Mon.Epiph.* 123, 417; cf. Dekker 2016a, 759, fig. 1 (phase 4b).

⁵⁵⁰ *P.Mon.Epiph.* 327 and n. 10, where Crum suggests “simple-minded”, rather than “headstrong”. *O.Saint-Marc* 426 features Apa Elisaius in close association with Epiphanius.

⁵⁵¹ *P.Pisentius* 11; cf. Winlock and Crum 1926, 214, 219; Dekker 2016a, 759.

⁵⁵² *O.Mon.Epiph.* 165.

⁵⁵³ *P.KRU* 75, ll. 64-67. For the “First Tower”, see Winlock and Crum 1926, 32-35, figs 3. Thirard (2006, 369) argued that the testament refers to the smaller “Second Tower”, since Epiphanius could not have been involved in the construction of the “First Tower”, for the discovery of his ostraca under its floor would imply that he was already dead, and the tower was constructed from a different kind of bricks than the other buildings. However, the “First Tower” must be the older one, since it was built “on the bed-rock of the ancient tomb court, where that bed-rock was exposed in the early days of the community, but buried soon after”, and therefore, it was “one of the earliest parts begun” (Winlock and Crum 1926, 32). Epiphanius apparently did not mind or notice that one of his early letters disappeared under the floor of the tower that he, Psan and Jacob were building. Later, the tower was *repaired* with smaller bricks, the same kind that was also used to build the “Second Tower” (*idem*, 32).

⁵⁵⁴ *O.Mon.Epiph.* 469 and 150 respectively. Pisrael sent the second letter to an archdeacon, who is expected to have worked in an urban context, and consequently, it must have been Pisrael who stayed at the *Topos*. The discovery of his letter at the *Topos* implies that the letter was returned to sender, or that this piece is a copy.

“First Tower” was built, and it was probably constructed after their coming to the *Topos* in ca. 620, in order to offer them a better accommodation or office than a dark hermitage.

A fragmentary letter to Bishop Pesynthius, which came from an underground statue room in the tomb of Daga, refers to Apa Abraham and Apa Epiphanius as being “in prison”. Crum observed that they were “presumably the hermit and the bishop”.⁵⁵⁵ In view of the above-mentioned petition, it is plausible that Epiphanius visited a prison, but the link with the bishop is actually based on the name only and far from certain.

The letter addressed to Bishop Pesynthius that is dated February 3, 623 refers to “the place of Psan and the priest Moses”,⁵⁵⁶ but Epiphanius is not mentioned, which creates the impression that he was no longer alive. When Epiphanius died, probably between April 620 and February 623, Psan inherited the *Topos* by force of Epiphanius’ (lost) testament.⁵⁵⁷ The suggestion of a common dwelling for Psan and the priest Moses is unexpected, since the latter reappears neither in Psan’s correspondence nor in the testament of his successors, Jacob and Elias I (see below). The monk Moses of the outlying Cell A, who could have been a priest, in view of the Biblical and homiletic texts copied by him⁵⁵⁸, seems to have left the *Topos*, before Epiphanius became a leading hermit, and is therefore an unlikely candidate. Perhaps, the priest Moses who is greeted in a letter addressed to Bishop Pesynthius came to Western Thebes and shortly stayed at the *Topos* as a member of the episcopal entourage (§7.4.1).⁵⁵⁹

While Psan was the leader of the *Topos*, he drew up a testament, appointing Jacob as his heir. When Elias I came to dwell with them, Psan added a codicil to the testament, stating that Jacob should not expel Elias from the *Topos*. He also stipulated that, if Elias were to inherit the dwelling-places from Jacob, he should ensure that they would not pass into the hands of relatives, but bequeath them to a pious monk.⁵⁶⁰

It appears that Pesynthius planned to visit Psan in ca. 630, at any rate after the bishop’s return to his see in ca. 629, and before his death in 632 (§3.1.2). When Epiphanius and Psan died, they were buried at the cemetery on the east side of the *Topos*, probably below a

⁵⁵⁵ *P.Mon.Epiph.* 466, ll. 8-10 and n. 8. On the find spot, “Rubbish Hole in 5”, see Winlock and Crum 1926, 31-32. In Dekker 2016a, 760 and fig. 1, I still consider the possibility that Bishop Abraham was involved.

⁵⁵⁶ *P.Pisentius* 22, l. 12; cf. Dekker 2016a, 760, fig. 1 (phase 5a). On the date, see §3.1.2, n. 76.

⁵⁵⁷ On Epiphanius’ testament, see *P.KRU* 75, ll. 11-14.

⁵⁵⁸ The Greek hymns attributed to Moses include *O.Mon.Epiph.* 598, 600-601, 603-607. For the use of Greek, mainly for liturgical texts, see Winlock and Crum 1926, 254-56; Boud’hors 2010a, 180-81.

⁵⁵⁹ *P.Pisentius* 7. In Dataset 4 they are not equated. The Arabic version of the *Encomium* states that Pesynthius was concealed four months a year, and that the priest Moses, the abbot of the Monastery of Apa Samuel, knew where he was (see §3.1.2, n. 73). If this were historically correct, Moses could have stayed at the *Topos* as a guest, not as a regular inhabitant, and Pesynthius may have stayed in a place of retreat.

⁵⁶⁰ Psan’s testament is lost, but the information is drawn from the Coptic testament of Jacob and Elias I, *P.KRU* 75, ll. 20-31; cf. Dekker 2016a, 760-61, fig. 1 (phase 5b-6); Garel, *Les testaments*, vol. I, 50. Elias I is distinguished from Elias II, who lived at the *Topos* in the eighth century; cf. idem, 762-63, fig. 1 (phase 9b).

canopy-like construction, but unfortunately, the early graves below this building were pillaged and found empty.⁵⁶¹ Since Epiphanius was locally venerated as a saint, the *Topos* attracted visitors, judging from the graffiti that they left in the tomb of Daga.⁵⁶²

§3.2.2 *Pesente, Zael, Moses and Psate of the hermitage at TT 29*

The hermitage at TT 29, on the southern slope of Sheikh Abd al-Gurna, is best known as the dwelling of the monk Frange, who lived in the first half of the eighth century, but it was already occupied in the first half of the seventh century.⁵⁶³ Pesente and Zael were probably contemporaries of Bishop Abraham.⁵⁶⁴ Perhaps, they were the co-recipients of a Coptic letter that was purchased on the antiquities market in Luxor.⁵⁶⁵ It was addressed to Papnoute, Pesente and Sael (Zael), and if the last two persons were the hermits of TT 29, Papnoute could have been a senior hermit, for he is addressed first. In view of the tentative dating for the later duo Zael and Moses, Pesente and Zael are placed before ca. 615.

In ca. 615-620, Bishop Ezekiel sent Zael and Moses a letter, in which he also greeted Psate (§3.1.4).⁵⁶⁶ The letters relating to Moses and Psate can be divided in two groups: those intended for Moses, which also include greetings to Psate,⁵⁶⁷ and those addressed to both of them, probably from a later period, when Psate had become a respected hermit as well.⁵⁶⁸ For methodological reasons I link the letters that were addressed to Moses only to the first group, although he could have received personal mail, after Psate became respected like him.⁵⁶⁹

Letters addressed to Moses only reveal that he was in contact with Bishop Abraham, Epiphanius and the hermit Terane, a combination of ties that points to ca. 620 (§3.2.6).⁵⁷⁰ Moses also received letters from (Bishop) Ezekiel,⁵⁷¹ the priest Mark,⁵⁷² the priest Victor (after 621; §3.2.4),⁵⁷³ and the brethren of an unidentified monastic community.⁵⁷⁴ Moses was addressed respectfully as “the anchorite”, “the scribe” or “calligrapher”, “the pious brother”,

⁵⁶¹ Winlock and Crum 1926, 45-48, fig. 9.

⁵⁶² Winlock and Crum 1926, 214 and n. 6. Epiphanius is called a Spirit-bearer in *P.Mon.Epiph.* 163, l. 20.

⁵⁶³ *O.Frangé*, p. 9-23. On the earlier inhabitants, see also Heurtel 2008, 167-78.

⁵⁶⁴ *O.Frangé* 793-794 and p. 397. *O.Frangé* 792 was certainly addressed to Bishop Abraham.

⁵⁶⁵ *SBKopt* II 876: *ed. princeps* Coquin 1975/1976, 78-79; cf. Dekker 2016a, 764.

⁵⁶⁶ *O.Frangé* 761.

⁵⁶⁷ *O.Frangé* 760, 764-769, 782, 784, 786(?). *O.Frangé* 752, a letter from Moses, mentions Psate.

⁵⁶⁸ *O.Frangé* 762-763, 772, 780-781; *P.Pisentius* 76 (Louvre N 688).

⁵⁶⁹ *O.Frangé* 771, 773-774, 777-779, 783.

⁵⁷⁰ *O.Frangé* 779, 797 (Epiphanius), 774 (Epiphanius, Terane), and 792 (Bishop Abraham).

⁵⁷¹ *O.Frangé* 760.

⁵⁷² *O.Frangé* 777-779.

⁵⁷³ *O.Frangé* 771.

⁵⁷⁴ *O.Frangé* 766 (765, 767).

“the revered and holy piety”, or more cordially as “my beloved brother”.⁵⁷⁵ In these days, the community of TT 29 included Moses, Psate and David.⁵⁷⁶

After 620, when Psate became as respected as Moses, the duo received letters from a certain George, the priest Mark, and the priest Victor, each of whom called them “beloved brethren”, which implies that they were all peers.⁵⁷⁷ For the first time, Mark and Victor identify Moses as a priest, a fact that was not evident from their earlier letters. Perhaps, he was ordained, when Victor was already abbot of the Monastery of St Phoibammon for some time, that is, after 621. It cannot be established when Moses and Psate died, and who inhabited TT 29 in the period between them and Frange.

§3.2.3 *The priest Mark of the Topos of St Mark the Evangelist*

Mark was the priest (and probably steward) of the *Topos* of St Mark the Evangelist on the hill of Gurnet Murai, opposite TT 29,⁵⁷⁸ and a contemporary of Bishop Pesynthius,⁵⁷⁹ Bishop Horame,⁵⁸⁰ Epiphanius,⁵⁸¹ Psan,⁵⁸² Moses and Psate of TT 29,⁵⁸³ and Ezekiel and Djor of TT 1152.⁵⁸⁴ He once travelled to Antinoopolis, in order to deliver a letter to Bishop Shenoute, and the latter’s reply was written in Mark’s hand (cf. 3.1.7).⁵⁸⁵ J. van der Vliet described Mark as “a mere priest, but he acted as a scribe and agent for all kinds of people, from peasants and camel drivers to bishops and other civil and ecclesiastical dignitaries. His accomplishments as a scribe made him an ideal intermediary, travelling up and down the Nile” and “a key person in the miaphysite network of the Theban region”.⁵⁸⁶

On the basis of his distinctive handwriting, Crum and, more recently, Anne Boud’hors and Chantal Heurtel attributed various texts to Mark, including the record of the solar eclipse

⁵⁷⁵ *O.Frangé* 760, 784, 779, 774, 771, 766 and (again) 779 respectively.

⁵⁷⁶ *O.Frangé* 768.

⁵⁷⁷ *O.Frangé* 762: George; 763: unknown; 772: unknown; 780-781: Mark; *P.Pisentius* 76: the priest Victor.

⁵⁷⁸ *O.Mon.Epiph.* 84, l. 30: “Mark, this humblest priest of the *Topos* of St Mark the Evangelist”. On Mark, see *O.Saint-Marc*, pp. 9-11; *O.Frangé*, pp. 22, 397; Heurtel 2007, 2010 and 2013; Van der Vliet 2015.

⁵⁷⁹ *P.Pisentius* 22 (scribe/ sender?), 29 (scribe/ sender); cf. Winlock and Crum 1926, 223, n. 10; Van der Vliet 2012, 34-35. On *O.CrumVC* 76 (scribe/ sender), see Heurtel 2013, 79-81.

⁵⁸⁰ *P.Pisentius* 22, if Mark, the scribe, was also the sender.

⁵⁸¹ *P.Saint-Marc* 426; *P.Mon.Epiph.* 198, 482; *O.Frangé* 779.

⁵⁸² *O.Mon.Epiph.* 165, 327 (Mark and Psan are greeted), 482; *P.Pisentius* 22; *O.CrumVC* 76; cf. Van der Vliet 2015, 131-32. The list of Coptic texts relating to Mark in *O.Saint-Marc* (pp. 19-22) also includes *O.Mon.Epiph.* 277, from a certain Mark to Psan. Since Crum did not identify the priest Mark as the scribe, and since it seems unlikely that the priest would address Psan, a long-time friend, reverently as “your fatherhood”, I decided to exclude this letter from the analysis.

⁵⁸³ *O.Frangé* 770 (with greetings to the deacon Mark), 777-779, 780-781, 784; cf. Heurtel 2008, 169, 174.

⁵⁸⁴ *O.Saint-Marc* 41.

⁵⁸⁵ *P.Pisentius* 10 (recto); cf. Van der Vliet 2012, 34-35.

⁵⁸⁶ Van der Vliet 2012, 35-36.

of March 10, 601 (§3.1.1),⁵⁸⁷ and the Coptic version of Damian's synodical letter on a wall in the tomb of Daga at the *Topos* of Epiphanius.⁵⁸⁸ Judging from these attributions, Mark is at least attested from March 10, 601 until February 3, 623, the date on which he wrote a letter addressed to Bishop Pesynthius (§3.1.2).⁵⁸⁹ Perhaps, he is last attested in ca. 630, if *O.CrumVC* 76, his letter to Psan, dates to the period when Bishop Pesynthius no longer stayed at the *Topos* of Epiphanius (§3.1.2).

Mark's close ties with Epiphanius and Psan create the impression that he frequently visited their *Topos*, for instance, to copy Damian's synodical letter,⁵⁹⁰ but it is unknown if he was a monk himself. The origin and status of the *Topos* of St Mark are unclear as well. It was a small community that accommodated no more than six individuals at the same time: there were few sleeping places (three cells and two reused ancient tombs), six looms, and five or six graves in the cemetery.⁵⁹¹ Georges Castel, who excavated the *Topos* of St Mark in 1971–1973, assumed that it developed around an ancient tomb that was reused by an anchorite. When he died, a church and communal buildings were built at the entrance of the tomb in memory of him, and in the course of time, these buildings were adapted and extended several times. The “monastery” eventually became a place of pilgrimage.⁵⁹² Castel's view implies that the original patron of the *Topos* was a local hermit saint, but in the time of the priest Mark, it was dedicated to Mark the Evangelist. Maurice Martin and René-Georges Coquin proposed a different view, that it was not a true monastery, but “the center where each week, on Saturday and Sunday, hermits living in the caves or tombs of the neighborhood gathered together”.⁵⁹³ Boud'hors and Heurtel agree that the *Topos* was not a real monastic community or a center of pilgrimage, and suggest that it was an administrative center, perhaps created by Bishop Abraham, where economical and juridical texts were stored, as well as a center of education, where apprentices were trained in copying Biblical texts.⁵⁹⁴ In view of Mark's reputation as a professional scribe and a copyist, it is plausible that the *Topos* functioned as a

⁵⁸⁷ *SBKopt.* II 1238; Heurtel 2013, 77-79. On the characteristics of Mark's handwriting, see *O.Saint-Marc*, pp. 9-10; Heurtel 2010, 139-41.

⁵⁸⁸ *P.Mon.Epiph.*, p. 331, n. 4; cf. Winlock and Crum 1926, 98, n. 1, where the copyist is identified with the scribe of *P.Pisentius* 29 and *O.Mon.Epiph.* 84 (= Mark); cf. Van der Vliet 2012, 128, 133-34 and 2016, 157-58.

⁵⁸⁹ *P.Pisentius* 22.

⁵⁹⁰ The priest Mark is greeted in *P.Mon.Epiph.* 198 (letter to Epiphanius) and in *O.Mon.Epiph.* 327 (letter to Epiphanius? Both Mark and Psan are greeted). Cf. Winlock and Crum 1926, 223; Van der Vliet 2015, 132.

⁵⁹¹ Castel 1991, 2042-43. On the *Topos* in general, see *O.Saint-Marc*, pp. 6-8; Winlock and Crum 1926, 15, pl. 1 (no. XII); Timm 1984-1992, vol. 6, 2787; Wipszycka 2009a, 187-90; Grossmann 2013. A mummy from the *Topos* is examined in Castel 1979.

⁵⁹² Castel 1991, 2042. Gasco (1999, 201, n. 1) suggests that the *Topos* was a small funerary chapel for monks.

⁵⁹³ Martin and Coquin 1991, 2040.

⁵⁹⁴ *O.Saint-Marc*, p. 8, 10.

kind of scriptorium and a scribal office, but the possible link with Bishop Abraham cannot be confirmed. In fact, Mark does not appear in Abraham's episcopal network (§5.4.4).

Judging from the dates proposed for the Greek papyri, Coptic ostraca and pottery from the *Topos*, it was inhabited from the sixth to the early eighth century.⁵⁹⁵ Even if it did not start as a true monastic (or semi-anchoretic) community, at least one of its members was called a “monk of the holy *Topos* of Abba Mark” in the second half of the seventh century.⁵⁹⁶

§3.2.4 *The priest Victor and David of the Monastery of St Phoibammon*

The priest Victor was Bishop Abraham's disciple, adviser and secretary. In the second half of the 610s Abraham appointed him as his heir and future successor as abbot of the Monastery of St Phoibammon (§3.1.1).⁵⁹⁷ Victor was probably involved in the monastic administration at an early stage, in order to relieve Abraham in his double capacity as bishop and abbot.

Four letters sent to Abraham by the same sender include greetings both to the brethren of the monastery and Victor, who appears once as a deacon, and thrice as a priest.⁵⁹⁸ The letters relating to the priest Victor were sent by an abbot called John, whom Crum identified on the basis of his name and handwriting. Another letter attributed to John, or to his scribe, mention a Festal letter by Patriarch Damian, which may point to an early date for John and for Victor's ordination to the priesthood (before 607?),⁵⁹⁹ but it does not help us to establish when Victor became Abraham's assistant.

While examining the letters from Bishop Abraham, Crum attributed thirty-one pieces to a secretary designated as “Hand A” and four texts to “Hand B”, but since they were difficult to distinguish, he suggested that they were the work of the same secretary, probably Victor.⁶⁰⁰ However, none of the letters attributed to these scribal hands was signed by the priest Victor, and Krause observed that at least one piece ascribed to “Hand A” was not written by Victor, but by Salom, the steward of a church dedicated to St Phaustus.⁶⁰¹ The present study will not review Crum's attribution of documents to “Hand A” or “Hand B”, for only a small number of letters has been published with a photograph, too few for a

⁵⁹⁵ *O.Saint-Marc*, p. 8; Gascou 1999, 201; Ballet 2007, 135.

⁵⁹⁶ *O.Qurnat Mar'y* inv. 249, ed. Gascou 1999, 203-07. Boud'hors and Heurtel consider the possibility that some of the individuals who officiated in the church may have been monks; cf. *O.Saint-Marc* 8.

⁵⁹⁷ *P.Lond.* I 77, ll. 1, 29; transl.: MacCoull 2000, 55 [sections 1-3], 58 n. 2. On Victor, see *O.Crum*, pp. xiii-xv; Krause, *Apa Abraham*, vol. 1, 24, 26, 81-83; idem 1969, 59-62; Garel, *Les testaments*, vol. I, 87-97.

⁵⁹⁸ The deacon Victor: *O.Crum* 104 (= Krause, *Apa Abraham*, vol. 2, no. 29); the priest Victor: *O.Crum* 49-50, 90, O.Berlin P. 8703 (= Krause, *Apa Abraham*, vol. 2, nos 47, 106, 30 and 90 respectively).

⁵⁹⁹ *O.Crum* 49 (from John), 50 (from John of the *Topos* of Apa [...]), 90 (from John), 249 (the sender, whose name is lost, asks for Damian's Festal letter). On the handwriting, see *O.Crum*, p. 62, under *O.Crum* 249.

⁶⁰⁰ *O.Crum*, pp. xiv-xv; cf. Krause, *Apa Abraham*, vol. I, 8.

⁶⁰¹ Krause, *Apa Abraham*, vol. I, 8-9, based on *O.Crum* 51 (= vol. 2, no. 92).

paleographic study.⁶⁰² In addition, it would take years to obtain photographs of all the relevant pieces and to compare the handwriting. Crum already observed that several scribal hands are “very similar” and difficult to distinguish from each other.⁶⁰³ For these reasons, the present study focusses on the content of the letters, and only takes into account comments on scribal hands, if there are additional criteria for linking texts to members of the Theodosian network.

Two Coptic documents featuring Bishop Abraham and Victor record a date according to the indiction cycle. In the month Mesore of a seventh indiction year, the priest Moses promised Abraham and Victor that he himself, or his heir, would return the loom part that he borrowed from them.⁶⁰⁴ The date corresponds to July/August 603 or 618, but in view of Victor’s prominent role as a co-recipient (in contrast with earlier letters, in which he is merely greeted), the later date is more likely. Likewise, a declaration drawn up in the presence of the bishop and Victor on Mesore 14 of an eighth indiction year, should date from August 7 of the year 619, instead of 604 (*O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* II 16; §3.1.1). In another relevant document, which was probably written in 621, Victor requested clergymen to arbitrate in a dispute, while carrying out Abraham’s orders (*SBKopt.* II 906; §3.1.1). These late texts reveal that Victor was increasingly involved in Bishop Abraham’s activities at the end of his episcopate.

During Abraham’s final years, he and Victor were assisted by the monk David, who is called “Hand D” on the basis of his handwriting.⁶⁰⁵ David added his greetings to *SBKopt.* III 1360, a letter from the bishop, and appears to be the scribe of *O.Crum* 293 and *SBKopt.* II 906, which were sent by Abraham and Victor respectively.⁶⁰⁶

Victor succeeded Abraham as abbot of the Monastery of St Phoibammon before October 17, 621 (§3.1.1), had his testament drawn up on December 4, 634, when he was ill, and he probably died in the period 637-640.⁶⁰⁷ These dates imply that four documents that feature (the abbot) Victor and are ascribed to “Hand D” should be placed in the period 621-

⁶⁰² Examples of “Hand A”: *O.Crum*, pl. 1 (*O.Crum* 71); *O.Lips.Copt.*, pls 5, 7-8, nos 10 (*O.Crum Ad.* 59 = Krause, *Apa Abraham*, vol. 2, no. 98), 12 (*O.Crum Ad.* 7 = Krause, *Apa Abraham*, vol. 2, no. 3), 14 (*O.Crum Ad.* 10; not included in Krause, *Apa Abraham*, vol. 2); an example of “Hand B”: *O.Crum*, pl. 1 (*O.Crum* 295).

⁶⁰³ *O.Mon.Epiph.* 1, n. 2: similarity between the work of the scribe of *O.Mon.Epiph.* 1 (Elias I), “Hand A” (Victor?) and the copyist of Damian’s synodical letter (Mark; cf. §3.2.3). Esther Garel informed me that she intends to conduct a palaeographical study.

⁶⁰⁴ *O.Crum* 311. The loom part is identified in Krause, *Apa Abraham*, vol. 2, 336-38; Schmelz 2002, 166.

⁶⁰⁵ *O.Crum*, p. XV, pl. 1 (E. 301); cf. Krause, *Apa Abraham*, vol. I, 9. *O.Crum* 158, 304 and *O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* II 12 are attributed to “Hand D” and signed by David. Crum also ascribed *O.Lips.Copt.* 24-25 (= *O.Crum Ad.* 13, 22) to “Hand D”, but they were written and signed by Mark; cf. *Saint-Marc*, pp. 9-10, 19. Letters sent by Victor and certainly written by “Hand D” are *P.Pisenti* 76 and *O.MMA* 1152 inv. 79-180: ed. Garel 2016.

⁶⁰⁶ For *SBKopt.* II 906, see Krause 1972, 105 (ed. princeps).

⁶⁰⁷ *P.KRU* 77 + *P.Sorb.inv.* 2680 (Khoiak 8, ind. 8): ed. Garel, *Les testaments*, vol. 2, 57-108. For the date of Victor’s death, see idem, vol. I, 105, 108.

640.⁶⁰⁸ Recently, Garel proposed the hypothesis that David died before Victor, and that he is mentioned in the latter's testament as "the late David, my brother", who was also the father of Jacob and Peter, who were biological brothers.⁶⁰⁹ Victor considered them and another David as his spiritual sons and appointed them as his joint heirs,⁶¹⁰ for they had supported him, when he suffered (from poor health?), and he had already involved them in the administration of the monastery.⁶¹¹ This may explain why an acknowledgement of debt addresses both Victor and "the brethren",⁶¹² and why letters written by David/"Hand D" refer to "the brethren"⁶¹³ or to "the most pious monk and steward" of the Monastery of St Phoibammon, whom Garel proposed to identify with Victor with some hesitation.⁶¹⁴ However, Victor is usually called a "priest", and rarely a "monk".⁶¹⁵ Perhaps, the monk and steward was one of Victor's heirs, who represented him in administrative matters, when he faced hardships.⁶¹⁶

§3.2.5 Ezekiel and Djor of the hermitage at TT 1152

The hermitage at TT 1152 in the hillside west of Shaykh Abd al-Gurna was excavated by a team of the Polish Center for Mediterranean Archaeology (Warsaw University) in the period 2003-2013. It is the site where three Sahidic manuscripts, including the *Encomium* on Bishop Pesynthius, were found in a rubbish dump in 2005. TT 1152 had been adapted for habitation, and the nearby tomb TT 1151 possibly served as a chapel.⁶¹⁷ There were two periods of

⁶⁰⁸ *O.Crum* 304: Thoth, fourth indiction; *O.Crum* 223: tenth (?) indiction; *O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* II 12: Thoth 23, eleventh indiction; *O.Crum* 158: twelfth indiction; cf. Garel, *Les testaments*, vol. I, 94-95, 104 and here, n. 202.

⁶⁰⁹ *P.KRU* 77 + *P.Sorb.inv.* 2680, ll. 59-60. If the scribe David really had children, he either became a monk at a relatively late age, or he was a layman active at the monastery. According to Garel (*Les testaments*, vol. I, 126), the term "*pistos*" may refer to laymen who live permanently at a monastery, or who are directly associated with it, even if they do not live there.

⁶¹⁰ *P.KRU* 77 + *P.Sorb.inv.* 2680, ll. 59-61, 120: "you, my beloved sons, David, Jacob and Peter".

⁶¹¹ *P.KRU* 77 + *P.Sorb.inv.* 2680, ll. 61-64.

⁶¹² *O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* II 12, dated September 20, 622 or 637. If David is indeed the scribe, 622 is more likely.

⁶¹³ *O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* II 11 ("Hand D"; the date is lost) and II 14: Paone 22, third indiction ("Hand D").

⁶¹⁴ *O.Crum* 158 (David/"Hand D") and 200 ("Hand D"); cf. Garel, *Les testaments*, vol. I, 92, 95, n. 336-37.

⁶¹⁵ *P.Lond.* I 77, l. 30. An overview of texts relating to Victor is presented in Garel, *Les testaments*, vol. I, 94-97.

⁶¹⁶ If David/"Hand D" died before December 634, the dated texts were written in the following order:

- *SBKopt.* II 906: Summer of 621 (Bishop Abraham, Victor);
- *O.Crum* 223: Summer of 621-April 622 (instead of 636/637; Victor);
- *O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* II 12: September 20, 622 (instead of 637; Victor, "the brethren");
- *O.Crum* 158: May 623-April 624 (instead of 638/639; "the monk and steward", the "most humble" David);
- *O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* II 14: June 16, 629 (instead of 644; "brethren", "the monk" David);
- *O.Crum* 304: September 630 (instead of 615 or 645; Victor, David);
- *O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* II 13: June 23, 631 (instead of 646; "the most humble" David, without Victor or brethren).

⁶¹⁷ Górecki 2007a, 183-90 (cat. no. 77 is manuscript *Q*, which contains the *Encomium*). See also the preliminary excavation reports published the period 2003-2013, esp. Górecki 2007b, 263-72; idem 2010, 297-303. Most of them are available online at <http://www.pcma.uw.edu.pl/en/pam-journal/>. For the location of TT 1152, see Winlock and Crum 1926, 10-11, pl. I, nos VII-VIII; cf. Wipszycka 2009a, 32, 190-196, figs 48-50.

occupation: from the sixth to the early seventh century, and from the second half of the seventh to the end of the eighth century, or a little longer.⁶¹⁸

Ezekiel and Djor, who lived at the hermitage in the early period, received letters from the priest Victor of the Monastery of St Phoibammon. Two of the letters were addressed to both men, and a third message was sent to Djor only. E. Garel identified the script as “Hand D”, that is, the hand of the monk David of the Monastery of St Phoibammon (§3.2.4).⁶¹⁹

Ezekiel and Djor were somehow associated with a “*Topos* in the desert”, perhaps the *Topos* of Apa John in the desert. In a Coptic contract a camel herd promised the leader(s) of the “*Topos* in the desert” among other things to draw water for Ezekiel and Djor every month for a day. The document was almost certainly written down by the priest Mark, who had also acted as a scribe in the case of a similar Coptic contract between Severus, priest of the “*Topos* of Apa John in the desert”, and the camel herd who was employed for a year (§3.2.3).⁶²⁰

§3.2.6 *Terane of the “Place of Apa Terane”*

Little is known about Terane, apart from the fact that his dwelling was located south of TT 29 and that he was a contemporary of Bishop Ezekiel, Zael and Moses of the hermitage of TT 29, and Epiphanius.⁶²¹ His association with Zael points to the period ca. 615-620, but his contact with Epiphanius and particularly the request that the latter would forward letters to unnamed individuals in Toout indicate that he was still part of the Theodosian network in 620.⁶²² Terane’s dwelling is perhaps to be identified with Dayr al-Nasara, one of the monastery in the desert northwest of Hermonthis/ Armant.⁶²³

§3.2.7 *The archimandrite at Karnak*

“The archimandrite”, a monastic authority who headed a large monastic community, appears in four Coptic letters, each time without a name.⁶²⁴ It is unclear whether they refer to one or several individuals, but since the texts date from approximately the same period, it is practical for our analysis of the Theodosian network to assume that one individual is meant. He was a

⁶¹⁸ Górecki 2010, 303.

⁶¹⁹ O.MMA 1152. inv. 155, 174, 180; ed. Garel 2016. Victor could be involved in nos 136, 170.

⁶²⁰ *O.Saint-Marc* 41 (Ezekiel, Djor), *O.Mon.Epiph.* 84 (Mark, Severus).

⁶²¹ *O.Frangé* 761, 774. See also *O.Frangé* 803; *O.Mon.Epiph.* 383, to Enoch of the *Topos* of Epiphanius; cf. Dekker 2016a, 758, fig. 1 (phase3a, before 615). This letter is accidentally omitted from Dataset 1.

⁶²² The sender of *O.Frangé* 774 wants to know whether Epiphanius has already sent his letters to Toout. In the petition of April 620 Epiphanius is requested to contact the *lashane* of Toout (*P.Mon.Epiph.* 163; §3.2.1).

⁶²³ *O.Frangé*, p. 26: “... on peut suggérer de l’identifier avec celui qui est appelé Deir el-Nasara par J. Doresse et Deir el-Miseikra par P. Grossmann”; cf. Doresse 1949, 345; Grossmann 2007, 11-13, map.

⁶²⁴ *P.Mon.Epiph.* 133 and 505 (Crum ascribed them to the scribe of *P.Mon.Epiph.* 130), 281; *O.CrumST* 179. On the title in general, see Winlock and Crum 1926, 130; Kahle 1961, 54; Wipszycka 2009a, 329-31.

contemporary of Bishop Pesynthius, both bishops called John and Epiphanius in ca. 615-620, and is mentioned in a letter addressed to Psan “the anchorite” from the 620s.⁶²⁵

The archimandrite is linked to the monastic community associated with the church in the festival temple of Thutmose III at Karnak, on account of a Greek inscription in the sanctuary that lists a number of archimandrites (§2.2.2). The community must have belonged to the diocese of Ape.

§3.2.8 *The priest Cyriacus of the Monastery of Apa Macarius*

In ca. 620, Cyriacus, the priest and abbot of the Monastery of Apa Macarius, (son) of Patoure, caused a great scandal by meeting Pehroudion’s wife outside the monastic walls, despite the fact that Bishop Pesynthius had forbidden him to speak with her. In the presence of Antony of Ape, Pisrael of Qus, and Psan of the *Topos* of Epiphanius, Cyriacus swore a solemn oath that nothing untoward had happened, and that he would be excommunicated and degraded, if he ever dared to contact her again, or to give something to her or Pehroudion.⁶²⁶

A certain Cyriacus, “(the son) of Patoure”, stood surety for Jacob, son of Kapollos, and advanced the latter’s rent to Pehroudion, who was apparently a land owner.⁶²⁷ Assuming that this man was the priest and abbot, although he is not identified as such, the name of his father suggests that he was a brother of Apa Macarius, the patron of the monastery. If so, Macarius may have been a pious layman, who founded a monastery, the administration of which was entrusted to members of his family. This monastery stood near Pshenhor, which lay on the east bank of the Nile, ca. 6 km south of the city of Qus, in the district of Koptos.⁶²⁸ It fell under Bishop Pesynthius’ jurisdiction in ca. 620, but since it lay closer to Qus than to Koptos, it would be more logical, if it belonged to the diocese of Qus (§2.1.2, 2.2.3-4).

Cyriacus had a problematic relationship with the villagers of Pshenhor. First, they stole a team of oxen from the monastery, and afterwards, they also took the camel, as he informed Bishop Pesynthius.⁶²⁹ The latter reacted by writing a letter to the village authorities,

⁶²⁵ *P.Mon.Epiph.* 133 and 281 respectively.

⁶²⁶ *P.Pisentius* 11. The declaration was drawn up by a professional scribe, but Cyriacus added his name in the empty slot in the first line. *P.Mon.Epiph.* 494 indicates that Cyriacus visited the bishop at (at the *Topos*).

⁶²⁷ *P.Pisentius* 12, recto; cf. Winlock and Crum 1926, 111, n. 9, where Crum argues that Patoure is a personal name, whereas Timm (1984-1992, vol. 4, 1858) identified it as a toponym.

⁶²⁸ *P.Pisentius* 11, ll. 2-3: **ἸΠΖΟΤ ΕΒΟΛ ἸΠΦΝΖΦΡ**. According to Crum (1939, 718b), **ἸΠΖΟΤ** and **ἸΠΦΜΤΟ ΕΒΟΛ** (“in the presence of”) are interchangeable. The monastery was previously localized on the west bank; cf. Van der Vliet 2012, 33.

⁶²⁹ *P.Pisentius* 2.

which Cyriacus delivered to them.⁶³⁰ In other letters – not necessarily related to Pshenhor – Cyriacus made a request or reported that the arrest of a certain David caused social unrest. Of a seventh letter only the address remains.⁶³¹

A priest Cyriacus received a letter from Bishop Horame that was actually destined for Bishop Pesynthius.⁶³² Since it cannot be demonstrated that he was the priest and abbot of the Monastery of St Macarius, the two are best distinguished, but the analysis of Pesynthius' episcopal network will test the possibility that they were the same person (§7.3.2).

§3.3 A COMMON CHRONOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Now that the bishops and other members of the Theodosian network have been introduced, it is time to collect the absolute and approximate dates presented in this study, and to integrate the results in a chronological framework.

§3.3.1 *Absolute dates*

In total, nine important documents include an absolute date within the period of ca. 590-632:

- *SBKopt.* II 1238, the ostrakon that records the solar eclipse of March 10, 601, which is attributed to the priest Mark and indirectly associated with Bishop Abraham through the *lashane* Peter (§1.1.2.B, 3.1.1, 3.2.3).
- *P.Mon.Epiph.* 142, a declaration addressed to Epiphanius, dated May 3, 618 (§3.2.1).
- *O.Crum* 311, a promise to Bishop Abraham and Victor from July/August 618 (§3.2.4).
- *O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* II 16, a declaration made in the presence of Bishop Abraham and Victor on August 7, 619 (§3.1.1, 3.2.4).
- *P.Mon.Epiph.* 163, the petition addressed to Epiphanius dated April 24, 620 (§3.2.1).
- *P.Pisentius* 22, the letter to Bishop Pesynthius dated February 3, 623, which mentions Bishop Horame and Psan, and was written by Mark (§3.1.2, 3.1.10, 3.2.1, 3.2.3).
- *O.Crum* 139, a letter from the *lashane* Zachariah to Victor, the priest and abbot of the Monastery of St Phoibammon, which is dated October 17, 621 (§3.1.1, 3.2.4).

⁶³⁰ *P.Pisentius* 3, ll. 4-9. The involvement of Pshenhorites is implied by ll. 49-50, where the local official defends the villagers by saying that “the taxes of Pshenhor were taken six years in advance”.

⁶³¹ *P.Pisentius* 32.1, *P.Mon.Epiph.* 494 and 430 respectively. Crum attributed *P.Pisentius* 2 (from Cyriacus), 32.1 (from Cyriacus), 50 (address lost), *O.Mon.Epiph.* 494 (from Cyriacus) and probably 430 (from Cyriacus) to the same scribe, in Winlock and Crum 1926, 223 n. 10. In fact, *P.Pisentius* 32 comprises fragments of two separate letters, only one of which was sent by Cyriacus. The handwriting of his letter is indeed similar to that of *P.Pisentius* 2, but *P.Pisentius* 50 was written by another scribe, whose ω and ζ are shaped differently. In general, the script of *P.Pisentius* 50 is more carefully executed. It must be observed that Cyriacus' name is spelled “ $\kappa\gamma\rho\iota\kappa\omicron\varsigma$ ” in *P.Pisentius* 11-12, recto and 32.1, and “ $\kappa\gamma\rho\iota\alpha\kappa\omicron\varsigma$ ” in *P.Pisentius* 2-3.

⁶³² *P.Pisentius* 22.

- *O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* II 12, another declaration made in Victor's presence and recorded by David on September 20, 622 or – less likely in – 637 (§3.2.4).
- *O.Crum* 304, a declaration made in Victor's presence, which was recorded by David in September 630 (§3.2.4).

§3.3.2 *Approximate dates*

In addition to the absolute dates, I proposed approximate dates on the basis of the ties among the members of the Theodosian network, and the relative order of hermits or civil officials:

- Bishop Abraham was ordained in ca. 590 (§3.1.1).
- The Monastery of St Phoibammon was founded in ca. 595 (§3.1.1).
- The Jemean authorities acknowledged the rights of the brethren of the Monastery of St Phoibammon to choose their leader in ca. 595-600, when Papnoute was *lashane*. The first abbot turned out to be Bishop Abraham (§3.1.1).
- Bishop Abraham was in contact with Isaac I and John, who lived at the future *Topos* of Epiphanius in ca. 600 (§3.2.1).
- Victor first appeared as a deacon, but became a priest soon (before 607?; §3.2.4).
- Pesente and Zael inhabited the hermitage at TT 29 before ca. 615 (§3.2.2).
- Probably in ca. 615-620, Bishop Abraham had his testament drawn up (§3.1.1).
- From 618 onwards, Victor increasingly assisted Bishop Abraham (§3.1.1, 3.2.4).
- Before May 3, 618, Epiphanius “the anchorite” became the leader of the *Topos* and came to be called (§3.2.1).
- The letters that are solely addressed to Epiphanius are dated to ca. 615-620, including those sent by the bishops Constantine, Serenianus and John (§3.2.1, 3.1.3, 3.1.5-6). The archimandrite is first attested in this period as well (§3.2.7).
- Zael, Moses and Moses inhabited the hermitage at TT 29 in ca. 615-620, and were in contact with Bishop Ezekiel and Terane (§3.2.2, 3.1.4, 3.2.6).
- In 620, Epiphanius received requests to contact the *lashane* of Toout and to forward letters. At the time, he was in contact with Moses of TT 29 and Terane (§3.2.1, 3.2.6).
- The bishops Pesynthius and Pisrael definitely stayed at the *Topos* of Epiphanius in ca. 620, at the beginning of the Persian period. The “First Tower” was built after their arrival, probably to offer them a suitable accommodation (§3.1.2, 3.1.8, 3.2.1).

- In ca. 620 Epiphanius was occasionally represented by his disciple Psan, particularly when the bishops Pesynthius, Pisrael and Anthony were involved. One such occasion was the council held on account of the priest Cyriacus (§3.1.2, 3.1.8-9, 3.2.1, 3.2.8).
- The bishops Constantine, Shenoute and Pisrael were involved in another council in ca. 620 (§3.1.3, 3.1.7-8).
- Bishop Abraham died in the summer of 621 and Victor succeeded him as abbot of the Monastery of St Phoibammon before October 17 of the same year (§3.1.1, 3.2.4).
- If the Moir Bryce diptych commemorates the bishops of Hermonthis, Abraham was succeeded by Moses, which happened in 621 at the earliest (§3.1.11).
- Epiphanius probably died between April 24, 620 and February 3, 623 (§3.2.1).
- Bishop Pesynthius probably returned to the diocese of Koptos. In ca. 630, he told the priest Mark that he planned to visit Psan soon (§3.1.2, 3.2.1, 3.2.3).

§3.3.3 *The chronological framework*

The relative distribution of the bishops and the other members of the Theodosian network over time is presented in Tables 3-4, which cover the period from the beginning of Abraham's episcopate to Pesynthius' death (ca. 590-632). In Table 3 the bishops are arranged by diocese and from north to south. The dioceses proposed for Serenianus and Ezekiel are hypothetical. Straight vertical lines indicate that an episcopate started or ended in a particular year (for instance 621, when Abraham died), whereas broken lines indicate that a period of office is dated approximately. Since it cannot be established when Shenoute, Pisrael, Antony, Moses and Horame disappeared from the stage, a question mark is placed at the end of their bars.

The same procedure is adopted in Table 4 for the other members of the Theodosian network, who are arranged by community. In this table, the broken lines represent estimated dates based on the appearance of a social actor in relation to other individuals in the network.

CONCLUSION

This chapter presented a prosopographical study of the bishops, hermits, abbots and priests who were connected through a common, Theodosian network, on the basis of which the wider social network of the Theban region was reconstructed. Most bishops dwelled in the Theban region, but Constantine of Asyut and Shenoute of Antinoopolis resided in Middle Egypt, whereas John and Horame of Edfu lived in the southernmost part of the country. The other members of the Theodosian network belonged to eight religious communities, which were

scattered over three dioceses: the *Topoi* of Epiphanius and St Mark the Evangelist, the Monastery of St Phoibammon, the hermitages at TT 29 and TT 1152, and the Place of Apa Terane in the diocese of Hermonthis; the community headed by the archimandrite, probably at Karnak, in the diocese of Ape; and the Monastery of Apa Macarius near Pshenhor, in the diocese of Koptos. The Theodosian and Theban networks, the position of the bishops therein, and their topographical extension are analyzed in the following chapter (§4.2, 4.4-4.5).

One important aim underlying this chapter was to determine which documents actually or probably relate to Abraham, Pesynthius and the other members of the network, which was necessary for the preparation of Datasets 1-4 (§4.1, 5.1, 7.1). In some of the biographies non-documentary sources and inscribed objects were discussed as well. In this study the liturgical Moir Bryce diptych is linked to Abraham, but the silver plate from Luxor and the famous image of a Bishop Abraham on a wooden panel are not. Pesynthius is associated with a Coptic circular letter on a liturgical matter, the *Encomium*, the Arabic *Life of St Andrew* (on the history of the monasteries of Apa Samuel and the Cross), and a notice in the Copto-Arabic *Synaxarium*, which features the bishops Constantine and Shenoute as well. In the Arabic version of the *Encomium* both Pesynthius and Epiphanius are presented as holy men.

Another aim of this chapter was to establish as many absolute or approximate dates as possible for the reconstruction of a common chronological framework, in which the members of the Theodosian network could be embedded. The relative chronology of the *Topos* of Epiphanius forms the backbone of this framework, and documents of several bishops, monks and priests are dated on the basis of their association with Epiphanius (ca. 615-620) or with Epiphanius and Psan (ca. 620). As it turns out, Abraham died in 621, later than is generally assumed, and the information in the Copto-Arabic *Synaxarium* on Pesynthius of Hermonthis is not confirmed by documents and it is even incompatible with the reconstructed timeframe. For this reason, this bishop is excluded from the Theodosian network. The chronological framework offers the possibility to examine the development of the Theban network (§4.2), and the absolute and approximate dates proposed for Abraham's documents are also used for the reconstruction of the ecclesiastical apparatus of the Hermonthite diocese by period (§5.4).

Since the Theban and Theodosian networks are too complex to just describe or present in a chronological table, tools from SNA are applied in the next chapter, in order to visualize the networks and to analyze their properties, both in general and in the course of time.

Chapter 4: The social network of the Theban region

INTRODUCTION

Now that the main Theodosian actors in the social network of the Theban region have been introduced and embedded in a common chronological framework, we will examine the nature of that network and the position of Abraham, Pesynthius and their colleagues therein.

This chapter comprises five sections. It starts with a brief description of the documents that were selected for Datasets 1-2, while paying particular attention to the writing material, the provenance, the dating, the general nature of the texts, and the network population.

In the second section quantitative network analysis is applied to Dataset 1, in order to examine the Theban network. The analysis of this network in three layers will enable us to check whether related but differently sized networks display much variation in their cohesion, core membership, and the relative importance of central actors:⁶³³

1. The **Theodosian network** forms the core of the Theban network and includes the bishops, priests and monastic leaders who were introduced in §3.1-2 and “the patriarch of Alexandria”, who is treated as a single actor, since his identity is often unspecified. Even if an absolute or tentative dating of a document points to Damian (578-607), Anastasius I (607-619), Andronicus (619-626), or Benjamin (626-665), the patriarch is treated as a single actor, since there was only one incumbent at the time. In addition, his marginal role should not distract us from the actual central actors (Pl. 2.1).
2. The **extended network** comprises thirty-nine social actors, namely the members of the Theodosian network plus ten individuals associated with two or more members of that network, including at least one bishop, at different occasions. This criterion applies to Peter, the *lashane* of Jeme, who was in office during the solar eclipse of 601;⁶³⁴ Paham, son of Pelish, from Jeme;⁶³⁵ Amos, son of Hello, from Jeme;⁶³⁶ the priest Kalapesius, the clergyman Alexander and an archdeacon;⁶³⁷ Patche, the estate manager;⁶³⁸ Strategius, the *lashane* of Ne (Thebes/Luxor);⁶³⁹ a clergyman Elias, who was associated with Bishop Anthony;⁶⁴⁰ and Zachariah, a *lashane* of Jeme (Pl. 2.2).⁶⁴¹

⁶³³ CD:\Dataset 1\Network analysis.docx, “Network analysis 1A”, based on Dataset 1.xlsx, spreadsheets “Theodosian network”-“Theban network”.

⁶³⁴ O.Berlin P 8700 (Abraham); *SBKopt.* II 1238 (Mark); cf. §3.1.1.

⁶³⁵ *O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* II 2 (Abraham); *P.Mon.Epiph.* 163 (Epiphanius); cf. §3.1.1.

⁶³⁶ *SBKopt.* I 295 (Pesynthius); *P.Mon.Epiph.* 163 (Epiphanius); cf. §7.5.2.

⁶³⁷ *O.Mon.Epiph.* 150 (Pisrael); *P.Pisentius* 19 (Pesynthius); cf. §7.4.3.

⁶³⁸ *P.Pisentius* 2 (Pesynthius); O.Bâle Lg Ae BfJ 31d (Mark); cf. §7.3.4.

⁶³⁹ *P.Pisentius* 1 (Pesynthius), *P.CrumST* 178 (Pesynthius, “Papas” or Bishop Anthony); cf. §7.5.2.

⁶⁴⁰ *O.Crum* 344 (Anthony), *O.Mon.Epiph.* 277 (Psan, priest Mark); cf. §3.1.9.

3. The complete **Theban network** consists of 189 nodes, which represent all the social actors or groups identified in the documents selected for Dataset 1. People are considered as a group, when their exact number is unknown, or when actions cannot be attributed to particular actors. This way of counting implies that the actual number of people involved was considerably higher than can be established (Pl. 3.3).

The third section concentrates on the development of the Theban network. Therefore, the network is subdivided into three subnetworks that represent the periods 600-609, 610-619 and 620-630 (graphs 5-7 on Pls 4-5).⁶⁴² Documents dated before 600 are excluded, since they feature one member of the Theodosian network (Bishop Abraham) only. Two texts postdating 630 are omitted as well: the testament of Jacob and Elias I of the *Topos* of Epiphanius does not include bishops (*P.KRU* 75; §3.2.1), whereas the *Moir Bryce diptych* does not record a personal tie between the bishops Abraham and Moses of Hermonthis, which is the very reason why Moses is excluded from the Theodosian network (cf. §3.1.1, 3.1.11).⁶⁴³

The fourth section focusses on the structural position of Abraham, Pesynthius and their colleagues in the social network of the Theban region.

The final section analyzes Dataset 2, in order to establish the topographical extension of the Theodosian network. By examining the spatial extension of the relations of Abraham, Pesynthius, their colleagues and other prominent members of this network (Epiphanius, Psan, the priests Mark and Moses), we can check whether Theodosian activity was limited to the countryside, or extended to the district capitals as well.

§4.1 THE DOCUMENTS SELECTED FOR DATASETS 1-2

§4.1.1 *Dataset 1: The Theban network in 600-630*

Dataset 1 consists of seventy-six documents. One of them, Abraham's testament (*P.Lond.* I 77), is written in Greek, the rest in Coptic. The dossier includes thirty-five inscribed limestone flakes, twenty-one inscribed pieces of pottery and twenty papyri (46.1%, 27.6% and 26.3%, respectively). Most papyri relate to Bishop Pesynthius or Epiphanius.⁶⁴⁴

⁶⁴¹ *SBKopt.* II 906 (Bishop Abraham, priest Victor), *O.Crum* 139 and 308 (priest and abbot Victor); cf. §3.1.1.

⁶⁴² CD:\Dataset 1\Network analysis.docx, "Network analysis 1B", based on Dataset 1.xlsx, spreadsheets "600-609"-"620-630".

⁶⁴³ *P.Lond.Copt.* I 468 (verso) and *P.CrumST* 192 (= *P.Lond.Copt.* I 467) are excluded, since they both feature just one member of the Theodosian network, namely the bishops John and Horame respectively.

⁶⁴⁴ List 1; Dataset 1.xlsx, spreadsheet "Selected documents". The percentages are not representative for Theban documents, for the proportion of ostraca in relation to papyri may vary, depending on the corpus and the period that are being examined. As for the documentary and non-documentary material from the *Topos* of Epiphanius, over 70% was written on pottery, ca. 12% on limestone, ca. 17% on papyrus; cf. Winlock and Crum 1926, 186. Zael and Moses of the hermitage at TT 29 mainly wrote on limestone flakes, but Frange's correspondence,

Fifty-six out of seventy-six documents have a recorded provenance (73.7%). They all originate from Western Thebes, and more particularly from the *Topos* of Epiphanius (23.7%), the hermitage at TT 29 (22.4%), the Monastery of St Phoibammon (13.2%),⁶⁴⁵ the hermitage of TT 1152 (10.5%), the *Topos* of St Mark (2.6%), and TT 310 (1.3%).

For each document I propose a date based on the chronological framework presented in §3.3 and Tables 3-4. Twelve documents are assigned to the period 600-609,⁶⁴⁶ eighteen to the period 610-619,⁶⁴⁷ and forty-six to the period 620-630 (15.8%, 23.9% and 60.5%).⁶⁴⁸

Dataset 1 includes thirteen documents that relate to Bishop Abraham (17.1%), and sixteen texts that certainly or probably involve Bishop Pesynthius (21.1%). In general, it comprises requests and petitions, promises, declarations, announcements of a council or the coming of an important person, documents authorizing the priest Victor to cultivate a field, the record of the solar eclipse of 601, and Bishop Abraham's testament.

§4.1.2 Dataset 2: Localities associated with the Theodosian network

Dataset 2 includes 134 documents, which are written in Coptic, except for Bishop Abraham's Greek testament.⁶⁴⁹ The selected documents record direct links between members of the Theodosian network and localities, whether toponyms or archaeological sites, in ca. 600-630. Six more texts were taken into consideration, but eventually excluded from the analysis:

- *P.KRU* 105, which mentions the town of Jeme and the Monastery of St Phoibammon, predates the period under consideration (§3.1.1).
- *O.Crum Ad.* 59 predates 600 as well. It supposedly refers to the transfer of Bishop Abraham's residence from the *Laura* of St Phoibammon to the monastery, but the *Laura* is not mentioned explicitly (§3.1.1).
- *O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* II 3, a declaration drawn up for Bishop Abraham, mentions the toponym “**ⲧⲃⲏⲛ**[...]” and “**ⲡⲣⲙⲡ**[.....]ⲉ”, which the editor proposed to reconstruct as “**ⲧⲃⲏⲛⲃⲉ** (?)”, “Tbebe (?)”, and “**ⲡⲣⲙⲡⲗⲁⲧⲉⲣⲙⲟⲩⲧ**ⲉ”, “der Mann vom (Kloster des

which dates to the first half of the eighth century, mainly consists of pottery: only 84 out of 627 (13.4%) letters were written on limestone; see *O.Frangé*, pp. 15, n. 44 and 22.

⁶⁴⁵ The documents that originate from the Monastery of St Phoibammon are listed in Godlewski 1986, 153-60. On Bishop Abraham's testament, which was found here before the official excavations, see Godlewski 1986, 54.

⁶⁴⁶ *BKU* I 70; *O.Crum* 49-50, 90, 310, 379; *O.Mon.Epiph.* 105, 107, 124, 185, 245; *SBKopt.* II 1238.

⁶⁴⁷ *O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* II 16; *O.Crum* 311; *O.Frangé* 760, 777-79, 782, 784, 786, 792-94, 797; *P.Lond.* I 77; *P.Mon.Epiph.* 131, 133; *P.Saint-Marc* 426; New York, O.Col. inv. 1903.

⁶⁴⁸ *O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* II 2; *O.Crum* 139, 308, 343-44; *P.CrumST* 178-79, 255; *O.CrumVC* 76; *O.Frangé* 761, 771, 774, 780-81, 785; *O.MMA1152*. inv. 79, 90, 136, 155, 170-71, 174, 180; *O.Mon.Epiph.* 150, 172, 277, 281; *P.Mon.Epiph.* 153, 163, 165, 198, 327, 466, 482; *P.Pisentius* 2, 7, 10 recto, 11, 19, 22, 29; *O.Pisentius* 76; *SBKopt.* I 295; *SBKopt.* II 906; *P.Saint-Marc* 41; O.Bâle Lg Ae BfJ 31d.

⁶⁴⁹ List 2; CD:\Dataset 2\List of localities.docx and Dataset 2.xlsx, spreadsheet “Selected documents”.

Apa) P[atarmut]e (?)”. Both reconstructions are hypothetical. As for “**πρμπ**[.....]ε”, I rather expect the name of a town or village after **πρμ**– than that of a monastery.⁶⁵⁰

- *O.Theb. Copt.* 27 mentions Bishop Pesynthius and the priest Andrew in Pasaft, but does not record a direct relationship between the bishop and the place Pasaft.
- In P.Dezaunay (private collection, location unknown) Bishop Pesynthius is informed that a certain Pheu has left for Buet, perhaps for personal business, which does not necessarily imply that the bishop had direct links with that locality.
- *P.KRU* 75, the testament of Jacob and Elias I, postdates 630 (§3.2.1).

Fifty-nine documents are written on limestone flakes, twenty-two on pottery, and fifty-three on papyri (44%, 16.4% and 39.6% respectively). The fairly high percentage of papyri is particularly due to the inclusion of texts relating to Bishop Pesynthius, Epiphanius, and Psan.

The ninety-two documents that have a recorded provenance (68.7%) mostly originate from monastic sites in Western Thebes. They came from the *Topos* of Epiphanius (23.1%), the Monastery of St Phoibammon at Dayr al-Bahri (20.1%), the hermitages at TT 29 (11.2%), TT 1152 (5.2%), “Baugruppe B” north of the German House (3.7%),⁶⁵¹ the *Topos* of St Mark (3%), and TT 310 (0.7%). One piece came from Medinet Habu, and another one was “stated to have come from Edfu”.⁶⁵²

Forty-seven documents are associated with Bishop Abraham (35.1%), whereas at least twenty-eight, and probably forty-four texts, relate to Bishop Pesynthius (20.9%-32.8%).⁶⁵³ Dataset 2 includes various kinds of documents, such as Bishop Abraham’s testament, episcopal orders, appointments of clergymen, notifications, announcements, requests, petitions, promises, guarantees, declarations, reports, letters of defense and complaints.

The analysis of Dataset 2 takes into account sixty-nine localities in total, including the eight archaeological sites in Western Thebes where documents were found *in situ*. Five sites are also mentioned, or referred to, in the selected documents, namely Medinet Habu (Jeme),

⁶⁵⁰ *O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* II, pp. 89-90, 92. Perhaps “**πρμπ**[**ατοῦ**βαστ]ε”; cf. Timm 1984-1992, vol. 4, 1856-58.

⁶⁵¹ O.Berlin P. 12486, 12488-89, 12491, 12493, 12495, 12501, 12507: Beltz 1980, 143, 160-61 (“Grabung Möller 1912”). According to Anthes (1943, 5, fig. 1), Möller did not excavate in 1912, but in 1911 (north of the German House) and 1913 (Dayr al-Medina, north and east of the German House). The only recorded location where he found multiple Coptic ostraca is “Baugruppe B”; idem, 22; Müller (forthcoming), 311, n. 106. O.Berlin P. 12497-97 and 12500 were acquired during Möller’s “Grabungsreise” in 1912 (Beltz 1980, 143, 160), and may have been purchased instead of excavated. Krause (1958, 9) assumed that Möller found all the listed ostraca at Dayr al-Medina.

⁶⁵² *O.Medin.HabuCopt.* 145 and *P.Lond.Copt.* I 468 (cf. Crum 1905, 223, n. 1 and 224).

⁶⁵³ Dataset 2.xlsx, spreadsheet “Selected documents”, in the column “Main social actor(s)”. If a document probably relates to Bishop Pesynthius, his name is rendered in blue.

the hermitage at TT 1152 (the “place of Apa Ezekiel”), the *Topos* of Epiphanius (“place of Epiphanius”),⁶⁵⁴ *Topos* of St Mark (“the Evangelist”), and the Monastery of St Phoibammon.

The localities extend from Alexandria in the north to Edfu in the south. Forty-six of them were situated in the district of Hermonthis (66.7%), and seventeen in the district of Koptos. (24.6%). The cities of Antinoopolis and Asyut are included in the dataset, on account of their association with the bishops Shenoute and Constantine (§3.1.3, 3.1.7). The city of Esna is also attested. The selected localities in the Theban region represent the dioceses of Koptos (21.7%), Qus (2.9%), Ape (5.8%) and Hermonthis (60.9%).⁶⁵⁵

Occasionally, it was difficult to establish whether toponyms with similar names refer to the same locality or not, and whether implicit references refer to a known locality. When selecting the toponyms, I took the following decisions:

- In *O.Crum* 61 and *O.Crum Ad.* 40, which both relate to Bishop Abraham, “the city” is identified as the city of Hermonthis.⁶⁵⁶
- In *O.Crum* 46, from Bishop Abraham’s dossier, “the village” is listed as separate locality, although it could refer to Jeme, since both this village and Jeme had multiple churches that fell under Abraham’s jurisdiction. The connection between “the village” and the priest Patermoute, active near Jeme, may confirm this hypothesis (§5.3.6).
- The Church of Apa Mark is identified with the *Topos* of St Mark at Qurnet Muraï, since the document in which it is mentioned (O.Berlin P.12507) was found at a tomb north of the German House, near Qurnet Muraï.
- It is plausible that the *Topos* of Apa John (*O.Crum* 310, 485), the *Topos* of Apa John in the desert (*O.Mon.Epiph.* 84), and the *Topos* in the desert (*P.Saint-Marc* 41) were one or two localities, but since their identification is uncertain, they are treated as distinct sites.
- Churches are only listed as separate localities, if their location is unknown, but those associated with a city, town or village are included in the counting for that locality.

Although it is possible to establish in which district and diocese most of the localities were situated, Dataset 2 does not include enough data to use non-metric multi-dimensional scaling for the reconstruction of a more detailed topography of the Theban region. This approach requires more (preferably hundreds of) documents and more identified localities.⁶⁵⁷

⁶⁵⁴ In *O.Crum* 310 Isaac I and John are identified as monks “of the mountain of Jeme”, Western Thebes (§3.2.1).

⁶⁵⁵ Dataset 2.xlsx, spreadsheet “Localities”.

⁶⁵⁶ Following Winlock and Crum 1926, 105.

⁶⁵⁷ In addition to the localities that are actually included in the analysis, the spreadsheet “Localities” in Dataset 2.xlsx presents another twenty-seven localities that were located in the Theban region, but do not appear in direct

The topographical network is different from Burchfield's West Theban network with regard to their scope, the selected documents and the period covered by them. The West Theban network focusses on communities, namely Jeme, the Monasteries of St Phoibammon and Paul, the *Topos* of Epiphanius and Frange's hermitage at TT 29. The documents on which its reconstruction is based were selected from well accessible editions (*O.Medin.HabuCopt.*, *O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* I-II, *O.Crum*, *O.CrumVC*, *P.KRU*, *P.CLT*, *P.Mon.Epiph.* and Heurtel's discussion of Frange's dossier).⁶⁵⁸ Their dates range from the late sixth to the eighth century, but a large number of texts are dated to the eighth century (*O.Medin.HabuCopt.*, *P.KRU*, *P.CLT*, Frange's letters). By contrast, the topographical network focusses on the localities linked to bishops who were active in ca. 600-630, and includes documents from other editions (*P.Pisentius*), separate publications and unpublished material as well (O.Berlin P.12488).

§4.2 THE THEBAN NETWORK IN CA. 600-630

The data relevant to the Theodosian, extended and Theban networks were imported in *Ucinet* 6 from Excel spreadsheets in a DL-type format and saved as *edgelists*, which create two-mode networks. Afterwards, each two-mode network was converted into two affiliation networks in the actor-to-actor and text-to-text modes. The quantitative tools were applied to the actor-to-actor mode only, since this research concentrates on the interrelations between social actors, and does not need to analyze the relations among the documents.

The use of affiliations networks has consequences for the scope of the reconstructed networks: they are undirected networks that connect all individuals attested in the same text through ties of seemingly equal strength and without distinguishing direct from indirect ties. Affiliations networks have the advantage of revealing which actors co-appear in the same texts and must have been (approximate) contemporaries. If a well-known actor occurs in a dated text, one can tentatively propose the same date for his direct and indirect ties in all texts associated with him, and test whether it is reconcilable with other such hypothetical dates.

In the present section I will first describe the network population, then the properties of the Theodosian, extended and Theban networks, arranged by level of analysis, namely the levels of the network, the components, the nodes, and the ties (§1.2.3).

relation to a member of the Theodosian network in the selected documents. Temraut appears in *P.Pisentius* 5, a letter that is *not* addressed to Bishop Pesynthius, and is therefore excluded from Dataset 2.

⁶⁵⁸ Burchfield, *Networks of the Theban Desert*, 18, 219.

§4.2.1 *The network population*

The Theban network comprises the following social groups (Pl. 3.3):⁶⁵⁹

- **Clergymen** (26.2%): fifty-one nodes represent social actors with an ecclesiastic background, ranging from the patriarch of Alexandria to “clergymen” whose function cannot be specified. They include eleven bishops, two archpriests, one archdeacon, and at least twenty-one priests and three deacons. Twelve persons are known to have been associated with a monastic community, but there were probably more.⁶⁶⁰
- **Monks** (32.3%): sixty-one nodes indicate the presence of monastic leaders, hermits and monks, some of who may have been clergymen as well, but are not recognizable as such in the selected documents. Six nodes designate monastic communities.⁶⁶¹
- **Civil officials** (16.4%): thirty-one nodes represent seven *lashanes*, financial agents (*dioiketes*), two estate managers (*pronoetes*), an *ekdikos* of the city of Hermonthis, a notary, representatives of the town of Jeme, a geometer and an imperial agent.
- **Military officials** (0.5%): a single node represents a group of soldiers.
- **Women** (2.6%): at least five social actors were female, including somebody’s wife, a mother, two young women and a widow, but there must have been more women among the citizens of Hermonthis and the villagers of Pshenhor.
- **Other people worth mentioning**: the other social actors involved are a husbandman, two camel herds, a money-lender, four messengers, people imprisoned at Jeme, Toout and Tabennese, the Persians, and two deceased men (the monk Hello, Pesente).

Little is known about the age structure, for the age of social actors is never specified. It appears that no children are involved, that some young men and women had the right age to marry (1.6%), that some people had adult children (2.1%), and that a young lad would visit monks to fetch a book for other monks.

§4.2.2 *The network level*

The Theodosian network has a density score of 0.227, which implies that 22.7% of all possible ties are recorded, whereas the scores for the extended and Theban networks decrease to 16% and 4.7% respectively, as usually happens with larger networks (§1.2.3.B).⁶⁶² By contrast, the average number of ties per actor is considerably higher in the Theban network

⁶⁵⁹ CD:\Dataset 1\List of social actors.docx and Network analysis.docx, “Network analysis 1A”.

⁶⁶⁰ The bishops Abraham, Pesynthius, Pisrael Serenianus, the priests Victor, Mark, Moses, Cyriacus, abbot John, the monk Elisaius (ID no. 42), who is excluded from the clergy, and two clergymen (ID nos 63-64).

⁶⁶¹ ID nos 109-114, including the monks of the Monastery of St Phoibammon.

⁶⁶² “Network analysis 1A”, B, based on “Theodosian network Cohesion.txt”-“Theban network Cohesion.txt”.

(9.1 edges) than in the Theodosian or extended networks (6.3 and 6.1 edges respectively). This is partly due to the inclusion of four texts that feature more than the average number of nodes: *P.Mon.Epiph.* 163 (18 nodes), *P.Pisentius* 19 and 22 (11 and 12 nodes), and *SBKopt.* II 906 (12 nodes). Without these texts the *average degree* is 7 and the density 4.6%: the average number of ties per node is close to the scores for the Theodosian and extended networks, but at the same time, the number of realized ties in the corrected network is slightly smaller.⁶⁶³

The average distances of the Theodosian, extended and Theban networks remain between two and three degrees of separation (2.1, 2.3 and 2.8 steps), which indicates that the three networks are relatively small and well connected (§1.2.3.B). The diameter increases from four steps in the Theodosian network to five steps in the extended and Theban networks. This is a small difference, considering the fact that the Theban network is 6.7 times as large as the Theodosian network, and 5 times as large as the extended network. If the diameter does not increase considerably, it implies that the Theban network is well connected, and that the Theodosian network is a fairly representative cross-section of that network. This observation that is confirmed by the relative stability of the network core and the identity of the social actors with the best centrality scores (§4.2.3, 4.2.4).

§4.2.3 *The component level*

When the *Girvan-Newman* algorithm is applied to the Theban network, it distinguishes two clusters. The smaller section, which comprises 63 nodes, is represented by Bishop Abraham, the priest Victor, David, the monks of the Monastery of St Phoibammon, Ezekiel and Djor, and the larger section of 132 nodes includes Bishop Pesynthius, Bishop Pisrael, Epiphanius, Psan, the priest Mark, the priest Moses, and Psate.⁶⁶⁴ The division between the clusters points to a close association between the inhabitants of the Monastery of St Phoibammon and the hermitage at TT 1152 (north of the hill of Shaykh Abd al-Qurna), and between the leaders of the *Topos* of Epiphanius, the *Topos* of St Mark and the hermitage at TT 29 (on or directly south of the hill of Shaykh Abd al-Qurna). In this case, the social network largely corresponds to a topographical reality, although one could observe that the *Topos* of Epiphanius is closer to the communities in the smaller cluster, and yet belongs to the larger one.

The repetitive use of the algorithm for identifying cutpoints in the Theban network reveals that the network is well-connected. Only after removing eighteen nodes in three steps,

⁶⁶³ “Network analysis 1A”, B. The corrected scores are based on Dataset 1.xlsx, spreadsheet “Check for §4.2.2” and “Check for §4.2.2 Cohesion.txt”.

⁶⁶⁴ “Network analysis 1A”, C; “Theban Network - Girvan-Newman.jpg”.

it disintegrates into fifteen components: 1) Epiphanius; 2) the bishops Pesynthius and Abraham, the priests Mark and Moses; 3) the bishops Pisrael, Ezekiel, Anthony, the priests Victor, Cyriacus, Psan, Psate, Terane, Zael, the archimandrite, Amos, Paham and Patche.⁶⁶⁵

A more economical way to dissolve the Theban network in two sections that largely correspond with the clusters is to remove Bishop Ezekiel, Epiphanius, the priests Mark and Moses, and Paham from Dataset 1 in *NetDraw*.⁶⁶⁶ These five men apparently form bridges over structural holes and are indispensable for the cohesion of the network. Bishop Ezekiel's role as a bridge is surprising, for unlike Epiphanius, Mark, Moses and Paham he does not appear among the social actors with the best centrality scores.

§4.2.4 *The node level*

In §3.1-2 I identified twenty-nine social actors as members of the Theodosian network, which is the core of the Theban network. When the *Core/periphery* algorithm in *Ucinet 6* is applied to the Theodosian, extended and Theban networks, it turns out that the two larger networks do not feature other individuals that should have been included in the Theodosian network. At the same time, the cores of the three networks as established by the algorithm are much smaller than the group composed by myself. The actual core of the Theodosian network consists of eight persons, who represent 27.6% of all social actors, including the bishops Pesynthius and Pisrael, the priests Mark, Moses and Victor, Epiphanius, Psan and Ezekiel. The extended network has a core of nine individuals, namely the members of the Theodosian network plus David (23.1%). Bishop Abraham only appears in the core of the Theban network, together with the brethren of the Monastery of St Phoibammon, Psate and Djor (6.7%), and in the corrected network, which includes all the listed actors except Psate (7.7%).⁶⁶⁷ In short, the eight core members of the Theodosian network form a stable group that reappears in the cores of the other network, which indicates that the Theodosian network is a fairly representative cross-section of the Theban network. The results also demonstrate that in general, Bishop Abraham was better connected with individuals in the periphery than with his colleagues, Epiphanius or the priest Mark.

⁶⁶⁵ "Network analysis 1A", C; "Blocks & Cutpoints1.jpg-Blocks & Cutpoints4.jpg".

⁶⁶⁶ "Theban network-Bridges.jpg".

⁶⁶⁷ "Network analysis 1A", D, based on "Theodosian network Core-periphery.txt"- "Theban network Core-periphery.txt," and "Check for §4.2.2 Core-periphery.txt".

The social actors who appear most frequently in the overviews of the centrality scores are the bishops Pesynthius, Pisrael and Abraham, the priests Mark and Moses, and Epiphanius and Psan, whereas the patriarch of Alexandria follows at a distance.⁶⁶⁸

Epiphanius and Bishop Pesynthius have the highest scores for degree centrality in the Theodosian, extended and the Theban networks. In the Theodosian network Epiphanius has most ties, in the extended network the two men share the first position, and in the Theban network Pesynthius has the best score. In the Theodosian and extended networks they are followed by the priest Mark, Bishop Pisrael, Psan, and by the patriarch and the priest Moses, who share the fifth position. In the Theban network Pesynthius and Epiphanius are followed by Bishop Abraham, the priest Mark and Psan.

Since the differences between the raw scores for degree centrality in the Theodosian network are limited (ranging from 18 to 10 ties), the inclusion of new relevant documents in Dataset 1 may result in a different order of the central actors. Changes in their relative importance are also possible in the Theban network, if the new material links a central actor, e.g. the priest Mark, with a large number of ties, but in general, the impact would be limited, since the differences between the raw scores are more pronounced (71, 63, 48, 43, 39).

Epiphanius has the highest score for closeness centrality in the Theodosian, extended and Theban network, which implies that he is closest to all the actors in each of the three networks. The priest Mark, Bishop Pesynthius and the priest Moses also appear thrice, but their relative order varies. Bishop Pisrael (Theodosian and extended networks) and Psan (Theban network) are included in the overview as well.

The actors with a high betweenness centrality are Epiphanius, the bishops Pesynthius and Abraham, and the priests Mark and Moses. Epiphanius always occupies the first position, but Pesynthius and Abraham, fourth and fifth in the Theodosian network, move to the second and fourth positions respectively in both the extended and Theban networks. As a result, Mark and Moses, originally second and third, are pushed to the third and fifth position respectively.

At first glance, the eigenvector centrality scores show the greatest variation. The three networks have Epiphanius and Bishop Pesynthius in common, and the Theodosian and extended networks both include the priest Mark and Bishop Pisrael, but there are also social actors who appear in one network only: the patriarch (Theodosian network), Psan (extended network), and the village officials who signed a petition to Epiphanius (*P.Mon.Epiph.* 163;

⁶⁶⁸ “Network analysis 1A”, E, based on “Theodosian network Centrality raw.txt”, “Theodosian network Centrality normalized.txt”, “Extended network Centrality raw.txt”, “Extended network Centrality normalized.txt”, “Theban network Centrality raw.txt”, “Theban network Centrality normalized.txt” and “Check for §4.2.3 Centrality normalized.txt”.

Theban network). These officials, who are not part of the network core, suddenly appear as central actors for two reasons. Firstly, they form a large clique of seventeen nodes that is interconnected by all possible ties, and each node is in contact with Epiphanius, the most central actor. Secondly, two of the officials, Amos and Paham, are associated with Bishop Pesynthius, who has a high eigenvector score himself, and Bishop Abraham respectively.⁶⁶⁹

Without the distorting effect of the petition the results of the corrected network are almost identical to those of the extended network: the five central actors with the best scores are Bishop Pesynthius, Epiphanius, Bishop Pisrael, the priest Mark and Psan respectively. The only difference with the extended network is that Bishop Pisrael appears in the fifth position.

§4.2.5 *The tie level*

The analysis of tie strength was limited to the Theban network, since the strongest ties are recorded between members of the Theodosian network. The ties are already included in the Theodosian and extended networks, and the analysis of these networks would lead to the same results. Strong ties are two or more instances of direct contact between specific individuals.⁶⁷⁰

Single instances of contact are omitted, for they obscure the structure of the network. In the resulting graph variations in tie strength are indicated by the thickness of the edges and by color. Purple edges represent eight instances of contact, red edges only two. (Pls 1, 3.3).

Unsurprisingly, the strongest ties appear between members of the same community: Moses and Psate of the hermitage at TT 29 (8 edges), Ezekiel and Djor of the hermitage at TT 1152 (8 edges), Bishop Abraham and Victor of the Monastery of St Phoibammon (7 edges), and Victor and David (6 edges). Epiphanius and Psan form an exception with only 4 edges. The ties between Psan and Bishop Pesynthius (6 edges), and Epiphanius and the priest Mark (5 edges) between were stronger. Mark's other strong ties were with Psan and Moses (5 edges), whereas David was in contact with both Ezekiel and Djor (5 edges).

Victor, who is not among the five best connected actors in the network, unexpectedly turns out to have the largest number of ties stronger than 1: his ties have a total strength of 32 edges. Next in line are Mark, Bishop Pesynthius, Epiphanius and Psan, whose ties have total values of 28, 26, 24 and 20 edges respectively.⁶⁷¹

⁶⁶⁹ In the corrected version of the Theban network, as described in §4.2.2, the persons with the best eigenvector centrality scores are Bishop Pesynthius (52.6%), Epiphanius (50.6%), the priest Mark (37%), Psan (36.7%), and Bishop Pisrael (34.8%); cf. "Check for §4.2.2 Centrality normalized.txt".

⁶⁷⁰ "Network analysis 1A", F.1.

⁶⁷¹ "Network analysis 1A", F.2.

The network created on the basis of tie strength can be divided into various cliques, or set of nodes that are all interconnected, ranging in size from three to five nodes and possibly consisting of ties of different strengths. The two five-node cliques largely correspond with the two clusters identified in §4.2.2: one of them includes the bishops Pesynthius and Pisrael, the priest Mark, Epiphanius and Psan (but not Moses and Psate), and a second one Victor, David, the monks of the Monastery of St Phoibammon, Ezekiel and Djor (but not Bishop Abraham). Smaller cliques are formed by Bishop Abraham, Victor, the monks of the Monastery of St Phoibammon and abbot John; Bishop Abraham, Pesente and Zael; Isaac I, John and Joseph; John, Enoch and Joseph; John, Enoch and Epiphanius; Mark, Moses and Psate; the priest Kalapesius, the clergyman Alexander and an archdeacon; and Victor, the *lashane* Zachariah and the geometer Pisrael (ID no. 132).

An attempt to study multiplex ties focuses on the bishops and priests in the Theban network who were monks or abbots, including the bishops Abraham, Pesynthius, Pisrael and Serenianus; the priests Victor, Mark, Moses, Cyriacus, and the abbot John; two clergymen (ID nos 63-64) and the monk Elisaius, although he is excluded from the clergy (ID no. 42). Through their double identities as clergymen and monks they connect the ecclesiastical and monastic spheres, but even if they are removed from Dataset 1, the spheres remain mixed.⁶⁷²

Interestingly, not a bishop but Epiphanius has most recorded ties with clergymen with a monastic background: his *ego network* reveals (indirect) contact with the bishops Pesynthius, Pisrael and Serenianus, and with the priests Mark, Moses and Cyriacus.⁶⁷³ By comparison, the *ego network* of Psan includes four monk-bishops or monk-priests (Pesynthius, Pisrael, Mark and Cyriacus), and those of Pesynthius, Abraham and Victor three, apart from themselves.⁶⁷⁴ The actual number of ties between the bishops and clergymen at monastic communities must have been much higher than can be established on the basis of the selected documents. At the same time, it can be argued that Epiphanius' high score is logical, in view of the fact that two monk-bishops, Pesynthius and Pisrael, stayed in his community, and that the monk-priests Mark and Moses lived nearby. In addition, he was indirectly linked to the priest and abbot Cyriacus, on account of whom a council was held that involved Pesynthius and Psan, "the disciple of Epiphanius" (§3.2.1, 3.2.8).

⁶⁷² "Theban network - Without clergymen at monasteries.jpg".

⁶⁷³ The *ego networks* were isolated in the *Ego network viewer* (§1.2.3, n. 44). In "Theban network-Ego network Epiphanius multiplexity.jpg" the purple nodes have a double monastic/ecclesiastical background.

⁶⁷⁴ Bishop Pesynthius: Bishop Pisrael, the priests Mark and Cyriacus; Bishop Abraham: the priests Victor and Moses, abbot John; Victor: Bishop Abraham, abbot John, the priest Moses.

Now that we have discussed the Theban network, which encompasses thirty years, we should examine how it developed by looking at the recorded ties by decade.

§4.3 THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE THEBAN NETWORK

§4.3.1 *The network in 600-609*

The network for this decade, based on twelve documents, includes twenty-one nodes, which is 10.8% of all nodes in the Theban network (§4.1.1; Pl. 4.5).⁶⁷⁵ The nodes represent Bishop Abraham, the priests Victor and Mark, abbot John, the deacon Peter, the monks of the Monastery of St Phoibammon, the monks associated with abbot John, Isaac I, John, Enoch, Epiphanius, Joseph, six more individuals with a monastic background, two *lashanes*, and a certain Theodore. The attribution of more documents to this period would increase the number of nodes and ties, and is likely to influence the centrality scores of the central actors significantly. Therefore, the network results are general indications, not final results.

The network for 600-609 has a density of 24%, an average distance of 2.1 steps and a diameter of 4 steps. Bishop Abraham is the central actor of the network and forms a bridge between three components, to which the other actors belong. The largest component is formed by the early inhabitants of the (future) *Topos* of Epiphanius and other monks associated with them (ten nodes). Another component comprises the priest Victor, Abbot John, monks and an anonymous *lashane* (six nodes), and the third one the *lashane* Peter, the deacon Peter, Mark and Theodore (four nodes).

The *Core/periphery* algorithm identifies Bishop Abraham, Victor, the brethren of the Monastery of St Phoibammon and the abbot John as the core members of the network. Mark, who is included in this network on account of his identification as the scribe of the record on the solar eclipse of 601, appears in the periphery, since he and Bishop Abraham are indirectly connected through the association of each of them with the *lashane* Peter (cf. §3.2.3).

Bishop Abraham and John occupy the first and second positions in all four overviews of best centrality scores. Thrice Isaac I occupies the third position, except for the *betweenness centrality*, when the *lashane* Peter has a better score on account of his position as a bridge between Bishop Abraham and Mark. Victor and abbot John have the same scores for *degree centrality* (no. 3), *closeness* and *eigenvector centrality* (no. 5).

The strongest ties are recorded between John and Enoch (4 edges), between John and Joseph (3 edges), and among Bishop Abraham, Victor and abbot John (3 edges). The actor

⁶⁷⁵ §4.4.1; “Network analysis 1B”, B-F, based on “600-609 Cohesion.txt,” “600-609 Core-periphery.txt”, “600-609 Centrality raw.txt” and “600-609 Centrality normalized.txt”.

with most strong ties is not Bishop Abraham, as one would expect, but John, who has a total score of 11 edges, on account of his frequent contact with members of his community, namely Isaac I, Enoch and Epiphanius, and with Joseph. Bishop Abraham, Victor, abbot John and Enoch share the second position, having a total tie strength of 8 edges. They are followed by Joseph (7 edges) and the monks of the Monastery of St Phoibammon (6 edges).

The monastic and civil communities represented in the analysis are the Monastery of St Phoibammon, a monastery that was headed by abbot John, the future *Topos* of Epiphanius, the *Topos* of Apa John, a monastic community to which Joseph belonged, and the town of Jeme (Table 5). It is tempting to identify the *Topos* of Apa John with the monastery headed by abbot John, but in the time of *O.Crum* 310, which mentions the *Topos* of Apa John, there was no abbot called John (anymore). Otherwise, he would have witnessed the declaration made by a monk, instead of Isaac I and John, who belonged to a different monastic community. It is also plausible that Joseph, who corresponded with Isaac I, John, Enoch and Epiphanius, was in fact the Joseph mentioned in *O.Crum* 310 as a monk associated with the *Topos* of Apa John. However, the name John is very common and Joseph's identity cannot be established.

If the two men called Joseph are equated, the network changes just a little: it would shrink from 21 to 20 nodes (ID nos 85 = 86), the average distance decreases from 2.1 to 2, the density increases from 24% to 25.8%, the average degree from 4.86 to 4.9, and the diameter remains 4. The core of the network would now include John and Joseph, but not the monks of the Monastery of St Phoibammon. If Bishop Abraham is removed from this hypothetical network, the three components mentioned above have the same shape, but Joseph's ties with Isaac I and John become stronger (from 2 to 3, and from 3 to 4 respectively). The only real difference is Joseph's increased centrality: he suddenly appears in the overviews for *degree*, *closeness* and *eigenvector centrality* after Bishop Abraham and John, and in the overview for *betweenness centrality* after Bishop Abraham, John and the *lashane* Peter.⁶⁷⁶

§4.3.2 The network in 610-619

This subnetwork is based on eighteen documents and comprises thirty-nine nodes (20% of all nodes in the Theban network), which represent the patriarch, six bishops, ten clergymen, including an archpriest, fifteen monks, four officials, and three laymen (Pl. 4.6).⁶⁷⁷

⁶⁷⁶ "Check for §4.3.1 Cohesion-Joseph.txt", "Check for §4.3.1 Core-periphery.txt", "Check for §4.3.1 Centrality - Joseph.txt (normalized scores)", "Check §4.3.1.jpg".

⁶⁷⁷ §4.4.1; "Network analysis 1B", B-F, based on "610-619 Cohesion.txt", "610-619 Core-periphery.txt", "610-619 Centrality raw.txt" and "610-619 Centrality normalized.txt".

With a density of 15.2%, an average distance of 2.5 steps and a diameter of 4 steps, this network is less well connected and less compact than the previous one. The network would fall apart into three components, if the priest Moses is removed. The largest component consists of twenty nodes, representing Bishop Abraham, the priest Victor, the clergymen and officials at Hermonthis, Zael and Psate, and consists of four components that are held together by Bishop Abraham and the priest Victor. The second component has fourteen nodes and includes the patriarch, the bishops, the priest Mark, Ezekiel, among others, who are arranged in four components, and Epiphanius, who forms the bridge between these components. The last component features Psate and the other individuals mentioned in *O.Frangé* 760.

The *Core/periphery* algorithm reveals that the core members are Bishop Abraham, the priests Victor and Moses, Psate, Epiphanius, Flavius Abraham, Flavius Pantonymus, Flavius Theophilus and the notary Peter. Bishop Pesynthius and the priest Mark are in the periphery.

The actors that appear in all four overviews of centrality scores are Bishop Abraham, the priests Moses and Victor, and Epiphanius appears thrice. Bishop Abraham has the best score for *degree* and *eigenvector centrality*, whereas Moses has the highest *closeness* and *betweenness centrality*. He is indeed closest to both Bishop Abraham and Epiphanius, who would be disconnected, without his presence. Although they are in a similar position, being bridges between three components, Abraham is closer to the other nodes than Epiphanius, but Epiphanius appears more often between nodes. Victor occupies the third position for degree and closeness centrality, and the second position for *eigenvector centrality*. The clergymen and officials at Hermonthis, who signed Bishop Abraham's testament, have a high *eigenvector centrality*, on account of their ties with the central actors Bishop Abraham and Victor, with whom they form a cluster of nine nodes.

It may come as a surprise that the priest Moses was a central actor, for he is less well known than Bishop Abraham, Epiphanius or Mark. Most documents relating to him originate from the hermitage at TT 29 and were published in 2007. If the edition (*O.Frangé*) by Anne Boud'hors and Chantal Heurtel had not appeared, we could not have included Moses' letters in the analysis and would not have guessed that Moses was a hub in the period 610-619.

The strongest recorded ties were between Moses and Psate (4 edges), between Moses and Mark (3 edges), and between Bishop Abraham and Victor (3 edges). Epiphanius' ties with the patriarch and Moses, and Abraham's ties with Moses, Pesente and Zael, and the contact between Pesente and Zael were less strong (2 edges). The actors with most strong ties are Moses, Bishop Abraham, Epiphanius, the duo Pesente and Zael, and Mark (11, 9, 6, 4 and 3 edges respectively).

The communities included in this network are the Monastery of St Phoibammon (with Bishop Abraham and Victor), the hermitage at TT 29 (with Pesente, Zael, Moses and Psate), the *Topos* of Epiphanius, the *Topos* of St Mark, and the clergymen and officials associated with the Holy Church of Hermonthis (Table 5).

§4.3.3 *The network in 620-630*

Forty-six documents form the basis of this sub-network, comprising 148 nodes (76% of all nodes in the Theban network), which represent the patriarch, eight bishops, an archpriest, twenty-eight other clergymen, thirty-six monks or monastic leaders, six *lashanes*, nineteen other officials, soldiers (ID no. 173), and forty-eight laymen.⁶⁷⁸ This network, which is five times larger than the Theodosian network, and four times larger than the extended network, determines the structure and appearance of the Theban network to a large degree (Pl. 5.7).

When compared to the uncorrected Theban network, the network for 620-630 is denser (6.7%), the average degree increases slightly (9.8), and the average distance between nodes is a bit shorter (2.7 steps), whereas the diameter remains 5 steps. In general, the social actors in the present network are relatively well connected.

According to the *Core/periphery* algorithm, the core member in this network are the bishops Pesynthius and Pisrael, the priests Victor and Mark, Epiphanius, Psan, Ezekiel, Djor, David and the monks of the Monastery of St Phoibammon. Bishop Abraham and the priest Moses, so prominent in 610-619, move to the periphery. The network is marked by multiple centers and horizontal (egalitarian) ties, rather than vertical (hierarchical) ones, as the mixed ecclesiastic and monastic backgrounds of the central actors demonstrate (see below).

Like the Theban network, the network of 620-630 does not easily fall apart: if we omit all core members, it falls apart in seventeen components, ranging in size from 1 to 37 nodes.⁶⁷⁹ The Girvan-Newman distinguishes two clusters: the larger one includes the patriarch, the bishops, the priests Mark and Moses, Epiphanius, Psan, Psate and Terane, among others (122 nodes), whereas the smaller one is represented by Bishop Abraham, the priest Victor, David, Ezekiel and Djor (26 nodes).⁶⁸⁰ The clusters are arranged around a large structural hole that separates Bishop Abraham from the actors in the larger component, although the actual distance between the Monastery of St Phoibammon and the *Topos* of Epiphanius was only a few hundred meters. If the recorded ties in the network were complete

⁶⁷⁸ §4.4.1; “Network analysis 1B”, B-F, based on “620-630 Cohesion.txt,” “620-630 Core-periphery.txt”, “620-630 Centrality raw.txt” and “620-630 Centrality normalized.txt”.

⁶⁷⁹ “620-630 Core members removed.jpg”. The largest component includes Bishop Abraham.

⁶⁸⁰ “Network analysis 1B”, D; “620-630 Girvan-Newman.jpg”.

and all active, he was only indirectly connected to Epiphanius through Paham, son of Pelish, and to Bishop Pesynthius through Paham and Epiphanius (or Amos).⁶⁸¹ Bishop Abraham's indirect ties are explained by the observation that he became less active in ca. 620, shortly before his death, and had to be assisted by Victor (§3.1.1).

The social actors with the best centrality scores are Bishop Pesynthius, Epiphanius, the priest Mark and Psan, generally in that order. Bishop Pesynthius has most recorded ties and appears most often between other actors, whereas Epiphanius has the best scores for *closeness* and *eigenvector centrality*. The priest Mark occupies the third position in the overviews for *degree*, *closeness* and *betweenness centrality*, and Psan follows him directly (*degree*, *closeness* and *betweenness centrality*). The other central actors are Bishop Pisrael and the priest Moses. Bishop Pisrael has high scores for *degree* and *closeness centrality*, because he has direct ties with Epiphanius, Bishop Pesynthius, Mark and Psan.

Epiphanius and Bishop Pesynthius both have a high *eigenvector centrality*, but the second, third and fourth positions are taken by Amos, Paham and the other officials who sent Epiphanius a joint petition (*P.Mon.Epiph.* 163). As they did in the Theban network, they form a large clique that distorts the results of the analysis on the network and node levels. When all actors who are known from the petition only – everyone except Epiphanius, Amos and Paham – are omitted from the analysis, the network becomes slightly less dense (6.5%), but the average distance (2.7 edges) and the diameter (5 edges) are the same. Epiphanius' centrality scores drop: he has the third position for *closeness* and *betweenness centrality*, the fourth best score for *degree centrality*, and is fifth in the overview for *eigenvector centrality*. The persons with the highest results for *eigenvector centrality* are now Bishop Pesynthius, the priest Mark, Psan, Epiphanius and Bishop Pisrael.⁶⁸²

The strongest ties are recorded between Ezekiel and Djor (8 edges), Bishop Pesynthius and Psan (6 edges), Victor and David (6 edges), Mark and Psan (5 edges), David and the duo Ezekiel and Djor (5 edges; Pl. 5.8).⁶⁸³ David's prominent position in the reconstructed network is mostly the result of letters addressed to Ezekiel and Djor from the hermitage at TT 1152, which Esther Garel attributes to David on the basis of the script (§3.2.5). Without these recently edited texts, David, Ezekiel and Djor would not appear to be important.

⁶⁸¹ “620-630 Bishop Abraham - Bishop Pesynthius.jpg”.

⁶⁸² “Network analysis 1B”, B-C and E.5, based on “Check for §4.3.3 Network cohesion.txt”, “Check for §4.3.3 Core-periphery”, “Check for §4.3.3 Centrality normalized”.

⁶⁸³ “Network analysis 1B”, F.1.

Several actors have multiple strong ties.⁶⁸⁴ Bishop Pesynthius and Mark each have the highest total value of strong ties (21 edges), and are followed by Victor and Psan (20 edges), David, Ezekiel and Djor (each 19 edges), Epiphanius (13 edges) and Bishop Pisrael (11 edges). In fact, the scores of these individuals do not vary considerably. If more relevant documents were included in Dataset 1, the relative positions would easily change.

The civil and monastic communities that appear in the dataset for 620-630 include the town of Jeme (represented by the *lashanes* and the other great men who signed *P.Mon.Epiph.* 163), the Monastery of St Phoibammon (with Bishop Abraham, Victor, David and the rest of the monks), the *Topos* of Epiphanius (Epiphanius, Psan, the bishops Pesynthius and Pisrael), the *Topos* of St Mark (the priest Mark), the hermitages at TT 29 and TT 1152 (the priest Moses, Psate, Ezekiel and Djore), and the hermitage of Apa Terane (Terane himself; Table 5).

Now that we have examined the Theban network in general as well as by decade, we will evaluate the structural position of Abraham, Pesynthius and their colleagues in that social network in the course of time.

§4.4 THE POSITION OF THE THEODOSIAN BISHOPS IN THE THEBAN NETWORK

§4.4.1 *Abraham of Hermonthis*

Bishop Abraham is the first and only Theodosian bishop attested in documents that we can safely assign to the period 600-609. Since the sources for that period are scarce, our picture of his social relations is far from complete, but the recorded ties reveal that his contacts included clergymen, monks from at least four monasteries and hermitages, and two *lashanes* of Jeme.

In the next decade, new spiritual leaders appear, particularly the priest Moses and Epiphanius, and together with Bishop Abraham they form a predominantly monastic network that heavily centers on Western Thebes. In terms of centrality, at least according to the recorded sources, Abraham appears in the first, second or third position. He has the most recorded ties and is closest to all other central actors.

During the last years of his life, in the early years of the Persian occupation of Egypt, the bishop moves to the periphery of the network, whereas Victor and David become central actors in the network. They increasingly assisted him in his activities, and after Victor had become abbot of the Monastery of St Phoibammon, both he and David were in contact with the authorities of Jeme and the anchorites Ezekiel and Djor several times (cf. §3.1.1, 3.2.4).

⁶⁸⁴ “Network analysis 1B”, F.2.

There is no written evidence for direct contact between Abraham and other Theodosian bishops, and the recorded ties in the network suggests that any correspondence between them went through the priests Mark, Moses and Victor. However, since Pesynthius, and Pisrael stayed at the *Topos* of Epiphanius, within his diocese and at a few hundred meters from his residence, it is most likely that they met in person.

§4.4.2 *Pesynthius of Koptos*

Pesynthius first appears in the period 610-619, before the Persian occupation of Egypt, when he still lived in his own diocese (§3.1.2). He has a peripheral position in the Theban network during that period, and his contacts with colleagues, the bishops Constantine and two bishops called John, and with Epiphanius are recorded by a single document only (*P.Mon.Epiph.* 133).

During the Persian period, Pesynthius stayed in Western Thebes and became the best connected actor in the network. He has the highest centrality scores, except for *betweenness centrality*, when he is second best, and the *eigenvector centrality* in the uncorrected Theban network, in which *P.Mon.Epiph.* 163 has distorted the picture. After the correction of the dataset, he is indeed the most central actor. Judging from the reconstructed network for 620-630, Pesynthius' ties with Psan and Bishop Pisrael (6 and 5 edges) were stronger than with the priest Mark or Epiphanius (4 and 3 recorded edges respectively). There are no indications of written contact between Pesynthius and the priests Moses or Victor, or Ezekiel and Djor.

In the complete Theban network, which covers thirty years, Pesynthius appears as one of the main actors together with Epiphanius, the priests Mark and Moses and Bishop Abraham. Epiphanius has better scores for the *closeness*, *betweenness* and *eigenvector centrality* (the uncorrected score, which also considers the ties in *P.Mon.Epiph.* 163), but Pesynthius has the highest number of ties (and the best *eigenvector centrality* score, after correction).

§4.4.3 *The other bishops*

Among the other Theodosian bishops, Pisrael is the only one who has a relatively high centrality. Judging from the analysis of the subnetwork for the period 620-630, he is a core member and occupies the fifth and fourth positions in the overviews for the *degree* and *closeness centrality*. His strongest ties are with Bishop Pesynthius and Psan (5 and 3 edges).

In the discussion of the Theban network on the component level (§4.2.3) it turned out that Bishop Ezekiel acted as a bridge, and that the network would fall apart in two groups after removing him, Epiphanius, Mark, Moses and Paham from the dataset.

§4.5 THE TOPOGRAPHICAL EXTENSION OF THE THEODOSIAN NETWORK

§4.5.1 *The network in general*

The topographical network of the Theban region is analyzed as a two-mode network, showing the connections between actors and localities (Pl. 6.9).⁶⁸⁵ *Ucinet 6* is used to analyze their cohesion, core/periphery, components and centrality. For the actual aim of this section, to establish the extension of the ties of the Theodosian bishops, *NetDraw* is used to examine their topographical sub-networks, using the *Ego network viewer*.

The topographical network includes twenty-nine individuals and sixty-nine localities. Only 9.1% of all possible connections are realized, the average distance is more than 3 steps of separation (3.1 edges), and the diameter is 6, which indicates that the network has many loose ends: many localities are associated with Bishop Abraham or Bishop Pesynthius only.⁶⁸⁶

The two-mode network has two cores. Among the individuals the core members are Abraham, Pesynthius, the priests Mark and Moses, and Epiphanius (19.2% of the individuals). No less than forty-two localities are assigned to the other core, including Antinoopolis, Asyut, Tabennese, Koptos, Qus, Ape, Jeme, Hermonthis, Edfu, the *Topoi* of Epiphanius and St Mark, the hermitages at TT 29 and 1152, and the Monastery of St Phoibammon (42%).⁶⁸⁷

The *Girvan-Newman* algorithm distinguishes two sections, the smaller one of which includes Bishop Abraham, the Hermonthite localities that are exclusively linked to him and Tabennese (27.6%). The other social actors and localities form one large unit (72.4%).⁶⁸⁸

The main actors in this network are Bishop Abraham, Bishop Pesynthius, Epiphanius, Mark and Moses. They always appear in this order, except in the case of the *closeness centrality*, when Pesynthius and Epiphanius share the second position, and various individuals occupy the fifth position: the patriarch, the bishops Ezekiel and Pisrael, Isaac I and John.⁶⁸⁹

The localities that occur most frequently in the overviews are the *Topos* of Epiphanius, Koptos, Jeme, the hermitage at TT 29, the *Topos* of St Mark and the Monastery of St Phoibammon. The *Topos* of Epiphanius has the best scores for all centrality measures, which is not surprising at all, since 23.1% of the documents in Dataset 2 were found there (§4.2.1). Koptos has the second best scores for *degree* and *eigenvector centrality*, and Jeme for

⁶⁸⁵ “Network analysis 2”, A, based on Dataset 2.xlsx, spreadsheet “Actor-locality edgelist”. For specific information about the spatial connections, see spreadsheet “Actors, localities, frequency”.

⁶⁸⁶ “Network analysis 2”, under B; “Topographical network Cohesion.txt”.

⁶⁸⁷ “Network analysis 2”, C; “Topographical network Core-periphery.txt”.

⁶⁸⁸ “Network analysis 2”, D; “Topographical network - Girvan-Newman.jpg”. Tabennese is also linked to Epiphanius.

⁶⁸⁹ “Network analysis 2”, E; “Topographical network Centrality.txt”.

closeness and *betweenness centrality*. Hermonthis only appears in the overview for *closeness centrality*, in the fifth position.

Although this section is particularly concerned with the spatial extension of the social ties of the Theodosian bishops, the topographical networks of Epiphanius, Psan and the priests Mark and Moses are visualized and discussed as well.

§4.5.2 *Abraham of Hermonthis*

Thirty-six localities are associated with Bishop Abraham, either on account of his social ties or the provenance of his documents, including thirty-four locations in his own diocese (Pl. 6.10). The other localities are Timamen in the diocese of Ape and Esna: the villagers of Timamen rejected Abraham's authority (O.Berlin P.12491; §2.3.1, 6.4.B); and Abraham asked someone to contact the deacon Ruben from Esna (O.Crum 126).

Three documents link Bishop Abraham to the city of Hermonthis. He was in contact with the archpriest Dioscorus, the priest Joseph and the deacon Paul of the Holy Church of Hermonthis and three urban officials, Flavius Abraham, Flavius Pantonymus and Flavius Theophilus, who signed Abraham's testament (P.Lond. I 77).⁶⁹⁰ In two other documents Hermonthis is referred to as "the city": if the *lashane* Pesente does not apologize to a man who was treated unjustly, Abraham will report his misconduct in "the city" (O.Crum 61), and if the priest Patermoute does not come and pay a fine, his degradation will be arranged in "the city" (O.Crum Ad. 40). These documents demonstrate that Abraham's ties were not limited to villages in his diocese, but also extended to the city of Hermonthis.

§4.5.3 *Pesynthius of Koptos*

The twenty-two localities that appear in relation with Pesynthius are scattered over eight different dioceses: twelve localities in the diocese of Koptos, including the city of Koptos; the *Topos* of Epiphanius, Jeme and the city of Hermonthis in the diocese of Hermonthis; Ape and Petemout in the diocese of Ape; the city of Qus; Alexandria, Antinoopolis, Esna, and Edfu (Pl. 6.10). He is most often associated with the *Topos* of Epiphanius (16 times), Koptos (4 times), Pshenhor (4 times) and Qus (4 times).⁶⁹¹ Pesynthius had direct written contact with the patriarch in Alexandria (implied by P.Mon.Epiph. 133), but his ties with the bishops of Antinoopolis and Edfu (P.Pisentius 22) and with Lord Christote of Esna (P.Pisentius 4,

⁶⁹⁰ The archpriest Dioscorus is discussed in §5.3.9.

⁶⁹¹ Dataset 2.xlsx, spreadsheet "Actors, localities and frequency", in the column "Frequency".

through the *lashane* Abraham of Pshenhor) were indirect. The statement in the *Encomium*, that Pesynthius' charity reached Aswan, is not confirmed by his documents (§3.1.2, 8.5.2).

The recorded contact between Pesynthius and the city of Koptos went through civil officials like Stephen, who was probably a *lashane*, and Callinicus (both attested in *P.CrumST* 174).⁶⁹² The senders of *P.Mon.Epiph.* 152 were probably *lashanes* as well. The bishop must have had contact with clergymen in the city of Koptos, as the *Encomium* states, but they are difficult to recognize in his documents (p. 85, §7.4.2). Two more documents mention "him (the bishop) of Koptos" and "the district of Koptos" (*O.CrumVC* 76, *P.Mon.Epiph.* 484).

Remarkably, Pesynthius' relations with the diocese of Qus are better documented. He had written and personal contact with Bishop Pisrael (*P.Pisentius* 7, 11), was informed by the clergymen of Qus about local scandals (*P.Pisentius* 18-18bis, 19), and ordered the priest Paul to excommunicate certain men and to come (*P.Pisentius* 18bis). In other words, Pesynthius imposed ecclesiastical sanctions on individuals in the diocese of Qus, probably because he was the administrator of "the eparchy of Qus", when the diocese was still vacant (§2.2.3).

During his years in Western Thebes, Pesynthius was also involved with matters associated with Hermonthis and Jeme. Once, a correspondent requested him to send for the lawyer at Hermonthis, in order to arrange a commemorative offering, probably to the benefit of the Church (*P.Mon.Epiph.* 254). It also happened that a certain Luke requested Pesynthius through Psan to contact Apa Elias, in order that the latter would write to the citizens of Hermonthis about an unspecified matter (*O.Mon.Epiph.* 172). In the general introduction we already discussed the petition of the widow, who begged the bishop to bring the *lashane* of Jeme and Amos, and to persuade them to let her stay in her house (p. 1).

Pesynthius was indirectly associated with Ape through his ties with Bishop Anthony (*P.Pisentius* 11 and probably *P.CrumST* 178; §3.1.9), a correspondent who had asked the lieutenant at Ape to send a wagon (*P.Mon.Epiph.* 460), and a man who had survived an assault in the mountain near Ape (*P.CrumST* 178).

§4.5.4 *The other bishops*

The available documentation provides little information about the ties of the other bishops in their own dioceses (Pl. 7.11). "Papās" Anthony, or Anthony of Ape, needed to be informed that brigands in the mountain of Ape assault people (*P.CrumST* 178), and Pisrael of Qus apparently ordered financial administrators to dismiss the steward of the *Topos* of St John at

⁶⁹² Stephen reappears in Antwerpen, Katoen Natie 685/01, and Callinicus in *P.Pisentius* 21; cf. §7.5.1.

Phello (*P.Pisentius* 8). Bishop Shenoute (of Antinoopolis) informed the monk Elisaius that Pisrael delivered a letter from the patriarch (of Alexandria), after having visited the patriarchal residence (*P.Pisentius* 10). Pisrael and Anthony attended a council together with Pesynthius of Koptos and Psan of the *Topos* of Epiphanius, in the diocese of Hermonthis (*P.Pisentius* 11).

Bishop Ezekiel is associated with three localities that belonged to the diocese of Hermonthis: the *Topos* of Epiphanius, the hermitage at TT 29 and the dwelling of Apa Terane. The isolated networks of the other bishops does not reveal new information.

§4.5.5 Other central actors in the Theodosian network

Although the focus lies on the topographical extension of episcopal networks, it would be a pity not to take the opportunity to visualize and briefly discuss the topographical ties of the other central actors, namely Epiphanius, Psan and the priests Mark and Moses (Pl. 7.12). Epiphanius is associated with fifteen localities in three dioceses. Twelve localities lay in the diocese of Hermonthis, such as Jeme, Toout and the various monastic communities in Western Thebes, and the other ones were Asyut in Middle Egypt, Koptos, and the “Place” of Apa Phoibammon, the location of which is unknown (§3.1.5).

Psan’s network comprises six localities in four dioceses: the *Topos* of Epiphanius, where he lived, and the city of Hermonthis in the diocese of Hermonthis; the city of Koptos and the Monastery of Apa Macarius in the diocese of Koptos; and (the dioceses of) Qus and Ape through his contact with the bishops Pisrael and Anthony.⁶⁹³

Mark’s ties extend to thirteen localities, including Antinoopolis, where he acted as a scribe for Bishop Shenoute (§3.2.3); Koptos, Pampane, Trikatan and Tses in the diocese of Koptos; Jeme, the *Topoi* of St Mark, Epiphanius and Apa John in the desert, and the hermitages at TT 29 and 1152 in the diocese of Hermonthis; and Edfu, through his implicit association with Bishop Horame (§3.2.3).⁶⁹⁴

Finally, the eleven localities associated with the priest Moses mostly are monastic sites in Western Thebes (the hermitage at TT 29, *Topoi* of Epiphanius and of St Mark, the dwelling of Apa Terane, the Monastery of St Phoibammon, the Monastery of “my father Pesente”), the Church of the Acacias, Toout, Tabennese and “the mountain” in the diocese of Hermonthis.

⁶⁹³ Hermonthis: *P.Mon.Epiph.* 171; Koptos: *O.Mon.Epiph.* 327; the monastery, Qus and Ape: *P.Pisentius* 11.

⁶⁹⁴ Antinoopolis: *P.Pisentius* 10; Koptos: *O.Mon.Epiph.* 327, *O.CrumVC* 76; Pampane: *P.Saint-Marc* 21; Trikatan and Edfu: *P.Pisentius* 22, assuming that Mark wrote this letter, which mentions Bishop Horame; Jeme: e.g. *P.Saint-Marc* 18. For the relevant documents concerning the monastic communities in Western Thebes, consult the spreadsheet “Actors, localities, frequency” in Dataset 2.xlsx.

The rest of his ties extended to Tses in the Koptite district and Timamen, which probably belonged to the diocese of Ape (§2.1.1).⁶⁹⁵

CONCLUSION

In this chapter the social network on the Theban region was examined in three layers (the Theodosian, extended and Theban networks) and during three decades on the basis of undirected one-mode networks. In such a network all social actors mentioned in the same document are linked to each another on account of their co-appearance in that document, even if part of the ties is indirect. This approach facilitated the study of the properties of the network in general and in the course of time. The analysis did reveal, however, that the structure of the Theban network is considerably determined by the network for 620-630, which is much larger than the networks for 600-609 and 610-619. The Theban network is a compact, well connected network that involves 195 individuals or groups. It is reconstructed around the Theodosian network, which includes twenty-nine actors, but its actual core consists of eight actors, who reappear in the extended and Theban networks, as well as Bishop Abraham and the monks of the Monastery of St Phoibammon.

Abraham and Pesynthius are prominent figures in the social network of the Theban region, but so are Epiphanius, the priests Mark and Moses, Psan and Bishop Pisrael. In the multi-centered Theban network the horizontal ties are more numerous than the vertical ones, and priests and monastic leaders are just as important as bishops. If they were excluded from the network, Abraham and Serenianus would be isolated from their colleagues, and our image of the relations among the bishops, local clergymen and hermits would be much less rich.

Abraham is a central actor in the subnetworks for 600-609 and 610-619, but he is not a core member of the subnetwork for 620-630, which is logical, since he died already in 621. By contrast, Pesynthius, who first appears in the periphery of the subnetwork for 610-619, becomes one of the central actors in 620-630. He is followed at a distance by Pisrael, who owes his relatively high centrality to a journey to Alexandria and Antinoopolis, and his attendance of a council together with Pesynthius, Anthony and Psan. Epiphanius is already prominent in 610-619, and Psan becomes almost as important as him in 620-630.

In this chapter I carried out three checks, to correct the impact of documents featuring a large number of nodes (on the Theban network and the network for 620-630), or to test what

⁶⁹⁵ Toout, “the mountain”, the dwelling of Apa Terane, the Monastery of “my father Pesente” and the Church of the Acacias: *O.Frangé* 774; Timamen: *O.Frangé* 786; Tses: *O.Frangé* 779.

would happen if two individuals called Joseph in the network for 600-609 were equated. The networks did not change much on the network level, but the order of the central actors varied.

The topographical analysis reveals that most localities associated with Abraham were located in his own diocese, and that he was also in contact with clergymen and civil officials in the city of Hermonthis. In addition, he was also requested to intervene in a matter involving a man from Tabennese (in the Hermonthite diocese), and inquired after a deacon from Esna. In short, Abraham's ties extended to three dioceses (Hermonthis, Ape, Esna), but mainly to his own, and also included important connections with the city of Hermonthis.

Pesynthius' ties were even more varied, for his correspondents were associated with eighth different dioceses. He often appears in relation to the *Topos* of Epiphanius, but was also in contact with civil officials in the city of Koptos, the clergymen of Qus, a lawyer at Hermonthis, and correspondents in the area of Ape (Pesynthius is not always explicitly mentioned by name and title, but in view of the contents of the letters, his involvement is highly probable). His network extended far beyond the boundaries of his diocese, and was not limited to villages or monastic communities in the countryside, but also included all four cities in the Hermonthite and Koptite district.

In short, the topographical analysis reveals that most localities attested in relation to the Theodosian bishops were located in the countryside, as Wipszycka already observed, but also that Abraham and Pesynthius did have significant ties with urban centers.

Datasets 1-2 are considerably enriched by the Coptic letters from the *Topos* of St Mark (*O.Saint-Marc*) and from the hermitages at TT 29 (*O.Frangé*) and TT 1152 (*O.MMA1152. inv.*), which were recently published. Without these texts, Zael, the priest Moses, Psate, David, Ezekiel and Djor would appear to be no more than marginal figures, and the reconstructed Theban network would have been much less dense and informative.

Now that Abraham's position in the Theban network has been analyzed, it is time to take a close look at his personal social network.

Chapter 5: The social network of Abraham of Hermonthis

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the procedure for network analysis is applied to Dataset 3, in order to examine Abraham's social network, which covers almost the entire period of his episcopate.

The first of six sections discusses Dataset 3, while paying attention to the criteria for selecting documents; indications that Abraham is involved, even if his name and title are not explicitly recorded or lost; the kind of texts; and the language, writing material, provenance and dating of the selected material. The documents for which an absolute or approximate date can be proposed, are divided over four periods: before 600, 600-609, 610-619 and 620-621.

The second section describes the network population and analyzes the social network in two layers: the **ecclesiastical network** is limited to clergymen, and the **complete network** includes all individuals and groups identified in the documents (Pls 8.13-14). This distinction is made, in order to test whether the basic structure of Abraham's network remains the same, despite the differences in size and network population. In addition, the properties of these undirected networks are compared to those of the **directed network**, which takes into account the direction of the ties, and therefore distinguishes between reciprocated and one-directional ties and omits indirect ties (Pl. 9.15). This type of network will lead to a more nuanced picture of the relative prominence of the central actors, for it will reveal whether they have high centrality scores on account of their outgoing ties, incoming ties, or both.⁶⁹⁶

The third section examines where and when the central actors in Abraham's network were active on the basis of a prosopographical study and by using the *Ego network viewer* to extract their *ego networks* and to reveal their direct ties. Their associates may reappear in texts that include topographical or chronological information that could give us an indication as to where and when the central actors themselves lived.

The fourth section presents a partial reconstruction of the ecclesiastical apparatus of the Hermonthite diocese, which is based on four subnetworks that correspond to the four periods mentioned above.⁶⁹⁷ Separate *edgelist*s were created for each period, after which the subnetworks were visualized in *NetDraw*. It is particularly important to establish the relative order and location of archpriests (at Hermonthis or Jeme), since there were only one or two at the same time, and since they were in contact with subordinate clergymen. In the fifth section,

⁶⁹⁶ CD:\Dataset 3\Network analysis.docx, "Network analysis 3", based on Dataset 3.xlsx, spreadsheets "Ecclesiastical network"- "Directed network".

⁶⁹⁷ Based on Dataset 3.xlsx, spreadsheets "Before 600"- "620-621".

I will reuse the graphs of the subnetworks for the partial reconstruction of a similar overview that focusses on civil and military officials, or at least laymen of some status, in the district of Hermonthis (Table 9, which is supplemented with information from Datasets 1 and 4).

In the final section Abraham's *ego network* is extracted from his directed network for the study of the direction of the ties between the bishop and various social groups, such as clergymen, monks, civil and military officials, and the rest of the network population. The quantification of the reciprocal and one-directional ties not only enables us to compare the recorded flows of contact by social group, but also to check Wipszycka's impression, whether Abraham was close to the faithful in his diocese. If at least half of the social actors of the directed network reappear in the *ego network*, and if most of the ties are reciprocal, these are clear indications that Abraham was indeed closely involved with his flock (§1.2.3.G).

§5.1 DATASET 3: DOCUMENTS FEATURING ABRAHAM OF HERMONTTHIS

§5.1.1 *The selected material*

Dataset 3 comprises 142 Coptic and Greek documents, starting with the 114 inscribed ostraca that Martin Krause examined in his dissertation of 1956, *Apa Abraham von Hermonthis. Ein oberägyptischer Bischof um 600*, which is unpublished but accessible through a digital copy.⁶⁹⁸ Some of these documents are still unedited and only accessible to me through Krause's transcriptions, and one ostrakon has not yet been located (Krause's no. 110).⁶⁹⁹ I decided to include all the texts selected by him and to respect his numbering, since he already established a sizeable dossier, and since other scholars also use Krause's numbering in addition to the inventory numbers or the conventional sigla of these documents.⁷⁰⁰

Dataset 3 includes twenty-eight more documents: some of them were published after 1956,⁷⁰¹ whereas other texts had already appeared, but were linked to Abraham afterwards.⁷⁰²

⁶⁹⁸ List 3; Dataset 3.xlsx, spreadsheet "Selected documents". Summaries and schematic representations of the documents are presented in Textual analysis.pdf. Most of the ostraca were drawn from the following editions: *O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* I, *O.Crum*, *O.CrumVC*, *O.MoscowCopt.*, *O.Medin.Habu Copt.*, *O.Mon.Epiph.*, *P.Saint-Marc*. Krause's nos 34 and 88 were published as *O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* II 6 and 22. *O.Crum Ad.* 57, 7, 9 and 12 were recently reedited as *O.Lips.Copt.* 10, 12-13 and 15. The documents in *O.MoscowCopt.* were first edited by B.A. Turajeff (called "Tur." in Winlock and Crum 1926, 134, n. 1, and "O.Push" in Schmelz 2002), which is inaccessible to me. Krause's no. 111 reappeared as *SBKopt.* III 1360.

⁶⁹⁹ Twelve ostraca in the Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung in Berlin: Berlin P.868, 12486, 12488-89, 12491, 12493, 12495, 12497-98, 12500-01, 12507; cf. Beltz 1980, 143, 160. For a facsimile of Krause's no. 110, see Silvestre 1850, vol. 1, Pl. 51, no. 3.

⁷⁰⁰ Giorda 2009, 67-76; Schmelz 2002, 70-85.

⁷⁰¹ *O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* II 1-3, 7, 9, 16, 31, 34; *O.Deir el-Bahari* 1, ed. Godlewski 1986, 134-35; *O.Frangé* 792-94; *O.Lips.Copt.* 9; *O.ThebIfao*: ed. Calament 2004a, 42; *SBKopt.* II 906: ed. *princeps* Krause 1972; *SBKopt.* III 1378, ed. *princeps* Kuhn 1972; *SBKopt.* III 1379-80, ed. *princeps* Krause 1990; *P.Saint-Marc* 439.

⁷⁰² *O.Crum Ad.* 11, 14 (= *O.Lips.Copt.* 11 and 10), *Ad.* 40; *P.KRU* 105 (cf. §3.1.1); *O.MoscowCopt.* 47, 77-8.

Krause discussed Abraham's Greek testament, *P.Lond.* I 77, at various occasions,⁷⁰³ but did not analyze it in his dissertation, since it focused on Coptic texts written on ostraca. Finally, one fragmentary letter on papyrus is found among Crum's unpublished transcriptions.⁷⁰⁴ Two texts were excluded from Dataset 3: *P.Mon.Epiph.* 466, since the "father Apa Abraham" mentioned in it was not necessarily the bishop, as Crum suggested,⁷⁰⁵ and the Greek Moir Bryce diptych, since this is a later, liturgical source that does not record personal ties with Abraham (§3.1.1).

Dataset 3 is limited to published or transcribed documents, but I am aware that there is more, unpublished material relating to the bishop. Krause, who is working on a revision of his dissertation, knows of about two hundred documents in total,⁷⁰⁶ and mentioned various pieces that were not included in his dissertation in separate articles.⁷⁰⁷ Once the unpublished material is available for study, Dataset 3 and the analysis of Abraham's network can be updated.

§5.1.2 *The identification of the bishop*

Abraham's name and title are both preserved (almost) completely in sixty-two documents (43.7%), whereas in eleven texts either his name or title are lost (7.7%). In other texts he was addressed as "my fatherly lord, Apa Abraham", "my holy, fatherly lord, the bishop", "our fatherly holiness and bishop", "our father the bishop" or "your holy fatherhood" (§6.2), and he occasionally referred to himself as "Abraham, this most humble one". Sixteen documents do not mention him at all, but are linked to him on the basis of their contents.⁷⁰⁸

If a document does not explicitly mention Bishop Abraham, some details point in his direction, such as the greeting "firstly, I greet you/your sonship", followed by the blessing "May the Lord bless you",⁷⁰⁹ and the standard form of various kinds of documents.⁷¹⁰

Crum's attribution of letters to particular scribes is another indication, but should only be accepted in combination with other criteria that suggest a link with the bishop, since at

⁷⁰³ Krause, *Apa Abraham*, vol. 1, 2-4; Krause 1969, 57-60.

⁷⁰⁴ Paris, Louvre inv. ? (SN 156), transcribed in Crum, *Notebook 84*, 57. On this notebook, also see §7.1.1.

⁷⁰⁵ *P.Mon.Epiph.* 466, n. 8; cf. Dekker 2016a, 760 and fig. 4, where I follow Crum and presuppose a direct tie between the bishops Abraham and Pesynthius.

⁷⁰⁶ Krause 1991, 401.

⁷⁰⁷ Krause 1958, 9; Krause 1990, 226, 235, n. 11-12, 16, 18. His search for relevant ostraca in the Coptic Museum in Cairo and the British Museum in London is described in Krause 2010, 70-71.

⁷⁰⁸ Dataset 3.xlsx, spreadsheet "Selected documents", in the column "Identification".

⁷⁰⁹ Krause, *Apa Abraham*, vol. 1, 29-31 (group I-II). The greeting and blessing were also used by the priest Victor, who, as the bishop's secretary, grew accustomed to them (pp. 28, 83).

⁷¹⁰ Standard letters are analyzed in Krause, *Apa Abraham*, vol. 2, 37-57 (guarantees relating to ordinations), 65-69 (guarantees relating to appointments), 94-100 (confirmation of appointments), 237-238 (guarantees that people will come for episcopal adjudication), 244-246 (promises to comply with the bishop's judgement), 267-270 (notification that certain individuals are excluded from the clergy), 296-300 (promises of good behavior after having been readmitted to the Eucharist).

least one text that he attributed to “Hand A”, supposedly the priest Victor, was not written by Victor at all.⁷¹¹ It also turns out that the handwriting of “Hand D”, supposedly David, is easily confused with that of the priest Mark.⁷¹² In addition to these scribal hands, Crum distinguished “Hand C”,⁷¹³ the priest Patermoute,⁷¹⁴ the abbot John,⁷¹⁵ the scribe of *O.Mon.Epiph.* 154, and the scribe of *O.Crum* 65 (recto). Since Bishop Abraham was the sender of the letters ascribed to the last two scribes, it is likely that they were episcopal secretaries. Krause labelled the scribe of *O.Mon.Epiph.* 154 “Hand E”,⁷¹⁶ and I call the other anonymous secretary “Hand F”.⁷¹⁷

§5.1.3 *The kind of documents*

The episcopal documents include Abraham’s testament (*P.Lond.* I 77), the deed concerning the Monastery of St Phoibammon, from which he benefitted as the first abbot of that monastery (*P.KRU* 105; §3.1.1), two prayers in which “Apa Abraham, the orthodox bishop” is invoked as an intercessor (*BKU* II 258, O.Berlin, P. 868), letters and declarations. The letters sent by the bishop comprise circular letters, confirmations of ordinations, notifications, orders, prohibitions, exhortations, warnings, requests and a letter of complaint (48.6%).⁷¹⁸ Once, the priest Victor wrote an urgent request on his behalf (*SBKopt.* II 906). In turn, Abraham received requests, undertakings by clergymen or workers, guarantees on behalf of clergymen or individuals summoned for a trial, and promises (40.8%). Seven times he appears as a witness, in whose presence a declaration was made (4.9%).⁷¹⁹ Two letters belong together: in *O.Crum* 90 the abbot John asked the bishop to bless bread, and in *O.Lips.Copt.* 9 the latter replied that he returned the bread, in order that John’s community could eat it as a blessing.

Abraham’s documents are mostly written in Coptic, but his testament and the two prayers are in Greek. One of the prayers is accompanied by a Coptic scribal note.

Almost 87.3% of the documents is written on limestone, 9,9% on pottery, and 2.8% on papyrus. Twice, the sender of a letter apologizes for not having written on papyrus (*O.Crum*

⁷¹¹ *O.Crum* 51, cf. Krause, *Apa Abraham*, vol. 1, 8-9; §3.2.4.

⁷¹² §3.2.4, n. 202.

⁷¹³ *O.Crum*, p. 12, about *O.Crum* 81: “Prob. Hand C”.

⁷¹⁴ *O.Crum*, p. 9: “Hand of [*O.Crum*] 40, 65 verso, 212” [= the priest Patermoute]; cf. §5.3.6.

⁷¹⁵ *O.Crum*, p. 47: “Prob. hand of [*O.Crum*] 49, 90, 249” [= abbot John]; cf. §3.1.1.

⁷¹⁶ *O.Mon.Epiph.* 154, n. 4; cf. Krause, *Apa Abraham*, vol. 1, 8, 98, n. 59.

⁷¹⁷ A palaeographical study is beyond the scope of this research project, but Esther Garel intends to examine these scribal hands (personal communication).

⁷¹⁸ Dataset 3.xlsx, spreadsheet “Selected documents”, in the column “Kind of document”.

⁷¹⁹ Dataset 3.xlsx, spreadsheet “Selected documents”, in the column “Role of B. Abraham”.

49, 97). O.Berlin, P.12491 bears the beginning of a letter, which must have continued on another ostrakon that is lost.⁷²⁰ It is likely that longer letters sent by the bishop, such as his circular letters and the message on O.Berlin, P.12491, were copies of texts written papyrus. This was certainly the case with *O.MoscowCopt.* 76, in which the bishop wrote that he would fill the papyrus with tears and sighs, if it were possible, and with a (lost) secret letter that was closed by three seals, judging from the preserved accompanying letter, O.Berlin, P. 12489.⁷²¹

§5.1.4 *The provenance of the documents*

72.5% of the selected documents has a recorded provenance: they originate from the Monastery of St Phoibammon (61.3%),⁷²² an ancient tomb called “Baugruppe B” north of the German House (5.6%),⁷²³ the hermitage at TT 29 (2.1%), the *Topos* of Epiphanius (1.4%), the *Topos* of St Mark (*P.Saint-Marc* 439), Medinet Habu (*O.Medin.HabuCopt* 145) and a storage room at Dayr al-Medina (*O.ThebIfao* 1). The finds from “Baugruppe B” do not only include letters sent by Bishop Abraham, but also promises from, or on behalf of, clergymen to the bishop with regard to the administration of local churches. It is remarkable that (copies of) such important documents, which one would expect to find in the episcopal archive at the Monastery of St Phoibammon, were kept at “Baugruppe B”. I suspect that the documents belonged to the private archive of the priest Patermoute, whom Bishop Abraham instructed to secretly deliver a sealed letter (§5.3.2).

§5.1.5 *The dating of the documents*

Forty-two documents (29.6%) can be dated absolutely or approximately on the basis of the people involved and are divided into four periods: the two pieces that predate 600 mention the archpriest Jeremiah and the deacon Peter of Jeme, among others (1.4%).⁷²⁴ Nine texts from the period 600-609 feature the deacon Peter of Jeme, the deacon - and later priest - Victor, the priest Plein, the abbot John, and the hermits Isaac I and John (6.3%).⁷²⁵ Another seven pieces are assigned to the period 610-619 on the basis of an indiction date or other criteria discussed in §3.3. They record the archpriest Dioscorus and the priest Joseph, who were both associated

⁷²⁰ Krause, *Apa Abraham*, vol. 2, 271.

⁷²¹ Krause, *Apa Abraham*, vol. 1, 6 and vol. 2, 191, 323; cf. Winlock and Crum 1926, 173; Wipszycka 2015, 35.

⁷²² Godlewski 1986, 153-60; Winlock and Crum 1926, 169, n. 8 (on Berlin P. 868).

⁷²³ Berlin, P. 12486, 12488-89, 12491, 12493, 12495, 12497-98, 12500-01, 12507; cf. Anthes 1943, 22; Müller (forthcoming), 311, n. 106.

⁷²⁴ *P.KRU* 105, *O.Crum Ad.* 59; cf. §3.1.1.

⁷²⁵ The deacon Peter: *BKU* I 70, Berlin, P. 12501; the deacon Victor: *O.Crum* 104; the priest Victor and the abbot John: *O.Crum* 49-50, 90 (cf. §3.2.4), *O.Lips.Copt.* 9 (reply to *O.Crum* 90); the priest Plein: *O.Crum* 313; Isaac I and John of the future *Topos* of Epiphanius: *O.Crum* 310.

with the Holy Church of Hermonthis, the priests Victor, Patermoute, John “the deaf” of Thone, Abraham and Moses, and the hermits Pesente and Zael of TT 29.⁷²⁶ Dioscorus, Joseph and Patermoute, reappear in eleven more documents.⁷²⁷ On account of their association with Dioscorus and Patermoute, the anonymous scribe “Hand E” and the priest Papnoute should be placed in this period as well.⁷²⁸ In total, twenty-seven documents are tentatively dated to 610-619 (19%). Finally, the four texts attributed to the period 620-621 mention David/“Hand D”, Paham, son of Pelish, from Jeme, the archpriest John, and the priest Moses of the hermitage of TT 29, among others (2.8%).⁷²⁹

§5.2 ABRAHAM’S SOCIAL NETWORK

§5.2.1 *The network population*

Abraham’s complete network comprises 339 nodes that represent social actors or groups, in case their exact number cannot be specified. The network population is varied (Pl. 8.14).⁷³⁰

- **Clergymen** (46.4%): 158 nodes form the ecclesiastical network and include Patriarch Damian, Bishop Abraham, four or five archpriests, priests, deacons, candidates for ordination, readers, stewards, episcopal secretaries (“Hand E”, “Hand F”), messengers, clergymen who have been suspended, and others whose functions are unspecified.
- **Monks** (7.7%): at least twenty-six nodes represent David (“Hand D”), monastic leaders and monks, but their actual number must have been higher: some individuals who are known to have been monks are not treated as such (like Moses of TT 29), and various clergymen may have had a monastic background that is unrecorded.⁷³¹
- **Civil officials** (7.4%): twenty-five nodes indicate the presence of urban officials at Hermonthis, *lashanes* and headmen, village scribes and other officials. This group also includes Paham, son of Pelish, who represented Jeme in *P.Mon.Epiph.* 163. Asper, Kouloul, Sarapion and a colleague are addressed as “lords” (κῡριος), which suggests that they were officials or at least laymen of some status (rich landowners?).

⁷²⁶ Dioscorus and Joseph: *P.Lond.* I 77 (610s), Patermoute and John: *O.Crum* 40 (August 16, 614); Abraham: *O.Crum* 34 (April 27, 618); Pesente and Zael at TT 29: *O.Frangé* 793-94 (ca. 610-615; cf. §3.2.2); Moses, who is distinguished from the priest Moses of the hermitage of TT 29: *O.Crum* 311 (July/August 619); Victor: *O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* II 16 (August 7, 619; cf. §3.1.1).

⁷²⁷ Patermoute: *O.Crum* 29, 46, 55, 65, 484, *Ad.* 40-41, *O.CrumVC* 37, Berlin, P. 12498 (cf. §5.3.6); Dioscorus and Joseph: *O.Deir el-Bahari* 1; Dioscorus only: *O.Crum* 69 (cf. §5.3.9).

⁷²⁸ “Hand E”: *O.Crum* 126, 184; *O.Moscow.Copt.* 76; *O.Mon.Epiph.* 154, 399 (cf. 5.3.3); the priest Papnoute: *O.Crum* 54, *Ad.* 8; *O.Lips.Copt.* 14; Krause, *Apa Abraham*, vol. 2, no. 110.

⁷²⁹ Paham: *O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* II 2 (cf. §3.1.1); David: *SBKopt.* III 1360 (cf. §3.2.4); Moses of TT 29: *O.Frangé* 792 (cf. §3.2.2); the archpriest John: *SBKopt.* II 906 (cf. §3.1.1).

⁷³⁰ CD:\Dataset 3\List of social actors.docx and Network analysis.docx, “Network analysis 3”, A.

⁷³¹ Only three individuals are called “monk”, namely Isaac I and John, monks of “the mountain of Jeme” (the future *Topos* of Epiphanius), and Isaac, monk of the *Topos* of Apa John. They all appear in *O.Crum* 310.

- **Military officials** (0.9%): Bishop Abraham corresponded with the commander Paul and the lieutenant Taggeila,⁷³² and he knew the *actuarius* Peter, who were stationed at Ape or – less likely – Hermonthis (§2.1.1).
- **Other occupations** (3.3%): some persons were land owners, tenants or husbandmen, and there was one camel herd. Three workers were employed to build a church, and another man received his wage for unspecified work that he did for the bishop.
- **Female social actors** (1.2%): four adult women are involved, including an old woman, a widow, a woman with a debt and a late benefactress of the church. An unknown number of women must have been included in the following category.
- **Groups** (1.8%): finally, some nodes represent more than one individual, such as “the people”, the villagers of Timamen, some youths, people requesting the bishop to pray for them, recipients of an episcopal letter who have (small?) children and apparently were husband and wife, and the (adult?) children of a late benefactress of the church.

Dataset 3 is dominated by adult men (97%). Women and mixed groups are few, children and youths even rarer. It is likely that there were more young men among the clergymen, especially among the candidates for ordination or the newly ordained and those supervised by senior clergymen, but the documents do not provide clues as to their age and private life.

§5.2.2 *The network level*

The ecclesiastical and complete networks have density scores of 2.8% and 1.9% respectively (692 and 2120 ties), which implies that less than three percent of all possible ties are realized ($339 \times 338 = 114.582$ ties).⁷³³ To be more precise, these would be the maximum scores for the respective networks, if all social actors attested in the same document were directly connected and if all ties were reciprocal, which is not the case. In the directed network only 1.3% (1475 ties) of all possible ties is actually recorded, which is a minimum score, for the indirect ties recognized in the documents could have been direct ties in real life, and part of the ties is lost or unrecorded. In other words, if the actual complete network of Bishop Abraham comprised the social actors included in Dataset 3 only, the density score would be between 1.3% and 1.9%. However, this estimate cannot be verified, since we do not know the actual number of social actors in Abraham’s network, and the number of unrecorded ties.

The members of the ecclesiastical network have an *average degree* of 4.4 ties, whereas the average number of relations in the complete network is 6.3 ties per social actor, which

⁷³² *O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* II 31. For the name Germanic Taggeila (Thankilla), see Kortenbeutel 1939, 183 and n. 4.

⁷³³ “Network analysis 3”, B, based on “Eccl network - Cohesion.txt”- “Directed network - Cohesion.txt”.

holds for clergymen as well. In general, it implies that 70% of the contacts of the clergymen was with other clergymen (4.4/6.3). In the directed network the average number of actually recorded relations is 4.3 ties, which forms 69.6% (1475/2108) of the relations in the complete network. The difference results from the fact that the complete network is an automatically generated network that does not distinguish between direct and indirect ties, but draws direct ties between all actors in a document. If we want to consider recorded contacts only, the score for the directed network is more accurate; if we want to propose a rough estimate of the actual *average degree* of the complete network, it must have been higher than 6.3 ties, for the social actors must have known many people who are not included in Dataset 3 (family, friends, etc.).

In the ecclesiastical, complete and directed networks the *average distance* is lower than three degrees of separation (2.1, 2.1 and 2.7 steps), which implies that each of them is relatively small. However, the directed network is over twice as wide in *diameter* as the undirected networks (7 versus 3 steps), because it includes a high number of indirect ties, which results in a longer geodesic path from one end of the network to the other. The combination of a low average distance and a wide diameter points to a directed network in which a central actor is a major hub between clusters of nodes. This can be expected in the professional network of Bishop Abraham, since he was the head of a hierarchical institution.

§5.2.3 *The component level*

Abraham indeed connects a large number of subgroups that are not linked otherwise. When he is removed from the complete network, it falls apart into eighty-three components.⁷³⁴ Most of them range in size from one to five nodes, but the largest component includes 115 nodes and is held together by social actors who are introduced in §3.2.4 or §5.3: the priest Victor, David and the monks of the Monastery of St Phoibammon; the archpriest Dioscorus of the Holy Church of Hermonthis; the archpriest John, probably of Jeme; the priests Patermoute and Papnoute; and the anonymous secretary “Hand E”.⁷³⁵ The component does not correspond to a well-defined social group from a particular period, but is based on texts from the beginning to the end of Abraham’s episcopate, including *P.KRU* 105, *P.Lond.* I 77 and *SBKopt.* II 906. When the procedure is repeated on the directed network, it is divided into even smaller units, but the largest component still includes the above-mentioned social actors.

The *Girvan-Newman* algorithm divides the network in two clusters of 307 and 32 nodes. The smaller cluster includes the monks of the Monastery of St Phoibammon, the

⁷³⁴ “Complete network - Components.jpg”.

⁷³⁵ “Complete network - Largest component.jpg”.

deacon Peter, the archpriest Jeremiah and the abbot John, who are all attested before 610 (*P.KRU* 105, *BKU* I 70, *O.Crum* 49-50, 90).⁷³⁶

The complete network was also disintegrated by identifying and removing cutpoints in *NetDraw*. In the first phase Bishop Abraham is the single cut point, but in the second phase ten nodes can be removed, namely the priests Victor, Patermoute, Papnoute and Papas, David and the monks of the Monastery of St Phoibammon, the archpriest Dioscorus, the deacon Peter, “Hand E” and Apa John (of *O.Crum* 55 and 105).⁷³⁷

§5.2.4 The node level

The *Core/periphery* algorithm identifies Bishop Abraham and the priest Victor as the core members of each of the three reconstructed networks.⁷³⁸ They represent 1.3% of all nodes in the ecclesiastical network, and 0.6% of the nodes in the complete and directed networks. Victor’s prominent role is no surprise, in view of his close relationship with the bishop as his disciple, heir and successor as abbot of the Monastery of St Phoibammon (cf. §3.1.1, 5.3.1).

The social actors with the best centrality scores in the ecclesiastical network after Bishop Abraham are the deacon Peter and the priests Victor, Patermoute and Papnoute.⁷³⁹ Victor and Patermoute share the best score for *degree centrality*, whereas they are first and second for *eigenvector centrality*. Interestingly, Patermoute features almost as prominently in this network as Victor. The deacon Peter owes the best scores for *closeness* and *betweenness centrality* to his position as a bridge between the clergymen who signed *P.KRU* 105 (before 600) and Bishop Abraham (in *BKU* I 70; in 600).

In the complete network the best connected actors are Victor, Patermoute, the monks of the Monastery of St Phoibammon, the deacon Peter, the signatories of *P.KRU* 105 and the archpriest John. In this network Victor has the best scores, except for *betweenness centrality*, where the monks of the Monastery of St Phoibammon and Peter precede him, because of their position between the various signatories of *P.KRU* 105 and Bishop Abraham, who was the eventual beneficiary of that deed (cf. §3.1.1). The monks also have a good score for *closeness* and *eigenvector centrality*, on account of their close relationship with the bishop and Victor.

⁷³⁶ “Network analysis 3”, C; “Complete network-Girvan-Newman.jpg”.

⁷³⁷ “Network analysis 3”, C; “Complete network - Blocks & Cutpoints phase 2.jpg”.

⁷³⁸ “Network analysis 3”, D, based on “Ecclesiastical network - core-periphery.txt”-“Directed network - core-periphery.txt”.

⁷³⁹ “Network analysis 3”, E, based on “Eccl network - Centrality raw”, “Eccl network - Centrality normalized”, “Complete network - Centrality raw”, “Complete network - Centrality normalized”, “Directed network - Centrality raw”, “Directed network - Centrality normalized”.

The directed network, which makes a distinction between incoming and outgoing ties for *degree* and *closeness centrality*, confirms the prominent positions of the above-mentioned social actors. In general, the differences between *indegree* and *outdegree*, and between *inclose* and *outclose*, are limited, which indicates that most of the recorded relations are identified as reciprocal. Patermoute has the most incoming and outgoing ties, and is followed by Victor, Peter, the monks of the Monastery of St Phoibammon, the signatories of *P.KRU* 105, the archpriest Dioscorus and Papnoute respectively (the monks have a better score for *outdegree* than Peter). The actors with the best *inclose* and *outclose* scores – who are closest to Bishop Abraham – are Victor, the monks of the Monastery of St Phoibammon, Peter and Patermoute. The fifth position is occupied by the abbot John for *inclose centrality*, and the *lashane* Peter for *outclose centrality*. Familiar persons are listed in the overview for *betweenness centrality* (the monks, Peter, Victor and Patermoute), but a clergyman in *O.Moscow.Copt.* 77, who was possibly an archpriest (ID no. 137), unexpectedly appears as a central actor for the first time: this is probably on account of his position as a bridge between Bishop Abraham and three priests, and the identification of their interrelations as reciprocated ties, which count double.

Being the main actor in his own network, Abraham has the best scores for each category, including *closeness centrality* (94.9%), *outclose* and *inclose centrality* (51.8% and 48.6%). It is tempting to use these scores to confirm Wipszycka's impression that Abraham was close to his flock, but the score for *closeness centrality* is based on an undirected network generated by *Ucinet* 6, which presupposes direct ties between all actors in the same text, which was not necessarily the case. The *outclose* and *inclose centrality* scores are based on the directed network, which only includes recorded or reconstructed relations, but focusses on the one-directional ties, while omitting the reciprocal ones, which best record close contact. Therefore, the proportions of the recorded direct and reciprocal ties in the *ego network* are taken as indicators for the bishop's closeness to the other people in his network (§1.2.3.G).

§5.2.5 Tie strength

In the complete network Bishop Abraham is most often associated with the priests Victor, Patermoute and Papnoute (15, 10 and 6 edges or recorded ties respectively), and “Hand E” (6 edges; Pl. 9.16). He also appears frequently with the brethren of the Monastery of St Phoibammon (5 edges) and the abbot John (4 edges). The complete network also records a close association between Victor and his fellow monks at the Monastery of St Phoibammon (4

edges).⁷⁴⁰ The ecclesiastical network presents the same results, with one exception: it does not include the brethren of the Monastery of St Phoibammon.

The directed network reveals that the strongest directed ties are recorded between Bishop Abraham and Victor, Patermoute and “Hand E”. In the case of Victor and Patermoute, the outgoing ties of the bishop are stronger than those coming from his correspondents: 15 and 14 ties between him and Victor, 7 and 6 ties with Patermoute. Abraham and “Hand E” are in contact six times. Other strong ties run from the monks of the Monastery of St Phoibammon towards Abraham (6 ties), from the abbot John towards Abraham (4 ties), and from Victor to his fellow monks at the Monastery of St Phoibammon (4 ties).⁷⁴¹

When all ties stronger than one are added up, the total value of Bishop Abraham’s ties is 74 edges. Next in line are Victor (22 edges), Patermoute (12 edges), the monks of the Monastery of St Phoibammon and the abbot John (11 edges each), and Papnoute (10 edges).⁷⁴²

§5.3 THE OTHER CENTRAL ACTORS IN ABRAHAM’S NETWORK

This section takes a closer look at the central actors other than Bishop Abraham and discusses where and when they lived on the basis of a prosopographical study and by using the *Ego network viewer*. This visualization tool extracts the *ego networks* of these individuals from the complete network, in order to reveal their direct relations. The actors closest to the bishop, like the priest Victor, the monks of the Monastery of St Phoibammon, and the anonymous episcopal secretaries “Hand E” and “Hand F”, are discussed first. They are followed by the deacon Peter, the priests Patermoute and Papnoute, and the archpriests John and Dioscorus.

§5.3.1 *The priest Victor*

Victor was a priest and a monk of the Monastery of St Phoibammon (§3.1.1, 3.2.4). He first appears in the period 600-609, in the letters from the abbot John, and fulfils a prominent role in Abraham’s latest documents. In total, fifteen episcopal documents mention Victor: he is greeted in ten letters that are addressed to the bishop;⁷⁴³ he is the beneficiary of Abraham’s testament (*P.Lond.* I 77; 610s); the bishop and he received a promise from the priest Moses, son of David, that the loom part that he borrowed from them would be returned (*O.Crum* 311; July/August 618); they both witnessed a declaration by the monk Moses, who was accused of

⁷⁴⁰ “Network analysis 3”, F.1, “Complete network (undirected)”.

⁷⁴¹ “Network analysis 3”, F.1, “Directed network”; “Directed network - Tie strength.jpg”.

⁷⁴² “Network analysis 3”, F.2.

⁷⁴³ *O.Crum* 49-50, 52, 90, 94, 97, 104, 204, 486; *BKU* II 316.

theft (*O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* II 16; August 7, 619); Victor recorded an incriminating report on the priest Papnoute (*O.Lips.Copt.* 14); and on behalf of the bishop, he requested the archpriest John and his colleagues to arbitrate in a conflict (*SBKopt.* II 906; 621).

Victor's *ego network* consists of forty-three nodes, which represent Bishop Abraham, David, the other monks at the Monastery of St Phoibammon, the archpriests Dioscorus and John, the priests Papnoute and Joseph (of the Holy Church at Hermonthis), the abbot John and his brethren, four urban officials at Hermonthis (ID nos 175-77, 253), and three *lashanes* (ID nos 255, 285, 299). At least 37.2% of his contacts are clergymen, 18.6% monks and 16.3% civil officials; the background of the rest of the social actors cannot be determined.⁷⁴⁴

Victor had the strongest ties with Bishop Abraham, his fellow monks at the Monastery of St Phoibammon and the abbot John (15, 4 and 3 edges respectively).

§5.3.2 *The monks of the Monastery of St Phoibammon*

The monks of the Monastery of St Phoibammon are the direct beneficiaries of *P.KRU* 105 (cf. §3.1.1), and are referred to in five episcopal documents, in which correspondents of Bishop Abraham add their greetings to everyone in the bishop's company.⁷⁴⁵ The combination of these texts results in a network with thirty-one nodes that represent the monks themselves, Bishop Abraham, Victor, the abbot John and his brethren, the archpriest Jeremiah, the deacon Peter, among others. About half of the network consists of clergymen, four nodes represent monks, and three nodes stand for two *lashanes* and a village scribe of Jeme (ID nos 166, 239, 299). Four out of six documents (*P.KRU* 105 and the letters from abbot John) were written before 610 and mainly record an early stage of the monks' network.

§5.3.3 *The anonymous secretary "Hand E"*

Crum suggested that six letters sent by Bishop Abraham were possibly written by the same scribe, on account of the same peculiar punctuation. This anonymous episcopal secretary, whom Krause called "Hand E", wrote a letter concerning the appointment of a deacon to the Church of Apa Patape (*O.MoscowCopt.* 76); an order to a priest to celebrate the Eucharist at a specified location (*O.Crum* 53); instructions to clergymen (*O.Crum* 69, 184; *O.Mon.Epiph.* 399); and a request to a prominent person to contact a deacon from Esna (*O.Crum* 126).⁷⁴⁶

⁷⁴⁴ "Complete network - Victor.jpg".

⁷⁴⁵ "Complete network - Monks of St Phoibammon.jpg", based on *O.Crum* 49, 90, 104; *BKU* I 110, *BKU* II 316.

⁷⁴⁶ *O.Mon.Epiph.* 154, n. 4; cf. Krause, *Apa Abraham*, vol. 1, 8, 98, n. 59.

“Hand E” was a contemporary of the archpriest Dioscorus, who worked at Hermonthis in the 610s (cf. §5.3.9), which points to a similar dating for the secretary.

§5.3.4 *The anonymous secretary “Hand F”*

Crum suggested that two letters sent by Bishop Abraham, *O.Crum* 65, recto and *Ad.* 8, were possibly written by the same scribe, whom I label “Hand F”.⁷⁴⁷ Provided that the identification is correct, “Hand F” owes his high *eigenvector centrality* in the ecclesiastical network to his strong tie with Bishop Abraham. The priest Patermoute, whom Crum recognized as the scribe of the text on the verso of *O.Crum* 65, was in office in 615 (cf. §5.3.6). If the Apa John on the recto of *O.Crum* 65 can be identified with the archpriest John of *SBKopt.* II 906 on the basis of their similar task as arbiters in a conflict, Apa John was at least active in 621 (cf. §5.3.8).

§5.3.5 *The deacon Peter*

The deacon Peter, son of Moses, was one of the signatories of *P.KRU* 105, who recognized the right of the founders of the Monastery of St Phoibammon to choose their abbot (before 600; cf. §3.1.1).⁷⁴⁸ He is recognized in two more documents that probably date from the beginning of Abraham’s episcopate. In *O.Berlin*, P.12501 the clergymen of Jeme, including a deacon called Peter, agree with Abraham to administer the sacrament of baptism trice a year, to cover the expenses, and to share the donations that they will receive with him (§6.4.5).⁷⁴⁹ The very fact that an agreement about such an important ecclesiastical matter needed to be made creates the impression that Abraham’s relation with the clergymen of Jeme was still relatively new. Peter is also identified with the homonymous deacon of *BKU* I 70, who stood surety for a certain Theodore in the presence of Bishop Abraham and the *lashane* Peter. In the present analysis, the latter is equated with the *lashane* Peter who witnessed the solar eclipse of 601, in a fourth indiction year (*SBKopt.* II 1238). If the *lashane*’s identification is correct, *BKU* I 70 must have been written on Paone 29 in the same indiction year, or June 23, 600.

None of the documents record the name of the church in which Peter served.

§5.3.6 *The priest Patermoute*

Patermoute appears in ten documents under different circumstances: as the scribe of letters on behalf of clergymen and the address of a letter sent by Bishop Abraham, according to

⁷⁴⁷ *O.Crum*, pp. 15 and 17.

⁷⁴⁸ “Complete network - Peter.jpg”.

⁷⁴⁹ Transcription in Krause, *Apa Abraham*, vol. 2, 147-50 (no. 39).

Crum;⁷⁵⁰ as a warrant on behalf of a clergyman Papnoute, who had just been readmitted to the clergy (*O.Crum Ad.* 41); as a witness to promises made by aspirant-deacons, new readers, and a priest who had been readmitted to the clergy;⁷⁵¹ and as a messenger who had to secretly deliver a heavily sealed letter from the bishop (O.Berlin, P.12498). He received instructions from the bishop as to whom he should exclude from the holy Communion (*O.Crum* 484), and an order to fetch Pshinnou, to let him pay a fine and to hand him over to the headmen (*O.CrumVC* 37). It seems that he was excluded from the clergy twice. The first time was temporarily, until he had gone to law with two men (*O.Crum* 55), but the second time was serious, for Patermoute had ignored an episcopal order (to come to the bishop?), after making some accusations. If he did not come and pay a fine, the bishop would make his degradation known “in the city” (of Hermonthis; *O.Crum Ad.* 40; §6.4.E). It is unknown how this episode ended for Patermoute.

Patermoute worked closely with the priest Papnoute, Panachore and Ezekiel (*O.Crum Ad.* 40-41), and was a contemporary of “Hand F”, the priest John “the deaf” of the village of Thone and Apa John, probably the archpriest of Jeme (cf. §5.3.8).

One document is dated Mechir 23 of the third indiction year, which corresponds to August 16, 614 (*O.Crum* 40). A dating to an earlier indiction cycle, the year 599, is too early.

Patermoute’s regular contact with Bishop Abraham suggests that he lived and worked relatively close to the episcopal residence, presumably in the town of Jeme, rather than at Hermonthis. It is likely that the four new readers, who were appointed to different churches in “the village”, and on whose behalf Patermoute wrote an undertaking (*O.Crum* 46), were about to work in Jeme, where there certainly were multiple churches under Abraham’s jurisdiction (cf. §4.1.2).⁷⁵² Unfortunately, since the names of the churches are incompletely preserved, none of the churches can be linked to Jeme or Hermonthis with certainty.⁷⁵³

Judging from his activities as a professional scribe and, occasionally, as an episcopal messenger, Patermoute’s social role was similar to that of the priest Mark (§7.3.6).

⁷⁵⁰ *O.Crum* 29, 40, 46 and 65 (on account of the handwriting, Crum attributed the address of this letter to the scribe who is identified in the other letters as Patermoute). See “Complete network - Patermoute.jpg”.

⁷⁵¹ *O.Crum* 29, 40, 46.

⁷⁵² ⲡⲧⲙⲉ, “the village”, is the Coptic equivalent of the Greek κώμη; cf. Crum 1939, 414a. However, Krause (*Apa Abraham*, vol. 2, 76-77) and Timm (1984-1992, vol. 1, 169) argued that it was a “Stadt”, probably the city of Hermonthis rather than Jeme.

⁷⁵³ The churches were named after “Apa Di[os?]”, “Apa [...]us”, “[...]” and “Apa [...]res”. Possibilities for the second name are numerous, for instance, Phaustus, Leontius, Cyriacus, etc. These examples are drawn from the list of churches in Jeme published in Timm 1984-1992, vol. 3, 1019-23. As for Hermonthis, Timm only lists the Holy Church and the Church of the Virgin Mary (vol. 1, 168).

§5.3.7 *The priest Papnoute*

A priest called Papnoute appears in six episcopal documents. He was closely associated with the priest Patermoute (*O.Crum Ad.* 40-41) and the clergyman Panachore, perhaps a deacon.⁷⁵⁴ According to one document, Papnoute declared to the priest Victor that he caught the priest Isaac eating and drinking on the last Saturday of Lent, just before they were about to celebrate the Eucharist (*O.Lips.Copt.* 14). Together with Panachore and a certain Theodore, Papnoute received an order from Bishop Abraham to act correctly and quickly (Krause's no. 110); he was informed that the priest Moses, son of Paul, was excluded from the clergy (*O.Crum Ad.* 8); and he acted as a witness in Bishop Abraham's decision to exclude the priest Patermoute from the clergy and even to excommunicate him, if he did not come and pay a fine the next day (*O.Crum Ad.* 40). Papnoute was excluded from the holy Communion himself together with John, son of Tsauo, and at the same – or another – occasion, he was excommunicated for speaking blasphemy. When the bishop readmitted him, Patermoute, Panachore and Ezekiel acted as Papnoute's warrants (*O.Crum* 54 and *Ad.* 41).

In view of his association with the priest Patermoute, Papnoute was probably in office in the town of Jeme in ca. 615. He was subordinate to the archpriest Psai (*O.Crum* 54).⁷⁵⁵ He could have been the same person as Papnoute, son of Isaac, who was a deacon, when he signed *P.KRU* 105 (before 600), but this hypothesis cannot be verified.

§5.3.8 *The archpriest John*

Before October 621 the priest Victor, who acted on behalf of Bishop Abraham, requested the archpriest John, Moses and other clergymen to arbitrate in a conflict, since the *lashanes* Peter and Zachariah did not have time to do this (*SBKopt.* II 906; cf. §3.1.1).⁷⁵⁶ It is tempting to identify John and Moses with John, son of Papnoute, the archpriest of the Parochial Church of Jeme, and Moses, son of Matthew, the priest and steward of the Church of the Holy Theotokos in Jeme, who signed the testament of Jacob and Elias I of the *Topos* of Epiphanius (*P.KRU* 75, ll. 140-43). If they were indeed involved, it implies that John and Moses were still in office in the 630s, for Jacob and Elias I drew up their testament after their predecessor Psan had died, and Psan was probably still alive in 630 (cf. §3.2.1).

In the discussions on “Hand F” and the priest Patermoute I proposed to identify the Apa John of *O.Crum* 65 with the archpriest John, since the former received an order from

⁷⁵⁴ *O.Crum Ad.* 41, Krause's no. 110 (unlocalized), *O.Crum Ad.* 40? (“P[...]”).

⁷⁵⁵ “Complete network - Papnoute.jpg”.

⁷⁵⁶ “Complete network - Archpriests.jpg”.

Bishop Abraham to arbitrate in a conflict, which was exactly what the latter was asked to do. Apa John was an influential clergyman who could (eventually) have become an archpriest.

§5.3.9 *The archpriest Dioscorus*

Dioscorus, son of Jacob and archpriest of the Holy Church of Hermonthis, was one of the signatories of Bishop Abraham's testament, together with the priest Joseph, son of John, who served in the same church (*P.Lond.* I 77; 610s).⁷⁵⁷ At another occasion, Dioscorus and Joseph received a letter from the bishop, stating that Agapetus was excluded from the clergy, and that any clergyman who would allow him to serve the altar would face the same punishment (*Deir el-Bahari* 1). Judging from a third document, Bishop Abraham requested Apa John, a priest, to listen to the archpriest Dioscorus and the priest Pesynthius (*O.Crum* 69).⁷⁵⁸

§5.4 THE ECCLESIASTICAL APPARATUS

Table 6, a reconstruction of the ecclesiastical apparatus of the Hermonthite diocese, is based on four *edgelists*, which include all clergymen known from the forty-one episcopal documents that can be assigned to one of the four periods distinguished in §5.1.5 (58 nodes).⁷⁵⁹ The networks of each period were visualized, in order to reveal the clergymen attested for each period. *The Ego network viewer* was used to isolate actors and their direct ties. It was particularly important to establish the order and locations of the archpriests, since there were only few of them, and since some documents mention the clergymen whom they supervised.

§5.4.1 *Clergymen before 600*

The visualized network reveals two clusters of nodes, based on *O.Crum Ad.* 59 and *P.KRU* 105 (Pl. 10.17). *O.Crum Ad.* 59 was addressed to a correspondent who probably lived in the diocese of Hermonthis, but cannot be identified. *P.KRU* 105 (ll. 27-38) lists eleven clergymen by their names and titles. They were associated with at least four churches in the town of Jeme, but only three of them explicitly mention the church in which they served.

In view of his title, the archpriest Jeremiah was associated with the main church of Jeme, presumably “the Parochial Church of Jeme” (§2.2.1). The priest Joseph, son of Mythia, was attached to the Church of the Apostles, as was probably the priest Cyriacus, son of Joseph, who signed the deed directly after him. Another priest called Joseph, the son of

⁷⁵⁷ “Complete network - Archpriests.jpg”

⁷⁵⁸ This priest, Apa John (ID no. 62), could be identical with other priests called (Apa) John (ID nos 61-67), but since it cannot be established which of them are identical, they are treated as distinct individuals.

⁷⁵⁹ Dataset 3.xlsx, spreadsheets “Before 600”-“620-621”.

Abraham, represented the Church of Apa Victor, and the priest Daniel, son of Andrew, served in the Church of St. Mary. Since Abraham, son of Lelou and Apa Victor, son of Pwohe, signed the deed after Daniel, it is plausible that they were attached to the same church as he was. These three sanctuaries appear in other documents as well, but are still to be located.⁷⁶⁰

Priests named Joseph, Daniel, Abraham or Victor reappear in the episcopal documents without further details: a priest Joseph was temporarily excluded from the holy Communion for neglecting the altar lamp (*Brit.Mus.Copt.* II 9), and a letter concerning a legate from a deceased woman mentions three priests, including one called Joseph (*O.MoscowCopt.* 77). A priest Abraham was temporarily excommunicated for speaking blasphemy, but four warrants, including Jeremiah (the archpriest of *P.KRU* 105?), guaranteed that he would not blaspheme again (*O.Crum* 81). The same or another priest Abraham stood surety for the newly ordained deacon Jacob (*O.Crum* 34). Finally, a priest named Victor, who is distinguished from Bishop Abraham's secretary and heir, promised to comply with the bishop's decision in a case of arbitration (*O.Crum Ad.* 12, re-edited as *O.Lips.Copt.* 15).

The deacons David, Elisaius, Papnoute and Peter were undoubtedly associated with the same churches and perhaps reappear in other texts. A priest David was excluded and later readmitted to the holy Communion (*O.Crum* 47), and he or a namesake received instructions to administer the last rites to an old women (*O.Crum* 66). The Elisaius of O.Berlin, P.12493, who had to take care of the service at the altar, was a different person, for he was recently ordained (deacon?) at the time of writing, and therefore worked under the supervision of the priest Pher, who does not occur in *P.KRU* 105. Papnoute could be the later priest Papnoute (§5.3.7). Peter is identified with the deacon Peter in *BKU* I 70 and O.Berlin, P.12501 (§5.3.5).

§5.4.2 Clergymen in ca. 600-609

The few clergymen who can be assigned to this period are the priest Victor, the abbot John (§3.2.4, 5.3.1), the deacon Peter (§5.3.5), a clergyman of the Church of St Michael and the priests Lachere and Plein, son of the priest Dios, who are mentioned in an agreement (*O.Crum* 313; Pl. 10.18).⁷⁶¹ This agreement refers to "our father the bishop" and is dated to a twelfth indiction year, which corresponds to 608/609, if Abraham is the bishop involved, and if "Hand A" is the scribe, as Crum suggested.⁷⁶²

⁷⁶⁰ Timm 1984-1992, vol. 3, 1022, nos 2, 17-18. The priest Cyriacus, son of Joseph, reappears in *P.Herm.* 25, l. 27 (late sixth century); cf. Garel, *Les testaments*, vol. 1, 78-79, 173 and vol. 2, 180, 187 (palaeographical study).

⁷⁶¹ The priest Lachere reappears as the sender of *O.Saint-Marc* 198.

⁷⁶² *O.Crum* 313, p. 35. The next twelfth indiction corresponds to 623/4, which is after Abraham's death.

There was a church dedicated to St Michael at Jeme. During Abraham's episcopacy, one of the priests officiating in the church at Jeme (ⲛⲧⲏⲙⲉ) was named Isaac, and his son Victor requested the bishop to be ordained deacon (*Brit.Mus.Copt.* II 7). According to the editor of this letter, Jeme was the town where Victor came from, but if that were the case, Victor would be called "the inhabitant of Jeme" (ⲡⲣⲏⲧⲏⲙⲉ). Instead, the toponym appears directly after the name of the church, to which it must refer. It is likely that Lachere (Lazarus?), Plein and Dios were active in the area of Jeme as well.

Although we are warned against accepting the attribution of episcopal documents to "Hand A", or the priest Victor, at face value (§3.2.4), it could be significant that two letters ascribed to this secretary date from this period (*O.Crum* 310, 313).

§5.4.3 Clergymen in ca. 610-619

The reconstructed network for this period displays thirty-eight clergymen, including Bishop Abraham, the priest Victor ("Hand B"?), the secretaries "Hand E" and "Hand F", the priests Patermoute and Papnoute, and the archpriests Dioscorus, Psai and John (cf. §5.3.1, 5.3.3-4, 5.3.6-9; Pl. 11.19). For the reconstruction of the ecclesiastical apparatus it is important to establish the order and locations of the archpriests, since there were few of them, and since they were in contact with several clergymen who were subordinate to them.

The archpriest Dioscorus served in the Holy Church of Hermonthis (§2.2.1, 5.3.9). Together with the priest Joseph and the deacon Paul he signed Bishop Abraham's testament in the 610s. Dioscorus and Joseph reappear in the episcopal documents as the joint recipients of a letter from the bishop, in which he informs them that Agapetus was excluded from the clergy. At another occasion, Dioscorus was assisted by the priest Pesynthius (cf. §5.3.9).

The archpriest Psai was informed that the priest Papnoute, who was subordinate to him, was excluded from the holy Communion (*O.Crum* 54). Assuming that Papnoute is the homonymous colleague of the priest Patermoute, who was active in Western Thebes in ca. 615, it is likely that Psai served in the Parochial Church of Jeme, and not in the Holy Church of Hermonthis, in about the same period (cf. §5.3.6-7).

The archpriest John appears in this network, since he is equated with Apa John (ID no. 60), who appears in *O.Crum* 65, but the identification is hypothetical (cf. §5.3.8). At any rate, Apa John should be included in this network, since the letter addressed to him was supposedly written by "Hand F", and supplemented by the priest Patermoute.

Clergymen associated with the priest Papnoute, other than the archpriest Psai, are the priest Victor and "Hand F"; the priest Moses, son of Paul, whom Papnoute had to send to the

bishop (*O.Crum Ad.* 8); the priest Isaac, who reported having caught Papnoute while breaking his fast before the official solution of Lent (*O.Lips.Copt.* 14), the priest Matthew (*O.Crum Ad.* 40), Panachore, Ezekiel and Theodore (*O.Crum Ad.* 41, Krause's no. 110). Patermoute acted as a scribe for the priest John "the Deaf" of Thone (*O.Crum* 40), three candidates to the diaconate (*O.Crum* 29), and four new readers of different churches in "the village" (*O.Crum* 46). He and Cyriacus, another clergyman, received orders from the bishop to catch Pshinnou and to deliver him to the authorities (*O.CrumVC* 37). When Patermoute was excluded from the clergy, the priest Apa John (ID no. 61) was informed about it (*O.Crum* 55).

The clergymen mentioned in documents attributed to "Hand E" are the deacon Paul, who was appointed to the Church of Apa Patape (*O.MoscowCopt* 76), the priest Shenetom, who was ordered to go to the "Place" (ⲙⲁ) of Pheu to celebrate the Eucharist (*O.Mon.Epiph.* 154), and the priest Ezekiel, whom the bishop exhorted to have patience with brother John (*O.Mon.Epiph.* 399). The discovery of *O.Mon.Epiph.* 154 and 399 at the *Topos* of Epiphanius suggests that Shenetom, Pheu and Ezekiel were active at or near Sheikh Abd al-Gurna.

As for "Hand F", his *ego network* overlaps with that of Patermoute and the archpriest John, who have already been mentioned.

The priest Moses, son of David, who borrowed a loom part from Bishop Abraham and the priest Victor in 618, probably did not travel far with the heavy wooden object, but lived somewhere in Western Thebes (*O.Crum* 311). In 619 the priests Hello of the Church of Apa Daniel and Hemai of the Church of Apa Cyriacus acted as witnesses for the monk Moses, whom Apa Papnoute of the *Topos* of Apa Theodore accused of theft (*O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* II 16).

Two documents sent by Bishop Abraham and attributed to his secretary "Hand B" are dated to 610-619 and August 7, 619 respectively (*O.Crum* 55; *O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* II 16). These dates indicate that this scribe was active after "Hand A" (600-609), at the same time as "Hand E" and "Hand F", or slightly later, and before "Hand D" (620-621). If "Hand A" and "Hand B" are both to be identified with the priest Victor, as Crum suggested,⁷⁶³ it is possible that Victor acted as an episcopal secretary again after a period when other scribes were employed.

§5.4.4 Clergymen in ca. 620-621

In this period, the archpriest John was assisted by the clergymen Moses, Plein, Solomon and Zachariah (Pl. 11.20). I link them to the town of Jeme, on account of the identification of John and Moses with the archpriest John and the priest Moses, who signed the testament of Jacob

⁷⁶³ *O.Crum*, p. xiv. The priest Victor wrote down *O.Crum Ad.* 14, which is attributed to "Hand B" (p. 29).

and Elias I (*P.KRU* 75, ll. 140-43). According to this testament, John served in the Parochial Church of Jeme, and the priest Moses was steward of the Church of the Holy God-bearer, the Virgin Mary. He could have been the successor of the archpriest Psai (§5.4.3).

Victor and David/“Hand D” were both active in this period (*SBKopt.* II 906, III 1360). The priest Moses of TT 29 is also attested in ca. 620 (§3.2.2).

The priest Mark and “the clergymen of Jeme” appear in documents relating to Bishop Pesynthius (§7.4.4). The bed-ridden monk Joseph, who was no longer active as an archdeacon and corresponded with Epiphanius in ca. 620 (*P.Mon.Epiph.* 162), is excluded from Dataset 3 as well. In his letter Joseph refers to a bishop, who advised him not to travel, on account of his poor health, but it cannot be ascertained whether he meant Bishop Abraham or a colleague.

§5.4.5 *Clergymen who could not be linked to a period*

Twenty-nine more clergymen are interesting on account of their (probable) status as archpriests, their association with a church or a locality, or familial or collegial relations.

One or two episcopal documents refer to archpriests, who are not mentioned by name. An episcopal order was certainly addressed to an archpriest: he had to excommunicate any clergymen who did not come to the Place (*Topos*) of Apa John to keep vigil, to celebrate the Eucharist, and to receive instructions (*O.Crum* 485). The other clergyman is identified as an archpriest, because he received an order from the bishop to bring the priests Athanasius, Joseph and Wanofre (?), who were subordinate to him (*O.MoscowCopt.* 77). There are no clear indications that link these clergymen to Hermonthis or Jeme.

Several clergymen were associated with churches of particular localities, or churches for which we can propose a location. The churches and chapels dedicated to the saints Ananias, Phaustus, George, Leontius, Menas, Victor and Mark were all possibly located in or close to Jeme, where there were places of worship with the same patronyms. Eleven clergymen served in these sanctuaries.⁷⁶⁴ The Church (or *Topos*?) of Apa Mark could well be the *Topos* of St Mark the Evangelist at Qurnet Muraï, where the priest Mark worked (§3.2.3),

⁷⁶⁴ Timm 1984-1992, vol. 3, 1021-22, nos 3-5 (or 9), 10, 12-13, 17. The relevant episcopal documents are Berlin, P. 12488: Pesente of the Church of Apa Ananias; *O.Crum* 51: Salom, steward of (the *Topos* of) Apa Phaustus; *O.Crum* 32: George, deacon of “the Place” of St George (cf. *O.CrumVC* 40); *O.Crum Ad.* 9: (the priest) Psate and his sons Pappa and Ananias of the *Topos* of Apa Leontius; *O.Crum* 45: the clergymen Zachariah and Athanasius, and the deacon Ezekiel of the Church of Apa Menas; Berlin, P. 12500: Apadios, deacon of (the *Topos* of) Apa Victor; Berlin, P. 12507: Abraham, deacon of the Church of Apa Mark. Two of the listed texts (Berlin, P. 12488, 12507) originate from “Baugruppe B” north of the German House in Western Thebes, which is a clear indication that the churches mentioned in them, those of Ananias, Victor and Mark, were located in the area of Jeme. Perhaps, the deacon George, son of Joseph, reappears as a priest and scribe in *O.CrumST* 38 (Paoni 29, indiction year 15, or June 23, 611 or 626?). The document mentions a church in Jeme.

and to which the deacon Abraham was appointed. Other clergymen were active in churches at Piohe, Pkoh, Patoubasten, The and Tmenke or in the Church of the Acacias.⁷⁶⁵ Perhaps we can link the new deacon Philotheus of *O.Crum* 35 to Hermonthis: he recalls the deacon Philotheus, son of Pheu, who signed an acknowledgement of wages paid to craftsmen who had done the woodwork of the Holy *Topos* of the Forty Martyrs and St Theophilus at Hermonthis.⁷⁶⁶ It is tempting to equate the two, since the warrant of the deacon of *O.Crum* 35 was a deacon called Pheu, which opens up the possibility that the deacons Pheu and Philotheus were father and son. As we will see below, father and son could both be clergymen. In this case, however, the identification of the deacons is tentative.

The episcopal documents reveal several family ties among clergymen: the sons of the priest Dios do liturgical services; Psate and his sons Pappa and Ananias served in the *Topos* of Apa Leontius; it is most likely that Joseph, priest of the *Topos* of Apa Victor in Jeme, and Papas, deacon of the *Topos* of Apa Victor, were brothers, for they both had a father called Abraham and worked in the same church; the deacon Ezekias agreed to end his conflict with his brother Eboneh, after the latter was dismissed as steward of the Church of the Acacias; and Paul promised to inform Bishop Abraham if his father, the priest Joseph, neglected the altar lamp again. Paul could only keep an eye on his father, if he was allowed to keep vigil in the church as a clergyman himself.⁷⁶⁷

Finally, various episcopal documents reveal clergymen who worked together, and probably belonged to the same church or monastic community: (the priest) Zachariah and Athanasius stood surety for Ezekiel, deacon of the Church of Apa Menas; similarly, the priest Pher, Pachom and Daniel were responsible for (the deacon) Elisaius; the priest Papas and his colleague Photinus promised that Apa Victor, who was under their care, would not act foolish again; (the priest?) David and Abraham were ordered to administer the last rites to an old woman; the priest Ananias and Isaac had to establish a boundary to end a conflict; Zachariah and Constantine discovered a jar of wine in the sanctuary of a church, which the priest Jacob supposedly put there; Isaac and John, and Ashai and Joseph were excluded from the clergy.⁷⁶⁸

⁷⁶⁵ *O.Crum* 36: the priest John and the reader Simeon in Piohe ask Bishop Abraham to ordain the deacon Isaac priest of the Church of St Mary at Piohe; *O.Crum* 57: priest Jacob at the church at Pkoh; *O.Brit.Mus.* II 22: deacon Abraham at Patoubasten; *O.Crum* 31: Abraham, reader (soon deacon) of the church at The; *O.Crum* 53: the priest Athanasius is ordered to celebrate the Eucharist in Tmenke; *O.Crum* 44: the deacon Ezekias and Eboneh, who was dismissed as steward of the Church of the Acacias. For this church, see *O.Frangé* 25.

⁷⁶⁶ *P.Pisentius* 49 + *P.CrumST* 46, transcribed in *Crum, Notebook* 84, 53.

⁷⁶⁷ *O.Crum* 38; *O.Crum Ad.* 9; *P.KRU* 105; *O.Crum* 30; *O.Crum* 44; *O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* II 9.

⁷⁶⁸ *O.Crum* 45; Berlin, P. 12493; *O.Crum* 300; *O.Crum* 66; *O.Crum* 62; *BKU* I 68; *O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* I (EA 33 134) and *O.Crum* 60.

When new editions of (dated) documents relating to Bishop Abraham are published in the future, it will hopefully be possible to recognize clergymen in this section and establish, or confirm, where and when they worked.

§5.5 CIVIL AND MILITARY OFFICIALS ASSOCIATED WITH ABRAHAM

The visualizations created for reconstructing the ecclesiastical apparatus by period can also be used as a starting point for a similar overview of state officials in the district of Hermonthis. Table 9 includes fifty-two entries in total: thirty-four nodes appear in Dataset 3, whereas the other social actors are drawn from Datasets 1 and 4. The individuals are arranged by locality, namely Hermonthis, Jeme, Piohe, Timamen, Ape or an unspecified location.

Dataset 3 includes four officials at Hermonthis, namely the notary Peter, who drew up Bishop Abraham's testament, the public defender Flavius Theophilus, the councilor Flavius Abraham and Flavius Pantonymus (610-619). Dataset 3 records fifteen officials linked to the town of Jeme, including five *lashanes* in different periods (Papnoute, Zachariah, Victor and two *lashanes* called Peter), the signatories and the scribe of *P.KRU* 105 (before 600), the headmen of *O.CrumVC* 37 and Kame, who were acquainted with the priest Patermoute (610-619), and Paham, the son of Pelish (620-621). There was a village scribe at Piohe, called David, and an official at Timamen, who cannot be identified (before 621). The military commander Paul, lieutenant Taggeila and the *actuarius* Peter were either stationed at the *castrum* of Ape or at Hermonthis (cf. §2.1.1). The rest of the officials, including four *lashanes*, four "Lords", and a civil official, are not linked to a particular place (before 621).⁷⁶⁹

The overview can be supplemented with "the Persian at Ne" (Luxor; *O.Mon.Epiph.* 324) and with officials associated with Bishop Pesynthius or Epiphanius, who are generally placed in the 620s. Apa Elias, Luke and a lawyer were associated with Hermonthis and appear in documents related to Bishop Pesynthius (§7.5.2). The civil officials at Jeme included the *lashane* Shenoute, Amos and the rest of the magistrates who sent Epiphanius a petition, the geometer Pisrael, and an "ara", whereas soldiers were stationed in the mountains of Western Thebes. Other officials in the Hermonthite district were the *lashanes* Victor of Toout and Strategius of Ne, a nameless lieutenant at Ape, master Elias and a *comes*.⁷⁷⁰

⁷⁶⁹ Hermonthis: *P.Lond.* I 77; Jeme: *P.KRU* 105, *BKU* I 70, *SBKopt.* II 906, *O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* II 2, 7, *O.CrumVC* 37, *O.Crum Ad.* 40; Piohe: *O.Crum* 36; Timamen: Berlin, P.12491; Ape: *O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* II 31, *O.Crum* 79; location unspecified: *O.Crum* 42, 49, 61, 65, 80, *O.MoscowCopt.* 78, *BKU* II 318, *O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* II 34, P. Louvre, inv. ? (SN 156).

⁷⁷⁰ Hermonthis: *O.Mon.Epiph.* 172, 254; Jeme: *P.Mon.Epiph.* 163, 281, *SBKopt.* I 295, *O.Crum* 139, 308, *O.Frangé* 774; Toout: *P.Mon.Epiph.* 163; Ape: *O.CrumST* 178, *O.Mon.Epiph.* 151, *O.Mon.Epiph.* 324, 458, 460.

§5.6 ABRAHAM'S DIRECTED *EGO NETWORK*

This final section examines the direction of the ties between Bishop Abraham and various social groups, namely clergymen, monks, civil officials, military officers, and the other actors. The analysis was prepared by extracting Abraham's *ego network* from his directed network, and by counting the reciprocal, incoming and outgoing relations for each group (§1.2.3.G.).⁷⁷¹

Abraham's *ego network* comprises 250 nodes, which implies that he was in direct contact with 73.7% of all 339 actors in this directed network, and remarkably close to the people in his diocese. The *ego network* includes 125 clergymen, eighteen monks, eighteen civil officials, two military officers, two women and eighty-six unspecified social actors.

167 nodes of the *ego network* share reciprocal ties with Abraham (66.8%), which is another indication that he was close to the faithful. As for the one-directional ties, 38 nodes refer to individuals who contacted the bishop (15.2%), and 45 nodes represent persons whom the bishop contacted (18%).⁷⁷² In both cases it is possible that the contact with the bishop was in reality reciprocal, but this is not recorded in the available documents.

The general proportion between the kinds of ties is more important than exact numbers or percentages (ca. 41:9:11). If nodes and ties from new documents are added to the dataset, the numbers and percentages will change, but Bishop Abraham will still have more reciprocal than one-directional relations, and more outgoing than incoming ties.

We will now take a closer look at the proportion of the reciprocal and one-directional ties by social group and the situations in which they existed.

§5.6.1 *Clergymen*

More than half of the clergymen has a recorded reciprocal tie with Bishop Abraham (81 nodes; 64.8%). This group does not only include personnel (the priest Victor, "Hand E", "Hand F") and regular correspondents (the abbot John, Patermoute), but also the clergymen whom the bishop met in person. They appear in various situations: as candidates for an ecclesiastical office;⁷⁷³ as newly ordained priests and deacons;⁷⁷⁴ as newly appointed readers;⁷⁷⁵ as penitents who confessed their misconduct,⁷⁷⁶ or were readmitted to the holy Communion;⁷⁷⁷ as senior clergymen who took responsibility for the conduct of their younger

⁷⁷¹ "Directed network - Ego network Abraham by group.jpg".

⁷⁷² "Network analysis 3", G.

⁷⁷³ *O.Crum* 29, 31.

⁷⁷⁴ *O.Crum* 30, 32-35, 37, *Ad.* 7; *O.MoscowCopt.* 45; *O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* II 7.

⁷⁷⁵ *O.Crum* 46.

⁷⁷⁶ *O.Crum* 312.

⁷⁷⁷ *O.Crum* 40, 47, 81, 94, *Ad.* 41; *O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* II 9; Berlin, P.12486.

colleagues;⁷⁷⁸ as signatories in an official document;⁷⁷⁹ as a conflicting party or warrant in a case of episcopal arbitration;⁷⁸⁰ as informants who report the misconduct of other clergymen;⁷⁸¹ or as agents sent by the bishop to deliver a message.⁷⁸²

The clergymen who contacted Bishop Abraham make up 9.6% of their social group (twelve nodes). They include Patriarch Damian, at whose request the bishop moved his residence,⁷⁸³ and clergymen in various situation: they stood surety for the functioning of a colleague,⁷⁸⁴ acted as a scribe,⁷⁸⁵ made a promise,⁷⁸⁶ or reported a transgression.⁷⁸⁷

Thirty-one nodes represent clergymen to whom the bishop wrote (24.8%). He informed clergymen about a decision,⁷⁸⁸ made inquiries,⁷⁸⁹ ordered clergymen to administer sacraments,⁷⁹⁰ gave orders of a different kind,⁷⁹¹ forbade the celebration of the Eucharist,⁷⁹² excluded clergymen from the clergy,⁷⁹³ sent a letter of thanksgiving,⁷⁹⁴ or made a request.⁷⁹⁵

§5.6.2 Monks

It must be observed that the monastic identity of some of the social actors labelled “monks” is tentative, and that the group of clergymen also included monks, who are not considered here.

77.8% of the eighteen nodes assigned to this social group represent monks who shared a reciprocal tie with Bishop Abraham, particularly David and his brethren at the Monastery of St Phoibammon, Pesente and Zael of the hermitage at TT 29, and Isaac I and John of the future *Topos* of Epiphanius (cf. §3.2.1-2, 3.2.5, 5.3.2). The other monks include Zyke, who came to Bishop Abraham to fetch a jar for the celebration of Easter; Isaac of the *Topos* of St John, who confessed his misconduct in the presence of the bishop and the hermits Isaac I and

⁷⁷⁸ *O.Crum* 38, 45, *Ad.* 9; Berlin, P.12489, 12493.

⁷⁷⁹ *P.Lond.* I 77.

⁷⁸⁰ *O.Crum* 42, 66, 313, *Ad.* 12, *O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* II 16.

⁷⁸¹ *BKU* I 68.

⁷⁸² *O.Crum* 69.

⁷⁸³ *O.Crum Ad.* 59.

⁷⁸⁴ *Brit.Mus.Copt.* II 9, *O.Crum* 32, 35-38, 300, Berlin, P.12489, 12493.

⁷⁸⁵ The priest Abraham: *O.Crum* 34; the priest Patermoute: *O.Crum* 29, 40, 46; steward Salom: *O.Crum* 51.

⁷⁸⁶ *O.Crum* 41, 311.

⁷⁸⁷ *O.Crum* 45.

⁷⁸⁸ *O.Crum* 65, 105, 484-485, *Ad.* 8; Berlin, P.12495.

⁷⁸⁹ *O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* I (EA 24948); *O.Crum* 80.

⁷⁹⁰ *O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* II 22; *O.Crum* 53, 66; *O.Mon.Epiph.* 154.

⁷⁹¹ To convey a message: *O.Crum* 56, 67, Berlin, P.12498; to investigate a matter: *O.Crum* 70, 184; to establish a boundary: *O.Crum* 62; to hand someone over to the authorities: *O.CrumVC* 37; to judge correctly: Krause's no. 110; the nature of the instruction is unclear: *SBKopt.* III 1360; to inspect churches: *SBKopt.* III 1379.

⁷⁹² Berlin, P.12497.

⁷⁹³ *O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* I (EA 33134); *O.Crum* 60, 75 verso; *Deir el-Bahari* 1.

⁷⁹⁴ *O.Crum* 64.

⁷⁹⁵ *O.Crum Ad.* 45, *O.Mon.Epiph.* 399.

John; Moses, who appeared before the bishop after being accused of theft, and Apa Papnoute, the superior of the *Topos* of St Theodore, who accused Moses.⁷⁹⁶

The one-directional ties are all directed towards Bishop Abraham (22.2%). The monks associated with the abbot John sent their greetings to the bishop and Victor; a monk (or priest?) informed Abraham about the location where he stored wheat; Ananias and Pheu asked independently from one another that a priest be sent for the celebration of the Eucharist.⁷⁹⁷

§5.6.3 *Civil officials*

As for Abraham's ties with civil officials, the majority is reciprocal (66.7%), one is directed towards him (5.6%), and there are five outgoing ties (27.8%). In other words, the bishop contacted civil officials more often than vice versa. It must be observed, however, that the number of officials is small and that the result is not necessarily representative for Abraham's actual ties with this social group.

The bishop met some officials in person during the drawing up of his testament or an episcopal hearing, or when a declaration was made in their presence.⁷⁹⁸ He also corresponded with the leaders of two communities about the outcome of his mediation with a *lashane* or about the disrespect of the villagers of Timamen towards him and his clergy.⁷⁹⁹

Abraham received a request from the village scribe David and two clergymen at Piohe to ordain the deacon Isaac priest.⁸⁰⁰

Bishop Abraham contacted a *lashane* and four individuals addressed as "Lord". He informed the *lashane* Pesente that the entire village was excluded from the holy Communion and that he would report Pesente's misconduct – unjustly detaining a man – in the city, if the *lashane* did not come to make an apology and compensate the man.⁸⁰¹ At other occasions, Abraham requested Lord Sarapion and his colleague to administer justice, probably asked Lord Kouloul to act as an arbiter, and made a request to Lord Loudj.⁸⁰²

⁷⁹⁶ *O.Crum* 51, 104, 126, 310, *O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* II 16, *BKU* II 318, *O.Frangé* 793.

⁷⁹⁷ *O.Crum* 90, 97, 204, *O.Mon.Epiph.* 154 (Pheu's action is deduced from the contents of the letter: it is likely that Abraham knew that a priest was required, because Pheu asked him to send one).

⁷⁹⁸ *P.Lond.* I 77 (the lay witnesses); *BKU* I 70 (*lashane* Peter); *O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* II 2 (Paham, son of Pelish) and 7 (*lashane* Victor); *O.Crum Ad.* 40 (Kame).

⁷⁹⁹ *BKU* II 318, *O.Crum* 49 (episcopal mediation between *lashanes* and communities); *Brit.Mus.Copt.* II 34 (at Lord Asper's request, Abraham agrees to mediate in a conflict); Berlin, P.12491 (the revolt at Timamen).

⁸⁰⁰ *O.Crum* 36.

⁸⁰¹ *O.Crum* 61.

⁸⁰² Paris, Louvre inv.?.; *O.MoscowCopt.* 78; *O.Crum* 65.

§5.6.4 *Military officials*

Abraham's contact with commander Paul and lieutenant Taggeila is identified as a reciprocal tie, since Taggeila requested the bishop to arbitrate between certain individuals, but the bishop replied that he had not been able to reach an agreement (*Brit.Mus.Copt.* II 31; 0.8%).

§5.6.5 *Women*

Two anonymous women appear in Bishop Abraham's direct network (0.8%). Abraham sent a widow to the priest Elias and instructed him to read a message to Patermoute, that he should have mercy with this widow. The other woman was sued by a man from Tabennese on account of money, and the bishop agreed to mediate between them.⁸⁰³

§5.6.6 *Other social actors*

The last group of eighty-six nodes is a repository for all other social actors and groups rather than a well-defined category. It possibly includes individuals who were in reality clergymen, monks or officials, but their social background is not evident from the documents in which they appear. Fifty-six nodes shared a reciprocal tie with Bishop Abraham (65.1%), twenty-one nodes contacted the bishop (24.4%), and he contacted individuals nine times (10.5%). In the following discussion, we will concentrate on four groups of people: individuals who worked for the Church, landowners and persons involved in a conflict.

The workers employed by the Church appear in two written declarations addressed to the bishop. In the first one, Hello, Pebo and John promised that they would come to him, if they did not build a church on time. In the other one, Hello confirmed that he received his wage, after working for the bishop.⁸⁰⁴

Dataset 3 includes two or three landowners. One of them asked Bishop Abraham to arbitrate between the husbandman who worked for him, and the bishop agreed. Another one, Misael, appeared before the bishop together with Joseph and Pelish, who promised to take care of Misael's estate and to let him decide where he wanted to live and how his land should be worked. The third landowner (?) was a man whom Abraham reproached for preventing the poor from fishing. After a first warning, the man did not obey the bishop, but even acted shamelessly, and the bishop sent another letter, hoping to convince the man to listen.⁸⁰⁵

⁸⁰³ *O.Crum* 67; *O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* I 34.

⁸⁰⁴ *BKU* I 69; *O.Crum* 51.

⁸⁰⁵ *O.Crum* 293; *O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* I 1; *O.MoscowCopt.* 80.

Various individuals were involved in a conflict as disputants or warrants. Phaustus had a conflict with his uncle, just like John, who was quarreling with his uncle Hatre about a dining room.⁸⁰⁶ Pesynte had a dispute with Jacob and his heirs, but since he could not come directly, Bishop Abraham allowed him more time. However, if he did not come on the established day, he would have to pay a fine.⁸⁰⁷ Menas promised to come to the episcopal hearing and to comply with the bishop's judgement. If he did not comply, he would have to pay a fine.⁸⁰⁸ Sometimes, the promise that a disputant would come to a hearing came from a warrant.⁸⁰⁹ It is recorded twice that a conflict could not be solved: Bishop Abraham mediated between disputants at the request of two military officers, but being unable to reconcile them, he sent them back. At another occasion, Abraham ordered Apa John to arbitrate between Pesynthius and Menas, since the previous arbiter, Lord Kouloul, was unsuccessful.⁸¹⁰

CONCLUSION

Abraham's social network was reconstructed as undirected ecclesiastical and complete networks and as a directed (complete) network, and separate *edgelist*s were created to analyze the complete network during four periods: before 600, 600-609, 610-619 and 620-621.

The complete network is more than twice as large as the ecclesiastical network, has a more varied population, and its members have a higher *average degree*, but in general, the basic structure of the two networks is the same. In both cases, the number of realized ties is less than 3%, which is low when compared with the scores for the Theodosian and Theban networks (22.7% and 4.7% respectively; §3.2.2). The *average distance* is lower than three degrees of separation and it only takes three steps to go from one end of the network to the other, but most ties go through Abraham. His strongly centralized network falls apart into many components, when he is removed from the dataset, as can be expected in a network of the head of a hierarchical institution.

In both networks Abraham and the priest Victor appear as the core members, and other social actors with high centrality scores are the deacon Peter and the priests Patermoute and Papnoute. The monks of the Monastery of St Phoibammon (in the complete network), the signatories of *P.KRU* 105, the archpriests John and Dioscorus, and the episcopal secretaries "Hand E" and "Hand F" also have good centrality scores. Abraham had the strongest ties with Victor, Patermoute, Papnoute, "Hand E" and the monks of the Monastery of St Phoibammon.

⁸⁰⁶ *SBKopt.* III 1378; *O.Crum* 86 + 155.

⁸⁰⁷ *O.Crum* 48.

⁸⁰⁸ *O.Crum* 43. For a similar promise made by clergymen, see *O.Crum* 42, 44, *Ad.* 12.

⁸⁰⁹ *SBKopt.* III 1378; *O.Crum* 86 + 155.a.

⁸¹⁰ *O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* II 31; *O.Crum* 65.

The directed network includes the same nodes as the complete network, but fewer ties: the complete network draws ties between all social actors mentioned in a document, but in the directed network only the recorded or reconstructed ties count. This network is less dense than the complete network (1.3%), and less compact with a diameter of 7 steps, but again, Abraham is the indispensable central actor, and he and Victor form the core of the network. Patermoute, Peter and the monks of the Monastery of St Phoibammon are also the central actors in the directed network. The differences between the ingoing and outgoing ties of the various central actors is limited. In other words, most ties are reciprocal.

Like the priest Mark, Patermoute was a professional scribe and he sometimes acted as an episcopal messenger, which gave him the opportunity to interact with many people. By using tools for quantitative network analysis he and his colleague Papnoute could be singled out as central actors in Abraham's network for the first time. In a brief prosopographical study both men were linked to the area of Jeme in ca. 615. The visualization of their *ego networks* and those of the other central actors identified in §5.3 facilitated the reconstruction of the ecclesiastical apparatus of the Hermonthite diocese, which lists a large number of clergymen, arranged by location and period. Without *Ucinet 6* and *NetDraw* it would have been much more difficult to reconstruct such an overview.

The attempt to establish the relative order and locations of the archpriests was mostly successful. The archpriests who officiated in the Parochial Church of Jeme include Jeremiah (before 600), probably Psai, who was a contemporary of Papnoute (ca. 615), and John (late 610s, 621), whereas the archpriest Dioscorus served in the Holy Church of Hermonthis (610-619). Two archpriests remain anonymous and could not be linked to Jeme or Hermonthis.

The few tentatively dated documents relating to the episcopal secretaries suggest that "Hand A" (Victor) was active in 600-609, "Hand E" and "Hand F" in 610-619, "Hand B" (Victor?) in ca. 619-620, and "Hand D" (David) in 620-621. If a palaeographical study could confirm Crum's identification of the scribal hands, and if more dated texts were attributed to these secretaries, the proposed order and dating of the secretaries can be verified. Once their order and dates are established, we could propose approximate dates for the undated letters attributed to them and include the clergymen mentioned in these letters to the ecclesiastical apparatus. This process would help to further refine Abraham's chronology.

The graphs of Abraham's network by period, which were made for the reconstruction of the ecclesiastical apparatus, were reused to make a similar overview by period for the civil and military officials in the Hermonthite district. The overview is supplemented with officials who are known from documents relating to Bishop Pesynthius or Epiphanius.

The analysis of the direction of Abraham's ties reveals that he was in direct contact with most actors in his directed network (73.7%), and that most of his ties were reciprocal (66.8%). These high scores confirm Wipszycka's impression that Abraham was well connected with the faithful in his diocese. (Abraham's scores for *closeness centrality* are not useful for proving his closeness, for the networks from which they result are unsuitable for this purpose. Since the undirected complete network presupposes too many direct ties, and the directed network omits the reciprocal ties, *closeness centrality* does not clarify how many ties were regular or reciprocated ties, and could be considered as close relations.)

Chapter 6: The nature of Abraham's authority

INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines the nature of Abraham's authority during various social events, and also takes into account the social, historical and practical conditions in which he worked.

The first section discusses the context in which Abraham worked, by recapitulating important observations made in earlier chapters with regard to his social background as a Theodosian monk-bishop, his position in the Theodosian network of the Theban region, and the organization and development of his diocese. Historical events during his episcopate that may have affected him or the Theban region in general should be considered briefly as well.

The next five sections examine the examples of spiritual, ascetic, episcopal, pragmatic and legal authority that can be recognized in Abraham's documents on the basis of themes or specific keywords that point to a particular type of authority (§1.3).

Finally, the weight of Abraham's episcopate is evaluated by checking whether he was actively involved in all or most spheres of episcopal activity. These include the organization of worship, mission, church administration, the care for the underprivileged, education and discipline, giving directions for daily life and intercession with civil authorities within the boundaries of his diocese. This approach will help to nuance Wipszycka's observation that Abraham did not experience the full weight of his office. While doing so, attention should also be paid to factors that made the episcopal office a heavy responsibility, such as Abraham's role as abbot of a major monastery and the disobedience of individuals.

§6.1 THE CONTEXT IN WHICH ABRAHAM WORKED

Being a Theodosian monk-bishop, Abraham represented a relatively new church hierarchy, which competed with the official, Chalcedonian church, and he took up the task to organize a new or almost new Theodosian diocese of Hermonthis, probably alongside a Chalcedonian counterpart (§2.2). Abraham established his residence at the newly founded Monastery of St Phoibammon in Western Thebes, which was near the town of Jeme and the hermitage of Isaac I and John, which later became known as the *Topos* of Epiphanius (§3.2.1).

The Theodosian diocese was limited to the West Bank. It must have started small, but in the course of time, it included a large number of localities (§2.2.1, 4.5.1). Already at an early stage of his episcopate, Abraham successfully established ties with the Jemean magistrates and clergymen (§5.3.5, 5.4.2). This is likely to have been facilitated by the agreement between the Monastery of St Phoibammon and the Jemean authorities, according

to which the latter would recognize the right of the monks to choose their leader themselves, but expected him to take care of poor passers-by (§3.1.1). Bishop Abraham benefitted from the agreement, since the Jemeans recognized him at least as the abbot of the monastery, whereas they were no longer morally obliged to provide for the poor, but could send them to the monastery. In the 610s, Abraham supervised the clergymen of the Holy Church of Hermonthis and also maintained good relations with urban officials (§5.4.3).

At the episcopal residence, Abraham was assisted by the priest Victor, two anonymous secretaries and David (§3.2.4, 5.3.1, 5.3.3-4). The priest Patermoute was an important local agent, who probably worked at Jeme and occasionally acted as a scribe or messenger (§5.3.6).

A few hundred meters south of Abraham's monastery, at the *Topos* of Epiphanius, the hermit Epiphanius attained the reputation of a holy man, whose spiritual and ascetic authority was recognized by bishops, clergymen and civil officials alike. He even received letters from the patriarch of Alexandria and Constantine of Asyut, the patriarchal vicar before ca. 620, and was invited to attend a council (§3.2.1). Other hermits in the Theodosian network, such as Moses of TT 29, were called "anchorite" as well, on account of their ascetic authority, but Epiphanius' extraordinary spiritual authority was matched by that of Bishop Pesynthius only (§8.2). No direct ties between Abraham and Epiphanius are recorded, and the analysis of the Theban network reveals that they were members of different clusters (§4.2.3), but in view of the limited distance between them, they were undoubtedly acquainted. In 620, Epiphanius' reputation was at its peak, whereas Abraham's activity decreased (§3.1.1, 3.2.1). Having been bishop for about thirty years, he must have been an aged man at the time.⁸¹¹

While Abraham was in office, several important historical events took place in Egypt or in the Byzantine Empire in general, which are not mentioned in his documents, but are nevertheless significant for sketching his historical background. To start with, there were two violent military coups at the imperial capital, by Phocas in 602 and by Heraclius the Younger in 610.⁸¹² In the Theban region the impact of these events may have been limited, but on a rock near TT 1151, next to TT 1152 (§3.2.5), archaeologists observed a Coptic graffito carved by Kame from Jeme, which is dated to the reign of Phocas. According to K.A. Worp, it is the only known Coptic inscription dated after a Byzantine emperor.⁸¹³ After the second coup, Heraclius' cousin and general Nicetas became governor at Alexandria and relieved taxes for

⁸¹¹ It was recommended that candidates to the episcopate were at least fifty, but younger candidates were also permitted after careful testing, provided that they were older than thirty; cf. Noethlichs 1973, 33-35, 55.

⁸¹² Kaegi 2003, 37, 43-52.

⁸¹³ Winlock and Crum 1926, 11-12. Worp (1990, 141) observed that the dates recorded in the graffito are conflicting: Phocas' eighth year fell in 609-10 (regnal year) or 610 (consular year), but the twelfth indiction year corresponded to May 1, 608-April 30, 609. For TT 1151, see Górecki 2010.

three year, which made him popular in Egypt, according to the *Chronicle of John of Nikiu* (end of the seventh century).⁸¹⁴ If the comment in the *Chronicle* is historically correct, the Theban region should have profited from the tax relief measures in ca. 610-613, which are unfortunately not recorded by Theban documents.

Abraham must have been informed about the demise of two Theodosian patriarchs of Alexandria, namely Damian, who had ordained him, on June 12, 607, and Anastasius, who died on December 19 (or 18), 619. Andronicus probably succeeded him already in 619.⁸¹⁵ The Sahidic *Life of Aaron* indicates that bishops would go to Alexandria to pay homage to the new patriarch under normal circumstances.⁸¹⁶

In May 614, the Persians conquered Jerusalem, slew a large number of its inhabitants, deported another large group to Persia, and caused an influx of Syrian refugees in Egypt, particularly at Alexandria. The Persians also took the relic of the Cross to the capital city of Ctesifon. The fall of Jerusalem, the Holy City of Christendom, was considered a disaster both for all Christians and for the Byzantine Empire.⁸¹⁷

In ca. 615 the Nile did not flood, which caused serious famine, as is stated not only by the two versions of the *Life of John the Almsgiver*,⁸¹⁸ but also by the extensive Arabic version of the *Encomium* on Bishop Pesynthius.⁸¹⁹

In the second half of 617, the patriarchs Anastasius of Alexandria and Athanasius of Antioch finally ended the separation between their Churches, which started on account of the Trinitarian dispute between Damian and Peter of Callinicus, patriarch of Antioch, in ca. 586. The reconciliation took place at Alexandria after the mediation of Nicetas.⁸²⁰

According to hagiographic traditions, the prospect of a Persian invasion of Egypt was horrific enough for Nicetas and the Chalcedonian Patriarch John the Almsgiver to flee to Cyprus,⁸²¹ and for Bishop Pesynthius to flee to Western Thebes (§3.1.2, 8.1). By contrast,

⁸¹⁴ Chapter 109.17: ed./trans. Zotenberg 1883, 430; trans. Charles 1916, 175. The *Chronicle* is only preserved in a seventeenth-century Ethiopic manuscript. On Nicetas, see Martindale 1992, 942.

⁸¹⁵ Jülicher 1922, 14, 23.

⁸¹⁶ Ed. Dijkstra and Van der Vliet (forthcoming), ch. 83.

⁸¹⁷ Foss 2003, 152-53; Kaegi 2003, 78. On John the Almsgiver's grief on the fall of Jerusalem, see the *Life of John the Almsgiver* edited by Delehaye 1927, 14 and 23 (ch. 9); on the Syrian fugitives, including bishops and priests, see idem, 13 and 21 (ch. 6). See also the *Life of John the Almsgiver* attributed to Leontius of Neapolis: ed. Gelzer 1893, 13-15 (ch. 7); transl. Dawes and Baynes 1948, 213-14. John Moschus' reaction on the fall of Jerusalem is discussed in Booth 2014, 94-100.

⁸¹⁸ The *Life of John the Almsgiver* attributed to Leontius of Neapolis: ed. Gelzer 1893, 25, 62 (ch. 13, 30); transl. Dawes and Baynes 1948, 221, 241. See also the other *Life*: ed. Delehaye 1927, 14, 22 (ch. 7).

⁸¹⁹ A, O'Leary 1930, fol. 179b.

⁸²⁰ Booth 2014, 104; cf. Olster 1985; Müller 1994. On the theological conflict, see Ebied 2016, 65-66.

⁸²¹ The *Life of John the Almsgiver* attributed to Leontius of Neapolis: ed. Gelzer 1893, 90-91 (ch. 44B).

Bishop Abraham remained at the Monastery of St Phoibammon,⁸²² perhaps because of his age. Although people in Western Thebes expressed their worries about the Persian presence and some of them faced financial problems on account of taxation, it appears that the area was relatively safe.⁸²³ It was certainly safe enough for Theodosian bishops, hermits and clergymen to keep their common network strong (§4.3.3).

§6.2 SPIRITUAL AUTHORITY

Abraham's spiritual authority was mainly based on his status as a bishop. He is called "holy father(hood)",⁸²⁴ "most holy",⁸²⁵ and "your fatherly holiness",⁸²⁶ which are common titles for bishops (§1.3.1). Unlike Pesynthius, he was rarely addressed in the second person plural, but usually in the singular, which indicates that Pesynthius was more respected than Abraham, probably because he was regarded as a Spirit-bearer, and Abraham was not (§8.2).⁸²⁷

Nevertheless, Abraham's prayers and blessings were much appreciated by some. The abbot John requested him to bless loaves of bread, "in order that your blessing will come over them".⁸²⁸ Abraham replied that he was unpleasantly surprised about the delivery of bread and could not use them. He returned the loaves, in order that the Lord would bless them and that the monks would eat them as a blessing. The editors of Abraham's reply observed that he did not refuse to bless the bread, but acted out of modesty, wanting to downplay John's hope for the effect of his blessing and to leave all praise to God.⁸²⁹ Abraham received some requests for prayer, and was invoked as a spiritual intercessor after his death.⁸³⁰

Various documents refer to the consecration of clergymen,⁸³¹ but the administration of the other sacraments by Bishop Abraham himself are not explicitly recorded. Nevertheless, he must have come to Jeme for the baptismal ceremony, which happened thrice a year, in order to pass the gifts of the Holy Spirit by laying his hands on the heads of the baptized.⁸³²

⁸²² Wipszycka 2015, 40.

⁸²³ *SBKopt.* I 295; *P.Mon.Epiph.* 300, 433; *O.CrumVC* 67; cf. Wilfong 2002, 5; Wipszycka 2015, 40.

⁸²⁴ **ΕΙΩΤ ΕΤΟΥΛΛΕ**, "holy father": *O.Crum* 29-30, 33-34, 45-47, 50-51, *Brit.Mus.Copt.* II 7, 9, 34, *O.MoscowCopt.* 45, O.Berlin, P. 12493; **ΗΝΤΕΙΩΤ ΕΤΟΥΛΛΕ**, "holy fatherhood": *O.Crum* 104, *BKU* III 316, *O.Lips.Copt.* 11, O.Berlin, P.12489; **ΧΘΕΙC ΝΕΙΩΤ ΕΤΟΥΛΛΕ**, "holy fatherly lord": *O.Crum* 31.

⁸²⁵ **ΘCΙΩΤΑΤΟC**: *P.Lond.* I 77, l. 83 in Garel, *Les testaments*, vol. 2, 17 (l. 82 in the edition); *Brit.Mus.Copt.* II 6.

⁸²⁶ **ΤΕΚΑΓΙΩCΥΝΗ ΝΕΙΩΤ**: *O.Crum* 90.

⁸²⁷ The abbot John is the only one to use plural forms, in *O.Crum* 90: **ΤΕΤΝΗΝΤΕΙΩΤ, ΝΤΕΤΝΗCΗΟΥ ΕΡΟ[ΟΥ]**.

⁸²⁸ *O.Crum* 90.

⁸²⁹ *O.Lips.Copt.* 9.

⁸³⁰ During his life: *O.Crum* 104, *BKU* II 316; after his death: *BKU* II 258; O.Berlin, P.868.

⁸³¹ **Χ(Ε)ΠΡΟΔΟΝΕΙ**: *O.Crum* 29-36, *Brit.Mus.Copt.* II 7.

⁸³² O.Berlin, P.12501. On the bishop's role, see Wipszycka 2015, 328; cf. Krause, *Apa Abraham*, vol. 2, 149.

§6.3 ASCETIC AUTHORITY

Abraham was recognized as the first abbot of the Monastery of St Phoibammon and as an “anchorite of the holy mountain of the Memnonia” (Jeme).⁸³³ Thrice, he is called “who truly bears the Christ”, which indicates that he enjoyed considerable ascetic authority.⁸³⁴

Abraham’s documents create the impression that he was a conscientious bishop, who insisted on obedience, the observance of God’s commands and church regulations, and the prevention of negligence (§6.4.E).⁸³⁵ He ordered candidates for ordination to observe a number of ascetic practices, such as memorizing one of the Gospels, fasting till the evening for forty days, reciting one hundred prayers daily, and “guarding” (var.: “not touching”) their beds both during these forty days and after their ordination, on the days when they perform liturgical services.⁸³⁶ According to Crum, Schmelz and Wipszycka, the final instruction refers to sexual abstinence for married clergymen, but Krause and Moawad assumed that new clergymen had to keep vigil.⁸³⁷ Since the verb used in the alternative phrase “to not touch the bed” usually has a negative meaning,⁸³⁸ it probably signifies “to not defile the bed”. Nevertheless, it is not unlikely that new clergymen had to spend forty days in a church or monastery under the supervision of senior clergymen, while fasting, praying and reciting from the Scriptures during nightly vigils, as is still customary in the Coptic Orthodox Church.⁸³⁹

Although bishops with a non-monastic background could give similar instructions, it is probable that monk-bishops like Abraham were particularly motivated to educate clergymen (and laymen), since they were used to a disciplined lifestyle themselves.⁸⁴⁰

§6.4 PROFESSIONAL AUTHORITY

A. Organization of worship

When Abraham was in office, the main sanctuary at the Monastery of St Phoibammon was still a chapel instead of a large church.⁸⁴¹ Therefore, it could not serve as the official episcopal church, but Abraham made an agreement with the clergymen of Jeme that special public ceremonies, including baptism, would take place in Jeme (§2.2.1 and below). On ordinary

⁸³³ *P.Lond.* I 77, l. 76 in Garel, *Les testaments*, vol. 2, 17; cf. §3.1.1.

⁸³⁴ *O.Crum* 50, from the abbot John; *O.Frangé* 792, from a certain Mark; *P.Saint-Marc* 439 (sender unknown).

⁸³⁵ Brown (2002, 66) was the first to call Abraham a “conscientious bishop”.

⁸³⁶ **ρῳεic**: *O.Crum* 29-30, 34-35; **ζαρεζ**: *O.Crum* 31, 33; **χωζ**: O.Berlin, P.12489; cf. Wipszycka 2015, 316-18.

⁸³⁷ *O.Crum*, p. 9, commentary to *O.Crum* 31: “to be pure (continent)”; Schmelz 2002, 56 and n. 121; Wipszycka 2015, 316-37; Krause, *Apa Abraham*, vol. 2, 51-52; Moawad 2013, 128.

⁸³⁸ The basic meaning of **χωζ ε-** is “to touch”, but the related noun can mean “contagion”; Crum 1939, 797a.

⁸³⁹ Moawad 2013, 128. Wipszycka (2015, 317) refers to Moawad’s article to support her idea that “guarding the bed” refers to purity, even in modern practice, but Moawad rather describes a period of training at a monastery.

⁸⁴⁰ Moawad (2013, 127-28) suspects that the habit to memorize a Gospel originates from a monastic context.

⁸⁴¹ **ἐὺκτήριον**: *P.Lond.* I 77, l. 34 in Garel, *Les testaments*, vol. 2, 15.

days, Abraham probably celebrated the Eucharist at the monastery with the brethren, since he was also their abbot, whereas the archpriests of the Parochial Church of Jeme and the Holy Church of Hermonthis represented him in their churches (§5.3.8-9).⁸⁴²

When someone wanted to be ordained priest or deacon of a specific church, he would send a request for ordination to the bishop, or other people would write on his behalf. If the bishop agreed, the candidate would promise to prepare himself for the office by fasting and “guarding his bed” for forty days, to memorize a Gospel and to perform his liturgical duties well (§6.3). Those who stood surety for him promised to report negligence on his part, or else, they would be held responsible.⁸⁴³ Dataset 3 records the (upcoming) ordination of three priests and seventeen deacons, and the appointment of four readers to churches at various localities.⁸⁴⁴ Two deacons were ordained at the request of the founder of a private church or monastery.⁸⁴⁵ Twice, a clergyman guaranteed that his sons would serve the altar (as deacons?) and that he was responsible for their conduct.⁸⁴⁶ When a priest fell ill, or when no priest was available to celebrate the Eucharist at a monastic community or shrine, the bishop sent one.⁸⁴⁷

Seven documents record the appointment of clergymen, often deacons, as overseers of particular churches or sanctuaries. Their duties were to prevent and report any negligence in the places of worship, to teach the faithful to be pious, and to exclude disobedient clergymen or laymen from the holy Communion, until they had been readmitted to the bishop.⁸⁴⁸ The prevention of negligence implied that the overseers had to ensure that the liturgy was performed correctly, and that the altar lamps burned continually after the example of the lamp in the Tent of Meeting (Exodus 27:20-21).⁸⁴⁹ In addition to the overseers, Abraham ordered an inspector to visit all the churches “from the hill to the valley”, to admonish clergymen who neglected the altar lamp and the liturgy, to instruct them about Lent and Easter, and to exclude

⁸⁴² But see Wipszycka (2015, 338): “Abraham performed his liturgical duties in the churches of Jeme (Medinet Habu)”. Archpriests were authorized to replace the bishop, when he was absent; cf. Lampe 1961, 240.

⁸⁴³ Krause, *Apa Abraham*, vol. 2, 37-57; Schmelz 2002, 48-58; Wipszycka 2015, 316-18.

⁸⁴⁴ Priests: *O.Crum* 35- (the deacon Philotheus asks to be ordained [priest]), 36, *Ad.* 7; deacons: *O.Crum* 29 (three candidates), 30-34, 45, *O.MoscowCopt.* 45, *O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* II 7, O.Berlin, P.12489, and probably *O.Crum* 38 (two persons), *O.Crum Ad.* 9 (two persons) and O.Berlin, P.12493; readers: *O.Crum* 46; cf. Schmelz 2002, 48.

⁸⁴⁵ Victor, the original founder (ἡγούμενος for πρωτοκτίστης) in O.Berlin, P.12489.

⁸⁴⁶ *O.Crum* 38, *O.Lips.Copt.* 13 (= *O.Crum Ad.* 9).

⁸⁴⁷ *O.Crum* 53 (Tmenke), 97 (hermitage), 105 (hermitage of Shenetom), *O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* II 22 (Patoubasten), *O.Mon.Epiph.* 154 (hermitage of Pheu); cf. Schmelz 2002, 79-80.

⁸⁴⁸ ἵδρυς ἡμῶν ἐστίν, “I put you in charge of”: O.Berlin, P. 12488, 12500, 12507; *O.Crum* 57 (village church), 58, 63; *O.MoscowCopt.* 76. These clergymen are called “Titulare” in Krause, *Apa Abraham*, vol. 1, 55-57 and vol. 2, 94-100, and “Kirchenvorsteher” in Schmelz 2002, 141.

⁸⁴⁹ *O.Crum* 41, 45; *SBKopt.* III 1379-80; cf. Wipszycka 1972, 99 and 2015, 348; Schmelz 2002, 39, 51.

disobedient clergymen from the clergy.⁸⁵⁰ During an inspection, Zacharias and Constantine found a flask of wine stashed under the cupboard in the sanctuary.⁸⁵¹

In late antique Egypt, liturgical services were held on Saturday and Sunday. Judging from literary texts relating to bishops living in the fifth century, it started with preaching on Saturday evening, praying and singing Psalms during the vigil on Sunday eve, and celebrating the Eucharist at night or early on Sunday morning.⁸⁵² Coptic Theban texts indeed confirm that priests were invited to come for mass already on Saturday.⁸⁵³ The clergyman Hello promised Abraham that he or his father would sleep in the church, tend to the altar lamp from the evening till the morning, and perform liturgical services.⁸⁵⁴ The priest Isaac reported that he went to his colleague Papnoute for the celebration of the Eucharist on Easter eve, but caught him eating before the end of the Lenten fast.⁸⁵⁵ Another cleric was excluded from the clergy for having celebrated the Eucharist on Sunday evening, which was too late.⁸⁵⁶

Abraham taught communicants to not eat before receiving holy Communion, and clergymen to mix the wine for the Eucharist with water in the correct proportion.⁸⁵⁷ The Eucharistic bread had to be fresh and warm, which implies that the loaves that the abbot John sent to Abraham could not be used for the Eucharist, since they were no longer warm. Krause thought that the bishop had to check them, but John only asked that he would bless them.⁸⁵⁸

Abraham and the clergymen of Jeme made an agreement that the latter would organize baptism ceremonies thrice a year “according to the custom of the village”, that the clergymen would pay for the costs, and that they would share the received donations with the bishop.⁸⁵⁹ Easter eve was considered as the best occasion for baptism, since it linked the baptized to the death and resurrection of Christ, but from the fifth century on, it could also take place at other times, such as Pentecost.⁸⁶⁰ Archaeologists did not find baptisteries at Jeme (§2.3.2), but a fragmentary text from the *Topos* of Epiphanius, *O.Mon.Epiph.* 157, mentions a baptismal font

⁸⁵⁰ *SBKopt.* III 1379-80.

⁸⁵¹ *BKU I* 68; cf. Schmelz 2002, 129.

⁸⁵² Moawad 2013, 125-26, 136.

⁸⁵³ Schmelz 2002, 83-85.

⁸⁵⁴ *O.Crum* 41.

⁸⁵⁵ *O.Lips.Copt.* 14 (= *O.Crum Ad.* 10). **ΡΟΥΖΕ ΜΠΣΑΒΒΑΤΟΝ ΗΠΕΒΛ ΕΒΟΛ**, “the evening of the Saturday of the solution (of the Lenten fast)” is Easter eve; cf. *O.Crum*, p. 18, n. 1.

⁸⁵⁶ *O.Crum* 75. Crum (*O.Crum*, p. 14, n. 2) translated **ΡΟΥΖΕ ΝΤΚΥΡΕΛΚΗ** as “the evening of Sunday”, but understood “Saturday evening”, as if the text reads “Sunday eve”; cf. Schmelz (2002, 84-85). However, “eve” is not listed as a translation of **ΡΟΥΖΕ** in Crum 1939, 310.

⁸⁵⁷ *O.Crum* 74, 73 (end); cf. Schmelz 2002, 78-79, 145-47. For the mixing of wine, see Moawad 2013, 129-30.

⁸⁵⁸ Krause, *Apa Abraham*, vol. 2, 106, based on *O.Crum* 90. Wipszycka (1972, 67) was the first to identify the loaves as *eulogiai*, blessed bread to be distributed after mass; cf. Schmelz 2002, 77.

⁸⁵⁹ O.Berlin, P.12501; ed. Krause, *Apa Abraham*, vol. 2, 147-50; cf. Wipszycka 1972, 73 and 2015, 109-10, 327-28 and n. 30; cf. Schmelz 2002, 85-86.

⁸⁶⁰ Wharton 1999, 332; cf. Rousseau 1999, 331.

“in the city” and “in the mountain of Jeme”, which was in use, without having been consecrated. The significance of this text is unclear, since there was no city in the mountain of Jeme, and Jeme was just a village. The editor doubted whether the text was part of a letter.⁸⁶¹

Two clergymen were ordered to quickly administer the last rites to an old woman, who was apparently dying. The last rites must have included holy Communion and prayers.⁸⁶²

Bishop Abraham informed a correspondent that Patriarch Damian sent a Festal Letter, “confirming us in God’s faith”.⁸⁶³ Perhaps, Abraham’s letter was a cover letter that was sent together with Damian’s letter, in order to be read in churches.

B. Mission

When Abraham and some clergymen went to Timamen, on the East Bank of the Nile, the villagers stood against them. They destroyed a book on canon law that the bishop brought with him, threw the clergymen in the river, and shouted against the bishop.⁸⁶⁴ It is likely that Abraham came to Timamen with ecclesiastical documents, in order to expand his jurisdiction to a place that actually belonged to the diocese of Thebes/Ape, since there was no Theodosian bishop of Ape at the time. Perhaps, he acted as the administrator of a vacant see (§2.1.1, 2.3.1). The violent rejection of Abraham’s authority may indicate that the villagers were Chalcedonian. The phrase “So far, I did not find anyone – neither a bishop nor a policeman – who sent them after me (for an apology)” suggests that there was a bishop, who should have sent the troublemakers, but did not do it, and who was not Theodosian.⁸⁶⁵ Whatever the exact circumstances, Abraham exercised enough authority to warn his correspondent, a civil official, that he would arrange an interdict, if the villagers were not brought to justice.

A less explicit form of missionary activity is the promotion of the cult of a saint. As abbot of the Monastery of St Phoibammon, Abraham contributed to the cult of its patron saint, a soldier of Preht who was martyred at Asyut in the early fourth century and whose remains were first venerated at a shrine at Touho (Taha al-Amida), eleven km north of al-Minya.⁸⁶⁶ He was commemorated on Pauni 1 (May 26). A Sahidic version of Phoibammon’s *Mighty deeds and miracles* dated between 822 and 913/934 associates the veneration of this saint with

⁸⁶¹ *O.Mon.Epiph.* 157 n. 2; cf. Schmelz 2002, 86.

⁸⁶² *O.Crum* 66; Krause, *Apa Abraham*, vol. 2, 128-30; Schmelz 2002, 85 n. 50.

⁸⁶³ *O.Crum Ad.* 59 (*O.Lips.Copt.* 10).

⁸⁶⁴ O.Berlin, P.12491; ed. Krause, *Apa Abraham*, vol. 2, 271-76.

⁸⁶⁵ Krause (*Apa Abraham*, vol. 2, 274) thought that the passage referred to Bishop Pesynthius.

⁸⁶⁶ Winlock and Crum 1926, 109-10; Papaconstantinou 2001, 204-14. Phoibammon’s *Martyrdom* is preserved in Sahidic in *P.Lond.Copt. London*. I 999 (undated), *P.Lond.Copt. London*. II 138 and 167 (undated; cf. Winlock and Crum 1926, 205) and his *Mighty deeds and miracles* in Pierpont Morgan Library, M582; ed. Verrone 2002. For Touho, see Timm 1984-1992, vol. 6, 2454-60.

Patriarch Theodosius I,⁸⁶⁷ which may explain why Theban Theodosians chose Phoibammon as their patron saint. According to Abraham's testament, Phoibammon "dwells in the above-mentioned holy mountain of Memnonia (Jeme)", which implies that the Monastery of St Phoibammon actually claimed to have one of his relics.⁸⁶⁸ If this was indeed the case, the relic came from the *martyrium* at Touho. Perhaps, Constantine, the bishop of Asyut and patriarchal vicar of the Upper Thebaid, stimulated the spread of the saint's cult to the Theban region, in order to consolidate the Theodosian church in that area. Constantine indeed promoted the cult of several saints by dedicating homilies to them (§3.1.3). However, there is no record of direct contact between Constantine and Abraham to confirm this theory.

After his death, Abraham was remembered and invoked as an "orthodox bishop".⁸⁶⁹

C. Church administration

Wipszycka observed that Abraham's documents do not mention the episcopal steward, who should co-manage church property together with the bishop.⁸⁷⁰ Indeed, the priest Victor was never called thus, but he may have held that position during Abraham's episcopate, given his involvement in the administration of the Monastery of St Phoibammon and increasingly in ecclesiastical matters. Recently, Garel remarked that the priest Victor was called "monk and steward" after becoming abbot of the Monastery of St Phoibammon, and that "steward" was another designation for a monastic superior.⁸⁷¹ However, when Victor was called a "monk", he was identified as a priest first, and the absence of Victor's name and priestly title suggests that when he succeeded Abraham as abbot, someone else became steward (§2.3.4).

As for the few local stewards recorded in Dataset 3, one was appointed steward over the Holy *Topos*, Salom, the steward of the *topos* of Apa Phaustus, wrote and signed the declaration of a worker, and Eboneh was dismissed as steward of the Church of the Acacias.⁸⁷² Stewards were often appointed to churches or shrines dedicated to saints, which were mainly open on the commemoration days of these saints, or when private individuals request for special masses, but were not in use for worship on a regular basis and therefore

⁸⁶⁷ Theodosius I features in the first two miracles in Verrone 2002, 6.

⁸⁶⁸ *P.Lond.* I 77, ll. 27-28 in Garel, *Les testaments*, vol. 2, 15, 20 and vol. 1, 113.

⁸⁶⁹ *BKU* II 258; O.Berlin, P.868; cf. Winlock and Crum 1926, 169.

⁸⁷⁰ Wipszycka 2007, 336 and 2015, 141, 199.

⁸⁷¹ Garel, *Les testaments*, vol. 1, 92, based on *O.Crum* 158 and 200.

⁸⁷² *O.Crum* 87, 51, 44. Crum identified Eboneh's church as "the church of the Three Oeconomi (?)", but the name is corrected in *O.Frangé* 25.

needed to be guarded. They were obliged to inspect the churches entrusted to them every Saturday and Sunday, and to check whether no liturgical vessel was missing.⁸⁷³

As regards church revenues, Dataset 3 does not explicitly record contributions for the sustenance of Bishop Abraham, but the corn that was stored at a temporary location possibly came from contributions, which the local churches drew from the offerings of the faithful.⁸⁷⁴ When the bishop received an offering in exchange for funerary services for a deceased woman, he ordered Apa John to contact certain clergymen and the woman's children, in order that Abraham could make proper arrangements.⁸⁷⁵

Recorded expenses or supplies relate to the provisioning of wine to a monastery for the celebration of Easter, since the brethren apparently did not receive enough donations to arrange for the wine themselves; the payment of a worker employed by the church; the building of a church; and the purchase of funerary bandages and shrouds.⁸⁷⁶ It is unclear whether the textiles were intended for the burial of deceased brethren of the Monastery of St Phoibammon or for the impoverished faithful, for whom the Church had to arrange a proper burial, if no-one else did.⁸⁷⁷ Abraham also made provisions for his own burial, which implied the wrapping of his body, Eucharistic offerings for the rest of his soul, funerary meals and services on the days of his commemoration, in accordance with the local custom, Abraham's rank and reputation.⁸⁷⁸

D. Care for the underprivileged

Abraham regularly expressed his concern for the underprivileged. He asked the priest Elias request Patermoute to show charity to a widow.⁸⁷⁹ After being informed that Psate mistreated people, making them poor and wretched, the bishop taught his flock that anyone who mistreated his neighbor would be excommunicated.⁸⁸⁰ He sent multiple letters to an important man who had prevented the poor from fishing and did not accept the bishop's rebuke.⁸⁸¹ When people harassed a man in the Church of Apa George and pillaged the place, Abraham

⁸⁷³ Wipszycka 1972, 101 and 2015, 366-68. *O.Crum* 76 includes the episcopal order to exclude stewards from the clergy, if they do not check the "topos" on Saturday and Sunday.

⁸⁷⁴ *O.Crum* 204.

⁸⁷⁵ *O.MoscowCopt.* 77. The offering *post-mortem* is called "πικομῶν", as in *P.Pisentius* 22, l. 34: εἰς τὴν προϋπὸς τῆς κομῆς, "about the small gift that we received"; cf. Van der Vliet 2015, 129.

⁸⁷⁶ *O.Crum* 104, 51, *BKU* I 69 and *O.Crum* 68. On the bishop's duty to aid churches with insufficient means for the liturgy, see Wipszycka 2015, 111, 356.

⁸⁷⁷ Wipszycka 1972, 115.

⁸⁷⁸ *P.Lond.* I 77, ll. 58-60: ed. *Les testaments*, vol. 2, 16, 21; cf. Förster 2008, 170-71.

⁸⁷⁹ *O.Crum* 67. For the examples listed here, see also Krause, *Apa Abraham*, vol. 1, 62-63.

⁸⁸⁰ *O.Crum* 71; cf. Schmelz 2002, 132-33, 256; Brown 2002, 66, where Psate is called Psalis.

⁸⁸¹ *O.MoscowCopt.* 80, called *O.Gol.* 11 in Schmelz 2002, 133, 256-57.

excommunicated everyone who had entered the church and spoke in his defense, arguing that “that poor man” had already paid.⁸⁸² He was furious again when the *lashane* Pesente and his men unjustly detained a man who came to the bishop for charity.⁸⁸³ He also corresponded with Lord Asper about a woman who was sued by a man from Tabennese (in the Hermonthite district) on account of a debt, since he intended to help her.⁸⁸⁴

O.Brit.Mus.Copt. II 4 and 5 were excluded from Dataset 3, since Abraham’s name and title do not appear, but the greeting formulae “Firstly, I greet your good sonship. May the Lord bless you” suggest that either he or the priest and abbot Victor was the sender (§5.1.2, n. 14). The first letter mentions a poor man, but is too damaged to reconstruct. The other letter requests the head of a charitable institution to allow a certain Abraham to stop working for this institution, for he was impoverished and his wife would ask for a divorce, if he continued.

By testamentary writing Abraham decided that Victor should continue to provide for the poor who would come to the Monastery of St Phoibammon. He had done so himself, not only because it was his duty as a bishop, but also because of the agreement between the monastery and the Jemean authorities (§3.1.1).⁸⁸⁵

E. Education and discipline

Bishop Abraham instructed his flock on religious and moral matters through circular letters by listing the persons who had to be excluded from the holy Communion: men and women who repudiated their spouses for other reasons than adultery, clergymen who knew about their situation and yet administered the holy Communion to them, and anyone who wrote a letter of divorce;⁸⁸⁶ men who had relationships with nieces or (step)sisters, or with two sisters at the same time, men who were hostile to a neighbor, fornicated with a woman, or were violent, and anyone who ate before receiving the holy Communion.⁸⁸⁷ Close-kin relationships were forbidden by the Bible and imperial law, but still occurred in late antique Egypt (§8.7).⁸⁸⁸ Abraham justified his preaching by adding that it were not his words, but “those of God” or of “the apostle” (§6.6.1),⁸⁸⁹ and that he had the salvation of souls in mind.⁸⁹⁰

⁸⁸² *O.CrumVC* 40.

⁸⁸³ *O.Crum* 61.

⁸⁸⁴ *Brit.Mus.Copt.* II 34.

⁸⁸⁵ *P.Lond.* I 77, ll. 38-39: ed. *Les testaments*, vol. 2, 21, 41 and vol. 1, 81-83.

⁸⁸⁶ *O.Crum* 72; cf. Schmelz 2002, 132. *O.Crum* 73 and *Ad.* 1 also list people who repudiate their spouse.

⁸⁸⁷ *O.Crum* 73. *O.Crum* 484 is too fragmentary to understand why certain men and women are forbidden to go to a particular place. *O.Crum* 71 repeatedly lists that people who mistreat their neighbors are excommunicated.

⁸⁸⁸ Leviticus 18:6-18, 20:17, Deuteronomy 27:22, Justinian’s *The Institutes*, book 1.10.2-3 (535): ed. Scott 1932, 29; cf. Wipszycka 2015, 323, on the Roman custom of marrying siblings, which persisted in late antiquity.

⁸⁸⁹ “Those of God”: *O.Crum* 72, l. 20-21 and 73, l. 8-10; of the apostle: *O.Crum* 73, l. 13-14, and *Ad.* 1.

⁸⁹⁰ *O.Crum* 72, *O.MoscowCopt.* 80, probably *O.Crum* 76.

When Abraham was informed about a problem, he sent clergymen to inquire what had happened. A priest had to ascertain why Panau appealed against Aaron, and the priest Michael was sent to establish who started the fight.⁸⁹¹ Abraham contacted Psan, asking him why he prevented Peter's son from serving the altar and why he handed him over to the *lashanes*.⁸⁹²

Abraham often warned that he would excommunicate people, in order to stimulate obedience. Clergymen faced exclusion from holy Communion, if they neglected the liturgy or the altar lamp (see §6.4.A); if they did not obey episcopal orders;⁸⁹³ if they claimed a reward for their services, when they were actually supposed to keep vigil at the *Topos* of Apa John;⁸⁹⁴ if they administered sacraments to individuals who were excommunicate;⁸⁹⁵ or if they did not comply with the bishop's judgement during an episcopal hearing.⁸⁹⁶ In practice, the sanction was imposed on clergymen for leaving the diocese without Abraham's permission, for allowing boys to get drunk (?), for speaking blasphemy, and for neglecting the altar lamp.⁸⁹⁷ Laymen were excommunicate, after profaning a church or for mistreating the poor.⁸⁹⁸ Several people requested the bishop to be readmitted to the holy Communion.⁸⁹⁹

Likewise, Abraham frequently warned to exclude clergymen from the clergy, if they did not obey his orders or report negligence.⁹⁰⁰ He imposed the sanction quite often: Ashai and Joseph did not celebrate the Eucharist in the hermitages for Easter, Patermoute should go to law with two men first, and Moses should come to the bishop.⁹⁰¹

Abraham imposed the interdict on an entire village, since the *lashane* Pesente and his men unjustly detained a man who came to see the bishop, and on a monastery, since the abbot John did not rebuke the monk Joseph for improper actions. The interdicts lasted, until Pesynte recompensed the man, and until Joseph came to the bishop. Abraham also warned an official at Timamen that he would arrange an interdict, if the official did not mediate between the

⁸⁹¹ *O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* I (EA 24948); *O.Crum* 70.

⁸⁹² *O.Crum* 80. Krause (*Apa Abraham*, vol. 2, 215) and Schmelz (2002, 144-45) understood that Peter's son was arrested for not having celebrated the Eucharist, but the reason for his dismissal and arrest must have been more serious. If clergymen did not celebrate the Eucharist, Abraham excluded them from the clergy (*O.Crum* 60).

⁸⁹³ Order to celebrate the Eucharist: *O.Crum* 53; to teach a priest how to celebrate the Eucharist: O.Berlin, P.12486; to establish a boundary: 62; to investigate a case: *O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* I (EA 24948), *O.Crum* 70.

⁸⁹⁴ *O.Crum* 485; cf. Wipszycka 1972, 95.

⁸⁹⁵ *O.Crum* 72; *O.Deir al-Bahari* 1.

⁸⁹⁶ *O.Crum Ad.* 12 (= *O.Lips.Copt.* 15).

⁸⁹⁷ *O.Crum* 40, 47, 81, *Ad.* 4; *Brit.Mus.Copt.* I 9. Clergymen were not permitted to leave their parish without written permission from the bishop; cf. Schmelz 2002, 44-45, 56-57.

⁸⁹⁸ *O.Crum* 94; *O.CrumVC* 40; *O.MoscowCopt.* 80; cf. Schmelz 2002, 136.

⁸⁹⁹ *O.Crum* 40, 47, 81, 94, *Ad.* 41; O.Berlin, P.12486.

⁹⁰⁰ *O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* II 9; *O.Crum* 39, 56, 65, 76, 79, 81, 300, *Ad.* 41; *O.Mon.Epiph.* 154; *SBKopt.* III 1979-80; O.Berlin P 12486.

⁹⁰¹ *O.Crum* 60, 55, *Ad.* 8. See also *O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* I (EA 33134); *O.Crum* 75, verso, *Ad.* 40; *O.Deir el-Bahari* 1.

bishop and the villagers who had hooted him.⁹⁰² He did not impose the sanction directly, since Timamen officially did not belong to the diocese of Hermonthis, but he may have considered asking support from the patriarch, who could confirm Abraham's authority by a deed (§2.3.1).

Some clergymen declared that if they were negligent or disobedient, their ordination through the laying-on of hands would become invalid, or they would no longer hold a cross.⁹⁰³ Abraham warned the priest Patermoute, who was already excluded from the clergy on account of making accusations, that if he did not come the next day and pay a fine, the bishop would carry out his degradation "in the city" (of Hermonthis; §5.3.6). Abraham had already prepared a document to degrade Patermoute, but gave him a last chance to make up for his mistakes.⁹⁰⁴

Abraham dismissed Eboneh from the Church of the Acacias and planned to dismiss Panau, if the latter sued Aaron for a particular reason that is not specified. A prominent person was expelled from the church, after neglecting the bishop's reproaches and having "erased your name from the number of the brethren yourself".⁹⁰⁵

Abraham did not always threaten with ecclesiastical sanctions to stimulate obedience, but also appealed to someone's conscience. When he ordered the priest Patermoute to deliver a sealed letter, he warned that Patermoute should not tell anyone that he was going, or he would get a bad conscience.⁹⁰⁶ In another letter, Abraham exhorted the priest Isaac to come to terms with Pson, in order that Pson would not blame the bishop for failing to mediate, and that as a consequence, Isaac's heart would remain troubled.⁹⁰⁷

Abraham imposed a fine twice, to be paid in four or six jars of wine: to Patermoute, who had ignored an order, and to Pshinnou, whose transgression was serious enough to have him arrested by the headmen.⁹⁰⁸ In another serious case, he warned the *lashane* Pesente that he would report him to magistrates "in the city", if he did not show respect for people.⁹⁰⁹

When Abraham agreed to arbitrate, the litigants provided a guarantee, promising that they would come and comply with the outcome. If not, they should pay a fine ranging in value

⁹⁰² *O.Crum* 61; O.Berlin, P.12497; O.Berlin, P.12491.

⁹⁰³ "There will be no hand on me": *O.Crum* 29, 40, *O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* II 9; for the hand cross: *O.Crum* 42.

⁹⁰⁴ *O.Crum Ad.* 40. I do not agree with Schmelz (2002, 154-55, 158, 160) that Patermoute was already degraded, and that the sanction was temporary and easily uplifted by paying a fine.

⁹⁰⁵ *O.Crum* 44; *O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* I (EA 24948); *O.MoscowCopt.* 80; cf. Schmelz 2002, 152.

⁹⁰⁶ O.Berlin, P.12498.

⁹⁰⁷ O.Berlin, P.12495. In ll. 8-9 Krause (*Apa Abraham*, vol. 2, 220) read $\overline{\text{MNTQ}} \text{CTOQ} \text{EXWI}$, which Schmelz (2002, 136) incorrectly reproduced as $\text{MNTQ} \text{CTOQ} \text{EXWI}$. Both editors translated "Seine Reinheit ist auf mir", but Crum (1939, 167-68) proposed "delay not to agree with him MNTQCTOQ ", with a subordinate clause starting with "that not, lest". $\text{MNTQ}(\tau)\text{CTOQ} \text{EXWI}$ is a subordinate clause preceded by an imperative (a seventh-century example of pattern A.1 in Boud'hors 2010b, 68-70) and means "that he will not turn on me".

⁹⁰⁸ *O.Crum.Ad* 40 (six jars); *O.CrumVC* 37 (four jars); cf. Schmelz 2002, 160-61.

⁹⁰⁹ *O.Crum* 61.

from one to six solidi.⁹¹⁰ Other promises were signed by guarantors on behalf of litigants, who declared themselves liable to a fine, if their protégés did not come.⁹¹¹ When someone asked Abraham to solve a conflict among the husbandmen working for him, the bishop agreed to intervene, but warned that he would leave the case, if the husbandmen did not obey him.⁹¹²

Abraham successfully reached an agreement between two priests, who had come to his residence, but could not reconcile the men sent by Paul and Taggeila, two military officers.⁹¹³ At least twice, arbitration was left to another high official. After a certain official examined a case, Abraham requested Lord Sarapion and his colleague to carry out the verdict. At another occasion, the priest Victor asked the clergymen of Jeme – at the bishop’s request – to solve a conflict between Menas and Stephen, since the *lashanes* did not have time for arbitration.⁹¹⁴

One document records episcopal negotiation between a monastic community headed by Apa Victor and village officials, including a *lashane*. When Abraham requested the village officials to establish peace with the monks, they answered positively, after which he asked the Apa Victor to inform him about their terms for further communication.⁹¹⁵

F. Giving directions for daily life

In general, counseling is a hardly documented aspect of the episcopal office, since it usually took place during personal meetings and since the matters discussed were confidential.

Judging from *O.Crum* 282, Abraham sent a special blessing to certain people and their children, and invited them to come to him, but they did not reply.⁹¹⁶ It is unclear why the bishop wanted to meet and bless this particular family, which he contacted three times, but he probably wanted to help or instruct them personally. Although he rebuked them for not having listened, and particularly for not having responded after receiving the blessing, he did not warn to exclude them from the holy Communion on account of their disobedience, as he usually did (§6.4.E).

⁹¹⁰ *O.Crum* 42-43, 48 (Abraham allowed Pesynte some time, until Epep 12), *Ad.* 12; cf. Schmelz 2002, 160.

⁹¹¹ *O.Crum* 86 and 155 relate to the conflict between John and his uncle Hatre about a diner room; *SBKopt.* II 1378 also mentions a conflict between uncle and nephew; cf. Schmelz 2002, 140-41.

⁹¹² *O.Crum* 293.

⁹¹³ *O.Crum* 313; *O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* II 31.

⁹¹⁴ Paris, Louvre inv.? (SN 156); *SBKopt.* II 906.

⁹¹⁵ *BKU* II 318. According to Schmelz (2014), the document records a case of episcopal arbitration, but at the time of writing, the two parties were not yet ready to meet before the bishop.

⁹¹⁶ Abraham wrote to his correspondents that he “sent God, while blessing you and your children the first time and the second”, but they “neither listened to God’s blessing nor to me” (ll. 2, 4-5, 8-9). The mention of God’s presence in the blessing seems to indicate the holy Communion, which was brought to the sick in case of need (as in *O.Crum* 66), but there is no mention of an illness or of clergymen who administered the sacrament. Krause (*Apa Abraham*, vol. 2, 332) suggested that Abraham probably referred to the blessing formula **ταρε πχοεις σμογ εροκ**, “that the Lord may bless you”.

G. Intercession with state authorities

When Abraham contacted state officials or other individuals of high status, in order to protect the interests of the underprivileged in his diocese, it was usually to discipline them for their unjust actions.⁹¹⁷ Intercession in the sense of mediation with authorities for the sake of supplicants is probably implied by *O.Crum* 49: Soua and his associates asked the bishop which decision he and a *lashane* took concerning a matter that worried them, and whether he received a written agreement, which they would like to have.

When the bishop was informed that a man from Tabennese had come to Lord Asper, in order to plead his case against a woman who owed him money, Abraham asked Asper to allow him to protect the interests of the woman, who was probably a member of his flock.⁹¹⁸

It cannot be established whether Abraham was involved in the appointment of Flavius Theophilus as public defender at Hermonthis, but as a bishop he may have been.⁹¹⁹

§6.5 PRAGMATIC AUTHORITY

Not only as bishop, but also as abbot of the Monastery of St Phoibammon Abraham was responsible for the care of the poor, on account of the agreement between the monastery and the Jemean authorities (§3.1.1). Abraham stipulated in his testament that his successor Victor should continue to provide for poor passers-by.⁹²⁰ Victor is the first to explicitly mention a charitable fund (“table”) for the poor at the Monastery of St Phoibammon, which must have been founded by Bishop Abraham.⁹²¹ It still existed in the first half of the eight century.⁹²²

§6.6 LEGAL AUTHORITY

Wipszycka already observed that Abraham developed the habit of putting important things in writing,⁹²³ which is less evident (or less well recorded) in Pesynthius’ case. Dataset 3 provides many examples of written sources that Abraham created as instruments of authority, such as official deeds, episcopal orders, warrants, protocols, declarations, oaths, agreements and guarantees. Before we examine these documents, we will first discuss how the bishop referred to Biblical, canonical and legal sources and for what reasons.

⁹¹⁷ *O.Crum* 61 (the *lashane* Pesynthius unjustly detained a man); *O.Crum* 71 (Psate mistreated the poor).

⁹¹⁸ *Brit.Mus.Copt.* II 34.

⁹¹⁹ *P.Lond.* I 77, l. 87: ed. Garel, *Les testaments*, vol. 2, 106.

⁹²⁰ *P.Lond.* I 77, l. 38-39: ed. Garel, *Les testaments*, vol. 2, 21, 41.

⁹²¹ *P.KRU* 77 + P.Sorb.inv. 2680, ll. 90: ed. Garel, *Les testaments*, vol. 2, 77, 98; cf. Winlock and Crum 1926, 173.

⁹²² The latest known attestation is *P.KRU* 13, l. 36 (November 30, 733).

⁹²³ On Abraham’s habit of having important decisions put into writing, see Wipszycka 2015, 318.

A. Biblical sources

Bishop Abraham frequently cited, or referred to, the Bible, in order to confirm the authority of his teaching or commands, adding that it were not his words but those of the Apostle John, the Holy Spirit or God (the Son, Jesus).⁹²⁴ He used the Scriptures to explain in his letters:

- why it is important to tell the truth (John 8:32 in *O.Crum* 73);
- who were excluded from the holy Communion: clergymen who did not keep vigil at the *Topos* of Apa John (2Thess. 3:10 in *O.Crum* 485); men and women who left their spouses, and men who lived with divorced women (Matt. 5:32, 19:9 and Luke 16:18 in *O.Crum* 72); anyone who ill-used his neighbor (comparisons with Biblical figures in *O.Crum* 71; see below); and violent people, for “anyone who uses violence, violates the Gospel” (1John 5:16-17, cited both in *O.Crum* 73 and O.Berlin, P.12491);
- why liturgical prescriptions should be followed (Psalm 43:2 in *O.Crum* 74);⁹²⁵
- why clergymen should heed the bishop’s words (James 1:25 in *O.Crum* 84);
- why the recipient of *O.MoscowCopt.* 80 was punished, after preventing people from fishing (Psalm 80:13-14).

Bishop Abraham modeled *O.MoscowCopt.* 80 after the example of an epistle that Paul wrote to the Corinthians “out of great distress and anguish of heart and with many tears” (2Cor. 2:4), to express his displeasure about the disobedience of his correspondent: “Were it possible to write down tears and groans upon papyrus, I would have filled this letter (with them) and send it to you”. To give more weight to his urgent plea, he added that suffering is the result of disobedience to God and listed persons from the Old Testament who were – in his view – punished for their disobedience, including Pharaoh, Gehazi and Saul.⁹²⁶

In *O.Crum* 71 Abraham compared people who mistreated others with evil-doers in the Old and New Testament, such as Judas, who betrayed Jesus; those who spat in Jesus’ face and struck him; Gehazi; Cain, who killed his brother; Zimri, who killed his king; Jerobeam, who caused Israel to sin; the accusers of Daniel and Susanna; the people who wanted Jesus to be crucified; and those who spread the story that the disciples would have stolen Jesus’ body.⁹²⁷

⁹²⁴ *O.Crum* 73 (“John, the Apostle”), *Ad.* 1 (“the holy Apostle”), 74 (“the Holy Spirit” in Psalm 43:2) and 72 (“God”, Jesus in Matt. 5:32, 19:19).

⁹²⁵ According to the numbering in the Sahidic version of the Psalms: ed. Budge 1898, 47-48.

⁹²⁶ Krause (*Apa Abraham*, vol. 2, 194) correctly observed that Gehazi was not punished for disobedience, but for greed and dishonesty. For this letter, “evidently an admired composition, since it is here copied from papyrus onto ostrakon”, see Winlock and Crum 1926, 172-73; cf. Schmelz 2002, 133.

⁹²⁷ Krause (*Apa Abraham*, vol. 2, 186-87) drew attention to the fact that Bishop Abraham suggests that the soldier who guarded Jesus’ tomb came up with the story about the stolen body, whereas the chief priests and elders were in fact responsible for it (Matt. 28:12-13); cf. Brown 2002, 66; Schmelz 2002, 133.

After Abraham was violently opposed at Timamen, he vented his outrage, writing that “nobody can serve two masters” (Matt. 6:24). Since he continued by arguing that violence is an offence against the Gospel, he probably did not refer to particular persons, but implied that a good Christian, who accepts the Gospel, should renounce violence (O.Berlin, P.12491).

In short, most Biblical citations come from the New Testament, whereas bad examples were drawn from both the Old and New Testament. It is remarkable that two episcopal letters include phrases that are presented as Biblical passages, but could not be identified.⁹²⁸

B. Ecclesiastical canons

Bishop Abraham had access to a compilation of ecclesiastical canons, on the basis of which he took decisions, and which candidates for ecclesiastical offices called “the(se) canons” or “all canons of the church”, but the exact contents and sources of which remain unspecified.⁹²⁹ Transgressions against “the canons” include going to another diocese without the bishop’s permission (*O.Crum* 40), and marrying one’s niece or stepsister (*O.Crum* 73). The inhabitants of Timamen even “destroyed the canons in my hand” (O.Berlin, P.12491).

C. Imperial laws

Bishop Abraham explained his choice to have his testament written in Greek by referring in a general way to “well and piously established” imperial laws.⁹³⁰ It is likely that Peter, the notary of Hermonthis, who drew up his testament, informed him about regulations in the *Justinian Code*, which made it possible, but not obligatory, to testate in Greek.⁹³¹

Both the testament and *P.KRU* 105, the Coptic deed signed by the Jemean authorities with regard to the ownership of the Monastery of St Phoibammon, include a penalty clause, stating that those who oppose the deeds should pay a fine of six gold ounces. This penalty was established by emperor Arcadius in 399 and confirmed by the *Justinian Code*.⁹³²

D. Official deeds

Dataset 3 includes two deeds that were written on papyrus by professional scribes and signed by officials: *P.KRU* 105, from which Abraham benefitted as the first abbot of the Monastery

⁹²⁸ Krause, *Apa Abraham*, vol. 1, 27 and vol. 2, 199, 274: *BKU* II 318: “Who destroys war, establishes peace”; O.Berlin, P.12491, ll. 9-11: “What nobody did, they did to me”.

⁹²⁹ *O.Crum* 29-31, 33, 34: “these commandments and [all] canons of the Church”; O.Berlin, P.12489: “these canons and these commandments that you gave us”; cf. Krause, *Apa Abraham*, vol. 1, 16-20.

⁹³⁰ *P.Lond.* I 77, ll. 14-15: ed. Garel, *Les testaments*, vol. 2, 14, 20.

⁹³¹ Garel, *Les testaments*, vol. 1, 189-90 and vol. 2, 31-32.

⁹³² *P.KRU* 105, ll. 12-13 and *P.Lond.* I 77, ll. 55: ed. Garel, *Les testaments*, vol. 2, 21, 183, 185, and vol. 1, 190.

of St Phoibammon, and Abraham's testament, in which he appointed Victor as his heir and owner of the monastery.⁹³³

E. Episcopal orders and warrants

Bishop Abraham sent various letters to clergymen, ordering them to administer sacraments,⁹³⁴ to inspect the churches, exhort the clergy and punish negligence,⁹³⁵ to deliver messages,⁹³⁶ and to inquire about conflicts,⁹³⁷ among other things. When he ordered Shenoute to inspect the churches, he also instructed him to bring the episcopal command with him, in order that Shenoute could prove that the bishop had sent him (*SBKopt.* III 1379).

A letter that is probably addressed to Abraham includes a request for a warrant, in order to force the deacon Sakau to come (*O.Crum Ad.* 11 = *O.Lips.Copt.* 11). Previously, the sender was instructed to summon Sakau and Apa Victor, but the former claimed that he did not have the opportunity to come.

F. Protocols and declarations

When someone was accused of misconduct, the statements of the witnesses were recorded as accurately as possible, in order that Bishop Abraham had sufficient means to summon and punish the transgressor. Dataset 3 includes five such documents:

- The clergymen Zachariah and Constantine reported to the bishop that they found a flask stashed under the cupboard in the sanctuary. Zachariah first thought that it was filled with water, but discovered that it contained wine. When he inquired about it, he was told that the priest Jacob had put it there (*BKU* I 68).
- The priest Isaac declared to the priest Victor that he caught the priest Papnoute eating on Easter eve, before the end of the Lenten fast (*O.Lips.Copt.* 14).
- John and Kame declared that Bishop Abraham did not press Paham, the son of Pelish, on account of money, but asked him to promise by oath that he would return it by Sunday, and Paham agreed to make the promise by oath. They also declare that Paham later accused them of appealing against him, and that he did not keep his promise (*Brit.Mus.Copt.* II 2).

⁹³³ *P.KRU* 105, l. 15: **ΧΑΡΤΗΣ**; *P.Lond.* I 77, l. 48 *et passim*: διαθήκη.

⁹³⁴ *Crum* 53, 66; *O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* II 22; *O.Mon.Epiph.* 154.

⁹³⁵ *SBKopt.* III 1379-80.

⁹³⁶ *O.Crum* 56; *O.Berlin*, P.12498.

⁹³⁷ *O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* I (EA 24948); *O.Crum* 70, 184

- After George declared before Bishop Abraham, Joseph and Victor that Aaron told him that Papas uttered an incantation, Joseph, Victor and George himself confirmed that this declaration was made (*O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* II 3).
- Isaac, a monk of the *Topos* of Apa John, declared to Bishop Abraham and the monks Isaac and John (of the future *Topos* of Epiphanius), that Phoibammon and he often entered a place, where they ate and drank. Perhaps, they were having secret meals in the store room, while other people were absent. At any rate, after the others returned to the monastery, Phoibammon forced Isaac to speak to the monk Joseph and possibly tell lies. Crucial parts of the declaration are lost, but it is likely that Isaac accused Phoibammon of transgressions, after admitting his own complicity (*O.Crum* 310).

Three persons made declarations before Bishop Abraham with regard to their own affairs, while committing themselves not to take further action:

- Hello, who worked for the church, but wanted to leave, officially stated that the bishop fully paid his wage and owed him nothing (*O.Crum* 51).
- After having reached an agreement with Bishop Abraham for “the salvation of my soul”, the priest Papas declared that he would be excluded from the clergy, if he dared to involve the *actuarius* Peter in a financial problem, since it would weaken his case. The mention of district accountants and tax collectors indicates that Peter’s problem related to paying taxes (*O.Crum* 79).

G. Oaths

Three documents mention promises made to Bishop Abraham. The monk Moses, who was accused of stealing from fellow brethren, swore an oath that he would leave the monastery, if the bishop found two or three reliable witnesses who confirmed his theft (*O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* 16). Pesynte, who was summoned on account of his conflict with Jacob and his heirs, could not come directly, but was allowed more time. He swore by God Almighty that he would not let the appointed time pass (*O.Crum* 48). Finally, Paham, the son of Pelish, promised in the presence of the bishop and (the relics of) St Phoibammon that he would return money by Sunday (*O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* II 2).

H. Agreements

Two documents are explicitly called “agreements”. In the first one the deacon Ezekias declared that he would stop quarreling with his brother, Eboneh, now that Bishop Abraham

dismissed the latter as steward of a church. The second text is the declaration made by the monk Moses, who promised to leave the monastery, if two or three witnesses could confirm that he had stolen.⁹³⁸ Other agreements in Dataset 3 concern the triannual administration of baptism in Jeme (O.Berlin, P.12501), the return of a loom part by the priest Moses or his successor (*O.Crum* 311), the timely coming of Pesynte (*O.Crum* 48), the cultivation of Misael's estates by Joseph and Pelish from Jeme (*O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* II 1), and the reconciliation between two clergymen by the bishop (*O.Crum* 313).

I. Guarantees

Two documents are specified as “guarantees”, and a third one as a “document”.⁹³⁹ Bishop Abraham required – and received – guarantees from clergymen who promised to serve the church without negligence (*O.Crum* 29-35, 41); from senior clergymen who were responsible for the correct observance of liturgical services by, and conduct of, younger colleagues (*O.Crum* 38, 45, *Ad.* 9, O.Berlin, P.12493); from clergymen who were reprimanded for neglecting the altar lamp (*O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* II 9) or allowing youths to get drunk (*O.Crum* 47), or clergymen who stood surety for colleagues who had been reprimanded (*O.Crum* 81, 300, *Ad.* 41); from litigants, who promised that they would comply with the outcome of episcopal arbitration (*O.Crum* 42-43, *Ad.* 12), or from those who stood surety for them (*O.Crum* 86 + 155).

Church institutions already created written documents in the first half of the fourth century,⁹⁴⁰ but Abraham's dossier is extraordinary for the large number of preserved texts. Wipszycka wondered whether “a part of them would not have come into being if Abraham had not resided in a remote desert monastery, but in Hermonthis, which was easier to access”.⁹⁴¹ In the previous chapter, however, we observed that Abraham was remarkably close to his flock in terms of social ties. His residence at the Monastery of St Phoibammon was probably one of the very reasons for his accessibility. Apart from the fact that it lay close to the town of Jeme, it was the principal monastery in seventh-century Western Thebes, a *martyrium* that claimed to possess relics of St Phoibammon, and a charitable institution (§3.1.1, 6.4.B, 6.5).

Abraham may have developed the habit of creating written documents at the beginning of his episcopate, when he had just started to organize his diocese, and when his episcopal

⁹³⁸ *O.Crum* 44 and *O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* 16: **ΣΥΜΦΩΝΟΝ**, συμφώνον.

⁹³⁹ *O.Crum* 31: **ΑΦΑΛΙΑ**; *O.Crum* 45: **ΑΓΓΙΑ** for ἑγγύη; *O.Crum* 48: **ΕΓΓΡΑΦΟΝ**.

⁹⁴⁰ Wipszycka 2015, 310-11, 320.

⁹⁴¹ Wipszycka 2015, 36

authority was not yet fully recognized. His dossier indeed reveals that clergymen and laymen were not always conscientious or obedient (§6.4.E). By using written sources as instruments of authority Abraham taught his flock to be more cooperative and increased his own authority.

§6.7 THE WEIGHT OF THE EPISCOPAL OFFICE

The analysis of Bishop Abraham's exercise of authority helps to nuance Wipszycka's impression that he did not experience the "normal" weight of the episcopal office. Wipszycka explained that Abraham's activities concerned villages and monasteries, but not Hermonthis; that the episcopal steward, who usually assisted the bishop with the church administration, did not appear in the documents; and that the monastery where Abraham resided was not big.⁹⁴² I agree that the bishop started small, since he had to organize a new Theodosian diocese, but his work area expanded fast and in the 610s he also supervised clergymen at Hermonthis (§5.3.9). As for the episcopal steward, Victor was never called thus, but his assistance to the bishop in ecclesiastical matters suggests that he fulfilled this role (§6.4.C). Finally, the monastery may have been small, but in the seventh century it was the largest monastery in Western Thebes as well as a *martyrium* and a charitable institution, which probably attracted many pilgrims and poor passers-by (§6.4.B and D, 6.5). In his double position as bishop and abbot of a socially important monastic center Abraham bore an unusually heavy responsibility.

In this study the weight of the episcopal office is assessed by looking at Abraham's involvement in the various aspects of his office (§6.4). All seven aspects are represented, but there is a clear emphasis on education and discipline, and on the organization of worship. The bishop's care for the underprivileged is expressed both in circular and personal letters and in his testament. His role in the promotion of St Phoibammon's cult is not explicitly recorded, but likely, in view of his position as first abbot of a monastery that claimed the martyr's relics. It is logical that his role as a spiritual counselor is little documented, since discussions with individuals on private matters had to remain confidential. In short, the analysis reveals that Abraham fulfilled the various duties required by the episcopal office and was fully a bishop.

In addition, Abraham was an exceptionally zealous and conscientious bishop who tried to educate his flock for the sake of their spiritual wellbeing.⁹⁴³ He did not accept negligence or disobedience from clergymen, but was relatively patient with laymen. To the man who was expelled from the church and to a couple with children he sent multiple letters, hoping that

⁹⁴² Wipszycka 2015, 141-42.

⁹⁴³ Wipszycka 2015, 335: "Or were Abraham and Pisentius exceptionally zealous bishops, dedicating all their free time to having an eye on their flock?"

they would finally obey and come to him.⁹⁴⁴ In both cases, he expressed his displeasure about their lack of regard for the episcopal office by writing that, if he were a magistrate, they would have obeyed immediately. He complained that the expelled man was “shameless” and had “a heart of stone”, but tried hard to persuade him to repent by imitating the emotional style of one of Paul’s Epistles, and by listing Biblical persons who were punished for their disobedience (§6.6.1). As for the priest Patermoute, the bishop already prepared a document to degrade him, but offered him one last chance: if Patermoute did not pay a fine the next day, his degradation would become official (§6.4.E).

Abraham’s mission to Timamen was a disaster, since the villagers showed no respect for him, his clergymen or even the ecclesiastical canons (§6.4.B), but in other cases the bishop successfully cooperated with *lashanes* and military officials (§6.4.E).

CONCLUSION

This chapter analyzed the nature of Abraham’s authority, while also considering the social, historical and practical conditions in which he worked. During his episcopate, two military coups took place in Constantinople, two Theodosian patriarchs of Alexandria died, there was a serious famine in ca. 615, since the Nile did not flood, and the Persians conquered Syria and Egypt, and pillaged Jerusalem. None of these events appear in Abraham’s documents, but he must at least have known about them, and the famine and the Persian presence in the Theban region undoubtedly affected the people in his diocese.

Abraham lived at the newly founded Monastery of St Phoibammon, which became an important religious and social center, since it claimed to possess the relics of St Phoibammon and provided for the poor, on account of an agreement with the town of Jeme. As abbot of this monastery and bishop of Hermonthis, Abraham bore a heavy responsibility, which he took seriously. During the Persian occupation, he did not leave his residence, but the coming of some of his colleagues to his diocese indicates that Western Thebes was a relatively safe area.

Abraham was engaged in all aspects associated with the episcopal office, and fulfilled his duties zealously, which is another confirmation that he was close to the clergymen and laymen in his diocese. He is best described as a conscientious teacher, who aimed to educate his flock for the sake of their souls, and who insisted on obedience, the observance of God’s commands and church regulations, and the prevention of negligence. He often explained his teachings and commands by citing from the New Testament, and added that it were not his

⁹⁴⁴ *O.Moscow.Copt.* 80; *O.Crum* 282.

words, but those of God or the Apostle John. By doing so, and by requiring protocols and guarantees, he used written sources as instruments of authority, in order to strengthen his professional authority. He regularly warned to impose ecclesiastical sanctions in case of transgressions, and excluded various clergymen from the holy Communion or the clergy, but seems to have been more patient with laymen. When a man was expelled from the church after repeatedly ignoring a rebuke, Abraham tried hard to convince him to obey and did not shun emotional rhetoric. Although it is usual for bishops to teach their flock, Abraham may have been particularly motivated to do so, on account of his disciplined lifestyle as a monk-bishop and as a leader of a prominent monastic community.

Abraham's professional authority increased in the course of time, but was sometimes ignored. Some of his correspondents did not respond to multiple messages, which caused him to write that they would have obeyed directly, if he were a magistrate. The (possibly Chalcedonian) inhabitants of Timamen even violently opposed his authority. Abraham did not always succeed in solving conflicts, and sometimes left arbitration to local clergymen or to civil or military officials, with most of whom he maintained good relations.

Abraham's prayers and blessings were much appreciated, but unlike Epiphanius and Pesynthius, he was not reputed for his spiritual authority. He did, however, enjoy considerable ascetic authority, judging from the fact that he was thrice called "who truly bears the Christ".

The care for the underprivileged was not just an episcopal duty, but also Abraham's task as abbot of the Monastery of St Phoibammon. Using his pragmatic authority as an abbot, he appointed the priest Victor as the future owner of the monastery (as a bishop he could not bequeath property) and stipulated that Victor should continue making provisions for the poor. The charitable fund that Abraham created still existed in the first half of the eighth century.

Chapter 7: The social network of Pesynthius of Koptos

INTRODUCTION

The procedure for analyzing Abraham's network is repeated on Dataset 4 for the analysis of Pesynthius' social network, which covers about the second half of his episcopate (ca. 615-630; §7.1.5). During at least part of the Persian period, Pesynthius stayed at the *Topos* of Epiphanius in the diocese of Hermonthis, from where he arranged the ecclesiastical and social matters in his own diocese, but he also got involved with issues relating to the dioceses of Qus, Hermonthis and Ape (§3.1.2, 4.5.3). This unusual situation required a strong, well organized network, which depended on the co-operation of local agents and messengers. This chapter compares the organization of Pesynthius' network with that of Abraham's network.

The first section describes Dataset 4, while paying attention to the selection of the documents, their relevance with regard to Pesynthius, the kind of texts, the material on which they are written, and their provenance and dating.

The second section analyzes the undirected and directed versions of the episcopal network. It cannot be reconstructed in the same way as that of Abraham, with a distinction between the ecclesiastical and complete networks, for clergymen are more difficult to identify than in Abraham's dataset, since many documents are incomplete and the information about social actors is less specific. In addition, the episcopal documents comprise three kinds of texts: documents that feature Pesynthius, those that probably involve him (but his name or title are missing), and letters that do not directly relate to him, but to one or more individuals known to him. It would be a pity to ignore the indirectly relevant texts, for they provide additional information about these social actors.⁹⁴⁵ Being aware that the inclusion of probable and indirect ties in the analysis affects the accuracy of the results, both the undirected and directed networks are reconstructed in three layers, in order that major variations can be explained by the nature of particular subnetworks. The **basic network** and the **directed basic network** are limited to texts that certainly feature Bishop Pesynthius, the **extended network** and the **directed extended network** also include letters that probably concern him, and the **complete network** and the **directed complete network** comprise all documents with certain, likely or indirect relations of the bishop (graphs 21-23 and 25-26 on Pls 12-14).⁹⁴⁶

⁹⁴⁵ Dataset 3 also includes a text that does not mention Bishop Abraham, but people known to him (*P.KRU* 105).

⁹⁴⁶ CD:\Dataset 4\Network analysis.docx, "Network analysis 4", based on Dataset 4.xlsx, spreadsheets "Basic network", "Extended network", "Complete network", "Directed basic network", "Directed extended network" and "Directed complete network".

The third section discusses the individuals who appear as central actors in most of the subnetworks and can safely be considered as regular contacts in the actual episcopal network. A brief prosopographical study will discuss where and when these persons are attested.

The fourth section presents a reconstruction of Pesynthius' ecclesiastical apparatus (Tables 7-8), which extended beyond the boundaries of his own diocese, whereas the fifth one focusses on the civil and military officials in the districts of Koptos and Hermonthis (Table 9-10). Both sections reveal individuals who actually lived in the diocese or district associated with Abraham, but are not included in his network. They are added to the overviews of clergymen and officials that are based on Dataset 3 (Tables 6 and 9). A reconstruction by period is not possible, since most documents in Dataset 4 are tentatively dated to the 620s.

The final section examines the direction of Pesynthius' relations with various social groups, and evaluates Wipszycka's impression that the bishop was close to his flock.

§7.1 DATASET 4: DOCUMENTS FEATURING PESYNTHIUS OF KOPTOS

§7.1.1 *The selected material*

Instead of a coherent “archive” or a “correspondence”, Dataset 4 presents a dossier of Coptic documents assembled from various editions, particularly *P.Pisentius*, *P./O.CrumST* and *P./O.Mon.Epiph.* Compared to Abraham's archive this dossier is more difficult to delineate, since several texts in *P.Pisentius* were incorrectly linked to the bishop, his involvement in other pieces is probable but not certain, and relevant texts in *P./O.Mon.Epiph.* are generally overlooked. In addition, the documents that relate to Bishop Pesynthius are scattered over public and private collections worldwide. Several of them, including pieces published in *P.CrumST*, were sold on the antiquities market and still need to be localized. On top of that, it is possible that new texts are found in collections or during excavations.⁹⁴⁷ When looking at the modern history of the documents, they can be divided into four groups.⁹⁴⁸

A. Papyri in the Musée du Louvre in Paris

Eugène Revillout included over eighty Coptic documents in his *editio princeps* of the papyri in the Musée du Louvre, but according to a general consensus, the number of relevant texts is about sixty (*P.Pisentius* 1-61 including *1bis*, *12bis* and *18bis-ter*, but without *25bis-ter*).⁹⁴⁹ Revillout's edition is much criticized, on account of his inaccurate readings. Most of the

⁹⁴⁷ Van der Vliet 2002, 61-72 and 2013, 263-70, 264: “Des archives aux contours flous”; Dekker 2011.

⁹⁴⁸ List 4; Dataset 4.xlsx, spreadsheet “Selected documents”. Summaries and schematic representations of the documents are presented in Textual analysis.pdf.

⁹⁴⁹ Till 1962, 168-69; Van der Vliet 2002, 65, n. 14 and 2013, 265; Dekker 2011a, 34-35.

documents were also examined by Walter E. Crum, but his fairly accurate notes in *Notebook 84*, which are now kept at the Griffith Institute Archive in Oxford, are unpublished. Since 2007, a joint team from Leiden University and the Musée du Louvre, directed by Jacques van der Vliet and Florence Calament, is preparing a new edition of all the accessible papyri. Being a member of the Leiden research group, I am also actively involved in this project.⁹⁵⁰

Notebook 84 includes transcriptions of eleven documents in the Musée du Louvre that are not in *P.Pisentius*. Crum published two pieces as *P.CrumST 46* and *O.CrumST 189*.⁹⁵¹

B. Papyri from the former Phillipps collection in Cheltenham

The second group comprises the papyri that Sir Thomas Phillipps, a famous British collector of rare books and manuscripts in Cheltenham, purchased from count Guglielmo Libri, another famous and notorious collector, in London in 1862 (Phil. 16402.1-19).⁹⁵² Crum transcribed them in an unpublished notebook, *Crum MSS 5.2*, which is kept at the Griffith Institute Archive, and published fifteen papyri in *P./O.CrumST*. He observed that some fragments fitted with *P.Pisentius* papyri, and that the two collections originally belong together.⁹⁵³

From 1946 on, the Phillipps collection was sold at auctions and gradually scattered over the world. Several papyri were offered for sale by Charles Ede Ltd in London, The Rendells, Inc. in Newton, Massachusetts, and Bruce P. Ferrini in Akron, Ohio.⁹⁵⁴ It turns out that these antiquities dealers also sold papyri from the former Phillipps collection that were not examined by Crum. The documents localized so far are in Antwerp (Katoen Natie 685/01, 685/02 = *O.CrumST 174*), the British Museum in London (EA 75954-74957), the Bancroft Library of the University of California at Berkeley (P. Berk. 01), and the Australian National University Classics Museum in Canberra (ANU Classics Museum 75.01).⁹⁵⁵

⁹⁵⁰ Van der Vliet 2002, 65-66, where the “Programme d’édition Pesynthios” (“PEP”) is announced. On its progress, see Calament 2012; Dekker 2011a; Van der Vliet 2013; cf. Van der Vliet 2012, 31-37 and 2015, 127-28. Crum did not transcribe *P.Pisentius 27*, which appears to be lost.

⁹⁵¹ Paris, Louvre, R49 (+ Phil.16402.7), R66A, R73, R76, R93 (= *P.CrumST 46*), R94, R102, R104; SN114, SN156, SN157 (= *O.CrumST 189*). On the inventory numbers used by the museum, see Calament 2012, 110.

⁹⁵² Van der Vliet 2002, 63; Dekker 2011a, 35. On the Phillipps collection in general, see Munby 1951-1960. The Phillipps numbering is used in Cat. Phillipps 1968 (no. 16402) and especially in *Crum MSS 5.2*.

⁹⁵³ *O.CrumST*, pp. vii-viii, based on *P.Pisentius 13* + *P.CrumST 180*; *P.Pisentius 52* + *P.CrumST 176*; *P.Pisentius 49* + *O.CrumST 46* and 153 (not in Dataset 4).

⁹⁵⁴ See the sales catalogues of Ede 1972, nos 46-69; Ede 1975, 29-41; The Rendells, Inc. 1979, nos 107-113; Ferrini 1997, nos 31-34; cf. Van der Vliet 2002, 63, n. 7; cf. Dekker 2011a, 35-36.

⁹⁵⁵ Van der Vliet 2013, 265-67; Calament 2011, 109, n. 22; Dekker 2011a, 36. I identified EA 75953-75957 with Ede 1972, nos 56a, 57 and 59-60 on the basis of the photographs available on the website of the British Museum at http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/search.aspx (search term “Charles Ede”).

C. Papyri and ostraca from the *Topos* of Epiphanius

The third group of documents related to Bishop Pesynthius was excavated at the *Topos* of Epiphanius in 1911/1912 and 1913/1914 by a team of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. It is presently divided over the Coptic Museum in Cairo⁹⁵⁶ and the Metropolitan Museum of Art.⁹⁵⁷ Crum observed that some pieces from *P./O.Mon.Epiph.* and *P.Pisentius* were written by the same scribes, and that the two groups were closely related.⁹⁵⁸

D. Other relevant documents in separate publications

The fourth group includes isolated published documents relating to Bishop Pesynthius or individuals engaged in his network, like Bishop Pisrael and the priest Mark. The ostraca are kept in the British Museum and the Petrie Museum in London, the Allard Pierson Museum in Amsterdam, the Antikenmuseum und Sammlung Ludwig in Basel, the Coptic Museum in Cairo, the Bibliotheca Alexandrina in Alexandria, the Royal Ontario Museum of Archaeology in Toronto and at a storage room of the SCA at Dayr al-Medina. The present location of a letter on papyrus from the private collection of Étienne Dezaunay (in France?) is unknown.⁹⁵⁹

From these groups ninety-nine documents were selected for Dataset 4: nos 1-50 explicitly mention Bishop Pesynthius (50.5%); nos 51-56 do not feature the bishop himself, but persons known to him (6.1%);⁹⁶⁰ nos 57-91 relate to a bishop, probably Pesynthius (37.4%), whereas nos 94-99 relate to a spiritual leader called Pesynthius, probably the bishop (6.1%).⁹⁶¹

Excluded from Dataset 4 are the Coptic circular letter in which Bishop Pesynthius is called “thrice-blessed”, which was written some decades after the bishop’s death (Pap.Berlin P.11346; §3.1.2); documents that refer to an anchorite, priest or monk called Pesynthius, who cannot be identified with the (future) bishop with great probability (*O.Crum* 345, 378, *O.Mon.Epiph.* 330); and documents from the *P.Pisentius* group that do not involve a bishop.

⁹⁵⁶ *O.Mon.Epiph.* 150 (Cairo 46304.6), 172 (Cairo 44674.48), 515 (Cairo 44674.150).

⁹⁵⁷ Since the MMA sold part of its collection to Columbia University in New York in 1958 and 1961, Van der Vliet (2002, 63), Calament (2011, 109, n. 22) and Dekker (2011a, 36) assumed that papyri relating to Pesynthius in New York moved to Columbia University. However, the MMA accession numbers of the selected documents fall within the ranges 12.180.42-335 and 14.1.42-569, which are still in the MMA, according to O’Connell 2006, 118-19. See “Textual analysis of Bishop Pesynthius’ documents” for the accession numbers.

⁹⁵⁸ Winlock and Crum 1926, 223, n. 10, 224; Crum, *Notebook* 84.

⁹⁵⁹ London, British Museum: *O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* I (EA 21271), *O.Crum* 286; London, Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology, University College: *O.CrumVC* 76; Amsterdam: O.APM inv. 3871: ed. Van der Vliet 2014; Basel: O.Bâle Lg Ae BJF 31d: ed. Heurtel 2013, 81-83; Cairo: *O.Crum* 25; Alexandria: *SBKopt.* I 295; Toronto: *O.Theb.Copt.* 26; P.Dezaunay: ed. Sottas 1922; Dayr al-Medina: *O.Saint-Marc* 236.

⁹⁶⁰ Bishop Pisrael in *O.Mon.Epiph.* 150, *P.Pisentius* 8, 10; the *lashane* Abraham of Pshenhor in *P.Pisentius* 5; the priest Mark in *P.Pisentius* 10, O.Bâle Lg Ae BJF 31d; Patche in *P.Pisentius* 2, O.Bâle Lg Ae BJF 31d; Pehrourion in *P.Pisentius* 12.

⁹⁶¹ Dataset 4.xlsx, spreadsheet “Selected documents”.

§7.1.2 *The identification of the bishop*

In this study all documents featuring a bishop called Pesynthius are attributed to the prelate of Koptos, since the presence of a homonymous bishop of Hermonthis in the 620s appears unlikely (§3.1.11). More positively, two documents explicitly mention Bishop Pesynthius of Koptos,⁹⁶² and three letters featuring Bishop Pesynthius refer to Koptos.⁹⁶³ Some of these texts involve Psan, and two of them originate from the *Topos* of Epiphanius, which strongly suggests that the other documents from the *Topos* involving a bishop relate to Pisentius of Koptos as well.⁹⁶⁴ The other way around, the sender of *P.Mon.Epiph.* 136.2, whose name Crum reconstructed as “Pesynthius”, almost certainly was the bishop, considering the paternal manner in which he addressed Lord Lucianus, a magistrate, as his “dear son” (§7.4.1).

Some documents from the fourth group of relevant texts are connected to Pesynthius of Koptos on account of topographical data: O.APM inv. 3871 was addressed to the bishop of Koptos, for the sender was a *lashane* of Pmilis, a locality in the Koptite diocese;⁹⁶⁵ *SBKopt.* I 295 features Amos from Jeme, a correspondent of Epiphanius (*P.Mon.Epiph.* 163), and his appearance suggests that Pesynthius received the letter when he stayed in Western Thebes; *O.Crum* 286 was found at the Monastery of St Phoibammon, close to the *Topos*.

In various letters Bishop Pesynthius is addressed as a “spiritual, fatherly and lordly sanctity” (*P.Pisentius* 7), a “God-bearer” and a “true high priest” (§8.2.1), “who truly bears the Christ” (§8.3.1), and a “patron” (§8.5.1).⁹⁶⁶ If a bishop is called by one of these titles in a letter from the Theban region, and he is associated with *P.Pisentius*, the *Topos* of Epiphanius or the former Phillipps collection, then the bishop probably is Pesynthius of Koptos.

P.Pisentius 18 and 18bis record contact between the clergymen of Qus and a bishop, whom I automatically identified with Pesynthius, on account of the siglum *P.Pisentius* and his involvement with “the eparchy of Qus” (*P.Pisentius* 19). Since he could also have been Bishop Pisrael of Qus, a test will be done to check whether the identification of Pisrael as the bishop of *P.Pisentius* 18-18bis would lead to significantly different results (cf. §7.3.7).

§7.1.3 *The kind of documents*

Whereas the majority of Abraham’s documents comprised ostraca, those relating to Bishop Pesynthius are mostly written on papyrus (84.8%), and sometimes on limestone (9.1%) or

⁹⁶² *P.Pisentius* 11; *O.CrumVC* 76 (both mention Psan).

⁹⁶³ *P.CrumST* 174, *P.Mon.Epiph.* 133, 484.

⁹⁶⁴ *P.Mon.Epiph.* 117, 152-53, 254, 430, 494; *O.Mon.Epiph.* 172 (with Psan), 425, 469.

⁹⁶⁵ Ed. Van der Vliet 2014.

⁹⁶⁶ For the various epithets, see Dataset 4.xlsx, spreadsheet “Selected documents”, in the column “Identification”.

pottery (6.1%). In general, Pesynthius' documents are more fragmentary than those related to Abraham: five letters are (almost) intact,⁹⁶⁷ and eight letters are too damaged to make a summary of the contents possible.⁹⁶⁸ It is more difficult to reconstruct Pesynthius' incomplete letters, since they do not include standard letters, unlike Abraham's dossier (§5.1.3).

The episcopal documents are written in Coptic, but since various papyri were reused, traces of older, unrelated letters or accounts in Coptic or Greek are occasionally visible.⁹⁶⁹ It also happened that Bishop Pisrael reused the backside of a letter addressed to him for a letter to Pesynthius (*P.Pisentius* 7-8), or that a bishop, probably Pesynthius, sent a reply on the backside of a letter (*P.Pisentius* 18-18bis). *P.Mon.Epiph.* 129 bears a letter from Abraham, the *lashane* of Pshenhor in the Koptite district, and a reply from a clergyman on behalf of the bishop (apparently Pesynthius), who is said to be ill. A fragmentary unpublished papyrus in the British Museum (EA 74964) shows the reverse: a letter from a bishop about a loan or donation of money on one side and a reply on the other side.

Dataset 4 comprises various kinds of documents, which are usually composed as letters: the transcript of a solemn oath made in the presence of bishops and Psan, "the disciple of Epiphanius" (*P.Pisentius* 11); a letter of recommendation concerning the appointment of a new steward (*P.Pisentius* 52 + *O.CrumST* 176); a letter of reproach (*P.Pisentius* 18bis); letters of defense (*P.Pisentius* 3-5); a promise not to harm a prisoner (*P.Pisentius* 37); a medical prescription (*P.Pisentius* 24); notifications, announcements, reports, requests and petitions. Reports made by clergymen may also include requests for further instructions.⁹⁷⁰ Dataset 4 also includes a scribal exercise (*O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* I, EA 21271) and a prayer invoking "Apa Pesynthius, the bishop of our soul and our body" (*O.Crum* 25).⁹⁷¹

Bishop Pesynthius appears most often as the recipient of letters (80.8%) and only four times as the likely sender or co-sender (4%).⁹⁷² His correspondence is less well balanced than that of Bishop Abraham, who received 41.1% of the letters in Dataset 3 and sent 48.9% (cf. §5.1.3). Admittedly, none of the five texts records Pesynthius' title and only one of them, the one that he and Bishop John jointly sent to Epiphanius, includes his name (*P.Mon.Epiph.* 133; cf. §3.1.6). He is explicitly mentioned, or referred to, in nine documents (9.2%), and is once invoked as an intercessor in a prayer, apparently after his death (*O.Crum* 25).

⁹⁶⁷ *P.Pisentius* 20-21, 24; *P.CrumST* 174; *O.Mon.Epiph.* 172.

⁹⁶⁸ *O.Crum* 286; *O.Mon.Epiph.* 425, *P.Mon.Epiph.* 430; *P.Pisentius* 47.2, 55; London, British Museum, EA 74953; P.Berk. 01; *O.Saint-Marc* 236.

⁹⁶⁹ *P.Pisentius* 1, 10, 24, 37, 52 (+ *O.CrumST* 176); *P.CrumST* 175.1+2; *P.Mon.Epiph.* 136.2.

⁹⁷⁰ *P.Pisentius* 17, 25, 29, 41, 54.

⁹⁷¹ Dataset 4.xlsx, spreadsheet "Selected documents", in the column "Kind of document".

⁹⁷² *P.Pisentius* 18bis, 60; *P.Mon.Epiph.* 133, 136.2.

Six documents do not concern the bishop but persons associated with him (6.1%): an acknowledgement of debt from Jacob to Cyriacus, who had previously advanced Jacob's rent to Pehroudion (*P.Pisentius* 12); episcopal missives from Shenoute and Pisrael (*P.Pisentius* 10; *O.Mon.Epiph.* 150); a letter addressed to Bishop Pisrael about the dismissal of a steward (*P.Pisentius* 7); a letter from Abraham, the *lashane* of Pshenhor, to civil officials (*P.Pisentius* 5); and a letter from the priest Mark to the estate manager Patche (O.Bâle Lg Ae BJB 31d).⁹⁷³ These texts are included in Dataset 4, for they reveal the social relations of, and among, individuals acquainted with Pesynthius that existed without his involvement. Furthermore, *P.Pisentius* 5 reminds us that the bishop was not the only person with authority to reckon with: the *lashane* Abraham sent a letter of defense to civil officials responsible for establishing the taxes and good order. Some texts provide new information about known individuals. Patche, who appears in *P.Pisentius* 2 without further specification, turns out to be an estate manager. The priest Cyriacus, who swore that he would never contact Pehroudion's wife again, or give anything to her or her husband, at least knew Pehroudion as the creditor to whom he previously advanced Jacob's rent (*P.Pisentius* 12).

In contrast with the texts relating to Bishop Abraham, letters addressed to Pesynthius are more personal. Some of them refer to his health,⁹⁷⁴ whereas other letters include criticism towards the bishop (§8.7). In general, Pesynthius is addressed with more reverence than Abraham, even with Biblical expressions that are expected in hagiographical works on model bishops rather than in letters: he is called "the light of the world" (*P.Pisentius* 44, address)⁹⁷⁵ and a "true high priest who petitions God on behalf of the entire people" (*SBKopt.* I 295, ll. 7-8), two expressions that originally referred to Christ (Jn 8:12; cf. Hebrews 5:1).

§7.1.4 *The provenance of the documents*

Only 22.2% of the episcopal documents has a recorded provenance. One text was found at the Monastery of St Phoibammon (*O.Crum* 286), another one at the *Topos* of St Mark (*O.Saint-Marc* 236), and twenty letters at the *Topos* of Epiphanius (*P.Mon. Epiph./ O.Mon.Epiph.*). From this dossier, twelve pieces were discovered in the area enclosed by the "First Boundary Wall", more specifically at the "Original Monastery" (7.1%), in "Room 5" inside the tomb of Daga (2%), and near the "First Tower" (3.1%). If Pesynthius kept an archive at the *Topos*, it

⁹⁷³ Shenoute, Pisrael, Mark and Cyriacus were all members of the Theodosian network; cf. §3.1.7-8, 3.2.3, 3.2.8. Abraham sent *P.Mon.Epiph.* 129 ro. and probably *P.Pisentius* 3 to Pesynthius. Cyriacus and the bishop are associated with Pehroudion, or rather his wife, in *P.Pisentius* 11 and with Patche in *P.Pisentius* 2.

⁹⁷⁴ *P.Pisentius* 24; *O.Mon.Epiph.* 129; *P.Mon.Epiph.* 152-153.

⁹⁷⁵ See also *P.CrumST* 178: "who illuminates [...]".

should have been located within the “First Boundary Wall”, but already in late antiquity, several of his documents ended up in rubbish heaps (4.1%).⁹⁷⁶

Since several documents from the *Topos* of Epiphanius and the *P.Pisentius* group are related, it is likely that the *P.Pisentius* group originates from the *Topos* as well (§7.1.2).

§7.1.5 *The dating of the documents*

Although *P.Pisentius* 22 is the only document with an absolute date (February 3, 623; cf. §3.1.2), it is possible to propose a tentative dating for 95.6% of the texts.⁹⁷⁷ *P.Mon.Epiph.* 133 is assigned to the period 610-619, since Epiphanius “the anchorite” is involved, whereas the priest Mark probably sent *O.CrumVC* 76 to Psan in ca. 630 (cf. §3.2.1, 3.3.2). The prayer in *O.Crum* 25 invokes the bishop as an intercessor and is likely to postdate his death in July 632.

Ninety-one documents are assigned to the years 620-630, when Bishop Pesynthius stayed in Western Thebes, at least during part of the period. Some of them already appeared in Dataset 1, such as *SBKopt.* I 295 and O.Bâle Lg Ae BJB 31d. Texts bearing the sigla *P./O.Mon.Epiph.* and *P.Pisentius*, and those coming from the former Philipps collection are also tentatively dated to this period, since the connections between these groups of texts indicate that they are approximately contemporary (cf. §7.1.2). *O.Crum* 286 originates from Western Thebes and could date from ca. 620-630 as well.

O.Brit.Mus.Copt. I (EA 21271), *O.Theb.Copt.* 26, O.APM inv. 3871 and P.Dezaunay cannot be assigned to a particular period.

§7.2 PESYNTHIUS’ SOCIAL NETWORK

§7.2.1 *The network population*

Despite being based on fewer documents, Pesynthius’ complete network is almost as large as that of Abraham: 334 versus 338 nodes. It has a varied population (Pl. 13.23):⁹⁷⁸

- **Clergymen** (21.3%): 72 nodes are identified as clergymen, either by their titles or by their involvement in ecclesiastical or matrimonial matters. They include Pesynthius himself, a patriarch in ca. 615-620 (Anastasius?), a patriarch in ca. 620 (Andronicus?), the bishops Constantine, John, Anthony, Pisrael, Horame, Shenoute and nameless colleagues, priests, two archdeacons, deacons, stewards and local agents. It is likely

⁹⁷⁶ Dataset 4.xlsx, spreadsheet “Selected documents”, in the column “Provenance”.

⁹⁷⁷ Dataset 4.xlsx, spreadsheet “Selected documents”, in the column “Dating”.

⁹⁷⁸ “Network analysis 4”, A.

that there were more clergymen among the anonymous correspondents of the bishop, but their social position cannot be verified.

- **Monks** (13.2%): forty-four nodes represent Epiphanius, Psan, other monastic leaders, monks, nuns and girls who would soon receive the cloth (see below).
- Seven times, it is unclear whether a person was a clergyman, a monk or both (2.4%).⁹⁷⁹
- **Civil officials** (15.3%): fifty-one nodes relate to urban magistrates, a chief physician, a lawyer, a “*komes*”, financial administrators (*dioiketes*), estate managers (*pronoetes*), sixteen *lashanes* and headmen, and local magistrates. The group also includes three individuals, who are likely to be officials, but are not explicitly identified as such: Stephen, who requested the bishop to issue a letter of protection, which suggests that he was an official involved in the tax collection (§1.3.5); Callinicus, about whom the same Stephen wrote that he was misinformed by some citizens of Koptos, which creates the impression that Callinicus held a high social position, and that his reaction to the falsehood could be harmful; and Lord Lucianus, whom Bishop Pesynthius requested to mediate between a woman and her abductor. In total, four persons are called “Lord”: Christodote from Esna, whom the bishop should consult concerning the problems at Pshenhor, the urban magistrates Erythrius and Joseph, and Lucianus.
- **Military officials** (0.9%): Dataset 4 includes the *actuarii* Theophilus, and two letters that are probably addressed to Bishop Pesynthius mention a lieutenant at Ape.
- **Other occupations** (1.8%): Dataset 4 includes two bakers, two shepherds, a poor husbandman, and a money-lender.
- **Women and girls** (11.1%): thirty-seven nodes represent female social actors, such as widows, married women, mothers and daughters, nuns, girls who would soon receive the cloth, and a baby. Another seventeen nodes refer to mixed groups that included women, like families, parents and inhabitants of cities or villages (see below).
- **Groups** (6.6%): nodes for two or more individuals indicate the presence of families, parents, the citizens of Koptos and Hermonthis, the villagers of Pshenhor, Trekatan and Kratos, and the inhabitants of unspecified locations. Social unrest was caused by the Persians, who confiscated cattle; marauders called “Atsoor”, who probably came

⁹⁷⁹ Dataset 4.xlsx, spreadsheet “Complete network”, where these individuals are indicated by the color green.

from Syria and abducted girls in the area of Pallas;⁹⁸⁰ a “barbarian” and brigands in the mountain of Ape; and men who stole cattle from the village of Pshenhor.

- **Other people worth mentioning:** three persons were in prison and three others were held captive by brigands. Four girls were abducted or held captive by men, and a fifth girl was violated by a shepherd. Dataset 4 also includes four deceased persons, namely Athanasius, whose commemoration had to be arranged, the monk Hello, Pesente, whose widow petitioned Bishop Pesynthius, and the girl Trakote.

The basic network, which is half the size of the complete network (170 nodes), presents similar proportions: clergymen, including the bishops Pesynthius, Anthony, Ezekiel, Horame, Pisrael and a nameless colleague, represent 21.2% of the nodes, monks 12.4%, persons who were clergymen or monks 2.9%, civil officials 21.8%, individuals with other occupations 1.8%, female social actors 8.8%, and groups 7.6%.⁹⁸¹ The *acturius* Theophilus is the only military official in this network. The largest differences concern the civil officials, who form a larger group in the basic network, and female social actors, who are better represented in the complete network. Nevertheless, in both networks the largest social groups are the clergymen, followed by the civil officials, monks and women, which indicates that the complete network is fairly representative, at least with regard to the network population.

Sixteen individuals in the complete network were indirectly linked to the bishop. They include the patriarch (in ca. 620), the bishops Constantine and Shenoute, the monastic leader Elisaius and his community, financial agents, the colleagues of the estate manager Patche, and a poor man and his wife (*P.Pisentius* 3).⁹⁸²

In comparison with Abraham’s complete network, that of Pesynthius has fewer clergymen (almost 25%, versus 46.4% in Abraham’s case), more civil officials (15.3% versus 7.4%), more monks (12.9% versus 7.7%), fewer groups (6.6% versus 1.8%) and more female social actors (11.1% versus 1.2%). In Abraham’s network the largest social groups are clergymen, monks, civil officials and people with other occupations (3.3% versus 1.8% in Pesynthius’ network). The different composition of the network populations confirms the general impression that Abraham was more involved with clergymen in ecclesiastical matters, and Pesynthius with women and groups on account of matrimonial or social problems.

⁹⁸⁰ On the Atsoor, see Winlock and Crum 1926, 141-42.

⁹⁸¹ Dataset 4.xlsx, spreadsheet “Basic network”: 36, 21, 5, 37, 3, 15 and 13 nodes respectively.

⁹⁸² ID nos 5, 12, 33, 39-40, 42, 51, 105, 110, 132, 239-44.

In contrast with Abraham's documents, those relating to Pesynthius provide more information about the age of the social actors.⁹⁸³ Although the complete network is dominated by male adults (80.5%), large minorities are adult women (6.6%), girls or unmarried young women (4.5%), boys or young men (1.8%) and mixed groups, such as parents and "people" (5.4%). Some nodes were assigned to "children", including infants and the (adult) children of John, who became a monk at a late age, and to a parent, either Trakote's father or mother.

§7.2.2 *The network level*

The basic, extended and complete networks comprise 170, 318 and 334 nodes and 1260, 2334 and 2456 recorded ties, which is 4.4%, 2.3% and 2.2% of all possible ties in the respective networks.⁹⁸⁴ The actual density scores were possibly lower, since the undirected networks were created as affiliation networks, which presume direct ties between all social actors in the same text, whereas not all of them were necessarily directly connected. In the directed versions of the basic, extended and complete networks the density is indeed lower, 1.8%, 1%, and 0.9% respectively, but since directed networks only count recorded ties (531, 997 and 1048 ties), the actual number of ties among the people in Dataset 4 could have been higher. Therefore, the real density in the complete network ranged between 0.9% and 2.2%.

In the undirected networks the actors involved have an *average degree* of 7.3-7.4 ties, in the directed networks ca. 3.12-3.13 ties. This implies that only ca. 43% (3/7) of the ties in the undirected networks is actually recorded, and that the other 57% represent indirect ties that are treated as direct ties. They may include existing ties that cannot be demonstrated.

The *average distance* in the undirected networks is 1.96, 1.98 or 2.1 steps, well below three degrees of separation, but in the directed networks it ranges from 3.3 to 3.5 and 3.5 steps, which implies that the actual episcopal network was less compact than the scores for the undirected networks suggest. This is even more evident from the increase in *diameters*: it takes 2, 2 and 4 steps respectively to get from one end of the undirected networks to the other, and 6, 9 and 9 steps in the directed networks. In the undirected network the increase results from the inclusion of sixteen persons who were indirectly connected with Bishop Pesynthius through Bishop Pisrael, the priests Cyriacus and Mark, the *lashane* Abraham and the official Patche (cf. §7.1.3). In the directed networks the indirect ties have little effect, but the inclusion of probable ties results in a large diameter for the extended network. If the inclusion of probable or indirect ties affects the structure of the network significantly, it is important to

⁹⁸³ "Network analysis 4", A.

⁹⁸⁴ "Network analysis 4", B, based on "Basic network Cohesion.txt"- "Complete network Cohesion.txt".

decide which network can best be used to describe the actual episcopal network. The answer to this question is postponed to §7.2.4, where we can evaluate the impact of probable and indirect ties on the identification of the central actors in the various networks.

A comparison of the complete networks of Abraham and Pesynthius reveals that they are almost the same size in terms of nodes (339 versus 334), but not in terms of ties (2120 and 2456 respectively). Abraham has fewer ties in his undirected network, but 69.6% of them appear as active ties in the directed version (1475/ 2120), compared to 42.7% of Pesynthius' ties (1048/ 2456). Pesynthius' complete network is slightly denser than that of Abraham (2.2% versus 1.9%), but for the directed complete networks it is vice versa (1.3% for Abraham and 0.9% for Pesynthius). Abraham's directed and undirected complete networks are more compact than those of Pesynthius, for they have smaller diameters (3 and 7 steps versus 4 and 9 steps). When considering the different circumstances under which the two bishops worked, the results reflect what we would expect. Abraham remained in his diocese and was mostly concerned with matters in his own diocese, which enabled him to keep his network relatively compact. By contrast, Pesynthius resided outside of his own diocese and had to deal with matters in various dioceses, including his own, which must have resulted in a more diffuse network with multiple long-distance ties (cf. §4.5.2-3).

§7.2.3 *The component level*

Without Pesynthius the complete network disintegrates into forty-eight components, the largest of which comprises 121 nodes that represent Bishop Pisrael, the priest Cyriacus, the deacon Phanes, Epiphanius and Psan, and various others social actors.⁹⁸⁵ The rest of the components range in size between one and eleven nodes. The number of components is lower than in Abraham's complete network (eighty-three), but the units are larger: in Pesynthius' network eight components have eight or more nodes, whereas Abraham's network only has two large components and many dyads.⁹⁸⁶ Pesynthius' network is more cohesive.

The complete network disintegrates after removing twelve social actors whom the *Blocks & Cutpoints* algorithm identifies as cutpoints. They are Pesynthius and Pisrael in the first phase, and Bishop Anthony, the priests Cyriacus and Mark, the deacon Phanes, Psan, Epiphanius, the archimandrite, and the *lashanes* Abraham and Strategius in the second phase. Lord Lucianus and the officials Callinicus and Stephen appear as cut points in other units.⁹⁸⁷

⁹⁸⁵ "Network analysis 4", C; "Complete network - Components.jpg".

⁹⁸⁶ For the components in Abraham's network, see the CD:\Dataset 3\ "Complete network - Components.jpg".

⁹⁸⁷ "Complete network - Block & Cutpoints1.jpg"- "Complete network - Block & Cutpoints2.jpg".

The directed complete network is already fragmented, for there are nineteen isolates and two detached groups of nodes that stand for social actors in *P.Pisentius* 19 and *O.Theb. Copt.* 27, who would soon meet Pesynthius. After omitting the bishop from the network, there are sixty-nine components, thirty of which are still large (at least four nodes).⁹⁸⁸

When the *Girvan-Newman* algorithm is applied to the complete network, it sets the social actors of *P.Pisentius* 2-5, 12 ro., 32.1 and O.Bâle Lg Ae BJF 31d apart from the rest. Recurring persons in these documents are the priest Cyriacus, the *lashane* Abraham and the Pshenhorites, who were closely associated and appear as central actors in various layers of the episcopal network (cf. §7.3.2-3).⁹⁸⁹ Together, they form a group based in or near Pshenhor.

§7.2.4 *The node level*

Bishop Pesynthius, Psan and the priest Cyriacus are identified as core members in all layers of the episcopal network, and Mark in all layers except the directed extended network.⁹⁹⁰ Bishop Pisrael only appears as a core member in the extended and complete networks. Less prominent core members are Epiphanius (in the extended and complete networks), the villagers of Psenhor, the deacon Phanes and the villagers of Pallas mentioned in *P.Pisentius* 15-16 (in the basic network). The Psenhorites, Phanes and Epiphanius are real central actors, for they have high centrality scores, but the villagers from Pallas owe their seemingly important position to their contact with Phanes and their appearance as a relatively large group in two documents (§7.3.2-3). It is striking that there is just one real core member who belonged to the diocese of Koptos, namely Cyriacus.

Psan, Cyriacus, Mark, Pisrael, Epiphanius, Phanes, the Psenhorites and the *lashane* Abraham frequently appear as central actors in the overviews of the various centrality scores, but their order varies depending on the size and nature of the subnetwork.⁹⁹¹ Instead of discussing all the results, we need to decide which network layers best reflect the original episcopal network. The basic network is limited to certain ties and may seem accurate, but the network is so small that villagers of Pallas are identified as core members, although they were

⁹⁸⁸ “Directed complete network - Components.jpg”.

⁹⁸⁹ “Complete network - Girvan-Newman.jpg”.

⁹⁹⁰ “Network analysis 4”, D, based on “Basic network - core-periphery.txt”, “Extended network - core-periphery.txt”, “Complete network - core-periphery.txt”, “Directed basic network - core-periphery.txt”, “Directed extended network - core-periphery.txt”, “Directed complete network - core-periphery.txt”. Joui and her mother Taham (ID nos 120 and 160) have the same ties, but only Joui is listed as a core member.

⁹⁹¹ “Network analysis 4”, E.1-4, based on “Basic network - Centrality normalized.txt”, “Extended network - Centrality normalized.txt”, “Complete network - Centrality normalized”, “Directed basic network - Centrality normalized”, “Directed extended network - Centrality normalized.txt”, “Directed complete network - Centrality normalized.txt”.

not important beyond their village at all. The directed basic network suffers from the same problem, for some of its central actors, like Taham and Joui, are not prominent in the larger networks. By contrast, the complete network is large, but also includes indirect contacts of Bishop Pesynthius, who make the network less compact (§7.2.2). When they are included, Pisrael and Mark, who stand between Pesynthius and the indirect ties, become more important than they are in the extended network, which focuses on certain and likely direct ties only. The same happens in the directed complete network. Originally, the complete networks were created to represent the episcopal network as accurately as possible, but the undirected and directed extended networks, which were created later to clarify the deviations between the basic and complete networks, are the most accurate.

In the extended network Psan and Epiphanius have the best scores for all centrality measures, and are followed by Cyriacus, Mark, Pisrael, Phanes and the villagers of Pshenhor, generally in that order. In the directed version of the network Psan, Cyriacus, Pisrael score highly for *degree* and *closeness centrality*. Surprisingly, some central actors are known from a single document and do not strike as particularly important, but have better *outclose* scores than core members, namely the senders of *P.Pisentius* 40 and *P.CrumST* 178. The overview for *betweenness* centrality lists the sender of *P.Pisentius* 14, who wrote about two matrimonial affairs, and Anastasius, a magistrate who recommended Jacob for the position of steward at the *Topos* of the Archangel Michael (*P.Pisentius* 52 + *O.CrumST* 176). The sender of *P.Pisentius* 14 and Anastasius also have good *betweenness* centrality scores in the directed complete network, apparently because they wrote on behalf of multiple persons.

§7.2.5 Tie strength

In the undirected networks Bishop Pesynthius is most frequently associated with Cyriacus (6 certain ties), Psan (4 certain and 3 probable ties), Epiphanius (5 probable ties) and Mark (3 certain ties, 1 probable one; Pl. 13.24). The directed networks indicate that Cyriacus and Pesynthius were in reciprocal contact four times, and that Cyriacus wrote to the bishop twice, whereas the bishop's relations with Psan and Mark were of equal strength in both directions (5 and 4 ties). Direct contact between him and Epiphanius is at least implied once, in a letter from the bishops John and Pesynthius to Epiphanius (*P.Mon.Epiph.* 133). The social actors who have the most strong ties in both the directed basic and complete networks are Psan, Phanes, Cyriacus, the Pshenhorites and Mark.⁹⁹²

⁹⁹² “Network analysis 4”, F, “Directed complete network - Tie strength.jpg”.

§7.3 THE OTHER CENTRAL ACTORS IN PESYNTHIUS' NETWORK

The present sections discusses the available information about the central actors other than Bishop Pesynthius, starting with those who lived in the diocese of Koptos. Some of them, like Epiphanius and Psan, were already introduced in Chapter 3. In those cases the discussion will concentrate on their structural position in the various layers of the episcopal network.

§7.3.1 *The deacon Phanes*

The deacon Phanes from Pallas is a relatively important actor, on account of his appearance in three letters addressed to Bishop Pesynthius.⁹⁹³ In *P.Pisentius* 1 the *lashanes* of Pallas, Chello and Pelaih, report the arrest of “the Atsoor”, brigands who were guilty of abducting young women. Previously, Phanes and another person went to the Atsoor to ask for the release of Euphrates' daughter. According to *P.Pisentius* 16, the deacon Phanes acted as a scribe for Apa Hello, who informed the bishop that the year before Psmou agreed to give his daughter in marriage to the son of Hjil. Since nothing had happened since then, Pesynthius had made inquiries, presumably at Hjil's request. Afterwards, Pesynthius ordered the priest Psan, Phanes and the *lashane* Pjijoui to ask Taham and her daughter Joui, who were somehow associated with Apa Hello, whether Psmou and Hjil had prayed together. In *P.Pisentius* 15 Phanes, Psan and Pjijoui replied that they probably did, for Taham and Joui saw them enter Apa Hello's house to have a celebration with wine and chick-peas.

§7.3.2 *The priest Cyriacus of the Monastery of Apa Macarius*

Cyriacus, the priest and abbot of the Monastery of Apa Macarius near Pshenhor, owes his high centrality scores to his appearance in at least seven documents: *P.Mon.Epiph.* 430, 494, *P.Pisentius* 2-3, 11, 12 recto and 32.1 (§3.2.8).⁹⁹⁴ Perhaps, he is also mentioned in a postscript to *P.Pisentius* 22, where the sender (the priest Mark?) states that Bishop Horame gave a letter addressed to Pesynthius to a priest called Cyriacus (ID no. 7).⁹⁹⁵ Since the latter does not have a demonstrable link with Pshenhor, he is distinguished from the homonymous abbot of the Monastery of Apa Macarius in the analysis (ID no. 6). Just in case that the Cyriacus of *P.Pisentius* 22 was indeed the abbot, the identification of the two was tested in the extended network, which I consider as the best rendering of the actual episcopal network (§7.2.4). The

⁹⁹³ “Complete network Ego Phanes.jpg”.

⁹⁹⁴ “Complete network Ego Cyriacus.jpg”.

⁹⁹⁵ Cyriacus' name is abbreviated as “ΠΡΕ(ΣΒΥΤΕΡΟΣ) ΚΥΡ(ΙΑΚΟΣ)”.

average degree increases slightly, from 7.32 to 7.33 ties, and Cyriacus gets the second best centrality scores, before Epiphanius and Mark but after Psan.⁹⁹⁶

§7.3.3 *The lashane Abraham and the villagers of Pshenhor*

The Pshenhorites and their *lashane* Abraham have relatively high centrality scores, particularly in the small basic network.⁹⁹⁷ The Pshenhorites feature occasionally in the overviews for *closeness centrality*, since they were closely associated with the prominent central actors Phanes and Cyriacus, whereas Abraham has a high *betweenness centrality* in all of the directed networks. This probably results from his appearance in a handful of documents.

Abraham, the *lashane* of Pshenhor, is the sender of *P.Pisentius* 4-5 and *P.Mon.Epiph.* 129, recto, and the recipient of *P.Mon.Epiph.* 129, verso. He is to be distinguished from Abraham of Trekatan, who is listed as a reliable witness in *P.Pisentius* 3-4. In *P.Pisentius* 3 “Abraham” is mentioned before Abraham of Trekatan (ll. 41 and 61-62 respectively), which suggests that the former refers to the *lashane* of Pshenhor, and that the sender was an official, whose name is not specified. The Pshenhorites are referred to in *P.Pisentius* 2-5.

Twice an undefined group of men entered the village of Pshenhor and stole cattle at night. The first time was five years ago, and it happened again recently. On both occasions the sender of *P.Pisentius* 3 informed Bishop Pesynthius about the theft through the mediation of Abraham (the *lashane*). Whatever the bishop replied, the Pshenhorites did not wait for him to solve the problem, for in their eyes he had “spent five years without jumping on our case” (l. 59-60). Instead, they seized the cattle of “the congregation” (ll. 7-9). Cyriacus, who is identified with the abbot of the Monastery of Apa Macarius near Pshenhor, confirms that the Pshenhorites stole the camel and the team of oxen from the monastery (*P.Pisentius* 2, ll. 3, 7-8). Afterwards, the bishop sent Cyriacus to the Pshenhorites to deliver a letter of reproach, in which they were blamed for taking the cattle of the congregation, although they had “not yet received the documents from the financial administrators” (*P.Pisentius* 3, ll. 7-9). Perhaps, the bishop expected that the financial administrators would be lenient towards the people of Pshenhor, on account of his mediation, but now that they took the law in their own hands, he was angry. The sender of *P.Pisentius* 3 responded on behalf of the entire village, asking the bishop to also listen to their misfortune this time and to inquire through Abraham of Trekatan, for he would confirm that the Pshenhorites were robbed first (ll. 61-63).

⁹⁹⁶ Dataset 4.xlsx, spreadsheet “Check 7.3.2”; “Check 7.3.2 normalized.txt”- “Check 7.3.2 Cohesion.txt”; “Network analysis 4”, E.5.

⁹⁹⁷ “Complete network Ego Pshenhorites.jpg”, which also includes Abraham.

The situation at Pshenhor escalated. In his letter to the bishop, Abraham, supposedly the *lashane*, ventilated his anger about the malice of “those who conspire against me” and “the acts of violence that they committed against the poor, particularly the blood that they shed” (*P.Pisentius* 4, ll. 9, 12-13). Perhaps he was to blame, but he just wanted peace and good order. With much pathos he added: “Whoever asks for peace and does not get it, unless he is [a rich man] whom the worldly authorities leave alone, while they are gnawing at the intestines of the poor” (ll. 10-11, 37-42). He asked the bishop to inquire about what happened through Abraham (of Trekatan), Gideon, Papa, Georgios and Lord Christodote from Esna, possibly landowners, estate managers or financial administrators. They would confirm that the villagers did not take the law into their own hands “when they came in” (ll. 70-74).

Abraham also sent a letter to “the illustrious lordships”, presumably tax officials or the financial administrators mentioned in *P.Pisentius* 3, in reply to their letter, in which they stated that they had written several times about establishing the taxes and the public order (*P.Pisentius* 5). Abraham retorted that “it is us who are writing and making requests to you many times”, “but you are neglectful” (ll. 5-12). He also reacted against the accusation that certain villagers, whom the officials listed in their letter, would have been on the field at night. If the officials can produce a reliable witness, the accused will be handed over to them.

Finally, Abraham, the *lashane* of Pshenhor, sent a letter to a spiritual authority, whom he addressed as a “patron” and “he who truly bears Christ”, epithets that strongly point in the direction of Bishop Pesynthius (*P.Mon.Epiph.* 129, recto; cf. §7.1.2). He asked the latter to pray for him, in order that he would be delivered from trials, and made another request, which is lost in a lacuna. The anonymous clergyman who wrote a reply on the backside of the letter appears to inform Abraham that the bishop was ill (§7.4.1).

§7.3.4 *The estate manager Patche*

The priest Cyriacus was informed that the team of oxen that the Pshenhorites had stolen from his monastery was lodged with Patche (*P.Pisentius* 2). The latter is identified with the estate manager who received a letter from the priest Mark (O.Bâle Lg Ae BfJ 31d). In that letter Mark requested Patche to listen to the people who delivered the letter to him and to write a fitting reply. Mark also included his greetings to the estate managers Paham and Gideon, who are not known from other documents.⁹⁹⁸

⁹⁹⁸ “Complete network Ego Pshenhorites.jpg” and “Complete network Ego Mark.jpg” includes Patche.

Patche was probably active in the area of Pshenhor, or more generally on the east bank of the Nile in the southern part of the district of Koptos. He has a high score for *betweenness centrality* in the complete network, even a better score than Cyriacus and the Pshenhorites, on account of his contact with Mark, whose *betweenness centrality* is second best.

§7.3.5 *Psan and Epiphanius*

Psan appears as a core member in all reconstructed subnetworks and his frequent appearance in the overviews with best centrality scores confirm that he was a central actor, whereas Epiphanius is almost exclusively prominent in the undirected networks. In fact, there was not much direct contact between Pesynthius and Epiphanius. In earlier days, Pesynthius and Bishop John informed Epiphanius about a council (*P.Mon.Epiph.* 133), but in the 620s, the period to which most episcopal documents are tentatively dated, the anchorite appears to have withdrawn to the background. He did not attend the council held to judge the case of the priest Cyriacus (*P.Pisentius* 11), and Apa John tried to contact him through Psan (*O.Mon.Epiph.* 165). Epiphanius' name occurs in two letters that were probably addressed to Bishop Pesynthius (*P.Mon.Epiph.* 458, 466). One of them creates the impression that Epiphanius went to prison, rather as a negotiator for the sake of prisoners than as a convict himself, as he was requested to do in a petition from the civil authorities of Jeme (*P.Mon.Epiph.* 466, 163; §3.2.1).⁹⁹⁹

Whereas Epiphanius became less accessible, Psan became a contact person for him as well as for “the bishops”, Pesynthius and Pisrael (*O.Mon.Epiph.* 165), and for Pesynthius only (*O.Mon.Epiph.* 172). The prosopographical ties create the impression that Psan formed an important bridge between this bishop and the latter's correspondents, but network analysis reveals that his scores for *betweenness centrality* in the directed networks are in fact relatively low. This is probably because most correspondents wrote directly to the bishop.

When Apa Hello died, Psan inherited some of his possessions (*P.Pisentius* 22).

§7.3.6 *The priest Mark*

Mark appears as a core member of, and central actor in, most layers of the episcopal network. He sent Bishop Pesynthius at least one letter (*P.Pisentius* 29), but a second letter addressed to the bishop is attributed to him merely on the basis of the handwriting: he could have been the sender, but certainly was the scribe (*P.Pisentius* 22; cf. §3.2.3). In ca. 630 Mark met Bishop

⁹⁹⁹ “Complete network Ego Epiphanius-Psan.jpg”.

Pesynthius, who told him about his plan to visit Psan very soon, and Mark almost forgot to inform Psan about his coming (*O.CrumVC* 76).¹⁰⁰⁰

Mark's high centrality scores result from his contact with other central actors: Psan (*O.CrumVC* 76; *P.Pisentius* 22), Epiphanius (*O.Mon.Epiph.* 165), Pisrael (*P.Pisentius* 10, recto) and Patche (O.Bâle Lg Ae BfJ 31d).

§7.3.7 Bishop Pisrael of Qus

Bishop Pisrael is a central actor in the extended and complete networks, but not in the basic network, since only two certain instances of contact are recorded between him and Bishop Pesynthius: Pisrael wrote Pesynthius a letter, and both bishops attended the council held on account of the priest Cyriacus (*P.Pisentius* 7, 11). Other references to “the bishops” are less explicit. Pisrael was one of the bishops in *O.CrumST* 255, but the name of his colleague is lost, and in *O.Mon.Epiph.* 165 the bishops are not mentioned by name, but their association with Epiphanius and Psan points in the direction of Pesynthius and Pisrael (§3.1.8). The likely identifications result in high centrality scores for Pisrael in the extended networks.¹⁰⁰¹

He is even more prominent in the complete networks, on account of *P.Pisentius* 8 and 10, recto, and *O.Mon.Epiph.* 150. These letters do not directly relate to Pesynthius, but are included in Dataset 4, since they feature individuals who were certainly members of his network. In the present case, it is clearly visible that their inclusion in Dataset 4 affects the cohesion and centrality scores so much, that Pesynthius' complete network is less suitable for comparison with Abraham's network. Pisrael's *betweenness centrality* changes the most: from the fifth position in the extended network he moves to the first place in the complete network. The difference between the extended and complete networks for the other centrality measures is two places, that in the directed networks one or two positions. In the directed complete network Pisrael is number one for *outdegree*, *outclose* and *inclose centrality*.¹⁰⁰²

In §7.1.2 the question was raised whether the bishop involved with *P.Pisentius* 18 and 18bis was Pisrael, instead of Pesynthius, since the letters refer to the clergymen of Qus. The alternative scenario was tested by linking the documents to Pisrael in the extended network, which is the best representation of the episcopal network. It turns out that the average degree increases slightly (from 7.34 to 7.32 ties), as do the average distance (from 1.98 to 2.02 steps) and the diameter (from 2 to 3 steps). The diameter increases, for *P.Pisentius* 18 and 18bis are

¹⁰⁰⁰ “Complete network Ego Mark.jpg”.

¹⁰⁰¹ “Complete network Ego Pisrael.jpg”.

¹⁰⁰² “Network analysis 4”, E.1-4.

now treated as indirectly relevant texts, in which all social actors except Pisrael are detached from Pesynthius and form a new group of indirect ties. Pisrael's position in the test network is practically the same as in the complete network: he has the second best scores for the degree and closeness centralities (after Psan), and moves from the fifth to the first position with regard to betweenness centrality, as in the complete network. His eigenvector centrality rises hardly, from the fifth place in the extended network to the fourth in the test network (following Psan, Epiphanius and Mark, but beating Cyriacus).¹⁰⁰³ In sum, it matters for the cohesion of the episcopal network and the relative importance of the central actors whether the bishop is Pesynthius or Pisrael, but the differences are not spectacular.

§7.4 THE ECCLESIASTICAL APPARATUS

Although the reconstruction of the ecclesiastical apparatus focusses on the diocese of Koptos, various clergymen in Pesynthius' network belonged to the dioceses of Qus, Hermonthis or Ape (Pl. 15.27). The bishop ordered the priest Paul from the diocese of Qus to come (*P.Pisentius* 18bis), and the priest Kalapesius to inform him about the immoral affairs in the “eparchy” of Qus (*P.Pisentius* 19). In addition, he sent the priest Mark, who fell under the jurisdiction of the bishop of Hermonthis, to a priest with the request to receive a monk in his house (*P.Pisentius* 29). Since these external priests acted as local agents for Pesynthius, they should be considered as members of an ecclesiastical apparatus that was trans-diocesan.

The ecclesiastical apparatus will not be reconstructed by period, for the dating of the documents is hardly refined: most texts are generally dated to the 620s (§7.1.5). Nor can groups of clergymen be distinguished by their association with archpriests, since there are no archpriests in Dataset 4, but it is possible to make a distinction by diocese and locality. Table 7 demonstrates that some clergymen were members of the bishop's entourage, whereas others were associated with Koptos, Pallas, Pshenhor or other localities, if recorded. The table also indicates whether a clergyman appears in the basic or complete network, and which persons did not receive an ID number, such as anonymous episcopal scribes and two individuals who are associated with Bishop Pesynthius in hagiographic sources: his disciple John and Jacob, the abbot of the Monastery of Apa Samuel of Phel (§3.1.2). Clergymen in the diocese of Hermonthis are integrated in Table 6, whereas those of Qus and Ape appear in Table 8. For

¹⁰⁰³ Dataset 4.xlsx, spreadsheet “Check 7.3.7” (Bishop Pisrael is linked to doc. nos 73-74); “Check 7.3.2 normalized.txt”- “Check 7.3.2 Cohesion.txt”; “Network analysis 4”, E.6.

the visualization of the ecclesiastical apparatus a new *edgelist* was created, comprising social actors, about whom I was not sure whether they were clergymen, monks or even both.¹⁰⁰⁴

§7.4.1 Clergymen in Pesynthius' entourage

The basic network includes four individuals who are considered as members of the bishop's entourage. Apa Elisaius, the priest Moses and a nameless person are greeted in letters sent to Bishop Pesynthius, and an anonymous clergyman replied instead of the bishop.

Apa Elisaius, "the perfect and virtuous [father of the monastery and] all [brethren]", who is greeted in *P.Pisentius* 44, recalls Apa Elisaius, "the priest and abbot of the *Topos*" mentioned in the Sahidic version of the *Encomium*.¹⁰⁰⁵ The latter was the abbot of the monastery where Bishop Pesynthius usually resided (probably the Monastery of the Cross), in the mountain of Tsenti (§3.1.2). The greeting to Elisaius in *P.Pisentius* 44 suggests that he and Pesynthius stayed at the same place, which raises the historically interesting question where and when this happened. Like the rest of the *P.Pisentius* group, the letter is tentatively dated to the 620s, when Pesynthius supposedly stayed in Western Thebes (§7.1.5). According to the Arabic version of the *Encomium*, Pesynthius remained hidden for ten years and only returned to his diocese after the Persian period, in 629 at the earliest (§3.1.2). If this statement is historically correct, there are two options. Crum supposed that, when the letter was written, Pesynthius resided with Elisaius' monastery,¹⁰⁰⁶ in the mountain of Tsenti, which could imply an early or late date (before 620 or in 629-632), but it is also possible that Elisaius visited the bishop in Western Thebes in the 620s. The second option is preferable, for the letter belongs to the *P.Pisentius* group, which is closely related to the *P.Mon.Epiph.* group and probably came from Western Thebes as well (§7.1.1).¹⁰⁰⁷

The priest Moses, to whom Bishop Pisrael sent greetings (*P.Pisentius* 7), is probably to be equated with the homonymous priest who stayed at Pesynthius' deathbed, who allegedly succeeded him as bishop of Koptos, and to whom the Sahidic version of the *Encomium* was originally attributed (§3.1.11). According to the extensive Arabic version, Moses was abbot of the Monastery of Apa Samuel and he was among the few people who knew where in Western Thebes Pesynthius stayed (§3.1.2), but network analysis shows that the bishop was far from

¹⁰⁰⁴ Dataset 4.xlsx, spreadsheet "Clergymen"; "Individuals by diocese.jpg".

¹⁰⁰⁵ S, Budge 1913, fols 67b; these episodes are not available in Q. The identification of Apa Elisaius was first proposed by Winlock and Crum 1926, 229-30.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Winlock and Crum 1926, 229-30. Crum did not identify the monastery with the Monastery of Tsenti.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Crum (Winlock and Crum 1926, 229) identifies "the monk" Elisaius of *P.Pisentius* 10, recto, with the Elisaius from the *Encomium* (= *P.Pisentius* 44), but they are distinguished from each other in Dataset 4, since there is no apparent relation between Bishop Pesynthius and *P.Pisentius* 10, recto.

isolated in the 620s. It is plausible that the abbot Moses visited Pesynthius in Western Thebes. He is distinguished from the monk Moses, who was expelled from his monastery (*P.Pisentius* 6, 47.1).

The sender of *O.Mon.Epiph.* 469 informs Bishop Pesynthius about what happened the day before and adds his greeting to a person in the bishop's company, whom he addresses as a social equal ("brother"). Both the sender and the third person could have been clergymen or monks. Unfortunately, the letter is too fragmentary to make their identification possible.

A person in the bishop's entourage, whose name is lost, replied to a letter from the *lashane* Abraham of Pshenhor (*P.Mon.Epiph.* 129, verso). Abraham's incompletely preserved letter was addressed to a spiritual leader, a "patron" and a "Christ-bearer", who is identified with Bishop Pesynthius, on account of these epithets (*P.Mon.Epiph.* 129, recto; §7.1.2). The reply came from someone who addressed Abraham as one socially superior to him ("father"), perhaps a modest clergyman. His mention of the bishop in combination with illness creates the impression that Pesynthius was possibly too ill to dictate a reply.

In addition to these individuals who were greeted together with the bishop, there were the anonymous scribes who wrote the five letters that were probably sent by Pesynthius. They are not included in Dataset 4 as separate actors, since they are not implicitly mentioned. A comparison of their handwriting reveals that five distinct scribes were at work:

- *P.Mon.Epiph.* 136.2 is a letter from Pesynthius to Lord Lucianus. Pesynthius' name is partly reconstructed and his title is lost, but he must have been a spiritual authority, considering the fact that he addressed Lucianus, an official, as "my dear son". Other indications that point in the direction of the bishop are Lucianus' reappearance in Dataset 4 (*P.Pisentius* 20) and the subject of the letter, the abduction of a married women (as in *P.Pisentius* 18-18bis). The scribe of *P.Mon.Epiph.* 136.2 has a skilled, fairly regular script. According to Crum, he also wrote *O.Mon.Epiph.* 208 and 380, which were both sent by someone called Pesynthius, who was a monk rather than the bishop.¹⁰⁰⁸ In *O.Mon.Epiph.* 380 he asked Peter to get good goat skins for the binding of a book, and in *O.Mon.Epiph.* 208 "this sinner" Pesynthius requested his "reverend fathers" Moses and Epiphanius for their prayers. When Moses and Epiphanius lived together at the *Topos* of Epiphanius, in ca. 615, Pesynthius of Koptos was already bishop. Although it is possible that he wrote a humble private letter to persons whom

¹⁰⁰⁸ *P.Mon.Epiph.* 136, n. 2, pl. VII. Photographs of *P.Mon.Epiph.* 136.2 (MMA 14.1.546) and *O.Mon.Epiph.* 380 (MMA 14.1.165) are available online at <http://metmuseum.org/>. The sigla *P.Mon.Epiph.* / *O.Mon.Epiph.* are not used, but the documents can be found by entering their accession numbers ("14.1.xxx") in the search engine. A comparison of the script confirms Crum's observation that the letters were written in a similar script.

he considered as holy men, it is hard to imagine that he would send such a letter all the way from the diocese of Koptos. In short, only the letter sent to Lucianus can be linked to the bishop with confidence.

- *P.Mon.Epiph.* 133 is a letter from John and Pesynthius, presumably two bishops, who informed Epiphanius about an upcoming council (§3.1.6). The scribe who wrote it has a regular, wide spaced hand, which Crum recognized in various other letters, in which the sender identified himself as John.¹⁰⁰⁹
- *P.Pisentius* 18bis is written in a cursive script with ligatures.
- *P.Pisentius* 60 announces that certain bakers were to be excommunicated. The script of his letter is fairly cursive script and without ligatures.
- British Museum, EA74954, verso, is a reply to the fragmentary letter on the recto that was addressed to a “fatherly lord bishop”. Since the document was part of the former Phillipps collection, it is likely that the bishop referred to was Pesynthius. The reply was written in small, rather angular letters.¹⁰¹⁰

Pesynthius’ disciple John is not visible in our documentation (§3.1.2). On account of the title of the published Sahidic version, it was generally assumed that John was a priest, but this is not confirmed by the seventh-century version from Shaykh Abd al-Qurna, where John is presented as Pesynthius’ “disciple, who is called ‘Matoi’”.¹⁰¹¹

§7.4.2 Clergymen in the diocese of Koptos

Pesynthius’ documents contain little concrete information about the clergymen in his diocese. Only few episcopal documents mention the city of Koptos. This observation led to Wipszycka’s hypothesis that Pesynthius’ authority was mainly restricted to villages in the countryside, and that the city was the domain of a Chalcedonian bishop.¹⁰¹² Even if there was a Chalcedonian bishop at Koptos, it was a large city that could have comprised multiple churches, some of which were in Theodosian hands, similar to the situation in Alexandria, where Chalcedonian and anti-Chalcedonian factions both had churches.¹⁰¹³ Two episcopal letters perhaps refer to clergymen of Koptos. The senders of *P.Mon.Epiph.* 152 were active in

¹⁰⁰⁹ *P.Mon.Epiph.* 133 (MMA 14.1.535), n. 1, pl. V. A photograph is available at <http://metmuseum.org/>.

¹⁰¹⁰ Transcribed in Crum MSS 5.2: 25 (Phil. 16402.6); cf. Ede 1972, no. 59. A recent photograph is available at http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=108733&partId=1&searchText=coptic+text&images=true&page=1.

¹⁰¹¹ *Q*, fol. 1, as in *B*, Amélineau 1887, 73 (but without John’s nickname), versus *S*, Budge 1913, fol. 20a; cf. Dekker 2010, 22, 24.

¹⁰¹² Wipszycka 2007, 344-45, 2009a, 33 n. 20 and 2015, 142.

¹⁰¹³ McKenzie 2007, 253-56. For the churches of Peter the Elder at Koptos and those of Onnophrius and Badasius at or near Koptos, see Winlock and Crum 1926, 116; Timm 1984-1992, vol. 5, 2145, 2148.

Koptos and mention a deacon, who delivered good news about the bishop's health. The deacon possibly came from Koptos himself, just as the priest Cyriacus delivered an episcopal letter to Pshenhor, near his monastery (*P.Pisentius* 3). *P.Pisentius* 9 mentions an archdeacon, probably called Jacob, the clergyman Hormisda and the priest Pegosh. The archdeacon served in a major church with multiple deacons, either at Koptos, a large town or a monastery, but the mention of the Lords Joseph and Erythrius makes an urban context most likely (§2.3.3).¹⁰¹⁴

Dataset 4 includes five clergymen from Pallas. The deacon Phanes was associated with the priest Gennadius and a clergyman whose name is lost (*P.Pisentius* 1), and at another occasion with the priest Psan and Apa Hello (*P.Pisentius* 15-16; §7.3.2). Gennadius could be the sender of *P.Pisentius* 24 and the homonymous priest mentioned in *P.Pisentius* 48, but since the title of priest is absent from the first letter and reconstructed in the second (in l. 23), it is not at all certain that we are dealing with the same person. However, it would make sense if the priest from Pallas was indeed the sender of *P.Pisentius* 24, for the latter obtained a medicinal herb for the bishop from a chief physician, who definitely worked in a city (§ 2.3.1, 7.5). Pallas was not far from the city of Koptos. It is likely that some of the clergymen, if not all, served in the Church of Apa Sansno, which is the only church in Pallas known so far.¹⁰¹⁵

A fragmentary Coptic letter in the ANU Classics Museum in Canberra (inv. no. 75.01, verso) does not explicitly refer to clergymen, but deals with the celebration of the Eucharist at Kratos, a village with a single church near Pallas.¹⁰¹⁶ The magistrates and villagers from Kratos, “from the young to the old”, admitted to a “holy father” that they had been negligent and apparently request him to allow them to have liturgical services again.

The priest Cyriacus, the abbot of the Monastery of Apa Macarius near Pshenhor, is the only clergyman who is demonstrably associated with Pshenhor (§7.3.2).

When the *Topos* of the Archangel Michael required a new steward, Bishop Pesynthius ordered Anastasius and other magistrates to recommend a good candidate. They chose Jacob, whose father Kalashire was already involved in the administration of the *Topos*. Jacob agreed

¹⁰¹⁴ The course of events makes sense if the sender is identified with Pegosh and Jacob with the archdeacon. The sender delivered a letter about the archdeacon that infuriated Jacob so much that he threatened the sender, as if the letter pertained to him. He and his associate Hormisda hoped that the Lords Joseph and Erythrius would support them, but they told Jacob and Hormisda to speak with Pegosh themselves.

¹⁰¹⁵ *O.CrumST* 156; cf. Winlock and Crum 1926, 117.

¹⁰¹⁶ Kratos appears completely for the first time in ANU Classics Museum 75.01, verso, and is to be reconstructed in *O.CrumST* 154 and 156 (twice ⲕⲣⲁⲧⲟⲥ), where it is listed together with Pallas; cf. Winlock and Crum 1926, 118; Timm 1984-1992, 1477. The mention of Pallas in the Greek contract on the recto and Kratos in the Coptic letter on the verso confirms the relative proximity of the two localities; ed. Kelly 2007, 211. *O.CrumST* 156 features a reader “of the church of Kratos”.

to accept the office and to hold liturgical services, which indicates that he was a clergyman (*P.Pisentius* 52 + *O.CrumST* 176).¹⁰¹⁷

Dataset 4 also includes the priests Psate of Phanemoun (*P.Pisentius* 45.1) and Joannake of the community of Ptene (*P.CrumST* 175.1+2), the priest Daniel (*P.Pisentius* 48), some candidates for ordination (*P.Pisentius* 35+ 36.2+ 45.3+2), and men who are tentatively identified as clergymen (*P.Pisentius* 13 + *O.CrumST* 180, *P.Pisentius* 14).¹⁰¹⁸

Conspicuously absent from Dataset 4 are clergymen associated with the mountain of Tsenti,¹⁰¹⁹ Andrew, the priest and abbot of the Monastery of the Cross, and Jacob, the priest and abbot of the Monastery of Apa Samuel of Phel (Dayr al-Gizaz; §3.1.2).

§7.4.3 Clergymen in the diocese of Qus

Clergymen associated with Qus appear in *P.Pisentius* 8, 18-18bis, 19, *O.Mon.Epiph.* 150 and perhaps in *P.Pisentius* 11. *P.Pisentius* 8, a letter to Bishop Pisrael, reports that the steward of the Chapel of St John at Phello was dismissed, as the bishop had ordered. Pisrael reused the backside of the papyrus to write a letter to Bishop Pesynthius (*P.Pisentius* 7).

P.Pisentius 18 and 18bis relate to the same matrimonial problem: Mark violated a young woman who was already spoken for, and her husband rejected her. Bishop Pesynthius (or Pisrael) was informed about this by the clergymen of Qus and notified the priest Paul and his fellow clergymen that Mark and his accomplices should remain excommunicated. He also ordered Paul to return the letter and to promise not to reject “her”, probably the mother, who had tried to defend her daughter, but was beaten up and rebuffed by the *lashane*, who blamed her for making trouble. The mention of St Cyriacus, whom the mother invoked as a protector, suggests that there was a church dedicated to that saint in the village of the priest Paul.¹⁰²⁰

In *P.Pisentius* 19 the priest Kalapesius informed Bishop Pesynthius about a scandal in the “eparchy of Qus”, which he overheard during a conversation between certain clergymen, including Alexander, and Papas: Psmou’s son was having an affair with the daughter of the deacon Dios, and the parents of his fiancée wanted to return the bride price in the presence of the archdeacon. Papas had his reasons to keep the scandal secret, but Kalapesius decided to inform Bishop Pesynthius, especially because he stood surety for the fiancée. Kalapesius,

¹⁰¹⁷ Winlock and Crum 1926, 115; Timm 1984-1992, vol. 3, 734-37. *O.CrumST* 176, which probably relates to Bishop Pesynthius (his name is lost), mentions a church or monastery dedicated to St Michael the Archangel.

¹⁰¹⁸ For Phanemoun and Ptene, see §2.1.2.

¹⁰¹⁹ The priest Petronius of the mountain of Tsenti (*O.Crum* 248) cannot be linked to Bishop Pesynthius.

¹⁰²⁰ A Church of St Cyriacus in the area of Qus is not listed in Timm 1984-1992, 2173-80 (nor in Dataset 2).

Alexander and a clergyman called Theophilus appear together in *O.Mon.Epiph.* 150, a letter from Bishop Pisrael to the archdeacon.

The “monk” Elisaius of *P.Pisenti* 10, recto, is distinguished from the abbot Elisaius (§7.4.1), but was a clergyman and an abbot as well. Not only did Bishop Shenoute address him as a social equal and greet “all the pious brethren who are with you” (ll. 2-3), which is fitting for an abbot, but he also wrote that “you have been dismissed from the clergy”, implying that Elisaius had received holy orders. Elisaius possibly belonged to the diocese of Qus, since the bishop of that see, Pisrael, went to the patriarch on his account and received letters to be delivered to Shenoute and Bishop Constantine concerning a council to be held to investigate Elisaius’ case. The letter is unrelated to Bishop Pesynthius.

§7.4.4 Clergymen in the diocese of Hermonthis

The clergymen associated with this diocese were all active in Western Thebes, such as the priest Mark of the *Topos* of St Mark (§7.3.6), the clergymen of Jeme who are mentioned in a fragmentarily preserved letter (*O.Crum* 286). The priest Andrew of Pasaft is also likely to have lived in this area (*O.Theb.Copt.* 26).¹⁰²¹ It is remarkable that Dataset 4 includes more state officials than clergymen from Western Thebes or Hermonthis (§7.5.2).

§7.4.5 Clergymen in the diocese of Ape

The only clergymen in Dataset 4 who were associated with Ape, or the area of Karnak, were Bishop Anthony (*P.Pisenti* 11, *P.CrumST* 178) and “the archimandrite”, if the latter was indeed a clergyman (*P.Mon.Epiph.* 133, *P.CrumST* 179; §3.2.7).

§7.5 CIVIL AND MILITARY OFFICIALS ASSOCIATED WITH PESYNTHIUS

§7.5.1 Officials in the district of Koptos

An overview of the state officials arranged by locality demonstrates that several of them were active in the cities of Koptos and Qus, Pallas, Pshenhor, Trekatan and smaller villages (Table 10).¹⁰²² They are not always identified by their titles or linked to a locality, but the contexts in which they appear and their activities reveal that they were socially important persons.

Stephen and Callinicus appear in the same letter about contradictory statements from citizens of Koptos, which they reported to Bishop Pesynthius (*P.CrumST* 174). On another occasion Stephen asked the bishop to issue a letter of protection (Antwerpen, Katoen Natie

¹⁰²¹ Timm 1984-1992, vol. 4, 1847-48.

¹⁰²² “State officials.jpg” (the colors represent their social position).

685/01). It is likely that Stephen was a civil official, either a *lashane* or an urban magistrate (§7.2.1). Callinicus' activity at Koptos suggest that he was a civil official as well. In the analysis he is identified with the Callinicus who quarreled with a financial administrator about the transport of wine (*P.Pisentius* 21).

The titles of the senders of *P.Mon.Epiph.* 152 fall in a lacuna, but Crum observed that it could have been “*lashanes*”. If so, they were the *lashanes* of Koptos. An online photograph demonstrates that the complete title is too long to fit in the address, but it could have been abbreviated.¹⁰²³ The title of *lashane* usually refers to village headmen, but Strategius of Ne/Thebes also called himself a *lashane*, although Thebes officially had urban status (§2.1.1).

The chief physician mentioned by Gennadius in *P.Pisentius* 24 must have worked in a city (§2.3.1). If Gennadius was identical with the homonymous priest of Pallas mentioned in *P.Pisentius* 1, he did not need to travel long to contact the chief physician of Koptos (§7.4.2).

The magistrates Lord Joseph and Lord Erythrius are tentatively linked to Koptos, or at least to a city, on account of their contact with an archdeacon (*P.Pisentius* 9; §7.4.2).

Other officials were *lashanes* or headmen involved in various kinds of activities: Khello and Pelaih of Pallas arrested “the Atsoor” for abducting girls (*P.Pisentius* 1), whereas Pdjjoui of Pallas cooperated with the priest Psan and the deacon Phanes to find out whether Psmou and Hjl had prayed together (*P.Pisentius* 15); Abraham of Pshenhor was already introduced in §7.3.3. The *lashanes* and the people of Trekatan promised not to harm a captive, who belonged to a group that had held a villager captive (*P.Pisentius* 37). The magistrates and villagers from Kratos admitted that they were negligent and asked the bishop to allow them to have liturgical services again (ANU Classics Museum 75.01, verso). The *lashane* Peter of Pmilis asked Bishop Pesynthius to issue a letter of protection for Phello and Theodore, in order that they would return with their families and that he could speak with them (O.APM inv. 3871).¹⁰²⁴ The *lashane* Pouba of Zoile was arrested, after being caught at night with two women (*P.Pisentius* 50). Finally, *lashanes* and magistrates of unnamed villages tried to mediate between men who had violated young women and the angry parents of these women (*P.Pisentius* 14, 54). One of the culprits was a shepherd (*P.Pisentius* 14).¹⁰²⁵

At Bishop Pesynthius' request, the magistrates Anastasius, Horion, Mena and Master Azarias recommended a candidate for the office of steward at the *Topos* of the Archangel

¹⁰²³ *P.Mon.Epiph.* 152, n. 1. Photographs of both sides of the papyrus are available at <http://metmuseum.org/12.180.326>, “Additional images”). The address can be reconstructed: ⲉⲓⲧⲫⲟⲣⲉⲓ ⲙⲡⲉⲭⲣⲓⲥⲟ ⲛⲓ ⲟⲩⲙⲉ [ⲁⲡⲁ ⲡⲉⲥ]ⲩⲛⲉⲓⲟⲥ | [ⲡⲉ]ⲡⲓⲥⲟⲡⲟⲥ + ⲛⲓⲧⲛ [ⲛⲁⲗⲁⲩⲟⲩ/ ⲛⲉⲕⲧⲣⲧ +. For the abbreviation, see Crum 1939, 148a.

¹⁰²⁴ Ed. Van der Vliet 2014.

¹⁰²⁵ This letter recalls the anecdote in the *Encomium* about a shepherd who went to Bishop Pesynthius, thinking – mistakenly – that the latter would not know that he had violated a woman: S, Budge 1913, fols 57b-59a.

Michael (*P.Pisentius* 52 + *O.CrumST* 176). The influence of laymen on the administration of the *Topos* indicates that the place of worship was a church and should not be identified with the medieval Monastery of the Archangel Michael (Dayr al-Malak Mikhail) near Qamula.¹⁰²⁶

Abraham of Trekatan is twice recommended as a reliable witness about the events in Pshenhor and perhaps was a financial agent (*P.Pisentius* 3-4), also in view of the fact that Trekatan appears to have been a center for taxation.¹⁰²⁷ Some financial agents were associated with Bishop Pisrael and with Qus (*O.Mon.Epiph.* 150, *P.Pisentius* 8).

Bishop Pesynthius was indirectly in contact with the estate manager Patche and his colleagues Gideon and Paham. It is likely that Patche lived on the East Bank of the Nile, not far from Pshenhor and the monastery headed by the priest Cyriacus (§7.3.4).

Dataset 4 does not include Theopemptos, the lawyer at Diocletianopolis (Qus), who drew up the Greek contract *P.Rein.* II 107 on March 27, 603 (§2.1.2).

§7.5.2 *Officials in the district of Hermonthis*

Among the Hermonthite officials are the *lashane* Strategius of Ne/Thebes (*P.Pisentius* 1, *P.CrumST* 178; §2.1.1), a *lashane* of Jeme and his associate Amos (*SBKopt.* I 295). The *lashane* possibly was Shenoute, the headman with whom Amos reappeared in the list of signatories in the petition to Epiphanius of April 620 (*P.Mon.Epiph.* 163). Being in office during an eighth indiction year, Shenoute's period of activity probably extended from May 619 to May 620 (§2.3.1). Unfortunately, it is not possible to link the letter featuring the nameless *lashane* and Amos to a particular year.

Lawyers appear in three documents, and at least one of them worked at Hermonthis. When a donation was made to the Church to ensure commemorative services for the late Athanasius, Bishop Pesynthius was requested to send for the lawyer at Hermonthis, in order that he would record the arrangements (*P.Mon.Epiph.* 254). At another occasion, Lucianus asked the bishop to send for the lawyer and to bring him in the morning, for he had received orders from the financial agents to have a deed drawn up soon (*P.Pisentius* 20). Nastasia, the sender of the third letter, beseeched the bishop to send a clean papyrus scroll quickly, for Basilius, possibly an official, came to have a deed drawn up, but the lawyer said that he had run out of papyrus (*P.Dezaunay*). The urgency of the requests indicate that Bishop Pesynthius

¹⁰²⁶ A possible link between the *Topos* and Dayr al-Malak Mikhail near Qamula is considered by Ede 1975, cat.no. 36; Winlock and Crum 1926, 116; Timm 1984-1992, 734-36. However, the church of Dayr al-Malak Mikhail was built in the fourteenth century; cf. Grossmann 1991c, 828; Sadek 2010, 277-79. *P.KRU* 90 (l. 47) records a church or monastery of St Michael the Archangel at Kalba, in the diocese of Koptos.

¹⁰²⁷ *O.Alexandria* 28372: ed. Kuhn and Van der Vliet 2010, 81-85.

was relatively close both to the lawyer(s) and the senders of the letters, and that they were all in the district of Hermonthis.

“Lord Lucianus”, called thus in a letter from the *Topos* of Epiphanius, is treated in the analysis as an official, although his function is nowhere specified (*P.Mon.Epiph.* 136.2; p. 197). He received instructions from the financial agents and was in contact with “the comes”, a high-ranked official on a district or provincial level, to whom he planned to deliver a deed (*P.Pisentius* 20).

The officials Luke and Apa Elias were both associated with the city of Hermonthis, but Apa Elias exercised more influence than Luke. For that reason, the latter requested Apa Elias through Psan to write to the citizens of Hermonthis on his behalf (*O.Mon.Epiph.* 172).

The same or another official Elias appears in Apa John’s plea to Psan (*P.Mon.Epiph.* 165). Apa John pitied the impoverished peasant Abraham, who had to sell his cattle, in order to pay his taxes. John, who did the selling, hoped that Epiphanius and “the bishops” could help Abraham and him by sending petitions to Master Elias. The mention of Elias would make sense, if he was a tax official who could lessen the burden or a potential patron.¹⁰²⁸

Two letters that were probably addressed to Bishop Pesynthius reveal contact between the *Topos* of Epiphanius and the lieutenant stationed at Ape (*P.Mon.Epiph.* 258, 263). The *actuarius* Theophilus is mentioned in a letter from John, who became a monk at a late age (Paris, Louvre, R49+ Phil.16402.7). Theophilus could have been attached to a garrison in the Koptite district, which has not been recorded, or to the one at Ape (§2.1.1).

§7.6 PESYNTHIUS’ DIRECTED *EGO NETWORK*

Bishop Pesynthius’ *ego network*, which is extracted from his directed complete network, includes 119 nodes, which means that he was in direct personal or written contact with only 35.6% of all nodes in his complete network. This low percentage suggests that Pesynthius was considerably less close to the actors in his network than Abraham (§5.6), which can be explained by Pesynthius’ stay in a neighboring diocese in the 620s, the decade to which most of his documents are assigned (§7.1.5). His direct contacts comprise thirty-four clergymen, including a patriarch and five bishops, twenty-four monks, six clergymen and/or monks, nineteen officials and thirty-six unspecified persons.¹⁰²⁹ About sixty-six nodes were linked to

¹⁰²⁸ Perhaps, he was Elias, the son of Kalapesius, who intervened in juridical matters; cf. *O.Saint-Marc* 28, p. 14.

¹⁰²⁹ “Network analysis 4”, G; “Ego network - Bishop Pesynthius.jpg”.

the diocese of Koptos, and nineteen nodes to the diocese of Hermonthis, whereas the bishoprics of Qus and Ape were much less prominent (seven and two nodes respectively).¹⁰³⁰

Even if Pesynthius had direct ties with a small number of actors, no less than 73.1% of them (87 nodes) shared a reciprocal tie with the bishop through personal or written contact, which implies that he was at least closely connected with them.¹⁰³¹ As for the one-directional relations, there were more incoming than outgoing ties (23.5% and 3.4%),¹⁰³² as was the case in Abraham's directed *ego network*, but on a different scale (66.8%, 15.2%, 18%).

In the following we will examine the direction of the ties by social group.

§7.6.1 Clergymen

Pesynthius' directed *ego network* includes thirty-two nodes that represent clergymen; 50% of them are identified as certain ties (Pl. 15.28).¹⁰³³ Most relationships are identified as reciprocal, such as his contacts with Bishop Pisrael, the priests Mark and Cyriacus and the deacon Phanes (78.1%), which is high when compared with Bishop Abraham's reciprocal ties with clergymen (64.8%). As for the one-directional ties, Pesynthius received letters from the patriarch of Alexandria, a bishop in Antinoopolis, the clergymen of Qus and a superior called John (12.5%). He probably sent letters himself to an archdeacon, whose position was at stake, and to the priest Paul and his colleagues in the diocese of Qus (9.4%).¹⁰³⁴

In his contact with clergymen, the percentage of Pesynthius' incoming ties is much lower and that of his outgoing ties much higher than his average score.

§7.6.2 Monks and nuns

The directed *ego network* comprises twenty-two nodes, representing monks and nuns, with whom the bishop was connected through reciprocal ties (16 nodes, 72.7%), or who contacted him (27.3%). The network does not reveal one-directional outgoing ties towards monastics. The monastics who contacted the bishop, but did not necessarily meet him or receive a reply, included an abbot and his brethren, who were somehow associated with the clergymen of Jeme; an abbot and his brethren, who wrote to a monastic leader (Psan?), but added their greetings to the "bishops Pisrael and [Pesynthius]"; John, who became a monk at a later age

¹⁰³⁰ "Ego network - Pesynthius by diocese.jpg", based on Dataset 4.xlsx, spreadsheet "Individuals by diocese".

¹⁰³¹ References to a personal meeting: *P.Pisentius* 6, 11, *O.CrumVC* 76, *P.Mon.Epiph.* 494; to mediation by a bishop, probably Pesynthius: *P.Pisentius* 21; to episcopal letters: *P.Pisentius* 3-4, 55, 57, *P.CrumST* 174.

¹⁰³² "Network analysis 4", G, which is based on "Ego network - Pesynthius by group.jpg".

¹⁰³³ In graph 28 the ties are arranged by social group and by the kind of relation. After identifying the nodes, I counted how many of them appear in document nos 1-50 (certain ties).

¹⁰³⁴ Incoming ties: *P.Mon.Epiph.* 133 (ca. 615-620; Patriarch Anastasius I?), *P.Pisentius* 22 (the bishop is not mentioned explicitly), *P.Pisentius* 18, *P.CrumST* 179; outgoing ties: *P.Pisentius* 9, 18bis.

and who requested the bishop to mediate with his children, who perhaps did not agree with their father's decision; and a monastic leader (Psan?) who informed Pesynthius, probably the bishop, that Epiphanius was "in prison".¹⁰³⁵

Seventeen nodes were connected to Pesynthius by certain ties (77.3%).

§7.6.3 *Civil officials*

Ten nodes represent single or several *lashanes*, whereas the other eight nodes stand for the lords Lucianus, Joseph and Erythrius, Callinicus, Leontius, Anastasius, the magistrates of Kratos, and a *comes*. Most officials appear as certain ties in the basic network (77.8%).

72.2% of the officials are connected to Bishop Pesynthius by a reciprocal tie, considering the references to episcopal missives or commands in their letters: the *lashane* Abraham of Pshenhor received a reply from the bishop, and his colleague a letter of reproach; Pjijoui of Pallas was ordered to investigate whether Psmou and Hjil had prayed together; the *lashanes* of Trekatan promised not to harm a hostage, after receiving an episcopal letter on this matter; the *lashanes* of Koptos were pleased to receive good news about the bishop's health; Stephen of Koptos wrote about having visited Bishop Pesynthius; the magistrate Anastasius obeyed an episcopal instruction by recommending Jacob for the office of steward of the *Topos* of the Archangel Michael; and the magistrates of Kratos asked the bishop to uplift the sanction imposed on their village.¹⁰³⁶

Five ties are directed towards the bishop, without a recorded reply (27.8%): Peter of Pmilis requested a safe-conduct, Chello and Pelaih of Pallas reported the arrest of the Atsoor, and the Lords Joseph and Erythrius are said to have contacted the bishop.¹⁰³⁷

§7.6.4 *Military officials*

There are no military officials in the directed *ego network*.

§7.6.5 *Women*

Bishop Pesynthius' ties with four women are considered as reciprocal relations (80%), and three of them were certain ties.¹⁰³⁸ Pesynte's widow, who beseeched him to convince the Jemean magistrates to let her stay in her house, did not identify herself more specifically, as if

¹⁰³⁵ *O.Crum* 286; *O.CrumST* 255; Paris, Louvre, R49.1 + Phil.16402.7; *P.Mon.Epiph.* 466.

¹⁰³⁶ Pshenhor: *P.Pisentius* 3-4; Pallas: *P.Pisentius* 15; Trekatan: *P.Pisentius* 37; Koptos: *P.Mon.Epiph.* 152, *P.CrumST* 174; *Topos* of the Archangel Michael: *P.Pisentius* 52 + *P.CrumST* 176; Kratos: ANU Classics Museum 75.01, verso.

¹⁰³⁷ Pmilis: O.APM inv. 3871: ed. Van der Vliet 2014; Pallas: *P.Pisentius* 1; the lords: *P.Pisentius* 9.

¹⁰³⁸ *SBKopt.* I 295; *P.Pisentius* 39; P.Dezaunay; *P.Mon.Epiph.* 136.2.

he would easily find her, and she (or her scribe) did not hesitate to call him “Pesynte” in an informal, confidential way. Constantina, widow and mother of two young children, sent the bishop a letter, thanking him for his charity on account of her state of widowhood. Nastasia requested Bishop Pesynthius to send a papyrus scroll soon, in order that she could write on it, reminding him that she worked for him in the past. Her familiarity with writing and her aristocratic name (a variant of Anastasia) suggests that she was not a simple servant, but a lady and perhaps even a patroness of the bishop.¹⁰³⁹ Pesynthius must also have been the bishop involved with a fourth woman: he sent her and the man who had violated her, although she was married, to Lord Lucianus, in order that he would deal with the matter (§8.4.D.1).

A fifth woman was an abandoned wife, who had followed her husband to another district, only to see him fall in love with another woman. From that other district she wrote to a bishop – probably Pesynthius –, after the mediation of the bishop in the new district had failed. Although it is plausible that she used to be a member of her correspondent’s diocese, the contact is treated as a one-directional relation, since there is no mention of contact in the past, nor is a reply recorded (*P.Pisentius* 51).

The widow Thello, who stayed at the congregation of Ptene, is not included in Dataset 4, but her letter could have been sent to Bishop Pesynthius (*O.Mon.Epiph.* 300): it is addressed to a spiritual authority, whose footprints she salutes – a common greeting formula for a bishop –, and the congregation of Ptene was located in the diocese of Koptos (§2.1.2). She requested her correspondent to “inquire concerning the affairs of the poor”: before the Persians conquered the Thebaid, her husband gave the priest of Apa Shenetom and Sakau corn to sow, but these men never gave her a share from the produce and even went to law with someone else, thus preventing that part of the produce could go to the poor. If Thello were included in Dataset 4, and if the bishop was Pesynthius, their tie would count as a one-directional relation. It appears that Thello and her husband used to be relatively wealthy, and that Thello was still concerned about the poor as a benefactress, after she became a widow.

§7.6.6 *Other social actors*

The directed *ego network* includes thirty-six nodes that represent villagers, scribes writing on behalf of others as well as anonymous senders of letters and persons mentioned by others who could have been clergymen, monks or officials, but are not clearly recognizable as such. Only

¹⁰³⁹ The name Anastasia is rare in Theban documents; cf. Timm 1962, 56; Hasitzka 2007, 10, 64 (Nastasia). Nastasia was associated with Basilius and a lawyer (§7.5.2).

nine of them were certainly connected with Bishop Pesynthius.¹⁰⁴⁰ In total, he had reciprocal relations with twenty-three nodes (63.9%), twelve incoming ties, mostly from individuals writing on behalf of other people (33.3%), and a single out tie: his letter of reproach to the Pshenhorites, which is referred to in *P.Pisentius* 3.

Ruffini's observation on the high connectivity of shepherds in Aphrodito raises the question about their importance in the Theban society.¹⁰⁴¹ Neither of the two shepherds included in Dataset 4 (*P.Pisentius* 54-55) appear in Pesynthius' directed *ego network*, and Abraham's network did not include shepherds at all.

CONCLUSION

This chapter analyzed the structure of Pesynthius' network. The creation of Dataset 4 and the delineation of network was more challenging than in Abraham's case, since the documents are often fragmentary and less specific about the social status and location of individuals. In addition, half of the documents certainly relate to Pesynthius, whereas another considerable group is probably relevant. Dataset 4 also includes indirectly relevant texts, since they provide additional information about social actors in the episcopal network, such as the priest Cyriacus and Pehroudion, who were already in contact with each other, before the bishop got involved in their case. It would be a pity to omit this information, also because this indirect tie contributed to the cohesion of the actual episcopal network.

As for the probable ties, Dataset 4 could be supplemented with *O.Mon. Epiph.* 300, a letter from the widow at the congregation of Ptene in the Koptite district to a bishop. The likelihood that he was Pesynthius only dawned on me at a late stage of the analysis, but I did not correct Dataset 4, since the addition of one document and a handful of ties would hardly change the general results for cohesion and centrality. However, it is clear that the boundaries of Pesynthius' dossier are fluid and may expand when new texts are added to Dataset 4.

In total, six subnetworks were reconstructed, in order to evaluate to what extent the inclusion of probable and indirect ties would distort our impression of the actual network. The basic network and directed basic network are based on documents that certainly feature the bishop, the extended and directed extended networks also include probable relations, and the complete and directed complete networks take into account indirect ties as well. The original

¹⁰⁴⁰ Gennadius (*P.Pisentius* 24); Komete (*P.Mon.Epiph.* 254); Papnoute, son of Psjeleh (*P.CrumST* 174); sender of *P.Mon.Epiph.* 253; a person mentioned in relation to wheat (*P.Pisentius* 32.1), the villagers of Trekatan (*P.Pisentius* 39); the late Pesynte (*SBKopt.* I 295; he was apparently known to the bishop, since the widow did not bother to identify him more clearly); messenger of Callinicus (*P.Pisentius* 21); sender of *P.Pisentius* 57.

¹⁰⁴¹ Ruffini 2008, 210-11.

plan was to make Pesynthius' complete network a standard for comparison, as is the case with Abraham's complete network, but the inclusion of sixteen indirect ties distorts the scores for network cohesion and centrality more than was anticipated. Since the extended network represents the network best, the testing of alternative scenarios involving the priest Cyriacus and Bishop Pisrael in Dataset 4 were run on the extended network. This network turned out to be fairly stable, for the different scenarios did not result in significantly different scores.

As for the comparison with Abraham's network, however, it still seemed best to use the complete network, since indirect ties have little impact on the network population and no impact on the direction of Pesynthius' (certain and probable) ties. In addition, Abraham's complete network includes some indirect ties as well.

In various layers of the episcopal network the relative proportion of social groups is similar: clergymen form the largest group (as is to be expected), followed by civil officials, monks and women, who are remarkably prominent: 11.1%, compared to 0.8% in Abraham's network. In contrast with Abraham's documents, those relating to Pesynthius provide some information about the age of people involved: a larger group is young and unmarried.

The complete networks of Abraham and Pesynthius are almost the same size in terms of nodes and do not differ considerably in density: ca. 1% of the ties is realized in the directed versions and ca. 2% in the undirected ones. Pesynthius' undirected network includes more ties, but only 42.7% of them appear as effective ties in the directed version, compared to 69.6% in Abraham's network. Pesynthius' directed network is also less compact than that of his colleague with regard to average distance and diameter (3.5 and 9 steps respectively, compared with 2.7 and 7 steps in Abraham's network). The differences in the overall cohesion of the networks are explained by the different circumstances under which the bishops worked. Abraham remained in his diocese, concentrated on internal affairs, and was therefore able to keep his network fairly compact, whereas Pesynthius stayed outside of his own diocese at least temporally and also dealt with social matters from other dioceses.

Pesynthius' unusual situation required a strong, well organized network that depended on the co-operation of local agents, such as the priests Cyriacus and Mark, the deacon Phanes from Pallas and the *lashane* Abraham of Pshenhor, who are central actors. It also depended on having a strong basis, which Pesynthius found at the *Topos* of Epiphanius, where Psan and – to a lesser extent Epiphanius – got involved in the episcopal network. They indeed have the best centrality scores in the extended network. Bishop Pisrael, who also stayed at the *Topos* for some time, is another central actor and a core member of the extended and complete networks. Pesynthius' strongest ties were with Cyriacus (in the Koptite diocese), Psan,

Epiphanius and Mark (in the Hermonthite diocese). Although his complete network is less compact than that of Abraham, it is significantly stronger, since it is less centralized: without Pesynthius the network would disintegrate into relatively few but large components, whereas the highly centralized network of Abraham would fall into pieces without him.

The reconstruction of Pesynthius' trans-diocesan ecclesiastical apparatus resulted in overviews of clergymen in the dioceses of Koptos, Qus and Ape, and in additions to the ecclesiastical apparatus of the diocese of Hermonthis. Relatively few clergymen are linked to a locality, such as Koptos (implicit), Pallas or Qus. Apa Elisaius and the priest Moses, who are known from the *Encomium*, and anonymous episcopal scribes, are attested among the individuals in the bishop's entourage. By contrast, Pesynthius' disciple John and the abbot Jacob of the Monastery of Apa Samuel of Phel, who were closely associated with the bishop according to hagiographic sources, are both remarkably absent in Dataset 4.

Another reconstruction was done to identify state officials in the districts of Koptos and Hermonthis. Only some of them could be linked to a locality, notably Koptos (implicit), Kratos, Pallas, Pmilis, Pshenhor, Qus, Trekatan, Zoile and the *Topos* of the Archangel Michael. Some individuals were tentatively linked to Hermonthis (lawyers, Apa Elias, Luke), Jeme (the *lashane* of *SBKopt.* I 295) or Ape/Thebes (Strategius of Ne, military officials), whereas others are generally located in the district of Hermonthis (a *comes*, Lord Lucianus?).

Pesynthius was in direct personal or written contact with less than half of the actors in his directed network (only 35.6%), but most of the relations were reciprocal (73.1%). Surprisingly, his direct contacts include no less than four women: two widows, an abandoned wife and possibly a lady. In other words, even if he was much less close to the faithful in his diocese than Abraham, both in terms of physical distance and lines of communication, he actively interacted with most direct contacts, and was also accessible to female petitioners, at least through writing. One of them even called him "Pesynte", which is quite informal.

Chapter 8: The nature of Pesynthius' authority

INTRODUCTION

This final chapter analyzes the nature of Bishop Pesynthius' authority, while also bearing in mind the social, historical and practical aspects of his episcopate. As in chapter 6, the first section discusses the context in which he worked and recapitulates the new insights about him that we gathered in previous chapters. The next five sections focus on examples of spiritual, ascetic, episcopal, pragmatic and legal authority respectively, and the last section evaluates the weight of Pesynthius' responsibilities, while comparing them with Abraham's situation.

This chapter differs from chapter 6, in that the analysis will not only be performed on episcopal documents, but also on the homiletic and hagiographical texts relating to the bishop. This is an excellent opportunity to compare the idealized image of Pesynthius as presented in the well-known *Encomium* with the impression that we get on the basis of documentary texts. The analysis also includes additional homiletic and hagiographic sources, since they highlight particular aspects of Pesynthius' episcopate, some of which are not recorded elsewhere.

The texts are arranged according to their historical relevance:

- The episcopal documents (Dataset 4) come first, since they are contemporary sources.
- The *Homily on St Onnophrius* by Bishop Pesynthius follows next, since it is possibly an authentic text. It is only preserved in a late Sahidic manuscript (1031/32).¹⁰⁴²
- The circular letter on the consecration of extra bread during the Eucharist (ca. 643/4-665) is included, since it creates the impression that the "thrice blessed" Bishop Pesynthius was remembered for having established a liturgical practice.¹⁰⁴³
- The Coptic and Arabic versions of the *Encomium on Bishop Pesynthius* commemorate Pesynthius as a saint and good bishop. Examples are preferably drawn from the short Sahidic version, which was already composed in the late seventh century, but the long Sahidic, Bohairic and extensive Arabic version include additional anecdotes.¹⁰⁴⁴

¹⁰⁴² British Library, Or. 6800: ed. Crum 1915-1917, 43-67 (transl.); discussed in Wilfong 2002, 24-27.

¹⁰⁴³ Pap.Berlin P. 11346: ed. Camplani 2012.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Short Sahidic version: *Q* (Shaykh Abd al-Qurna, Field Inv. No. Coptic MS. 2, presently in the Coptic Museum; late seventh century), fols 1-72: Dekker is preparing the edition, but only has access to the first half of the manuscript; *S* (British Library, Or. 7026; 1005), fols 20a-82b: ed. Budge 1913, 75-127 (text), 258-321 (transl.); long Sahidic version: *W* (Nationalbibliothek, Wien, K. 9629, 9551-52; ninth century): ed. Till 1934, 31-36 (text), 37-43 (transl.); Bohairic version *B* (Rome, Vatican, Biblioteca del Vaticano Borgia copto 66; 917/8): ed. Amélineau 1887, 73-163; extensive Arabic version *A* (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, arabe 4785, fols. 97r-215r; 1883-85): ed. O'Leary 1930, 317-487. The versions of the *Encomium* are discussed in Dekker 2010 and 2016b.

- The notice in the Copto-Arabic *Synaxarium* on the enigmatic Bishop Pesynthius of Hermonthis is included, since it associates Pesynthius of Koptos with a consecration.¹⁰⁴⁵
- The Arabic *Life of St Andrew* is discussed, since it is the only source on the deposition of an abbot by Bishop Pesynthius.¹⁰⁴⁶
- The *Letter of Pseudo-Pesynthius* is an apocalyptic text that was probably composed in the tenth century and attributed to Bishop Pesynthius to increase its authority. It is nevertheless an interesting source, since it evokes Pesynthius' reputation as a visionary and a preacher, and seeks to imitate and emulate the pastoral epistles that he used to send to his flock, according to the *Encomium*.¹⁰⁴⁷

What makes the comparison between literary and documentary sources interesting is that in general, the documents seem to confirm that Pesynthius was already regarded as a holy man during life, but he also received fierce criticism. In order to get a picture of him that is as historically accurate as possible, we should first examine the social context in which he lived. His documents present a more dynamic picture of the Theban society than Abraham's dossier, for they reflect the situation in the 620s, of which Abraham witnessed the beginning only.

§8.1 THE CONTEXT IN WHICH PESYNTHIUS WORKED

Like his colleague Abraham, Pesynthius was a monk-bishop, who faced the challenge of organizing a relatively new Theodosian diocese.¹⁰⁴⁸ It extended on both river banks, for the see of Koptos lay on the east bank of the Nile, whereas the monastery where Pesynthius resided was located on the west bank, in the mountain of Tsenti near modern Naqada (§2.2.3). It was probably called the Monastery of the Cross (§3.1.2).

It is likely that Pesynthius was ordained bishop at the age of fifty (§3.1.2). According to the *Encomium*, his disciple John assisted him from the beginning of his episcopate until his death, but John does not appear in the episcopal documents (§3.1.2, 7.4.1). Contact with Epiphanius in Western Thebes is first recorded in ca. 615-620. At the time, Epiphanius had already attained the reputation of a holy man with extraordinary spiritual and ascetic authority and was prominent enough to receive letters from the patriarch and several bishops (§3.2.1).

¹⁰⁴⁵ Paris, Bibliothèque nationale arabe 4869, fol. 86v (seventeenth century): ed. Basset 1909, 490.

¹⁰⁴⁶ Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, arabe 4882, fols 1-14v (nineteenth century): unpublished, but summarized in Di Bitonto Kasser 1989, 168-70; cf. Troupeau 1974, 60.

¹⁰⁴⁷ Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, arabe 6147, fols 39-56v (1832): ed. Périer 1914, 79-92, 302-23 (text, transl.); cf. Van Lent and Van der Vliet 1996, 207-13; Van Lent 2010, 266-74.

¹⁰⁴⁸ On Bishop Timotheus of Koptos as Pesynthius' possible predecessor, see §2.3.1

Pesynthius' documents cover the second half of his episcopate, but most of them are tentatively dated to the 620s (§7.1.5). On the basis of the *Encomium*, it is assumed that the bishop lived in Western Thebes during the Persian period, and that he stayed at the *Topos* of Epiphanius, where archaeologists indeed found part of his dossier (§7.1.1.C, 7.1.4). Recently, Wipszycka expressed her doubts whether he actually remained there during the entire period, and observed that the *Topos* lacked space for a bishop and his retinue.¹⁰⁴⁹ I agree that Pesynthius did not necessarily dwell there for ten years on end,¹⁰⁵⁰ but should add that the large First Tower was built in ca. 620, probably to offer him a better accommodation or office (§3.1.2). The *Topos* was small compared to the ordinary episcopal residences in cities, but under the given circumstances, and having been used to living modestly as a monk, Pesynthius, may have been content with just enough space for his correspondence and rooms for him and his small retinue (the priest Moses in *P.Pisentius* 22?).

Officially, bishops were not allowed to stay away from their diocese for more than a year without a good reason,¹⁰⁵¹ but fear for the Persians was considered a good reason. The Chalcedonian Patriarch John the Almsgiver even left Egypt shortly before the invasion (§6.1), and the author of the *Encomium* did not question the need for Pesynthius to flee and hide.¹⁰⁵² It also mattered that the bishop did not get isolated from his flock, but tried to fulfil his pastoral duties as best as possible. Despite the distance, he was well informed about matters in his diocese, particularly at Pallas and Pshenhor, owing to a strong, well organized network and regular communication with the deacon Phanes, the priest Cyriacus and Abraham, the lashane of Pshenhor (§7.3.1-3). His network also included clergymen and officials at Koptos (§7.4.2, 7.5.1).¹⁰⁵³ The priest Mark occasionally acted as a messenger (§3.2.3, 7.3.6). In addition to the affairs in the Koptite diocese, Pesynthius seems to have temporarily acted as the administrator of the vacant see of Qus, and he got involved with matters in the Hermonthite district (§2.2.3, 7.5.2). In such cases, he benefitted from his position in the close-knit Theodosian network, and cooperated with Epiphanius and Psan, who were successful mediators with civil officials in their own right (§3.2.1, 7.3.5). Although Pesynthius was praised as “a protector, not only of our district, but of the entire country of orthodox

¹⁰⁴⁹ Wipszycka 2015, 41.

¹⁰⁵⁰ The bishop occasionally visited the clergyman Kalapesius (*P.Pisentius* 54, l. 4: “After you left this time”).

¹⁰⁵¹ *Novella* 6.2 (535), 67.3 (538), 123.9 (546), listed in Noetlich 1973, 49; cf. Feissel 1989, 812. See also Canon 14 in the *Apostolic Canons*: ed. Funk 1905, vol. 1, 568-69.

¹⁰⁵² Wipszycka 2015, 40.

¹⁰⁵³ The *Encomium* (*S*, fols 64a, 70a) records contact between Pesynthius and people from Koptos.

Christians”,¹⁰⁵⁴ it is not evident from the *Encomium* that he actually was an important religious leader on a regional level.

Episcopal and monastic documents record a variety of social problems in the districts of Koptos and Hermonthis, including the use of violence by Persians or civil authorities,¹⁰⁵⁵ officials who obstruct business,¹⁰⁵⁶ foreign marauders near Pallas and Ape,¹⁰⁵⁷ cattle theft at Jeme and Pshenhor,¹⁰⁵⁸ difficulties for monks and nuns to obtain the materials for their handwork,¹⁰⁵⁹ poverty,¹⁰⁶⁰ people leaving their homes,¹⁰⁶¹ imprisonment,¹⁰⁶² marital scandals,¹⁰⁶³ and violence against girls and women.¹⁰⁶⁴ Although the Persians disrupted families, took off cattle, hindered the transport of wheat, and required travel documents,¹⁰⁶⁵ most moral offences, particularly sexual transgressions, happened anyway, due to the lack of stability in Egyptian villages.¹⁰⁶⁶

When Pesynthius stayed in Western Thebes, he was probably in his seventies and had some health issues. On his behalf Gennadius consulted a chief physician, and at least once, the bishop was too ill to reply to a letter himself (§3.1.2, 7.5.1).

During an episcopate of over thirty years, Pesynthius witnessed the same events as Abraham: the military coups by Phocas and Heraclius, the deaths of the patriarchs Damian and Anastasius, the Persian conquest of Syria and Egypt, the fall of Jerusalem, the removal of the Cross to Ctesifon, a failing flood that resulted in famine, the reunion between the anti-Chalcedonian Churches of Alexandria and Antioch, and the Persian occupation of Egypt (§7.1). Later historical events include the death of Patriarch Andronicus on January 3, 626, and the ordination of Benjamin I as his successor;¹⁰⁶⁷ the end of the Byzantine-Persian war in 628 and the withdrawal of Persian troops from Egypt;¹⁰⁶⁸ the celebration of the recovery of

¹⁰⁵⁴ *S*, fol. 29a (= *Q*, fol. 23).

¹⁰⁵⁵ The Persians (“barbarians”) in *SBKopt.* I 295 and *O.Mon.Epiph.* 170; “civil authorities” in *P.Pisentius* 4, l. 40.

¹⁰⁵⁶ A financial administrator in *P.Pisentius* 21; a lieutenant in *O.Mon.Epiph.* 458.

¹⁰⁵⁷ The Atsoor in *P.Pisentius* 1; a “barbarian” and his accomplices in *P.CrumST* 178.

¹⁰⁵⁸ *SBKopt.* I 295 (by the Persians); *P.Pisentius* 2-3 (by the Psenhorites, after being robbed of cattle themselves).

¹⁰⁵⁹ *P.Pisentius* 28; *O.Mon.Epiph.* 277.

¹⁰⁶⁰ *SBKopt.* I 295; *O.Mon.Epiph.* 165.

¹⁰⁶¹ *SBKopt.* I 295 (the widow’s son left); *O.CrumVC* 67; probably Amsterdam, O.APM inv. 3871.

¹⁰⁶² *P.Pisentius* 5, 37; *P.Mon.Epiph.* 163, 167, 176-77, 181, 219, 466; *O.Mon.Epiph.* 172; *O.Crum* 209.

¹⁰⁶³ *P.Pisentius* 11, 17, 18ter, 19, 38, 51.

¹⁰⁶⁴ *P.Pisentius* 14, 18-18bis, 54; *P.Mon.Epiph.* 136.2; *P.CrumST* 175.1-2; cf. Wilfong 2002, 42-43.

¹⁰⁶⁵ *O.Mon.Epiph.* 170: Persians killed a husband and a son; *SBKopt.* I 295: Persians beat the son and seized cattle; *O.CrumVC* 67: since no corn could come south, a family went north in search for bread, hoping that the Persians would not come north as well; *O.Mon.Epiph.* 324: a man required a document, in order that the Persian in Ne/Thebes would allow him to go south to obtain corn.

¹⁰⁶⁶ Wipszycka 2015, 41.

¹⁰⁶⁷ Jülicher 1922, 23. On Benjamin, see Müller 1956.

¹⁰⁶⁸ On the overthrow of the Persian king Khusrav II in February 628 and the negotiations between his successor Khawadh and general Shahrbaraz, which ended the war, see Kaegi 2003, 174-91.

the Cross and the Holy Sponge at Constantinople on September 14, 629, and the restoration of the Cross to Jerusalem in the early 630s;¹⁰⁶⁹ the appointment of Cyrus, bishop of Phasis (in Colchis), as the *topoteretes* or imperial deputy for the Chalcedonian see of Alexandria in 631;¹⁰⁷⁰ and the restoration of the Chalcedonian hierarchy by Emperor Heraclius, who allegedly appointed bishops as far south as Antinoopolis.¹⁰⁷¹ Pesynthius died in July 632, before the council that Cyrus organized at Alexandria in June 633, in order to solve the Chalcedonian schism by means of the doctrine on the single energy of Christ (monenergism), and before the persecution of the Theodosians who rejected this doctrine.¹⁰⁷² Although the *History of the Patriarchs* states that Patriarch Benjamin went into hiding, as soon as he heard about Cyrus' coming to Egypt (in 631, when Pesynthius was still alive),¹⁰⁷³ it is more likely that he fled when the persecution started in 633 (after Pesynthius' death). A later date for Benjamin's flight fits better with another statement that he hid himself for ten years and returned in 643/4.¹⁰⁷⁴

In short, Pesynthius was in office during a turbulent period. In these conditions, he had to solve various social problems and made a memorable impression, as is indicated by the *Encomium* on him and confirmed by his documents.

§8.2 SPIRITUAL AUTHORITY

§8.2.1 *Episcopal documents*

Bishop Pesynthius was regarded as a bishop with extraordinary spiritual authority, judging from the unusual epithets with which supplicants addressed him, such as a “God-bearer”,¹⁰⁷⁵ “the successor of Christ on earth” and “thirteenth apostle”,¹⁰⁷⁶ a “true high priest”,¹⁰⁷⁷ the “light of the world”,¹⁰⁷⁸ and “beatitude”,¹⁰⁷⁹ who was “wise in the things of God”¹⁰⁸⁰ and

¹⁰⁶⁹ Kaegi 2003, 189.

¹⁰⁷⁰ Booth 2014, 205; Wipszycka 2015, 440 and 166-68, where the author follows the interpretation of Cyrus' title proposed by Marek Jankowiak in his dissertation *Essai d'histoire du monothélisme à partir de la correspondance entre les empereurs byzantins, les patriarches de Constantinople et les papes de Rome* (Paris: École Pratique des Hautes Études, Warsaw: University of Warsaw, defended in 2009).

¹⁰⁷¹ Wipszycka 2015, 220-21, based on the *History of the Patriarchs*; ed. Evetts 1904, 492.

¹⁰⁷² Evelyn White 1932, 253-254; Kaegi 2003, 216; Booth 2014, 206; Wipszycka 2015, 167.

¹⁰⁷³ Evetts 1904, 490. Evelyn White (1932, 253) places Benjamin's flight in 631; cf. Müller 1956, 325-29, who does not mention a precise date.

¹⁰⁷⁴ Evetts 1904, 490, 493, 502. On Benjamin's return in 643/44, see Jülicher 1922, 12; Müller 1956, 330.

¹⁰⁷⁵ **ΘΕΟΦΟΡΟΣ**: the addresses of *P.Pisentius* 15-16 and 52 + *O.CrumST* 176.

¹⁰⁷⁶ **ΠΑΙΔΟΧΟΣ ΠΠΕΧ(ΡΙΣΤΟ)C, ΠΠΕΖΗΝΤΩΜΤΕ ΠΑΠΟCΤΟΛΟC**: *P.Pisentius* 54, ll. 2-3 (from a clergyman). Pesynthius is again called “the thirteenth apostle” in *S*, fol. 27b (= *Q*, fol. 20).

¹⁰⁷⁷ **ΠΑΡΧΙΕΡΕΥC ΠΠΕ**: *SBKopt.* I 295, l. 7 (from a widow); *P.Pisentius* 44, l. 10 and address (from an ill man).

¹⁰⁷⁸ **ΠΟΥΟΕΙΝ ΠΠΚΟCΜΟC**: *P.Pisentius* 44, address (from an ill man); **ΕΤΡ ΟΥΟΕΙΝ**: *P.CrumST* 178, address (from a robbed man), as in *S*, fol. 21b (= *Q*, fol. 5): “an illuminator of the entire world”.

¹⁰⁷⁹ **ΜΑΚΑΡΙΩΤΗC**: *P.Pisentius* 20, l. 1-2 (Lucianus), 29, l. 21 (the priest Mark), 44, l. 2 and address (from an ill man), *P.Mon.Epiph.* 254, l. 1 and address (from someone who needed a lawyer).

“spiritual”.¹⁰⁸¹ Bishop Pisrael addressed his colleague reverently as “your fatherly and spiritual sanctity”,¹⁰⁸² whereas an official at Pshenhor, who blamed the bishop for not having intervened in a long-term conflict, still bore in mind “the Spirit of God who dwells within you”.¹⁰⁸³ Pesynthius was frequently addressed in the second person plural, which may indicate that the senders had both the bishop and the Holy Spirit in mind (§1.3.1).¹⁰⁸⁴ Among the bishops in the Theban region only Ananias of Hermonthis seems to have matched Pesynthius in spiritual authority.¹⁰⁸⁵

Several correspondents refer to the fragrance that surrounded the bishop,¹⁰⁸⁶ which recalls the odor of sanctity associated with holy persons after death and sometimes during life, as in the cases of Padre Pio and Epiphanius.¹⁰⁸⁷

Dataset 3 does not record instances when Pesynthius administered sacraments himself, but two documents indicate that he would ordain (and consecrate) clergymen soon (§8.3.A.1).

Several supplicants request Pesynthius to remember them in his prayers.¹⁰⁸⁸ The widow of Jeme, who feared expulsion from her house, appealed to his reputation as a successful intercessor before God as well as before civil authorities.¹⁰⁸⁹

§8.2.2 *The Encomium on Pesynthius*

The *Encomium* emphasizes that Pesynthius was a Spirit-bearer and presents anecdotes that demonstrate his spiritual abilities: the reading of souls, telepathy, foreknowledge, healing and knowledge of the divine.¹⁰⁹⁰ The bishop’s ability to read other people’s souls just by looking at them is illustrated by anecdotes featuring a shepherd who assaulted a girl and came to greet the bishop, thinking that he would not know about it; a father who did not know that his unmarried son had begotten a child; and a soldier who visited the bishop, in order to test his generosity, but heard to his surprise that Pesynthius knew that he had killed someone.¹⁰⁹¹

¹⁰⁸⁰ ΠΙΣΟΦΟΣ ΖῆΝ ΝΑΠΝΟΥΤΕ: *P.Pisentius* 44, l. 1, which recalls *S*, fol. 50b: “You became talented in the wisdom of God, and learned in the holy mysteries”.

¹⁰⁸¹ ΠΠ(ΕΥΜΑΤ)ΙΚΟΣ: *P.Pisentius* 7 (from Bishop Pisrael), 12bis (sender unknown), 45.1 (sender unknown).

¹⁰⁸² *P.Pisentius* 7, l. 15: ΤΕΚΖΑΓΙΟΣΥΝΗ ΝΕΙΩ\Τ/ ΠΠΠ(ΕΥΜΑΤ)ΙΚΟΣ.

¹⁰⁸³ *P.Pisentius* 3, ll. 10-11, 52-53.

¹⁰⁸⁴ *P.Pisentius* 6, 18, 20-21, 24, 29, 31, 41, 44, 47, 50, 52; alternated with the singular in *P.Pisentius* 3-4, 22-23.

¹⁰⁸⁵ In *O.Crum* 85 he is called a “Spirit-bearer” and “son of the Apostles”.

¹⁰⁸⁶ *P.Pisentius* 1 (the *lashanes* of Pallas), 54 (Kalapesius, a clergyman?); P.ANU Classics Museum 75.01, verso (the officials of Kratos).

¹⁰⁸⁷ Lesourd and Benjamin 1970, 132-36. For a recent study on the odor of sanctity in Latin hagiographic sources from the fifth to the ninth centuries, see Roch 2010. For Epiphanius, see *P.Mon.Epiph.* 163, l. 2.

¹⁰⁸⁸ *P.Pisentius* 12bis, 20, 22, 28, 38, 40-41, 44; Paris, Louvre, R49 + Phil.16402; *P.CrumST* 179.

¹⁰⁸⁹ *SBKopt.* I 295, ll. 9-10: “who intercedes for us before God and men”.

¹⁰⁹⁰ *S*, fols 61b, 77a. See also fol. 38b (= *Q*, fol. 49): “He filled you with the splendor of the Holy Spirit”.

¹⁰⁹¹ *S*, fols 57a-61b, 61b-65b and 75a-76b respectively.

The spiritual gift of telepathy is implied by the anecdote about Pesynthius' disciple John, who went to Western Thebes for business and was attacked by hyenas and wolves on his way back to the mountain of Tsenti. When John exclaimed "Prayers of my father, help me from the mouths of the beasts!", the animals withdrew directly as if they were being pursued. Upon his return, the bishop rebuked John for travelling at a late hour, being aware that "the beasts had almost eaten you". The author of the *Encomium* ended the anecdote by saying that Pesynthius "came to know about everything that happened, and that regardless the place where he was when it happened, he came to know about it".¹⁰⁹²

The gift of foreknowledge is demonstrated by Pesynthius' predictions that a woman who was falsely accused of adultery by her jealous husband would give birth to a son, that he himself had five more days to live, and that after his death there would soon be chaos, either in the monastery, the Church or Egypt.¹⁰⁹³ Shortly before the Persian invasion, the bishop sent pastoral letters, urging his flock to stop committing sins, in order that God would not deliver them to the barbarians and humiliate them.¹⁰⁹⁴ Considering the historical context, it was understandable that Pesynthius feared that the Persians, who had already conquered Syria, would invade Egypt as well. His letter is not cited to demonstrate his prophetic gift, but "to embellish the *Encomium*" with the bishop's own words,¹⁰⁹⁵ and to present an example of his teachings. However, the author of the *Letter of Pseudo-Pesynthius* integrated the theme of a foreign invasion in an apocalyptic text, according to which Pesynthius predicted the Arab invasion (§8.2.3).¹⁰⁹⁶

The author of the *Encomium* states that anyone on whom the bishop made the sign of the cross would be healed immediately, regardless of the nature of their illnesses.¹⁰⁹⁷ At one occasion, Pesynthius tried to prevent being praised for having exorcised a demon from a boy. He asked for water from the sanctuary, blessed it with the sign of the cross and instructed his father to give the blessed water to the boy at home. When the father returned after some days to thank the bishop, the latter replied that the healing was not due to him, but to the power of God that exists in sacred places.¹⁰⁹⁸ The extensive Arabic version includes many other healing

¹⁰⁹² *S*, fols 61b-63a.

¹⁰⁹³ *S*, fols 72b-73b, 79b, 82a; cf. Winlock and Crum 1926, 228. *S*, fol. 37a (= *Q*, fol. 46): "a man of foresight".

¹⁰⁹⁴ *S*, fols 43a-b (= *Q*, fols 57-58).

¹⁰⁹⁵ *S*, fol. 45a (= *Q*, fol. 66).

¹⁰⁹⁶ On account of the parallel between the *Encomium* and the *Letter of Pseudo-Pesynthius*, Crum (in Winlock and Crum 1926, 228) thought that the letter cited in the *Encomium* did demonstrate the bishop's prophetic gift.

¹⁰⁹⁷ *S*, fol. 66a. Pesynthius did not heal a woman suffering from a heavy menstrual flow, as Wilfong (2002, 37) and Donker van Heel (2014, 72) understood, but Jesus did (Matthew 9:20-22). The bleeding woman is mentioned in a discourse on the power of faith, in which the narrator argues that the audience should believe that Bishop Pesynthius was worthy to see Elijah the Tishbite (*S*, fols 31a-32b = *Q*, fols 30-31).

¹⁰⁹⁸ *S*, fols 66b-69a (= *A*, fols 149b-151b).

miracles attributed to the bishop, featuring a boy who accidentally swallowed a lizard (this time, Pesynthius gave him the blessed water himself); a woman with abscesses in her throat; a nobleman, whose wife gave birth to twins after consuming two dates and water blessed by the bishop; and a mother who was unable to feed her child on account of an infection in her mammary glands and almost died on account of it.¹⁰⁹⁹ Remarkably, Pesynthius did not directly heal the jealous husband, who was stricken with a serious illness, after falsely accusing his wife of adultery and refusing to listen to the bishop. Instead, he told John to “Leave him, until he has taken his punishment well. Verily, he is ignorant”.¹¹⁰⁰

Pesynthius is said to have had visions all his life, ranging from a column of fire during childhood, an altar veil that briefly floated above the altar without human agency, and a man of light who announces Pesynthius death (the apostles Peter and Paul, according to the Arabic version).¹¹⁰¹ When a priest suddenly fell fatally ill during mass, the bishop explained that it happened, since the priest spat and his phlegm hit the wing of a cherubim, who returned a deadly blow as a punishment for a lack of reverence at the altar during mass.¹¹⁰² The author of the Sahidic version of the *Encomium* emphatically states that Pesynthius was worthy to see Elijah the Tishbite, who consoled him when he suffered from his spleen as a monk.¹¹⁰³

Pesynthius’ conversation with a pagan mummy on the torments in hell is known from the Bohairic and Arabic version of the *Encomium* only.¹¹⁰⁴

After his ordination, Pesynthius’ appearance is said to have changed. Since his “eyes were burning like the morning star, while always casting forth lightning”, nobody could look into his face without fear or awe.¹¹⁰⁵ He is compared with Moses, whose face radiated after speaking with God on Mount Sinai, and with Joseph, whose brothers bowed and did not recognize him.¹¹⁰⁶ When the lover of an adulterous woman appeared before the bishop, he was so terrified by the eyes that “glowed upon him like a blazing fire” and read his soul, that he wet his pants and confessed immediately.¹¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁹⁹ *A*, fols 175a-178b, 190a-192a.

¹¹⁰⁰ *S*, fol. 71b. This quote seems to contradict the phrase “You became a chief physician, who healed everyone good-heartedly” on fol. 53a.

¹¹⁰¹ *A*, fols 104a-b (= *Q*, fol. 34-36; *S*, fol. 32b-33b), 141b-142a, 205b-206a (= *S*, fol. 79b). Pesynthius’ ordination is announced by a divine voice in the Sahidic version (= *Q*, fol. 54; *S*, fol. 41b), and by three angels, in the Arabic version (*A*, fol. 129b).

¹¹⁰² *A*, fols 161-164a (= *W*, ed. Till 1934, 37-39).

¹¹⁰³ *S*, fols 28a, 31a-b (= *Q*, fols 21, 28).

¹¹⁰⁴ *A*, fols 170b-173b (= *B*: ed. Amélineau 1887, 141-51).

¹¹⁰⁵ *S*, fol. 56.

¹¹⁰⁶ *S*, fols 42a-b (= *Q*, fols 55-56), 56a, with references to Genesis 34:29-30, 42:8.

¹¹⁰⁷ *A*, fol. 181b; cf. Rapp 2005, 251-52.

The *Encomium* states that Pesynthius diffused a sweet odor that smelled like cinnamon day and night, and that the fragrance from his ointments “reached to the limits of the inhabited world”.¹¹⁰⁸ Perhaps, the author implies that balm obtained from the bishop’s body or tomb was widely distributed as contact relics, a practice that still exists today.¹¹⁰⁹

Upon request the bishop blessed livestock. Once, Pesynthius allegedly blessed an ewe (or a cow, according to the Bohairic and Arabic versions) by making the sign of the cross on the outside of the belly, but the sign penetrated into her womb. When the lamb (or calf) was born, it had a white cross-shaped mark on its belly.¹¹¹⁰

The Sahidic version of the *Encomium* states that Pesynthius’ prayers during life were powerful, since he was a righteous man, and that he was once seen praying, while his fingers radiated like lamps.¹¹¹¹ The Arabic version ends with the prayer that Pesynthius may extend his hand and bless all people who have come to celebrate his feast.¹¹¹²

§8.2.3 *The Letter of Pseudo-Pesynthius*

In about half of the Arabic manuscripts that include the Arabic *Letter of Pseudo-Pesynthius*, it is preceded by a version of the *Encomium*.¹¹¹³ The apocalyptic sermon imitates the pastoral epistles cited in the *Encomium*, and presents the bishop on his deathbed as a visionary, who foretold the Arab conquest of Egypt and complete disruption of the social order, but also the restoration of peace, the end of the Chalcedonian schism and Judgement Day. As in the Arabic version of the *Encomium* the letter ends with a prayer for Pesynthius’ blessing.¹¹¹⁴

To give the modern reader an impression of the bishop’s unusual spiritual authority in the eyes of the faithful, he is best compared with Padre Pio, who is also said to have had the gifts of reading souls, telepathy, foreknowledge, healing and knowledge of the divine. In addition, he is said to have had frequent visions during mass and to have diffused – and telepathically transmitted – mystic odors that smelled like jasmine, lilies, violets or tobacco.¹¹¹⁵

¹¹⁰⁸ *S*, fol. 20b (not in *Q*), 53a.

¹¹⁰⁹ The Arabic version of the *Encomium* (*A*, fols 213b-214a) states that a cross appeared at the entrance of the tomb, producing a sweetly perfumed balm or myrrh, which flowed like breast milk.

¹¹¹⁰ *A*, fol. 149a (= *S*, fols 65b-66a; *B*: ed. Amélineau 1887, 129); cf. Wilfong 2002, 38.

¹¹¹¹ *S*, fols 35b, 38a-b (= *Q*, fol. 42, 48): “You asked and God granted all your requests”, 39b.

¹¹¹² *A*, fols 214b-215a.

¹¹¹³ Van Lent 2010, 266-67.

¹¹¹⁴ Périer 1914, 87-88, 445-46, 316-23. On the relation between the *Encomium* and the *Letter*, see

¹¹¹⁵ Resourd and Benjamin 1970, 122-31 (healing), 132-33 (reaction to mentally transmitted pleas), 152-55 (reading the mind and the heart), 155-58 (knowledge of distant things or underlying spiritual causes), 162-64 (foreknowledge), 159 (conversation with a soul in purgatory); 123, 133-34 (kind of smells), 161 (visions).

§8.3 ASCETIC AUTHORITY

§8.3.1 *Episcopal documents*

Like Abraham, Pesynthius was called “who truly bears the Christ”, “perfect in all virtues”.¹¹¹⁶

§8.3.2 *The Homily on St Onnophrius*

The *Homily on St Onnophrius* is attributed to Pesynthius, who is called Bishop of Koptos in the title and “(monk) of the mountain of Tsenti” in the conclusion of the only preserved text version, which came down to us in an eleventh-century manuscript.¹¹¹⁷ The difference between the two designations made Crum wonder whether Pesynthius delivered the sermon, before he was ordained bishop, but on the basis of the title he added that it seems unlikely.¹¹¹⁸ However, just as the title of the Sahidic version of the *Encomium* was changed, the title of the *Homily on St Onnophrius* may also have been a product of revision, and the episcopal title could have been added to the text.¹¹¹⁹ Nevertheless, Pesynthius taught his audience – not for the first time – with an authority that is expected from a bishop, but not from a monk or priest.¹¹²⁰

On the feast day of St Onnophrius, “the anchorite and perfect hermit”, Pesynthius delivered the homily at a church dedicated to this saint, probably at Pallas (§2.2.3).¹¹²¹ He presented Onnophrius as a model of virtue and chastity, and recommended his example to all men and women, even if they did not renounce the worldly life, but he said remarkably little about the saint himself, not even the date of his commemoration.¹¹²²

Pesynthius’ exhorted his audience to avoid exuberance, to be pious, honest and chaste, to fast at least during Lent and on Wednesday and Friday, but preferably every day till the ninth hour (three o’clock in the afternoon), and to be content with little wine and modest means.¹¹²³ As a monk-bishop, Pesynthius could recommend those ascetic practices, since he was used to a disciplined lifestyle himself and was admired for even heavier ascetic exercises, as the *Encomium* indicates.

¹¹¹⁶ **ΕΤΦΟΡΕΙ ΠΠΕΧ(ΡΙCΤΟ)C ZH OYME**: *O.Crum* 286 (incomplete); *P.Pisentius* 3-4, 6, 27, 28, 41, 47.2, 54-55; Paris, Louvre, R49; Katoen natie 685/2 (in the addresses); *P.Mon.Epiph.* 129, recto; *O.Mon.Epiph.* 515; **ΕΤΧΗΚ ΕΒΟΛ ΖΗ ΑΡΕΤΗ ΝΙΜ**: *P.Pisentius* 29 (address), 44 (reconstructed in l. 3).

¹¹¹⁷ Crum 1915-1917, fols 1, 34.

¹¹¹⁸ Crum 1915-1917, 40.

¹¹¹⁹ Pesynthius’ disciple John, surnamed “Matoi” in Q, fol. 1, appears as a priest in S, fol. 20a.

¹¹²⁰ Crum 1915-1917, fol. 16: “Now I write and ask you and I strongly urge you again” (addressing women); fol. “16 sic”: “For you know that I will not stop teaching you and exhort you about this matter” (addressing parents).

¹¹²¹ Crum 1915-1917, 41 (based on Phil. 16402 = *O.CrumST* 156), fols 1, 10, 33. Wilfong (2002, 24) did not explain why he thought that Pesynthius may have delivered the homily at several locations, in Koptos and Jeme.

¹¹²² Crum 1915-1917, fol. 5.

¹¹²³ Crum 1915-1917, fols 10-12.

§8.3.3 *The Encomium on Pesynthius*

In the *Encomium* Pesynthius is called a “Christ-bearer”, an anchorite, an ascetic and a perfect man.¹¹²⁴ The Sahidic version stresses that he tried to hide his ascetic practices, in order to avoid the praise of men, and that he was seriously upset, when people discovered that he meditated, thinking that their admiration had nullified the value of his efforts in the eyes of God.¹¹²⁵ According to John, Pesynthius often withdrew into the desert to pray on his own, while he was staying in Western Thebes. “No one would be able to find the totality of his prayers that he made by day and night”, but at night he used to pray four hundred times.¹¹²⁶ The *Encomium* creates the impression that Pesynthius enjoyed staying in Western Thebes, since it gave him the opportunity to live as an ascetic again.¹¹²⁷

The Sahidic version states that Pesynthius memorized the books of Jeremiah and Ezekiel. The Bohairic version adds the Psalms, the twelve minor prophets and the Gospel of John, whereas the Arabic version also lists thirty ecclesiastical books, which the bishop knew by heart and continued to recite until his death.¹¹²⁸

During the Persian period, Pesynthius allegedly spent the forty days of Lent in an ancient burial chamber filled with mummies and asked John to bring water and moistened wheat (instead of baked bread) every Saturday.¹¹²⁹

On his deathbed, Pesynthius wanted to be buried in his monastic garments and asked John to buy a shroud with a coin that he had earned as a monk and saved for the payment of his own burial. He affirmed that he did not keep money that belonged to the Church.¹¹³⁰

Pesynthius is compared to Pachomius, the founder of the Pachomian congregation, to the hermit Palamon, who instructed Pachomius, and to Petronius, Horsiesius and Theodore, Pachomius’ successors as leaders of the congregation.¹¹³¹ The same individuals are invoked in a Coptic inscription painted on a wooden cross together with other monastic saints, including Shenoute of Atripe, the anchorite Paul (of Thebes or Tammah?) and an abbot called Jacob.¹¹³²

¹¹²⁴ Christ-bearer: *S*, fols 20b (*Q*, fol. 2), 80a; perfect man/saint: fols 56b, 63b; anchorite: fols 22a (*Q*, fol. 9, but later in the text), 23b; ascetic: fols 22 (*Q*, fol. 5), 45a, 51a.

¹¹²⁵ *S*, fols 22a + 24a-b (*Q*, fols 5, 7, 11-12), 63a, 77a.

¹¹²⁶ *S*, fol. 77a.

¹¹²⁷ After praying in the desert, Pesynthius returned, “his eyes being full of light like the stars of the sky, and he was completely glad, like someone who returned from a drinking place” (*S*, fol. 48a).

¹¹²⁸ *S*, fols 23b-24a (*Q*, fols 9-10); *A*, fols 118b, 123b (= *B*: ed. Amélineau 1887, 75, 83).

¹¹²⁹ *A*, fols 167b-170a (= *B*: ed. Amélineau 1887, 141-44).

¹¹³⁰ *S*, fols 81b-82a.

¹¹³¹ *S*, fol. 56b.

¹¹³² Berlin, the Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum, inv. no. 9876 (presently called Bode-Museum): ed. Cramer 1949, 40-41.

§8.4 PROFESSIONAL AUTHORITY

A. Organization of worship

A.1 *Episcopal documents*

Two letters mention the ordination of clergymen. In the first one, a clergyman expressed his concern that Bishop Pesynthius would cancel the ceremony that was planned for the next day, on account of a possible impediment caused by the son of Psmou. It appears that the sender examined the matter and came to the conclusion that the ceremony could take place, but was unable to inform the bishop about the outcome himself. Therefore, he urgently requested his correspondent to contact the bishop in his stead, and expressed his hope that the clergymen would come for the ordination of several candidates.¹¹³³ The second letter, which was probably addressed to Pesynthius, refers to the ordination of a priest in the near future.¹¹³⁴

The bishop also decided whether certain girls should be clothed with the habit before the “Feast of the Cross”, that is, the celebration of the discovery of the Cross by Empress Helena on Thoth 17 (September 14).¹¹³⁵

A.2 *The circular letter*

The circular letter on the consecration of extra bread during the Eucharist invokes the “thrice-blessed” Bishop Pesynthius as an authority *par excellence* on liturgical matters: since “you brought the correct order of the celebration from the beginning, command us!” The preacher fully supports an order issued by Patriarch Benjamin through Bishop Peter (“I too”), adding that Bishop Pesynthius would agree as well (“he too”).¹¹³⁶

A.3 *The Encomium on Pesynthius*

Bishop Pesynthius is praised for “grabbing the rudders of the worship of God. For this reason, you became a steersman on the sea of the holy Mysteries”.¹¹³⁷

Two anecdotes refer to the celebration of the Eucharist by the bishop himself, whereas a notice in the *Copto-Arabic Synaxarium* states that he assisted during the consecration of

¹¹³³ *P.Pisentius* 35 + 36.2 + 45.3+2, l. 18: “if he will not ordain [them] at all”; l. 30: “in order that they will ordain them”, namely the bishop and the priests who would assist him.

¹¹³⁴ *P.Pisentius* 9, l. 15: **ἐπαφῆ πε[πρεσβύτερος]**, “in order to ordain the [priest]”.

¹¹³⁵ *P.Pisentius* 28; cf. Crum 1939, 181a (under e); Wilfong 2002, 40-41; Boud’hors 2012, 29-30, n. 12. Bagnall and Cribiore (2006, 241) understood: “to bind to do the work”. For the two “Feasts of the Cross”, see Basilios 1991, 1243. The second feast, which celebrates the Recovery of the Cross by Emperor Heraclius on Paremhat 10 (March 6), is less likely, since the celebrated event happened in 628, possibly after *P.Pisentius* 28 was written.

¹¹³⁶ Pap.Berlin P. 11346, l. x+3-5, 7, 9: ed. Camplani 2012, 379-80. I propose to read **† ετοτ[τηγτ]ῆ** in l. x+5 as an imperative. The editor hesitated to link the promotion of the correct liturgical order to the bishop.

¹¹³⁷ S, fol. 38a (= Q, fol. 48).

Pesynthius of Hermonthis (§3.1.11).¹¹³⁸ It is doubtful whether the latter officiated in the 620s, but the bishop of Koptos probably assisted during the consecration of Pisrael of Qus and Anthony of Ape, who were both ordained in ca. 620 (§3.1.8-9).

Pesynthius had to ensure that Lent was observed and that Easter was celebrated on the very days that the patriarch announced for these events in his festal letter.¹¹³⁹

B. Mission

B.1 *Episcopal documents*

Pesynthius' documents do not offer indications for missionary activities.

B.2 *The Homily on St Onnophrius*

The *Homily on St Onnophrius* was meant to be read on the feast day of St Onnophrius, which was on Paone 16 (June 10). By presenting Onnophrius as a model of virtue, Pesynthius aimed to exhort the faithful to live according to high moral standards, but he was perhaps aware that the promotion of the cult of this widely popular saint could also strengthen the position of the Theodosian Church. Since Onnophrius was already venerated at Asyut in the sixth century,¹¹⁴⁰ I wonder whether Constantine of Asyut could have been involved in spreading the cult, just as he may have contributed to the spread of the cult of St Phoibammon (§6.4.B). To my knowledge, no connection between Constantine and Onnophrius is recorded.

B.3 *The Encomium on Pesynthius*

The Sahidic version of the *Encomium* praises Pesynthius for preaching “your wisdom of the orthodox faith”,¹¹⁴¹ and reports that he celebrated Mass at the church of Tsenti on the feast day of Patriarch Severus of Antioch, which must have been on Amshir 14 (August 7).¹¹⁴²

The Arabic version of the *Encomium* also suggests a link between the bishop and the popular martyr saint Victor, the son of Romanus: when Pesynthius was hidden in Western Thebes, Jesus, the Virgin Mary and various saints would have appeared to him during prayer, in order to remind him that it was the feast day of St Victor (Parmoute 27, or April 22).¹¹⁴³ Probably on account of this passage, Boutros and Décobert assumed that Pesynthius revived the cult of this saint at Dayr Mar Buqtur (Monastery of St Victor), west of modern

¹¹³⁸ A, fols 141b, 156b (= S, fol. 75a); *Synaxarium*: ed. Basset 1909, 490.

¹¹³⁹ Pesynthius received clergymen who delivered Damian's festal letter in S, fol. 57a-b.

¹¹⁴⁰ Papaconstantinou 2008, 161-62.

¹¹⁴¹ S, fol. 37a (Q, fol. 46).

¹¹⁴² S, fol. 75b. For Severus' cult, see Papaconstantinou 2008, 188-90.

¹¹⁴³ A, fols 199b-200b. On Victor's cult, see Papaconstantinou 2008, 62-68.

Qamula.¹¹⁴⁴ However, the Sahidic version does not confirm a special connection between Pesynthius and St Victor, and the oldest architectural remains at Dayr Mar Buqtur probably date to the eighth or ninth century, at least a century after the bishop's death.¹¹⁴⁵ It is unclear why the bishop was associated with St Victor, but during his stay in Western Thebes Pesynthius could indeed have commemorated him at the Church of St Victor at Jeme, which already existed in ca. 595.¹¹⁴⁶

C. Church administration

C.1 *Episcopal documents*

As Wipszycka observed, the documents do not mention the episcopal steward.¹¹⁴⁷ It is unclear who assisted Bishop Pesynthius with the financial administration of his diocese.

When the bishop needed to appoint a steward for the Church (“*Topos*”) of the Archangel Michael, he told certain officials to propose a candidate, and they recommended Jacob, the son of Kalashire, whose father was already engaged in the administration of the church. Interestingly, they chose Jacob, although he was illiterate.¹¹⁴⁸ If their choice did not please the bishop, Jacob would bring his warrants, and they would take financial responsibility for the church. Two letters were possibly sent by stewards who had been dismissed by their superiors: one sender was expelled from the monastery with his papers, and the other one was responsible for the furniture of a church, until his employer fired him and claimed the money that he needed to provide for his mother.¹¹⁴⁹

Whereas the *Encomium* explicitly mentions the contribution that the bishop received annually (§C.3), only two documents record donations or gifts. An unknown correspondent sent at least six *artabes* of crushed wheat, two *artabes* of split lentils, some measures of lentils in a different form, a large plaited cover, large vessels with large cakes, small vessels with small cakes and cheese to “your fatherhood”, possibly Pesynthius.¹¹⁵⁰ Callinicus gave three lemons, a pomegranate and some vegetables, hoping that the bishop could prevent his wine

¹¹⁴⁴ Boutros and Décobert 2002, 90.

¹¹⁴⁵ Grossmann 1991d, 829; cf. Sadek 2010, 276-77.

¹¹⁴⁶ *P.KRU* 105, l. 30: “(Church) of Apa Victor”; cf. Papaconstantinou 2008, 63.

¹¹⁴⁷ Wipszycka 2007, 336 and 2015, 141.

¹¹⁴⁸ *P.Pisentius* 52 + *O.CrumST* 176, l. 6: “Jacob, the son of Kalashire, is illiterate (ΟΥΑΓΡΑΜΜΑΤΟΣ)”.

¹¹⁴⁹ *P.Pisentius* 6, 11; *P.Pisentius* 48, ll. 15: “[...] the entire material of the church (ΘΥΛΗ ΤΗΡΕ ΝΤΕΚΚΛ/Η(ΗΙΑ)) at the time when I was entrusted with it”. According to Revillout and Calament (2004b, 64-65), *P.Pisentius* 48 is a letter of complaint from a disinherited son, but ll. 3-6 rather indicates that the recipient is accused of claiming the money that the sender, his former employee, inherited from his father: “your servant, my old father, deposited it in a testament at the moment when he was about to leave the body”, (saying:) “provide for your mother from the portion that my fatherly lord gave (...) out of charity”.

¹¹⁵⁰ *O.CrumST* 189.

from getting spoilt.¹¹⁵¹ Pesynthius probably benefitted from the commemorative offering for the late Athanasius, on account of which he was requested to send for a lawyer.¹¹⁵²

Expenses are hardly recorded either. Tsheere and Koshe, probably two nuns, thanked the bishop for sending them six *artabes* of wheat, either to help a nunnery out of patronage, or to recompense the nuns for the garments that he received (§8.5.1).

Laymen working for the church appear in three documents: a man with young children was employed as a husbandman at the command of “your fatherly lord” (Bishop Pesynthius?), but on account of the patronage that he enjoyed the other workers wanted to leave or receive enough wage or chaff for an entire year; the bishop excommunicated one baker and decoded that another one should be employed; and George and Enoch asked him whether he wanted a guarantee from the craftsman Souai, who worked at the Church of the Archangel Michael, for there was a problem with a list that somebody drafted shortly before his death.¹¹⁵³

C.2 *The Encomium on Pesynthius*

Pesynthius is praised for “becoming a pious steward” and compared to Paul, who “took care of the entire church” as well.¹¹⁵⁴ It is said that he secretly sent the contributions that he received to pious citizens or villagers, who distributed them among the poor during the winter months, when there was usually a lack of bread.¹¹⁵⁵ He refused gifts from people guilty of serious offences, as some ecclesiastical canons require, and therefore ordered John to return the cheese given by a shepherd who had assaulted a girl.¹¹⁵⁶

Bishop Abraham sent clergymen to inspect churches (§6.4.A, C), but according to the *Encomium*, Pesynthius visited villages and examined the churches himself.¹¹⁵⁷

D. Care for the underprivileged

D.1 *Episcopal documents*

The people on whose behalf clergymen or officials pleaded to Pesynthius on account of their poverty or helplessness included two women, whose daughters were abducted; a fired and

¹¹⁵¹ *P.Pisentius* 21, ll. 7-8.

¹¹⁵² *P.Mon.Epiph.* 254; cf. Wipszycka 1972, 77.

¹¹⁵³ *P.Pisentius* 23, 25; *P.CrumST* 177, ll. 2, 6, 9: “the matter of Souai, the craftsman”, “[as for the] list, we sent it to you, after we came to know [...]”, “write us whether you wish to receive a guarantee from him”. Schmelz (2002, 169) suggested that Souai made a donation to the church shortly before his death.

¹¹⁵⁴ *S*, fols 37a (= *Q*, fol. 46), 55b.

¹¹⁵⁵ *S*, fols 42b-43a (= *Q*, fol. 56); cf. Wipszycka 1972, 122-23, where the Arabic version is cited.

¹¹⁵⁶ *S*, fols 57a-61b. *Chapters from the Constitutions*, canon 28: “It is not allowed to accept offerings from adulterers, fornicators, tradesmen or those who hinder widows or orphans (...)”: ed. Funk 1905, vol. 2, 142-43 (in Latin). For similar regulations, see Wipszycka 1972, 65.

¹¹⁵⁷ *S*, fol. 65a (= *A*, fol. 148b).

excommunicated baker, who was seriously poor; the husbandman Abraham, who had to sell his cattle to pay his tax; and the villagers of Pshenhor, whom the bishop punished from stealing cattle, but who had in fact been robbed of their cattle themselves three times.¹¹⁵⁸ Supplicants who sent letters to the bishop themselves were the widow Constantina, who thanked him for his charity towards her and children, and probably wanted to make another request; the widow who feared being expelled from her house (§8.5.1); and the man whom “the barbarian” and his accomplices had robbed and held captive in the desert near Ape.¹¹⁵⁹

The bishop actually arranged that Peter, a (single?) father with young children, got a job. He also made the people of Trikatan promise that they would not harm a prisoner.¹¹⁶⁰

Pesynthius seems to have shown a particular concern for the well-being of girls and young women, since abduction and rape happened regularly and ruined the chances for a good marriage. In general, female victims were often forced to marry their abductors, despite the fact that this practice was prohibited by imperial law.¹¹⁶¹ Several episcopal letters refer to the abduction of girls,¹¹⁶² some of whom were already betrothed,¹¹⁶³ and even married women were not safe.¹¹⁶⁴ When the bishop was informed that Mark had violated a girl and that the local clergy had expelled her, he reacted furiously, excommunicating both “this criminal” and the clergy, and he ordered the priest Paul to come and acknowledge that he had treated the girl unjustly.¹¹⁶⁵ As for the abducted married woman, Pesynthius asked Lord Lucianus to deal with this matter suitably.¹¹⁶⁶ On the basis of these letters, Wilfong’s idea that the bishop was more concerned with male culprits than with female victims can easily be proven wrong.¹¹⁶⁷ The girl Trakote appears to have had a different problem. Either she herself or her parents decided that she would not marry. It is unclear why she died, but before her death she made a confession, and the bishop is asked to inquire after the circumstances of her demise.¹¹⁶⁸

¹¹⁵⁸ *P.CrumST* 175.1+2 and *P.Pisentius* 18; *P.Pisentius* 25; *O.Mon.Epiph.* 165; *P.Pisentius* 3-4.

¹¹⁵⁹ *P.Pisentius* 39; *SBKopt.* I 295; *P.CrumST* 178.

¹¹⁶⁰ *P.Pisentius* 23, 37.

¹¹⁶¹ Beaucamp 2007, 278. However, Pesynthius agreed with the practice, following Deut. 22:29 (§8.6.3).

¹¹⁶² The abduction (ῥαπῆ) of girls is reported in *P.Pisentius* 1 (by the Atsoor); *P.Pisentius* 54 (by a shepherd); *P.CrumST* 175.1+2 (Abraham “brought me inside his house” and “bound me to him”).

¹¹⁶³ *P.Pisentius* 18-18bis report that Mark, the son of Makare, seized a girl violated (no. 18, l. 4: ἄρβιτῆς ἡβόνῃ), although she was betrothed to another man (no. 18bis, l. 2: ἐκκαῶτ ἡκερῶμε). Her husband blamed her for it and rejected her (no. 18, ll. 5-6: ἀπῆλαι [- - - ὅν λ]οῖδε ἐρος χε [ἀφῆ νοε]ῖ κ ἡμος ἐαφνοχς ἐβολ).

¹¹⁶⁴ *P.Mon.Epiph.* 136.2.

¹¹⁶⁵ *P.Pisentius* 18bis.

¹¹⁶⁶ *P.Mon.Epiph.* 136.2.

¹¹⁶⁷ Wilfong 2002, 42. The examples that Wilfong lists are drawn from reports addressed to the bishop, and do not tell much about how Pesynthius reacted (*P.Pisentius* 1, 54-55).

¹¹⁶⁸ *P.Pisentius* 31, l. 4-5: “young [girl], while she was still in the body”, l. 6: “my daughter Trako[te]”, l. 7: “in order that no husband would live with her”, l. 10: “this small transgression”, l. 16: “she made her declaration”; ll. 20-25: “your benevolence” is asked to contact “those who were with her at the end, when she went to rest”.

D.2 *The Encomium on Pesynthius*

Bishop Pesynthius is praised for taking care of all the traditional categories of people in need, like the orphans, the widows, the weak, the proselytes, and those who were hungry, thirsty or naked.¹¹⁶⁹ The *Encomium* describes how he distributed the contributions that he received every year: he gave alms himself or ordered John to do it, or he sent goods to pious people, in order that they would distribute them among those who needed them, especially during winter.¹¹⁷⁰ His generosity was not limited to his own diocese, but allegedly extended to every village and city as far as Aswan (§8.5.2). It is even said that, when he was informed that the Persians were coming, he distributed everything that he had, including his pillow.¹¹⁷¹ The claim that anyone who came to him received whatever he asked, is nuanced by the anecdote on the soldier who wanted to test the bishop's generosity: Pesynthius, who knew that he had robbed and killed someone, scolded him and the soldier returned empty-handed.¹¹⁷²

In prayers the deceased Pesynthius is invoked as “the bishop of our bodies and our souls” and as “the bishop of our poor diocese”.¹¹⁷³

E. Education and discipline

E.1 *Episcopal documents*

Dataset 4 includes just one reference to episcopal instruction: Kalapesius requested the bishop to reassure a baker that baking is useful work.¹¹⁷⁴

Various documents reveal that the bishop made inquiries,¹¹⁷⁵ or asked local agents to investigate a matter, for instance, whether Psmou and HjiI had already prayed to confirm that their children will marry.¹¹⁷⁶ Pesynthius also received requests to examine a problem.¹¹⁷⁷

At the bishop's command several people were excommunicated: an archdeacon, who was so angry about the sanction that he menaced the messenger and appealed to magistrates for support; the priest Cyriacus, who caused a scandal by meeting a married woman, although he previously promised to avoid her; Mark, who abducted a girl who was already spoken for,

¹¹⁶⁹ *S*, fols 50a-b. The hungry, thirsty and naked recall Matthew 25:35-36.

¹¹⁷⁰ *S*, fols 42b-43a (= *Q*, fol. 56) and 80a.

¹¹⁷¹ *S*, fol. 80a.

¹¹⁷² Compare *S*, fols 42b (= *Q*, fol. 56) and 74b-76b.

¹¹⁷³ *O.Crum* 25; Kaiser Friedrich Museum 9876: ed. Cramer 1949, 40-41, pl. 6.

¹¹⁷⁴ *P.Pisentius* 25, l. 6.

¹¹⁷⁵ *P.Pisentius* 16, ll. 1-3: “Well, you asked my humility about (...)”; 14, ll. 12-13; 19, ll. 2-3.

¹¹⁷⁶ *P.Pisentius* 15, ll. 3-4: “Well, your fatherhood wrote to us that we should ask (...)”.

¹¹⁷⁷ Requests to make inquiries through witnesses (ϣΙΝΕ ΖΙΤῆ): *P.Pisentius* 3, l. 61 and 4, ll. 70-71; to inquire after a matter (ϣΙΝΕ ΝΑ): *P.CrumST* 175.1+2, l. 9 and *P.Mon.Epiph.* 466, l. 16 (partly reconstructed); to investigate a matter (ΜΟΥΡΤ): *P.Pisentius* 19, l. 14 and 31, ll. 22, 25.

and the people who rejected her, including the priest Paul, who had to come and admit that he acted unjustly; a man whose wife could not be reconciled with him (and the sender did not blame her, but did what the bishop had ordered, as if this outcome was already expected); a baker; and several bakers, who kindled too many ovens during a period of fasting.¹¹⁷⁸ The bishop actually prohibited the Eucharist in a village, where people fought with weapons, and probably at Pshenhor, since villagers had stolen the team of oxen of a monastery.¹¹⁷⁹ The authorities and villagers of Kratos apologized for celebrating (mass or a feast?) in a careless manner, and hoped that the bishop would forgive them.¹¹⁸⁰

The bishop warned that clergymen who allowed excommunicated bakers to partake from holy Communion would be excluded from the clergy.¹¹⁸¹ The priest Cyriacus was even close to being degraded, since he had met Pehroudion's wife outside of the monastery, although he had sworn to Bishop Pesynthius that he would avoid contact with her, in order to prevent a scandal. When Pesynthius heard about their meeting, he summoned Cyriacus and spoke to him menacingly, but Cyriacus begged for forgiveness and persuaded him by swearing an oath. At a council, in the presence of the bishops Pesynthius, Pisrael of Qus, Anthony of Ape and the hermit Psan, Cyriacus swore with his hand on the four Gospels that he had never approached the woman inappropriately. He added that, if he swore a false oath, he would be excommunicated and degraded,¹¹⁸² and promised never to contact the woman again, or to let her come to the monastery, or to give anything to her or her husband.

At the order of the patriarch two more councils needed to be organized. In ca. 615-620 the bishops Pesynthius, John (of Edfu) and John, the archimandrite and Epiphanius were exhorted to convene, in order to judge an affair according to the authority of the ecclesiastical canons (§3.2.8), and in ca. 620 the patriarch ordered that a council should be held, in order to investigate the case of the monk Elisaius (§3.1.7).¹¹⁸³ Several bishops were involved, such as Constantine, Shenoute and Pisrael, but remarkably, Pesynthius cannot be linked to the event.

¹¹⁷⁸ *P.Pisentius* 9: l. 11: [ΚΩ ΠΠ]ΑΡΧΙΔΙΑΚ(ΟΝ)ΟC ΖΙΒΟΛ; *P.Pisentius* 11: excommunication is implied by Cyriacus' appearance before a tribunal of religious authorities; *P.Pisentius* 18bis, 5-6: CΕΖΙΒΟΛ, Ν]ΓΚΑΛΛ ΖΙΒΟΛ; *P.Pisentius* 18ter, l. 8: ΑΪΛΦΟΡΙΖΕ ΠΜΟQ; *P.Pisentius* 25, l. 9: ΑΚ]ΚΕΛΕΥΕ ΝΑΪ ΕΚΑΛΛ ΖΙΒΟΛ; *P.Pisentius* 60.

¹¹⁷⁹ *P.Pisentius* 26, l. 7: "We are excommunicated" (ΕΤΖΙΒΟΛ), l. 10: "he will not hold mass at the *topos* again [...]" (ΗΛQΤ ΦΑ); *P.Pisentius* 2, l. 3: "The Pshenhorites who are excommunicate (ΕΤΖΙΒΟΛ)".

¹¹⁸⁰ P.ANU Classics Museum 75.01, verso, l. 4: "we have been careless"; l. 5: "celebrate in it (in church?) as in the [drinking] places" (ΠΗΛΑΝC[Ω?]); l. 9: "our negligence".

¹¹⁸¹ *P.Pisentius* 60, fragment 1: "Clergymen who will administer holy Communion to them will be excluded from the liturgy of the priesthood" (ΦΩΠΕ ΖΙΒΟΛ ΝΤΑΙΤΟΥΡΓΙΑ [ΝΤΜΝΤΚΛΗΡΙΚΟC], as on fragment 3); fragment 2: "he] who will do this will be excommunicated (ΦΩΠΕ ΖΙΒΟΛ) as well [...] the people of his village".

¹¹⁸² *P.Pisentius* 12, ll. 23-24: "estranged from the communion of the holy mysteries and the hand that is upon me" (his ordination through the laying-on of hands would be undone).

¹¹⁸³ *P.Mon.Epiph.* 133, l. 8; *P.Pisentius* 10, ll. 9-10.

Dataset 4 does not record instances when the bishop imposed fines or ordered that someone was arrested, as Abraham did (§6.4.E).

Bishop Pesynthius tried to solve conflicts within and between communities, but was not always successful. On account of the quarrel between the monk Moses and fellow-monk, whom Moses called “the way-layer”, the bishop visited their monastery and was kind to all the brethren. However, since the brethren thought that the bishop authorized them to decide about Moses as they pleased, they expelled him from the monastery and subjected him to a trial, where the “the way-layer” uttered unbearable words, supported by “three idiots”.¹¹⁸⁴ In reply to a letter from the bishop Moses apologized for making a critical remark (largely lost) and elaborated on what “the way-layer” said that made the monks decide to expel him.¹¹⁸⁵

The conflict between the village of Pshenhor and an unspecified group (tax-collectors or cattle-thieves?) formed another difficult case for the bishop. When the Pshenhorites stole cattle from a nearby monastery, the bishop excommunicated them.¹¹⁸⁶ A headman replied in defense that the villagers were robbed first: in the course of five years, men came at night to deport cattle three times. The first two times he informed the bishop, hoping that the latter would help the villagers, but he did not come with a solution. When the villagers stole cattle from the congregation, the first thing he did was to send a letter of reproach, which they forwarded to the financial administrators. That night, Pshenhor was robbed for the third time, and the value of the stolen animals equaled the tax of Pshenhor for six years. The headman pleaded the bishop to find a solution, but also warned him that, if he “spends another five years without jumping on our case, there will be no durable peace”.¹¹⁸⁷

At another occasion, there was a violent confrontation between Persian (?) authorities and the Pshenhorites.¹¹⁸⁸ The *lashane* Abraham informed the bishop that the authorities were guilty of evil deeds and bloodshed among the poor, and was displeased to notice that Pesynthius could think that the blame was on him or on the Pshenhorites. Abraham asked the bishop to make inquiries through particular reliable individuals, who would confirm that the villagers did nothing wrong. Although it is not explicitly stated, Abraham clearly wanted to prevent that the bishop imposed a sanction on his village. When he wrote, Pesynthius did not yet act as a mediator, but as a religious leader who called members of his flock to order.

¹¹⁸⁴ *P.Pisentius* 6.

¹¹⁸⁵ *P.Pisentius* 47.1.

¹¹⁸⁶ *P.Pisentius* 2.

¹¹⁸⁷ *P.Pisentius* 3, ll. 59-60.

¹¹⁸⁸ *P.Pisentius* 4, ll. 40: Van der Vliet proposes to translate $\bar{\nu}\epsilon\zeta\omicron\upsilon\gamma\iota\alpha$ $\epsilon\tau\epsilon\rho\omicron\lambda$ neutrally with “les autorités civiles”, but since Abraham described them as barbarians (“while they eat the intestines [of this] poor [people]”), and since $\epsilon\rho\omicron\lambda$ basically means “outside”, the term could refer to authorities from abroad, that is, Persians.

The bishop was also expected to solve various marital problems: a man wanted to give his daughter in marriage to someone working for him, but she refused to marry, saying that she would rather drown herself;¹¹⁸⁹ there was doubt whether Psmou and Hjiil had already prayed together before Apa Hello, a clergyman and match-maker, in order to confirm that their children would marry;¹¹⁹⁰ a man had who tried to abduct a girl was forced to pray in the presence of officials and clergymen, perhaps to make him promise that he would marry her, and only then her parents revealed that she was already engaged;¹¹⁹¹ Psmou's son was already betrothed, but since he started an affair with the daughter of the deacon Dios, his fiancée's parents wanted to return the bridal gift, and the clergymen of Qus tried to keep this scandal a secret;¹¹⁹² a couple broke up again, after the woman gave birth to a girl, for the man claimed that he could not be the father, since they were reconciled only six months before;¹¹⁹³ a man repudiated his wife, after finding her in a yard with another man, and neither she nor the man who was with her wanted to swear an oath to prove their innocence;¹¹⁹⁴ villagers pursued a woman to force her to be reconciled with her husband, while disobeying the orders of the priest to leave her;¹¹⁹⁵ Anthony expected that Daniel's daughter would be expelled on account of adultery, and felt uncomfortable about a colleague's order to keep aside;¹¹⁹⁶ and a woman accompanied her husband to another district, where he fell in love with another woman, who pretended to be his wife in public.¹¹⁹⁷ As Wilfong observed, Pesynthius' documents reveal "a great insistence on reconciliation when possible to avoid divorce", and in the case of adultery, the bishop ordered "not to constrain the husband to be reconciled with her".¹¹⁹⁸ However, at another occasion, he respected a woman's choice not to be reconciled with her husband and decided that the man should be excommunicated, since the blame was apparently on him.¹¹⁹⁹

Two letters concerning adultery indicate that the women involved did not marry out of love. The woman who accompanied her husband to another district remarked that her parents married her off with a man from the same village, after she made "this big [mistake?]"¹²⁰⁰ As

¹¹⁸⁹ *P.Pisentius* 13 + *P.CrumST* 180, l. 6: (The girl said: "I will) go to the water and die. I will not go [...]"). Wilfong (2002, 41-42) assumed that she was abandoned (κω), but l. 8 actually reads "May he leave with her" (μαρεκω νῆμας).

¹¹⁹⁰ *P.Pisentius* 16; cf. Steinwenter 1955, 20, n. 1.

¹¹⁹¹ *P.Pisentius* 14, l. 7: "he was about to abduct her" (εφνατωρη), but she was "betrothed" (l. 9:]ϣαωτϣ).

¹¹⁹² *P.Pisentius* 19; cf. Steinwenter 1955, 21.

¹¹⁹³ *P.Pisentius* 17; cf. Wilfong 2002, 44.

¹¹⁹⁴ *P.Pisentius* 38. In the *Encomium* the oath is part of an adultery test (§8.6.3).

¹¹⁹⁵ *P.Pisentius* 14, ll. 12-19.

¹¹⁹⁶ *P.Pisentius* 41.

¹¹⁹⁷ *P.Pisentius* 51.

¹¹⁹⁸ Wilfong 2002, 44 and *P.Pisentius* 38, l. 17.

¹¹⁹⁹ *P.Pisentius* 18ter; cf. Steinwenter 1955, 21, n. 2; Wilfong 2002, 44.

¹²⁰⁰ *P.Pisentius* 51, ll. 2, 4.

for the woman accused of “enchanting men” and of adultery, her mother declared that her son-in-law “did not hesitate to take her daughter (away)”, and that certain people involved “did not want the matter to be revealed”.¹²⁰¹ The sender apparently wanted the bishop to see that the woman is not just an adulteress, but also a victim to some extent.

Wilfong described Bishop Pesynthius as a dominant religious leader, who “sometimes threatened women and men with excommunication to get them to behave as he wanted” and attempted “to enforce biblical rules” on women, in order to control their behavior out of misogyny.¹²⁰² This impression may arise when passages regarding women in the *Homily on St Onnophrius* and the *Encomium* are read from a modern, feministic perspective.¹²⁰³ The letters present a nuanced picture of the bishop, who strongly condemned sexual offences, but was far from misogynistic. Pesynthius displayed concern for the well-being of girls and women, who were vulnerable, since they lived in a society where abductions and rape occurred frequently (§8.4.D.1). He blamed the priest Paul for rejecting a raped girl and excommunicated Mark “this criminal”; he did not force a woman to be reconciled, but ordered to excommunicate her husband instead; and he wanted to know who had abducted a poor woman’s daughter.¹²⁰⁴

E.2 *The Homily on St Onnophrius*

The *Homily on St Onnophrius* aimed to instruct laymen how they could lead a virtuous life, even if they did not live in a monastery. Pesynthius made a number of suggestions, exhorting the youth to guard their virginity until marriage, spouses to be faithful, superiors to maintain justice, the rich to be generous to the poor and to abstain from exacting usury, and everyone in general to remain patient with opponents.¹²⁰⁵ In order to really honor saints on their feast days, one should avoid exuberance and dishonesty, and strive for spiritual and bodily purity, for instance by fasting at least during Lent and on Wednesday and Friday, by being content with moderate means. In addition, Pesynthius exhorted the faithful to attend the vigil preceding the feast, to remain sober until receiving holy Communion, to behave piously also after leaving the church and to always be aware of God’s omnipresence.¹²⁰⁶ For women he had special instructions: they should avoid to make eye-contact with strange men, or impudently stare at any man, wear proper cloths that also cover their heads, be modest in their

¹²⁰¹ *P.Pisentius* 38, ll. 7-8; cf. Wilfong 2002, 42, where the text is incorrectly called “*P.Pisentius* 35”.

¹²⁰² Wilfong 2002, 30-31, without listing his sources.

¹²⁰³ Donker van Heel (2014, 71) wondered whether women would listen to “admonitions by – as so often – a man in a skirt”, a remark that voices modern scepticism towards traditional religious authorities in a humorous way.

¹²⁰⁴ *P.Pisentius* 18bis, 14 and *P.CrumST* 175.1+2 respectively.

¹²⁰⁵ Crum 1915-1917, fols 6-9.

¹²⁰⁶ Crum 1915-1917, fols 9-15, 18-26.

jewelry, always keep the Gospel in mind, and stop making noise when coming to church.¹²⁰⁷ Finally, Pesynthius instructed parents to teach their children to be respectable and to rebuke them when they fornicated, for if they did not correct their children, God would hold them responsible for the consequences (this topic reappears in E.3 and 8.6.2-3).¹²⁰⁸

The homily could have been inspired by the sermons of Shenoute of Atripe. Like him, Pesynthius called his audience “a people (worthy) of life”, and explicitly addressed men and women separately.¹²⁰⁹

E.3 *The Encomium on Pesynthius*

As a preacher and a teacher Pesynthius was compared with the apostles, particularly Paul, with the wise king Salomon and with the Cappadocian theologians Basil of Caesarea and Gregory the Theologian (of Nazianze).¹²¹⁰ He corrected a priest who spat before the altar by telling him that another priest who spat during the Eucharist fell instantly ill and died soon afterwards, since a Cherubim, who attended mass in the sanctuary and was hit by the spittle, gave him a deadly blow.¹²¹¹ By telling this story, the bishop (and the narrator of the *Encomium*) wanted to make the faithful aware of the presence of heavenly creatures during the Eucharist and to stimulate their piety in sacred spaces.

In a circular letter that is extensively quoted in the *Encomium* he argued that God delivered the country to merciless pagan nation (the Persians), in order to humiliate the people for sexual offences, like intercourse outside marriage and adultery. He blamed parents for not correcting their children: fathers did not find their sons a wife, and mothers supported their daughters, when they had illicit relations.¹²¹² In addition, wealthy laymen forgot to share their food and drinks with the poor, and even expected payment from them. Therefore, Pesynthius exhorted his flock to reflect on their sins, to repent and watch their mouths, and to have mercy with the underprivileged, in order that God would also have mercy with them.¹²¹³

When Pesynthius knew that a visitor had fornicated, he ordered to throw him out or refused to receive him.¹²¹⁴ According to another anecdote, he rebuked a man for not finding his son a wife and informed him that the son had already begotten a child. He urged the father

¹²⁰⁷ Crum 1915-1917, fols 15-16, 19. Pesynthius disliked women who sang lamentations and clapped their hands.

¹²⁰⁸ Crum 1915-1917, fols “16 *sic*”-17.

¹²⁰⁹ Crum 1915-1917, 41 n. 3 and fol. 33: **ΟΥΛΛΟC ΕΠΩΝΕ**; Wilfong 2002, 27, n. 6. Shenoute used the phrase “whether male or female” to stress the unity of the monastic community during crises; cf. Krawiec 2002, 98.

¹²¹⁰ *S*, fol. 37a (= *Q*, fol. 46), 56a-b. In *P.Mon.Epiph.* 460 Pesynthius is compared with Basil of Caesarea.

¹²¹¹ *A*, fols 161a-163a (partly in *W*, ed. Till 1934, 37-39).

¹²¹² *Q*, fols 57-58 (= *S*, fols 43a-b), 60-61 (omitted from *S*).

¹²¹³ *Q*, fols 62-66 (= *S*, fols 43b-45a).

¹²¹⁴ *A*, fols 142b-147a (= *S*, fols 57b-58a: a shepherd), 158a-161a (two priests).

to let his son marry the pregnant girl and added that the son was excommunicated, until he had taken the girl as his wife, in order to make up for having humiliated her.¹²¹⁵

The clergymen of a village informed the bishop about a man who was excluded from Communion for accusing his wife and another man of adultery without basis. Pesynthius summoned the man, but he protested loudly and only came after falling terribly ill. The bishop told him that the woman was innocent and would soon bear a son (it is implied that he knew about this, on account of his spiritual abilities). The birth of a son would prove her innocence (or rather that, if Pesynthius told the truth about the child, he must also be right about the woman), whereas the birth of a girl would mean that she was unfaithful. If the man still did not believe that his wife was innocent, the bishop suggested the possibility to make her swear an oath and drink the “water of the curse” (§8.6.3), but the man was already convinced.¹²¹⁶

Another woman who was repudiated by her husband on account of adultery came to the Monastery of the Cross, pleading loudly that the bishop would hear her story, how her husband had wronged her and her five children by throwing them out of the house. Pesynthius summoned the husband, who voiced his suspicions, but agreed to be reconciled to her, if the man suspected of being her lover could swear before the bishop that nothing had happened. However, upon seeing the fiery eyes of the bishop, the lover readily confessed. Since the woman insisted that she was innocent, the bishop tried a trick, hoping that she would confess her adultery out of her own. At first, he pretended that her lover had reassured her husband, and suggested that she could reassure him by drinking holy oil, but when she agreed to drink it, Pesynthius admitted that he did not believe that she was innocent and warned her that the oil had killed many people. Instead of letting her drink the oil, he asked the lover to retell what had happened, while her husband was present. Afterwards, the bishop ordered the woman to be beaten and driven from before him, and to be delivered to the governor.¹²¹⁷

As in the episcopal documents, Pesynthius appears in the *Encomium* as a bishop who strongly condemned sexual offences, but cared for the well-being of innocent women; as in the *Homily on St Onnophrius* he told parents to correct their children in case of transgressions.

The Sahidic version of the *Encomium* explains that the jealous husband fell ill, since he had defied Pesynthius, but the bishop did not condemn him. By contrast, some secondary anecdotes in the Arabic version present a harsher picture of him: acting as God’s prophet, the

¹²¹⁵ *S*, fols 63b-65b.

¹²¹⁶ *S*, fols 68a-74a; Wilfong 2002, 39.

¹²¹⁷ *A*, fol. 180a-185a (*W*, ed. Till 1934, 40-43); cf. Rapp 2005, 251-52. If an adulteress repented, the *Canons of Athanasius* (Canon 74) recommended that she did penance by shaving off her hair, wearing mourning garments and fasting forty days. Afterwards, she would be readmitted to Communion, but if she was caught committing adultery again, she would do the same penance and remain excommunicated; ed. Riedel and Crum 1973, 47-48.

bishop condemned the dishonest surveyor Damian and a priest who had committed sexual crimes, announcing that they would die soon and suffer in hell. He also condemned a thief for stealing a silver cup from a church, but the latter did not die, since he returned the cup.¹²¹⁸

E.4 *The Life of St Andrew*

The Arabic *Life of St Andrew* is the only source that states that Bishop Pesynthius deposed Jacob as abbot of the Monastery of Apa Samuel (Dayr al-Sanad), on account of his excessive expenditures, and that he appointed Moses and Joseph instead.¹²¹⁹

E.5 *The Letter of Pseudo-Pesynthius*

The tenth-century *Letter of Pseudo-Pesynthius* is inspired by the pastoral epistle quoted in the *Encomium*. Like Pesynthius, the author admonished his audience for their sins, exhorted them to avoid bad thoughts and deeds, and warned them for a merciless foreign nation.¹²²⁰ Unlike Pesynthius, he claimed to have received a revelation from the Holy Spirit, focused on “the correct, orthodox faith”, and condemned people for moral and sexual offences for eternity.¹²²¹

F. Giving directions for daily life

F.1 *Episcopal documents*

The documents do not specifically record how Pesynthius morally supported individuals, but the widow Constantina was comforted by his charity towards her and her children, and the monk Moses, who was expelled from his monastery, wrote that he was consoled by a letter from the bishop.¹²²²

F.2 *The Encomium on Pesynthius*

The *Encomium* describes Pesynthius as a true comforter: “Who would come to you, his heart being sad, and not return being happy?”¹²²³

¹²¹⁸ A, fols 140b-141b, 159b-161a, 188b-189a.

¹²¹⁹ Di Bitonto Kasser 1989, 168-70.

¹²²⁰ Périer 1914, 87-88, 90-91, 445.

¹²²¹ Périer 1914, 89-90 (ideas that are considered blasphemy), 91-92 (for any Christian: oppressing others for personal gain, bearing false testimonies, being a bigamist, neglecting people in need and having illicit relations; for women: failing to correct the misconduct of daughters, meeting insensible women, being unfaithful or disrespectful towards a husband, undergoing abortion; for priests: drinking too much and misbehaving in public, administering holy Communion to “bad women”, allowing people at the altar, neglecting liturgical duties and being hypocrite). Whereas the Pesynthius of the *Encomium* and the *homily on St Onnophrius* held both parents responsible for the conduct of their children, Pseudo-Pesynthius focused on the mothers.

¹²²² P. Pisentius 39 (partly cited in Wilfong 2002, 41), 47.1.

¹²²³ S, fol. 56a; see also fol. 79b-80a: “the comforter of those who were in sorrow”.

G. Intercession with state authorities

G.1 *Episcopal documents*

Pesynthius interceded with Lord Lucianus and was also asked to contact Apa Elias, two local authorities who probably lived in the district of Hermonthis (§7.5.2), and are best discussed in the context of the bishop's pragmatic authority (§8.5.1). Only two examples are linked to his own district. The Psenhorites hoped that Pesynthius would intercede with civil authorities, in order to solve the cattle theft problem, whereas Callinicus pleaded with the bishop to request a financial administrator to stop blocking a delivery of wine, since it was about to get spoilt.¹²²⁴

G.2 *The Encomium on Pesynthius*

The *Encomium* states that “rulers became lovers of the poor in your days”, implying that this was a result of the bishop's intercession with authorities on behalf of the poor.¹²²⁵

§8.5 PRAGMATIC AUTHORITY

§8.5.1 *Episcopal documents*

Several correspondents addressed the bishop as their “patron”, including the Jemean widow who feared expulsion from her house, the priest Kalapesius from the “eparchy” of Qus, the *lashane* Abraham of Pshenhor, and Daniel and Jacob, who were in financial difficulties.¹²²⁶

Pesynthius received several requests to contact civil or religious authorities outside his own diocese. Twice, he was asked to summon a lawyer, who worked at Hermonthis, either in order to write down the arrangements for the commemorative offering for a deceased, or to draw up a contract between Lord Lucianus and financial administrators.¹²²⁷ The Jemean widow begged him to persuade the *lashane* and the official Amos to let her stay in her house.¹²²⁸ It also happened that petitioners asked Psan to forward their requests for intercession to the bishop. Through Psan Apa John asked Epiphanius and “my lords the bishops”, including Pesynthius, to write to Master Elias for the sake of a husbandman who had to sell his cattle on account of the tax, but was already a poor man.¹²²⁹ Again through Psan's mediation, Luke hoped that the bishop could write two lines to Apa Elias, in order that he would address the citizens of Hermonthis. Luke did not dare to approach Pesynthius

¹²²⁴ *P.Pisentius* 3, 21. On Callinicus' association with the district of Koptos, see §7.5.1

¹²²⁵ *S*, fols 51a-b.

¹²²⁶ **ΠΡΟΣΤΑΤΗΣ**: *SBKopt.* I 295, ll. 9-10: “who intercedes for us before God and men”; *P.Pisentius* 19; *P.Mon.Epiph.* 129, recto, and 440. The sender of *P.Pisentius* 25 is unknown.

¹²²⁷ *P.Mon.Epiph.* 254; *P.Pisentius* 20.

¹²²⁸ *SBKopt.* I 295.

¹²²⁹ *O.Mon.Epiph.* 165.

directly, but expected that the latter would not turn down a request made by Psan.¹²³⁰ Pesynthius actually interceded with Lord Lucianus on behalf of a violated woman, asking him to deal with her case suitably.¹²³¹

People also requested the bishop to solve practical and economic problems. Nastasia ran out of papyrus and asked him to send her a scroll quickly, particularly because she also made efforts for him (as a patroness?; §7.6.5).¹²³² Two nuns, Tsheere and Koshe, wanted to send him extra clothes, hoping that he would find a customer and “sell them for us”.¹²³³ Since they lived south of him, that is, south of the mountain of Tsenti or – more likely – south of the *Topos* of Epiphanius, they probably fell under the jurisdiction of the bishop of Hermonthis, instead of the bishop of Koptos. Nevertheless, Pesynthius sent them corn, either to pay for earlier deliveries or out of patronage, and they appealed to him on account of their financial problems, for they were both distressed about their work. Another request to sell items came from a certain John, who added that the bishop could keep fifteen items for himself.¹²³⁴

Finally, a petitioner asked Pesynthius to inquire after family members, since they had recently experienced hardships, and somehow, the sender could not contact them directly. In the analysis, I consider the possibility that the sender was Susanna, and that she could have needed the bishop’s mediation, if she were a nun who had renounced her family.¹²³⁵

§8.5.2 *The Encomium on Pesynthius*

The *Encomium* describes Pesynthius as “a protector, not only of our district, but of the entire country of orthodox Christians”, who “began to give alms to every city and to every village as far as Aswan”, perhaps during the nation-wide famine of ca. 615 (§6.1).¹²³⁶

§8.6 LEGAL AUTHORITY

The following section discusses the use of sources of authority in the episcopal documents, the *Homily on St Onnophrius* and the short Sahidic version of the *Encomium* respectively. As for the Biblical citations, we only examine those that appear in speeches or letters attributed to the bishop, in order to get an impression of how he used the Scripture in his argumentation.

¹²³⁰ *O.Mon.Epiph.* 172.

¹²³¹ *P.Mon.Epiph.* 136.2.

¹²³² P.Dezaunay: ed. Sottas 1922.

¹²³³ *P.Pisentius* 28, ll. 26-27.

¹²³⁴ *P.CrumST* 179.

¹²³⁵ *P.Pisentius* 40. The name appears in l. 1 is preceded by **ⲙ** and could also be a matronym.

¹²³⁶ *S*, fols 29a, 42b (= *Q*, fols 23, 56). The term used for “protector” is **ⲛⲁⲱⲧⲉ**, instead of **ⲡⲣⲟⲥⲧⲁⲧⲏⲥ**.

§8.6.1 *Episcopal documents*

Bishop Pesynthius did not use Biblical passages in the few preserved letters that are ascribed to him (*P.Pisentius* 18bis and 60, *P.Mon.Epiph.* 133 and 136.2), but referred to ecclesiastical canons once, without specifying which corpus of canons he meant (*P.Mon.Epiph.* 133). He informed Epiphanius that the patriarch asked them as well as other religious leaders to judge a case in accordance with “the ecclesiastical canons”.

The official documents attested in Dataset 4 include a contract that was still to be drawn up, a testament, and replies from financial administrators to letters from Pesynthius.¹²³⁷

Many documents refer to episcopal commands. Correspondents of the bishop wrote that they acted as he had commanded,¹²³⁸ they asked him to send instructions,¹²³⁹ or promised to act as he commanded,¹²⁴⁰ and two letters simply indicate that Pesynthius issued orders.¹²⁴¹ Two documents in Dataset 4 record that the patriarch ordered to hold a council.¹²⁴²

Pesynthius’ documents do not include protocols, on the basis of which a transgressor could be summoned and questioned, but when the bishop made inquiries, correspondents did record as accurately as possible what other people had said: that Psmou agreed to give his daughter in marriage to Hjil’s son; that Taham and her daughter did not see Psmou and Hjil pray, but saw them enter Apa Hello’s house (where they were supposed to pray) and planned to drink wine, apparently to celebrate the engagement of their children; that Papas wanted to keep the scandal of a broken engagement a secret; and that a priest protested a little against the bishop’s proposal to have a housemate and imposed conditions on the monk who was going to live with him (as an assistant or a disciple?).¹²⁴³

Three documents mention oaths.¹²⁴⁴ The priest Cyriacus had to swear an oath by the four Gospels and in the presence of Pesynthius, two other bishops and Psan, and he also confirmed the oath in writing. When a village was excommunicated, since some inhabitants had fought with weapons, the priest swore that he would no longer celebrate in their church. Finally, a woman accused of adultery and her alleged lover were given the chance to swear an oath to prove their innocence, but the fragmentary text suggests that neither of them did it. In the case of the woman, no mention is made of the “water of the curse” (§8.6.3).

¹²³⁷ *P.Pisentius* 20, l. 5: Ε[ΓΓΡΑ]ΦΟΝ; *P.Pisentius* 48: ΔΙΑΘΗΚΗ; *P.Pisentius* 3 and 21: ΑΝΤΙΓΡΑΦΟΝ.

¹²³⁸ *P.Pisentius* 15, 18ter, 23, 25, 28, 37; *O.CrumST* 176; *P.Mon.Epiph.* 460.

¹²³⁹ *P.Pisentius* 17, 28, 29, 41.

¹²⁴⁰ *P.Pisentius* 13, 22, 54; *Katoen natie* 685/1.

¹²⁴¹ *P.Pisentius* 19, 57.

¹²⁴² *P.Pisentius* 10; *P.Mon.Epiph.* 133.

¹²⁴³ *P.Pisentius* 16 and 15 respectively, 19, 29.

¹²⁴⁴ *P.Pisentius* 11 (Cyriacus), 26 (the priest), 38.

Dataset 4 does not include guarantees, but George and Enoch asked if Pesynthius wanted to receive a guarantee, since a list of items turned out to be inaccurate.¹²⁴⁵

The bishop received two requests from officials to issue letters of protection. Stephen, an urban official associated with Koptos (§7.5.1), asked Pesynthius to give Papnoute such a letter and to send him, in order that Stephen could talk to him. Stephen promised that he would uphold justice for Papnoute. Similarly, Peter, the *lashane* of Pmilis, requested the bishop to issue a letter of protection for Phello and Theodore, in order that they would go home with their families and cattle.¹²⁴⁶ Although *lashanes* were authorized to send letters of protection themselves, Bishop Pesynthius was asked to act as a mediator, since he could better convince fugitives that it was safe to go home, for if the officials did not respect the letter of protection, he would excommunicate them.¹²⁴⁷

§8.6.2 *The Homily on St Onnophrius*

The Biblical passages in the *Homily on St Onnophrius* aimed to demonstrate that Pesynthius' teachings conformed with the Scriptures and were consequently authoritative. He explicitly quoted "the holy Scripture", David, Ezekiel, "the prophet" (Amos), Jesus and Paul,¹²⁴⁸ but usually did not identify his source. Pesynthius wanted to teach his audience that:¹²⁴⁹

- the commemoration of St Onnophrius was inspired by Paul's exhortation to Christians to commemorate their leaders and to imitate their faith, for "without faith it is impossible to please God" (Heb. 13:7, 11:6);
- people should not repay evil for evil (Rom. 12:17), for David said: "If I repaid those who repaid me with evil, I will fall by my enemies" (inspired by Ps. 7:4);
- saints are not honored with words only, but expect that people are pure in body and mind and honest, for even Christ did not endure people who "honored him with their lips" and called him "Lord", but did not do as he said (Matt. 15:8; Luke 6:46);
- parents should correct their children, for "the soul that sins shall die" (Ezek. 18:4);
- feasts should be celebrated appropriately, without dishonesty, in order that God will not turn feasts into mourning and reject the offerings (Amos 8:10, 5:21; Isa. 1:14);

¹²⁴⁵ *O.CrumST* 177, l. 9: **αεφαια**.

¹²⁴⁶ P.Katoennatie 685/1, O.APM, Inv. 3871.

¹²⁴⁷ Van der Vliet 2014, 260, where the documents are called "safe-conducts". The priest John excommunicated the estate managers Patese and Himai, since they arrested someone, although they had sworn by God not to pursue him (*O.CrumST* 394); cf. Winlock and Crum 1926, 172; Schmelz 2002, 137.

¹²⁴⁸ Crum 1915-1917, fols 1 (Paul), 9 (David), 11 (Jesus), 17 (Amos), 25 (the holy Scripture, David), 27 (the holy Scripture, Ezekiel). The references to the Psalms are based on the edition of the Sahidic version, Budge 1898.

¹²⁴⁹ The following teachings appear in Crum 1915-1917, fols 1-4, 8-11, 17-18, 23, 25, 27-28, 30-32.

- after the feast, people should eat modestly, thanking God and singing Psalms in their hearts, and also share food with the poor, since Jesus said that “if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is my disciple, truly I tell you, he will certainly not lose his reward” (Eph. 5:19; Matt. 10:42);
- they should pray day and night, in order to keep the Lord in mind constantly, just as David recommended (variation on Ps. 36:4,¹²⁵⁰ 16:8);
- since the bishop believed that serious illnesses happened several times “on account of our sins”, he exhorted his audience “not to act like the pagans” (Matt. 6:7) and to stop committing sins, for “the wickedness of the wicked will not damage him on the day when he turns away from his wickedness” (Ezek. 33:12);
- God “can destroy body and soul in hell”, and people “who destroy the temple of God”, should know that the punishment for fornication will be terrible (Matt. 10:28; 1Cor. 3:17; Zech. 14:12; Isa. 66:24);
- bad habits and impure passions should be avoided, in order that people can say: “we leaped over a wall”, that is, the wall of passions (Ps. 17:29)];
- the audience should not leave these words at the church, but “write them on the table of our heart” (Prov. 7:3);
- people should reprimand sinners, in order that they can confidently say that “I will announce Your name to my brothers”, “I have hidden your Word in my heart”, and “of those whom you gave me, I lost not one” (Ps. 21:22; Ps. 118:11?;¹²⁵¹ John 18:9);
- and God desires mercy and does not want anyone to perish (Matt. 9:13; 2Pet. 3:9).

In short, the Biblical citations are almost evenly drawn from both Testaments. The Psalms and the Gospel of Matthew are quoted most often.

§8.6.3 *The Encomium on Pesynthius*

Judging from the Sahidic version of the *Encomium*, Pesynthius frequently cited the Bible, usually without indicating the exact source. He used Biblical passages for various reasons:

- to reassure people that they should not worry about food or water (Matt. 6:34), for God knew what they needed, before they asked Him (Matt. 6:8) and He would provide whatever they needed (Ps. 54:22), as he did for Elijah (3Reigns 17:6, 19:5-8),¹²⁵²

¹²⁵⁰ Budge 1898, 39; not identified by Crum (1915-1917, 64, n. 3).

¹²⁵¹ Fol. 32: ⲁⲓⲧⲁ[.] ⲉⲙ ⲡⲁⲛⲏⲧ, not identified by Crum (1915-1917, 66). The Sahidic version of the proposed Psalm reads ⲁⲓⲛⲱⲡ ⲛⲏⲉⲕⲱⲗⲁⲭⲉ ⲉⲙ ⲡⲁⲛⲏⲧ; ed. Budge 1898, 127.

¹²⁵² S, fols. 33b, 47a-b (= Q, fols. 37, 70-72), 49a-b, which also cites Luke 12:24.

- to disclaim the merit of catching a fish for a sick monk by saying that God, who sent Daniel a meal, also provided the fish (Bell and the Dragon in Daniel 14: 33-39);¹²⁵³
- to pray that God would make the water rise from the well, just as Jesus ordered Peter to walk on water (Matt. 14:29), for Pesynthius forgot to bring his rope and bucket;¹²⁵⁴
- to reprimand his flock in a pastoral epistle, arguing that God allowed terrible things to happen on account of their grave sins, just as God punished the pharaoh with plagues, the Sodomites with sulfur and fire, and the fallen angels with imprisonment in endless darkness (Ex. 7:14-14:21; Gen. 19:24; Gen. 6:1-4, but retold as in 2Peter 2:4); that, if God had not promised that there would be no flood, he would already have erased the world with a second flood (Gen. 8:21); that the sins of his flock are worse than the Biblical sins, for parents knew that their children fornicated and allowed it to happen (Lam. 4:6; Rom. 1:32); that more plagues will come, “incurable and without passing”, if the people do not chastise themselves and “produce fruit worthy of repentance” (Deut. 28:59; Matt. 3:8); that they should repent and have mercy with others, in order to receive mercy themselves (James 2:13; Tob. 4:7, 4:10, 12:8; Luke 16:19-25); and that everyone will be judged on the basis of what he has done (2Cor. 5:10);¹²⁵⁵
- to reprimand John for accepting cheeses from a shepherd who had raped a girl, and for hiding them among other cheeses, thinking that the bishop would not know, just as Gehazi tried to fool Elisha (4Reigns 5:20-27; also cited are Ps. 141:5; 1Cor. 5:11; Heb. 13:4, 12:16; 1Cor. 6:9);¹²⁵⁶
- to urge a father to let his son marry the girl who carried his baby, and that the father was to blame, if he taught his son weakly, just as the priest Eli was blamed for the misconduct of his sons (variation on Deut. 22:28-29; 3Reigns 2:12-34);¹²⁵⁷
- to disclaim the healing of a boy by saying that “everything is possible for him who believes” (Mark 9:23).¹²⁵⁸
- to remove a man’s doubts about the fidelity of his wife by suggesting the possibility of making her swear an oath and letting her drink from the “water of the curse”: if she was guilty, her body would be “covered by leprosy”, but if she was innocent, the water

¹²⁵³ *S*, fols. 34b (= *Q*, fol. 39).

¹²⁵⁴ *S*, fols. 36a (= *Q*, fol. 44).

¹²⁵⁵ *Q*, fols 58-66 (much abbreviated in *S*, fols 43b-45a).

¹²⁵⁶ *S*, fols 60b-61b.

¹²⁵⁷ *S*, fols 64b-65a. Deut. 22:28-29 stipulates that the rapist should give the father of the victim fifty silver pieces and marry the girl, but Pesynthius argued that the rapist should give the girl “the crown” of marriage.

¹²⁵⁸ *S*, fol. 68b.

would not harm her and she could still bear children (cf. Num. 5:11-31, where the abdomen of a guilty women would swell up and her thighs would waste away);¹²⁵⁹

- to warn a murderer that his blood would be shed as well (Gen. 9:6);¹²⁶⁰
- to explain John that God protects the faithful from evil (Ps. 90:9-10, 13-15);¹²⁶¹
- to refuse food by recalling Jesus' words at the Last Supper, that He would not drink wine until he was reunited with the Apostles in his Father's Kingdom (Matt. 26:29);¹²⁶²
- finally, Pesynthius warned on his deathbed that wolves would enter the garden, and people would do as they pleased, "since the wall was smashed" (inspired by Acts 20:29 and Prov. 25:28).¹²⁶³

Pesynthius admonished people by comparing them to "bad guys" in the Old Testament (the pharaoh, the Sodomites, fallen angels, Gehazi and Eli's sons), but when he wanted to reassure others or stimulate their faith or benevolence, he cited 3Reigns, Tobit, the Psalms and the Gospels of Matthew and Mark.

The bishop knew what Deuteronomy and Numeri prescribed in case of rape or alleged adultery. He agreed that a rapist should marry his victim and stay with her, in order to compensate for having ruined her chances for marrying unblemished, but he did not mean that women accused of adultery should actually drink the "water of the curse". When Pesynthius mentioned the adultery test as a legal possibility to a jealous husband, he did not intend to place the burden of proof on the wife, as Wilfong argued,¹²⁶⁴ but tested the man's obedience. The aim of the anecdote was to demonstrate that the man was punished with illness after loudly refusing to obey Pesynthius, and that he was healed when he finally obeyed by coming to the bishop. By that time, he was convinced of Pesynthius' spiritual authority and no longer dared to disobey him.¹²⁶⁵ Since the man listened to the bishop and finally believed that his wife was innocent, she did not have to undergo the test. Likewise, Pesynthius prevented the repudiated wife from actually drinking the holy oil, for he did not propose the test to let the liquid expose her as an adulteress, but hoped that she would make a confession out of fear that the oil may kill her (§8.4.E.3). The anecdotes on "the water of the curse" may shock many

¹²⁵⁹ *S*, fols 72b-73a.

¹²⁶⁰ *S*, fols 75a-b.

¹²⁶¹ *S*, fols 77b-78a.

¹²⁶² *S*, fols 81a-b.

¹²⁶³ *S*, fol. 82a.

¹²⁶⁴ Wilfong 2002, 39.

¹²⁶⁵ *S*, fols 73a-b: "The man said: "From the moment when your fatherhood spoke with me, my heart was already convinced. And I will never stop obeying you again".

modern readers, especially since the test was only proposed for women and not for men, but we should also think about what happened if a woman was found guilty of adultery. Could it be that the bishop treated her harshly, in order to prevent an angry mob from taking the law into their own hands and killing her, as the Pharisees in John 8:1-11 planned to do (following Deut. 22:22).¹²⁶⁶ The novel and the film *Zorba the Greek* (from 1946 and 1964 respectively) demonstrate that a widow caught in a one-night stand still faced lynching in modern Crete.

Since Pesynthius cited Deuteronomy and Numeri, Wilfong argued that his attitude toward women was based on the Old Testament and his behavior toward men on the Gospels and the Pauline epistles, while implying that the bishop was misogynistic.¹²⁶⁷ However, the analysis of Biblical citations in the Sahidic version of the *Encomium* revealed that the bishop chose bad male examples from the Old Testament to correct John or instruct his flock. Even if the views of the historical bishop on women were traditional (misogynistic in modern eyes), he cannot be called misogynistic on the basis of a hagiographic text, since it presents the image of Pesynthius that a later author wanted his audience to remember. In fact, the *Encomium* indicates that the bishop's attitude towards women was reasonable, when he defended an unjustly accused wife, and did not enforce the adultery test on a woman whom he actually considered guilty.

The Sahidic version of the *Encomium* mentions the *Canons of the Bishops* once with regard to the annual contributions that Pesynthius received from the faithful, which is likely to refer to the *Didascalia* and the *Apostolic Constitutions*.¹²⁶⁸

§8.7 THE WEIGHT OF THE EPISCOPAL OFFICE

According to the Arabic version of the *Encomium*, Pesynthius endured many problems at the beginning of his episcopate.¹²⁶⁹ Many men had unlawful relationships, by marrying a niece or two sisters, or by having intercourse with mother and daughter. Many people – even clergymen and magistrates – behaved badly, since they did not know about (or rather, fear) God, nor did they believe in the day of Resurrection. People disrespected Pesynthius, calling him a “muddled lunatic” or a “one of the interfering busy-bodies who does not know what he says”. They also called him names or belittled him by using short names (“Pesyntiun” and

¹²⁶⁶ Daniel's daughter was about to be expelled on account of adultery (*P.Pisentius* 41). In the Arabic version of the *Encomium*, an adulteress was beaten and delivered to the governor, in order to be humiliated in public (*A*, fol. 184b-185a). This secondary anecdote may reflect the custom in Pesynthius' days or that of a later editor.

¹²⁶⁷ Wilfong 2002, 39 and pp. 30-31, where patristic authors and monastic leaders are described as misogynistic.

¹²⁶⁸ *Q*, fol. 56; *S*, fol. 42b: “the *Canons of the Apostles*”. *Didascalia*, chapter 9, section 26.2: ed. Funk 1905, vol. 1, 102 (Latin); trans. Brock and Vasey 1982, 11; reworded in the *Apostolic Constitutions*, Book 2, section 26.2: ed. Funk 1905, vol. 1, 103 (Greek).

¹²⁶⁹ *A*, fols 196a-197a.

“Pesente”), and clergymen did not correct such people, but brought them closer to the bishop, who had actually sent them away.¹²⁷⁰ It is also said that Pesynthius attracted large crowds every day, and that he did not want to take a rest, although he was exhausted, since the episcopal office was a heavy responsibility that obliged him to discipline fornicators, adulterers and impious or ambitious monks.¹²⁷¹ If he did not correct them according to the ecclesiastical canons, he feared that God would blame him for being negligent.

The episcopal documents confirm that Pesynthius was a zealous and conscientious bishop, who punished transgressors, particularly in cases of rape and adultery; that there were illicit close-kin relationships;¹²⁷² and that Pesynthius was criticized by angry people. A spokesman of the Psenhorites reproached him for not listening, for suggesting that he did not want peace, for believing accusations against him, and for not intervening in the conflict about cattle theft for five years, whereas the *lashane* Abraham of Pshenhor was insulted that Pesynthius could think that he was seeking trouble.¹²⁷³ Jacob, probably the archdeacon whom the bishop excommunicated, expressed his displeasure by threatening the episcopal messenger and by fetching magistrates to defend him, which was a blatant act of insubordination.¹²⁷⁴

Dataset 4 offers glimpses of all aspects of the episcopal office, except of mission. If we count the commemoration of Severus of Antioch and St Victor as hints for missionary activity, and the charity of rulers toward the poor as a result of intercession with civil authorities, all aspects appear in the Sahidic version of the *Encomium* (§8.4.B.3, G.2). The theme of education and discipline is the best recorded, not only in the documents, but also in the *Encomium*, the *Homily on St Onnophrius* (with a focus on education), and the *Life of St Andrew* (with an example of discipline). Pesynthius’ care for the underprivileged, church administration and the organization of worship are also relatively well attested, both in the documents and in the *Encomium*.

In the 620s, the period to which most documents are assigned, Pesynthius spent years outside of his diocese, which created more distance between him and his flock.¹²⁷⁵ However, even if the distance complicated and limited episcopal activities, particularly giving directions for daily life in private, the number of tasks was still considerable, since the bishop was also asked to intervene in various matters beyond his diocese. Other factors that made the

¹²⁷⁰ Pesente’s widow or her scribe called the bishop “Pesente” (*SBKopt.* I 295).

¹²⁷¹ *A*, fols 189b-190a.

¹²⁷² *P.Pisentius* 26, about a man and his niece. Abraham also condemned such a relationship (*O.Crum* 73; §6.4.E).

¹²⁷³ *P.Pisentius* 3, ll. 11-12, 44-46, 59-60; *Pisentius* 4, ll. 17-18.

¹²⁷⁴ *P.Pisentius* 9, ll. 4, 7-9.

¹²⁷⁵ *P.Mon.Epiph.* 152: “Were not the distance far”, the senders would have greeted the bishop in person.

episcopal office a challenge for the bishop, who was probably in his seventies, were his poor health; social unrest caused by tax problems, the Persian occupation, marauders and people lacking self-control; Pesynthius' conviction that God would blame him personally for the loss of souls, if he did not discipline his flock; and the high expectations of his petitioners, who regarded him as a holy man. Fortunately for him, officials like Lord Lucianus turned out to be cooperative, and he could sometimes work together with Epiphanius – the other holy man of the Theban region –, fellow bishops or Psan, at least during councils.

CONCLUSION

The episcopal documents and the *Encomium* reveal that Pesynthius must have been a man of immense charisma. In both kinds of texts he is described as a Spirit-bearer, who interceded with God and diffused the odor of sanctity, and as a Christ-bearer or ascetic. The combination of a strong spiritual and ascetic authority is unusual even for monk-bishops. The only person in the Theban region who could compete with Pesynthius in both respects was Epiphanius.

On account of his charisma, Pesynthius was widely regarded as a powerful patron and received several requests. Some petitioners asked him to contact civil or religious authorities in Hermonthis or Jeme, whereas others in or outside the diocese of Koptos hoped that he would solve their financial or practical problems, for instance, by selling their goods or sending a papyrus scroll. Such requests suggest that the bishop was considered accessible. At the same time, there was a physical distance between Pesynthius and his diocese in the 620s, when Pesynthius stayed in Western Thebes for years. In this period, the bishop probably was an elderly man with a poor health who could not always answer his mail himself. These conditions must have complicated his work as a bishop. If it is true that Pesynthius neglected the case of cattle theft at Pshenhor for five years, as an angry headman stated, it may have been due to the bishop's residence outside of his diocese and his condition.

The episcopal documents present a lively picture of the social problems that the bishop tried to solve, such as injustice, violence, sexual offences and poverty. Pesynthius disciplined several clergymen: he excommunicated an archdeacon, almost degraded the priest Cyriacus and summoned a priest who had unjustly expelled a girl. However, that he deposed the priest Jacob as abbot of the Monastery of Apa Samuel and appointed two new abbots in his stead is recorded in the Arabic *Life of St Andrew* only.

Interestingly, Pesynthius encouraged separated couples to be reconciled, but if the man was to blame, and his wife could not be reconciled, the bishop did not put pressure on her, but excommunicated the man. He showed a particular concern for girls and women who had been

abducted or raped and ran the risk of being rejected by their fiancé or husband and by their community. In one case, Pesynthius not only punished the violator, but also the priest who had expelled the victim. At any rate, he was not misogynistic, as Wilfong suggested on the basis of teachings attributed to him in the *Homily on St Onnophrius* and the *Encomium*.

Pesynthius' care for the underprivileged is demonstrated by his charity towards the widow Constantina and her children, and by his decision to employ a poor worker, who had young children as well. The *Encomium* praises the bishop for his generosity, stating that he distributed his income to the poor, particularly during winter and even beyond the boundaries of his diocese: he allegedly sent alms to Aswan, perhaps during the great famine of ca. 615.

Pesynthius' reputation as a living saint did not prevent some people from expressing strong criticism. The headman of Pshenhor reproached him for not intervening in a case of cattle theft for five years, and for believing false accusations. The monk Moses was displeased that the brethren thought that the bishop had authorized them to expel Moses from the monastery. In a second letter he apologized for a critical remark. The Arabic version of the *Encomium* states that Pesynthius felt disrespected at the beginning of his episcopate.

Like Abraham, Pesynthius was a conscientious teacher. The *Homily on St Onnophrius* and the *Encomium* indicate that he instructed his followers to be sincere, to avoid sexual offences, to live modestly and to share what they had with the poor. According to both sources, he exhorted parents to teach their children to be respectable and to correct them in case of fornication. The *Homily on St Onnophrius* added that he told women to stop making eye-contact with strange men, dressing fancifully and being loud. To modern readers it may seem that a bishop with such traditional views, and a monk-bishop at that, tried to control the behavior of women out of misogyny, but we should not forget the social context for which the text was meant: knowing the disruptive effect that sexual offences could have on families and communities, and how often they occurred, the bishop argued that women should avoid attracting unwanted attention, in order to protect them and maintain peace in the community.

The circular letter from the time of Patriarch Benjamin is the only document that presents Pesynthius as an expert in liturgical matters, especially with regard to the Eucharist.

Although the bishop's stay in Western Thebes is likely to have limited his activities in the diocese of Koptos, his involvement in matters relating to all four dioceses, made possible through his social network, indicate that he was a zealous bishop.

There is a clear difference between the episcopal documents and literary texts in the use of sources of authority: Dataset 4 includes commands, reports, letters of protection and some references to legal documents, whereas the *Homily on St Onnophrius* and the *Encomium*

mostly include Biblical citations. Although the low number of official documents (deeds, guarantees, appointments) is probably due to the loss of part of the archive, it is significant in comparison with Abraham's case: Abraham used written sources as instruments of authority, in order to increase his professional authority, but Pesynthius was revered as a bishop with extraordinary spiritual and ascetic authority. On account of his personal charisma, he made a memorable impression and is still commemorated as a saint.

General conclusions

The monk-bishops Abraham of Hermonthis and Pesynthius of Koptos represented a new anti-Chalcedonian church hierarchy that gradually reorganized itself, after Peter IV became patriarch of Alexandria in 576, ten years after the death of his predecessor Theodosius I. This Theodosian hierarchy is the forerunner of the present-day Coptic Orthodox Church.

Although it is likely that there were Theodosian bishops of Hermonthis and Koptos before Abraham and Pesynthius, considering the fact that they were ordained in ca. 590 and 599 respectively (§2.3.1), they still faced the challenge of organizing relatively new dioceses. Even if Peter IV ordained bishops for practically every diocese in Egypt, it is far from certain that the first Theodosian bishops of the new hierarchy actually succeeded in fulfilling their office alongside Chalcedonian bishops still in place. In addition, the Byzantine state did not persecute Theodosians, but did not officially approve their hierarchy either.

In ca. 600-630 Abraham and Pesynthius were both engaged in a regional Theodosian network, which centered on eight monastic communities, most of which were located in Western Thebes in the diocese of Hermonthis, and included other Theodosian bishops as well. Supported by this network, Abraham and Pesynthius were able to organize their individual social networks and to establish their authority. They had to deal with a number of problems both in the church and in the Theban society, which was marked by a lack of social stability, caused by violence, poverty and moral offences (§8.1). In addition, a widespread famine and the Persian conquest of Egypt disrupted the public order, and the fall of Jerusalem in 614 shocked all Christians in the Byzantine Empire (§6.1). More joyous events, which Pesynthius witnessed, were the Byzantine reconquest of Egypt and the recovery of the Cross (§8.1).

The aim of this book was to understand how Abraham and Pesynthius contributed to the rise of the Theodosian church in the Theban region by examining three aspects: their position in the Theodosian network and the wider social network in ca. 600-630, the structure of their individual social networks, and how they used their authority while doing their job. After discussing these aspects and the main research question, we will evaluate the use of combining papyrology, SNA and a model of episcopal authority as well as the strengths and challenges of applying SNA to papyrological evidence. We will conclude by proposing other archives and dossiers from Egypt, to which SNA could be applied.

1. THE POSITION OF THE BISHOPS IN THE THEODOSIAN AND THEBAN NETWORKS

The structural position of the bishops in the social network of the Theban region was analyzed by first reconstructing the network in three layers – the Theodosian, extended and Theban networks – on the basis of Dataset 1, in order to check whether differences in network size and population create significantly different results, or that the reconstruction is fairly stable. Then, the procedure for network analysis was applied to each layer and tests were run to correct the impact of documents with a disproportionately large number of social actors, or to check a different identification of certain social actors. It turned out that, apart from the order of the central actors, the networks did not change significantly, which indicates that the doubtful identification of a single person does not distort the reconstructed network much.

For the creation of all four datasets, but Dataset 1 in particular, I benefitted considerably from the recent editions of Coptic letters from the *Topos* of St Mark (*O.Saint-Marc*) and the hermitages at TT 29 (*O.Frangé*) and TT 1152 (O.MMA1152 inv.). Without these texts, the reconstructed networks would have been much less detailed.

Although the Theodosian bishops are prominent figures in the social network of the Theban region, some priests and hermits are central actors as well, and the general structure of the network is egalitarian (monastic) rather than hierarchical (ecclesiastical). In each network layer the bishops Pesynthius and Pisrael, the priests Mark, Moses and Victor, and the hermits Epiphanius, Psan and Ezekiel form a stable core group. Bishop Abraham only appears as a core member in the Theban network, which implies that he was better connected with social actors in the periphery of the network than with his colleagues or Epiphanius. New texts may connect Abraham to them, but as long as such texts are few, the impression will not change.

Since absolute and approximate dates were proposed for several documents relating to Abraham, Epiphanius or Pesynthius (§3.3), the network could also be analyzed by decade. It turns out that the network for 620-630, which is much larger than the networks for 600-609 and 610-619, considerably determined the reconstruction of the Theban network. Abraham is a central actor in the subnetworks for 600-609 and 610-619, whereas Pesynthius, who first appears in the periphery of the subnetwork for 610-619, becomes one of the central actors in 620-630. Bishop Pisrael has high centrality scores, but is less prominent than Epiphanius, a central actor in 610-619 and 620-630, and Psan, who becomes important in 620-630.

The topographical extension of the Theban network was analyzed by applying SNA to Dataset 2, in which persons are linked to localities. It turns out that, although most localities associated with Abraham were in the countryside, he was also in contact with clergymen and civil officials in the city of Hermonthis. Pesynthius' network did not only include villages or

monastic communities, but also the cities of Koptos, Qus, Hermonthis and Ape. Wipszycka's impression that the localities under their jurisdiction were located in the countryside is mainly based on *P.Pisentius*, which does not record explicit ties between Pesynthius and social actors at Koptos. This book highlights the bishop's implicit links with the cities in *P.Pisentius* and the more explicit links in groups of related texts, namely *P.CrumST* and *P.Mon.Epiph.*, which were previously overlooked. The episcopal documents create the impression that Pesynthius temporarily supervised the diocese of Qus, perhaps as an administrator, until Pisrael became bishop of Qus. That Pesynthius' jurisdiction extended beyond the formal boundaries of his diocese is not evident from the *Encomium*.

2.A ABRAHAM'S SOCIAL NETWORK

Abraham's social network was reconstructed in two layers (the ecclesiastical and complete networks), again in order to test whether or not differences in size and network population led to considerably divergent results. The complete network is more than twice as large as the ecclesiastical network and also includes monks, civil and military officials, women and unspecified groups or individuals, but the basic structure remains the same. It is a highly centralized network that has a low density (3% of all possible ties is realized) and disintegrates into many small components, when Abraham is removed from Dataset 3. Since Abraham was the head of a hierarchical institution, this result is expected, but the analysis of Pesynthius' network shows that it does not always have to be like this (see 2.B below).

Apart from Abraham himself, the central actors in his network are the priest Victor, who assisted the bishop, the monks of the Monastery of St Phoibammon (in the complete network only), the episcopal secretaries "Hand E" and "Hand F", the deacon Peter, the priests Patermoute and Papnoute, and the archpriests John and Dioscorus.

In addition to the undirected ecclesiastical and complete networks, which connect all persons attested in the same text, although not all of them were necessarily in direct contact, I also created a directed network, which only includes recorded or reconstructed reciprocal or one-directional ties. The directed network is less dense than the complete network (1.3%), and has a larger diameter, but again, Abraham is the main central actor, and he and Victor form the actual core of the network. Patermoute, Peter and the monks of the Monastery of St Phoibammon are also identified as central actors in the directed network.

On the basis of the absolute and approximate dates proposed for Abraham's documents I could create subnetworks for the periods "before 600", "600-610", "619-620" and "620-621". They formed the basis for a reconstruction of the ecclesiastical apparatus of

the Hermonthite diocese. This reconstruction was facilitated by studying the *ego networks* of Patermoute, a professional scribe who sometimes acted as an episcopal messenger, and his colleague Papnoute. It was also important to establish the order of the archpriests included in Dataset 3, and to determine whether they were active at Jeme and Hermonthis, since there were not many of them at the same time. Once they were placed in a chronological order, the people directly associated with them could also be arranged. Archpriests are known by name for all periods, except for 600-610.

The subnetworks were reused for creating a similar overview of civil and military officials in the district of Hermonthis, arranged by location and period. Again, there is less documentary material for AD 600-610 than for the other periods.

The analysis of Abraham's directed *ego network* reveals that he was in direct contact with most actors in his network (73.7%), and that most of his ties were reciprocal (66.8%). These high scores confirm Wipszycka's impression that the bishop was close to the faithful in his diocese. This is not a surprise, since half of the network population consists of clergymen, who were supervised by the bishop, but he was also close to the other half, which comprised monks, civil and military officials, women and unspecified social actors, since he was abbot of the Monastery of St Phoibammon: it lay near the town of Jeme and was the principal monastery in seventh-century Western Thebes. In addition, it was a *martyrium* that claimed to possess relics of St Phoibammon, and a charitable institution (§6.6, end).

2.B PESYNTHIUS' SOCIAL NETWORK

Pesynthius' social network was reconstructed in six layers, including undirected and directed versions of basic, extended and complete networks, in order to test the impact of the inclusion of probable and indirect ties. The extended network, which is limited to certain and probable ties, is the best approximation of the actual network, but since Abraham's complete network also includes indirect ties, I still decided to use Pesynthius' complete network for comparison.

Pesynthius' complete network is less compact than that of Abraham, but significantly stronger, since it is less centralized: without the bishop the network would disintegrate into relatively few but large components. Alternative scenarios involving Cyriacus and Bishop Pisrael were tested on the extended network, but the results of the analysis were not much different, which again indicates that a few doubtful identifications hardly distort the network.

Central actors in Pesynthius' network are Bishop Pisrael, Epiphanius and Psan, the priests Cyriacus and Mark, the deacon Phanes, the Pshenhorites, headed by the *lashane* Abraham, and the estate manager Patche (on the basis of one direct tie and an indirect one).

The reconstruction of Pesynthius' trans-diocesan ecclesiastical apparatus resulted in overviews of clergymen in the dioceses of Koptos, Qus and Ape, and in some additions to the ecclesiastical apparatus of the diocese of Hermonthis. A similar overview was made for the civil and military officials in the district of Koptos, and some state officials (or at least men of social standing) were added to the overview relating to the district of Hermonthis.

During the Persian period (620s), Pesynthius stayed in Western Thebes, in the diocese of Hermonthis, for a while. Although he was much less close to the faithful in his diocese than Abraham to his flock, both in terms of physical distance and the number of direct ties, he actively interacted with most direct ties and with various social groups. He received several requests from female petitioners, including a widow belonging to Abraham's diocese, who did not hesitate to call the bishop "Pesynte", which is quite informal. In other words, Pesynthius was physically more distant from the people in his diocese compared to Abraham, but he was still relatively well approachable on account of his strong network.

The Arabic version of the *Encomium* states that Pesynthius attracted large crowds every day, when he dwelled in his monastery in the Mountain of Tsenti, and that only four people knew where in Western Thebes he stayed during the Persian occupation. Network analysis reveals that even in the 620s Pesynthius was far from isolated. On the contrary, he even received requests to contact civil or religious authorities outside his diocese (on his own or together with Epiphanius and one or more colleagues), or to solve practical or financial problems. This is a clear indication that the bishop was considered accessible and influential, even if he was not physically close to his flock and did not "jump on a case" immediately.

3. HOW ABRAHAM AND PESYNTHIUS EXERCISED THEIR AUTHORITY

In the present secularizing Western society, which highly values individuality and autonomy, episcopal authority (or religious authority in general) is often viewed with skepticism, since many people have a negative impression of the social role of churches in the Western past. In their view, religious institutions imposed doctrines and models of behavior on the common man, whereas their representatives did not always live up to the best standards themselves. In addition, traditional religious institutions are often called paternalistic and misogynistic. If we project modern impressions on the role of bishops in a traditional society, we will not be able to fully understand how Abraham and Pesynthius functioned within their social context.

Even in traditional societies episcopal authority was not just imposed, but constructed. It was a process of social interaction, in which bishops – particularly those who represented a new hierarchy – tried to earn the respect of others, and to stimulate their cooperation, by

meeting their expectations of what bishops should do. This also implied solving mundane problems and conflicts, and disciplining transgressors. If a bishop failed to do so, the people could take action themselves and aggravate the problem, as the Pshenhorites did, when they stole cattle, after the bishop let five years pass without solving their problem concerning cattle thefts (§7.3.3). In addition, episcopal authority is not a monolithic concept, but covers five modes of authority, the proportions of which may differ from bishop to bishop, depending on their personality, skills, means and circumstances.

Abraham was both bishop of Hermonthis and abbot of the newly founded Monastery of St Phoibammon, which became an important religious and social center in Western Thebes, since it claimed to possess relics of the martyr saint Phoibammon and provided for the poor, on account of an early agreement with the town of Jeme. It is likely that Abraham's pragmatic authority, based on his leadership at this monastery, enhanced his professional authority, which gradually increased in the course of time. Abraham did not always feel taken seriously, for instance when people did not reply to his letters, and he was opposed at Timamen (in the neighboring diocese of Ape). He often used written sources as instruments of authority to confirm his professional authority, by putting important things in writing and by citing from the Bible, adding that it were not his words, but those of God or the Apostle John. No special spiritual abilities were attributed to him, but people appreciated his prayers and his ascetic authority. As a bishop, Abraham is best described as a zealous and conscientious teacher, who wanted to educate his flock by insisting on obedience, the observance of God's commands and church regulations, and the prevention of negligence for the sake of their souls. Like Pesynthius, he felt personally responsible for the spiritual well-being of his flock, but saw that many people in late antique society, including clergymen, were negligent in their behavior or work, or that they committed serious offences that could endanger the salvation of their souls. Abraham was involved in all aspects relating to the episcopal office, which indicates that he bore the full responsibility of the office, in addition to being an abbot.

In Pesynthius' case, we had the extraordinary opportunity to compare the image of the historical figure based on his professional Coptic documents with his representation in non-documentary texts. In general, the documents confirm the impression given by the *Encomium* that the bishop's spiritual, ascetic and pragmatic authority were extraordinary. Both sources indicate that he was considered as a Spirit-bearer, who interceded with God and diffused the odor of sanctity, that he was admired for his extraordinary ascetic authority, and that his social involvement (care for the underprivileged and intercession with authorities) extended beyond the boundaries of his diocese. The *Encomium* explains that his spiritual authority was based

on special spiritual abilities, such as the reading of souls, telepathy, foreknowledge, healing and knowledge of the divine, which make him comparable with Shenoute of Atripe and Padre Pio of Pietrelcina. In Western Thebes his spiritual authority was equaled by that of Bishop Ananias of Hermonthis and Epiphanius only (§3.2.1, 8.2.1). Both the *Encomium* and the *Homily on St Onnophrius* attributed to him present Pesynthius as a conscientious bishop, who repeatedly taught his flock to be sincere, to show mercy to the poor, to avoid sexual offences, and that parents should correct their children in case of unchaste behavior for the sake of their souls. The bishop insisted on purity, not because he simply wanted to impose doctrines or an ascetic model of behavior on the faithful (presenting the example of St Onnophrius is not the same thing as imposing it), but because he wanted to prevent social problems and the perdition of his flock. His documents reveal that he lived in a society where adultery, abduction and rape regularly happened, that betrothal and marriage did not protect women against such offences, and that victims ran the risk of being rejected by their fiancés and the local church. Pesynthius promoted chastity, since he knew the disruptive effect of sexual offences on the individuals involved, their families and their communities in general. Modern, emancipated readers may be shocked by the solutions that he proposed according to the *Encomium* and blame him for being a misogynistic “man in a skirt” (Donker van Heel): he exhorted a father to let his son marry the girl who was expecting his child, in order to make up for her humiliation (the son ruined her chances to marry another man unblemished, but he did not necessarily rape her); and when two women were accused of adultery, he proposed the test of “the water of the curse” or holy oil, adding that the liquid would harm adulteresses (but he did not let them drink it). These solutions are attributed to Pesynthius in different versions of a hagiographical text, which were composed after his death by editors who consciously created images of Pesynthius as they wanted their audiences to remember him, which may, but did not necessarily correspond with reality in all details. These anecdotes were included in the *Encomium*, in order to demonstrate Pesynthius’ ability to distinguish people who had secretly been unchaste from those who were innocent. It appears that the Arabic version of the *Encomium* and the Arabic *Letter of Pseudo-Pesynthius* present a harsher picture of the bishop than the early Sahidic version of the *Encomium*. In the latter, Pesynthius made a jealous husband wait, “until he had taken his punishment well” (§8.2.2), and he shocked a soldier by revealing a murder (§8.4.D.2), but he did not predict his imminent death in hell, as he allegedly did, according to the later Arabic texts (§8.4.E.3, 5).

All aspects of the episcopal office appear in the *Encomium*, but there are no examples for missionary activities in the documents. Compared to Abraham, Pesynthius was limited in

his possibilities to fulfill his office, since he stayed outside of his diocese for a while in the 620s, and since he was probably an elderly men with health issues. At the same time, he received various requests to contact civil or religious authorities outside his diocese or to solve practical problems, which indicate that he was considered accessible and influential, even if he could not solve all problems. It even appears that he acted as the administrator of a vacant see, and that his professional authority was more extensive than the *Encomium* suggests. In view of these conditions, it can be argued that the episcopal office was a heavy load for him, as the editor of the Arabic version of the *Encomium* made him confess (§8.7).

4. HOW ABRAHAM AND PESYNTHIUS CONTRIBUTED TO THE RISE OF THE THEODOSIAN CHURCH

Abraham and Pesynthius contributed to the development of the Theodosian church in the Theban region by organizing the Theodosian dioceses of Hermonthis and Koptos (Pesynthius probably supervised that of Qus as well for a while), by normalizing the relations with state officials in the region, and by making a memorable impression. After their deaths, they were both commemorated and invoked as spiritual intercessors in prayers, as is shown by the Moir Bryce diptych and the *Encomium* respectively.

Abraham was well remembered on account of the charitable fund that he established at the Monastery of St Phoibammon for the provisioning of the poor, in accordance with an early agreement between the monastery and the Jemean authorities (§3.1.1, 6.5). In his testament he decided that his successor, the priest Victor, should continue to provide for the poor, which the latter and his successors Peter and Jacob did. The fund still existed in the first half of the eighth century, and it is likely that Abraham was commemorated as long as the monastery was inhabited. However, since there was no hagiographical tradition linked to his person, he was forgotten for centuries, until the discovery of his testament.

By contrast, Pesynthius made such a memorable impression that he became the object of a cult already in the second half of the seventh century and was remembered as a powerful intercessor with God (§3.1.2). In a circular letter from ca. 643/4-665 a bishop confirmed his belief also by invoking the “thrice blessed” Pesynthius, who “brought the correct order of the celebration from the beginning” (§8.4.A.2). In addition, the Sahidic version of the *Encomium* argues that he was truly a saint by demonstrating his spiritual abilities and extraordinary generosity towards the poor. Since this hagiographical text was copied, reedited and translated in Bohairic and Arabic in order to be read in different parts of Egypt, Pesynthius’ cult was not limited to his tomb in the mountain of Tsenti, but expanded throughout Egypt, and he was even included in the Ethiopic *Synaxarium* (introduction). What makes the case of Pesynthius

special is that the image of a holy bishop does not only appear in hagiographical sources, which were created after his death, but also in the letters that he received during life. To the widow who feared to be expelled from her house, he was “our patron who intercedes on behalf of us before God and men”, “the one whom God made a true high priest”.

Apart from the bishops’ efforts to organize their dioceses, another important factor for the success of the Theodosian church in the Theban region was the presence of a monastic network that supported them. This network developed gradually and was particularly well-connected in the early 620s, when it was centered on the *Topos* of Epiphanius, where there were no less than two holy men, namely Pesynthius and Epiphanius himself. Epiphanius was already revered as a man with extraordinary spiritual and ascetic authority, when Pesynthius became associated with the *Topos* and increased its appeal as a center of spiritual power, where people could address their petitions and pleas. Psan and the priest Mark assisted in more practical matters, such as transmitting requests to the holy men or delivering messages.

5. THE COMBINATION OF PAPYROLOGY, SNA AND A MODEL OF EPISCOPAL AUTHORITY

This book, which presents an ethnographic study based on documentary papyri, combined three approaches. The papyrological approach made it possible to select relevant documents, to identify the members of the Theodosian network of the Theban region, to place central actors in a social, spatial and chronological context, to reconstruct social and topographical networks, and to prepare relational data for further analysis. Without this preparatory study the networks and episcopal authority could not have been analyzed.

Special software from SNA was used to examine networks that were too large and too complex to handle without computer assistance. *Ucinet 6* has the advantage that it can easily import Excel-files and offers enough tools for calculating the properties of the networks, and *NetDraw* makes the large amount of data visible in one image, which you can manipulate by using algorithms or rearranging nodes. SNA enabled us to study the structure of the networks and the relative centrality of Abraham, Pesynthius and other members of the Theban network therein. In addition, it helped us to see the important roles of less well-known social actors, such as the priest Moses of the hermitage at TT 29, who was a central actor in ca. 610-619.

The model of episcopal authority, which is an expanded version of Rapp’s model of leadership by monk-bishops, was introduced as an analytical tool for establishing how bishops justified their agency and, as it turned out, how respectfully others addressed them. The model made it possible to get a balanced image of Abraham and Pesynthius, since we did not focus on the most evident characteristics of the bishops, but evaluated the relative weight of all five

modes of authority, namely spiritual, ascetic, professional, pragmatic and legal authority. In the present research the modes of authority are defined in a traditional Christian (catholic and orthodox) way, but if they are taken more broadly, the model could be used to analyze religious authority in other cultural contexts as well.

6. THE STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES OF APPLYING SNA TO DOCUMENTARY PAPYRI

For several reasons it is worthwhile to apply SNA to papyrological evidence. Firstly, special computer programs can visualize complex networks and quantify their properties with a swiftness, accuracy and completeness that humans cannot achieve. Secondly, even if a dossier is fragmentary, and the exact nature of the relations are unclear, it is still possible to conduct a general analysis, since the co-appearance of two individuals in a document is already significant: it indicates that they were approximate contemporaries. Thirdly, SNA can be applied both on huge datasets, as Ruffini did for the analysis of the social networks in Oxyrhynchus and Aphrodite, and on smaller datasets, which make it easier to follow the social actors and to create directed versions of the networks. Fourthly, the use of quantitative tools generates concrete data that can support or contradict general impressions. The analysis of the directed *ego networks* confirmed Wipszycka's impression that Abraham and Pesynthius were close to their flock, although the proportions of their direct and reciprocal ties varied. Fifthly, the analysis may reveal that less well-known persons occupy structurally important positions in the network, such as the shepherds in Ruffini's study and Bishop Ezekiel in this book (§4.2.3). Sixthly, the reliability of a reconstructed network can be evaluated by testing alternative scenarios. If the results do not change considerably, the network is fairly stable and the results can be trusted. Finally, the visualization of subnetworks by period can facilitate a chronological reconstruction.

However, the application of SNA to documents also requires patience and endurance. Firstly, it requires a thorough prosopographical study, in order to carefully identify the social actors and the nature of their social ties. When the documents are fragmentary, this can be a difficult task and may necessitate the researcher to make his/her interpretations and choices explicit in the form of summaries and schematic representations. Secondly, the organization of the relational data requires precision and consistency, especially when the researcher plans to reconstruct directed networks. He/she must decide when a tie is defined as a reciprocal or one-directional tie. Thirdly, it is time-consuming to prepare datasets, particularly when they include *matrices* for the reconstruction of directed networks. Errors are easily made and not easily detected. During the analysis it may turn out that newly edited texts should be added to

the datasets, or that a text can be interpreted in a different way. Fourthly, it is economic to replace names of persons and documents by numbers, but when new texts are added to the datasets, all these numbers need to be corrected. Finally, it takes time to develop a procedure for analysis that generates results that can be used to answer research questions.

7. DESIDERATA FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

SNA can be useful for the analysis of various Egyptian networks. The anecdotes in the *Apophthegmata Patrum* (fourth-sixth century) are an important source for establishing relations between the monastic communities at Nitria, Kellia and Sketis, whereas other networks reconstructed on the basis of archives or dossiers. When combined, the Coptic documents relating to Epiphanius, Psan, Victor, Mark, Moses, Ezekiel and Djor can be used to reconstruct the monastic network in seventh-century Western Thebes into more detail than in §4.2-3; the Coptic dossiers of Frange of TT 29 and Isaac II and Elias II of the *Topos* of Epiphanius should be combined for a similar network for the eighth century. Other potentially interesting archives are those of the hermit John of Asyut (Greek; fourth century); Flavius Patermouthis, son of Menas, from Syene (Greek/Coptic; late fifth-early seventh century); the tax collectors Theopemptos and Zacharias, perhaps at Hermonthis (Greek; 624-626; §2.1.1); the Monastery of Apa Apollo in Bawit (Greek/Coptic; sixth-eighth); Qurra ibn Shariq, the governor of Egypt (Greek/Arabic; early eighth century); and the archives of various individuals and families in Western Thebes from the eighth century. Once the professional scribes, clergymen and civil officials of Jeme are arranged in a chronological order, it will be possible to analyze the social network of Western Thebes in the course of the eighth century. Such a chronological study is exactly what I plan to do in a following research project.

Bibliography

ABBREVIATIONS

<i>AB</i>	<i>Analecta Bollandiana</i>
<i>AfP</i>	<i>Archiv für Papyrusforschung</i>
<i>ASAE</i>	<i>Annales du Service des antiquités de l'Égypte</i>
<i>BASP</i>	<i>Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists</i>
<i>BEC</i>	<i>Bibliothèque d'études coptes</i>
<i>BIFAO</i>	<i>Bulletin de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale</i>
<i>BiOr</i>	<i>Bibliotheca Orientalis</i>
<i>BSAC</i>	<i>Bulletin de la Société d'archéologie copte</i>
<i>CdE</i>	<i>Chronique d'Égypte</i>
<i>CBC</i>	<i>Cahiers de la Bibliothèque Copte</i>
<i>CE</i>	<i>The Coptic Encyclopedia</i> , 8 vols., edited by A.S. Atiya. New York: Macmillan.
<i>CSCO</i>	<i>Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium</i>
<i>JbAC</i>	<i>Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum</i>
<i>JECS</i>	<i>Journal of Early Christian Studies</i>
<i>JCS</i>	<i>Journal of Coptic Studies</i>
<i>JCSCS</i>	<i>Journal of the Canadian Society for Coptic Studies</i>
<i>JJP</i>	<i>The Journal of Juristic Papyrology</i>
<i>JJP Suppl.</i>	<i>The Journal of Juristic Papyrology, Supplement Series</i>
<i>JNES</i>	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
<i>JRAS</i>	<i>Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society</i>
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
<i>MDAIK</i>	<i>Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo</i>
<i>OLA</i>	<i>Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta</i>
<i>PSBA</i>	<i>Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology</i>
<i>PAM</i>	<i>Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean</i>
<i>PO</i>	<i>Patrologia Orientalis</i>
<i>ROC</i>	<i>Revue de l'Orient chrétien</i>
<i>SKCO</i>	<i>Sprachen und Kulturen des Christlichen Orients</i>
<i>SOCC</i>	<i>Studia Orientalia Christiana Collectanea</i>
<i>ZPE</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik</i>

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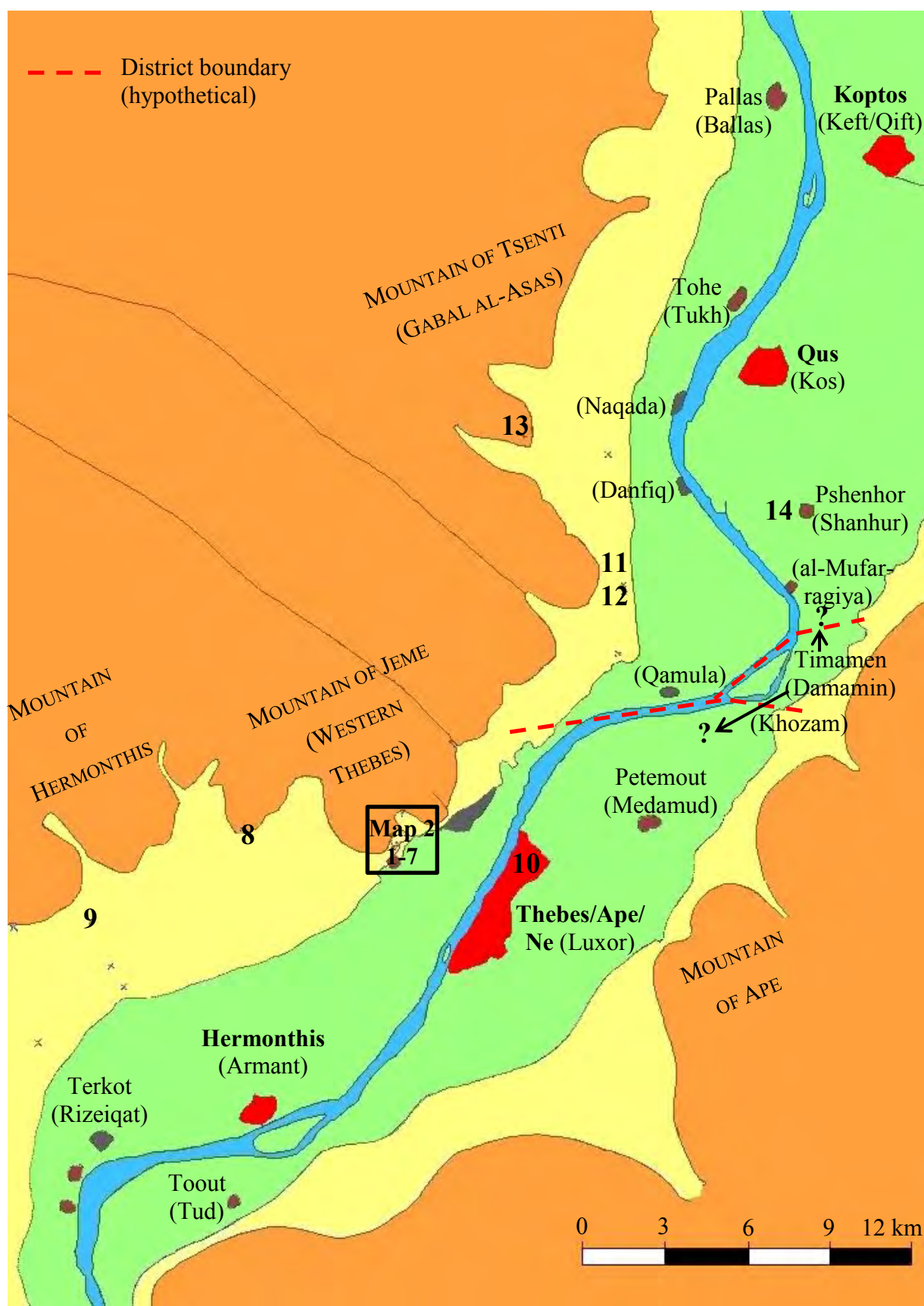
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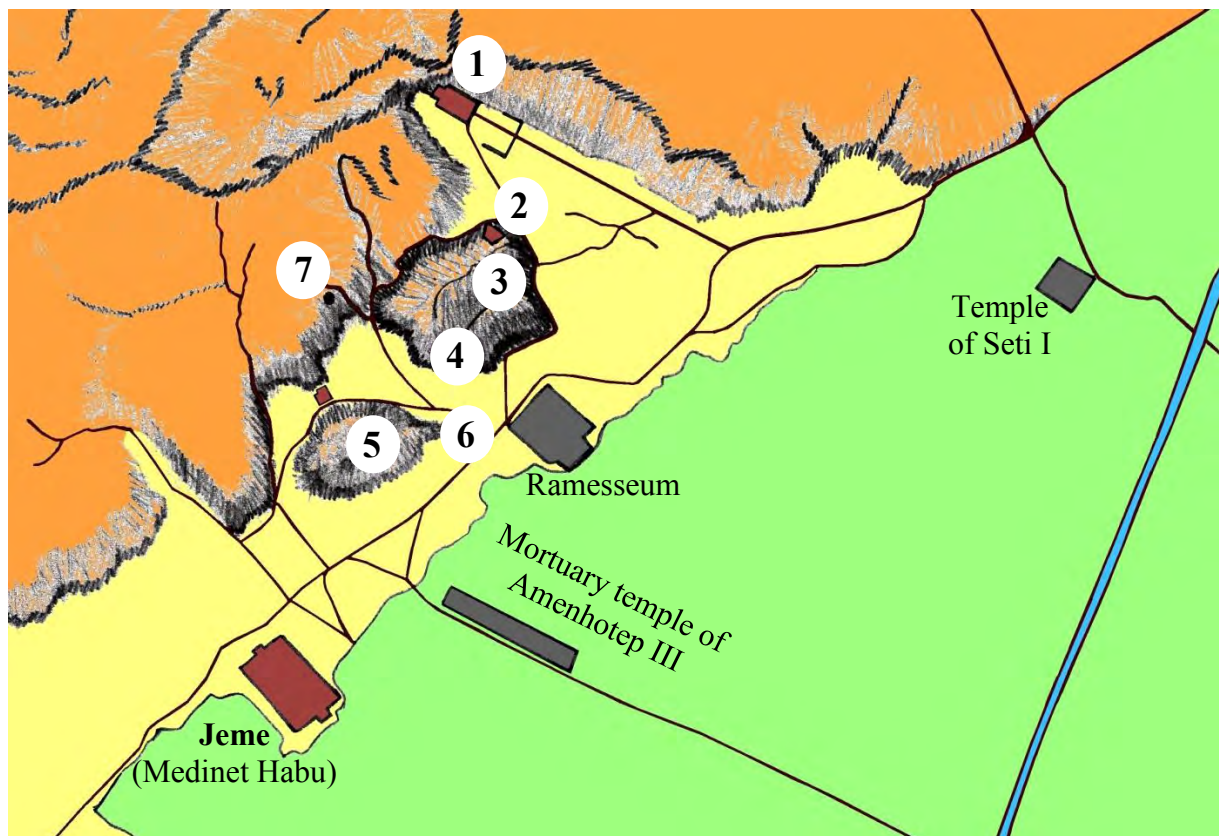
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Map 1: The districts of Hermonthis and Koptos



For the monastic communities, numbered nos 1-14, see the legend below Map 2.

Map 2: Western Thebes



1. The Monastery of St Phoibammon at Dayr al-Bahri, Bishop Abraham's residence.
2. The *Topos* of Epiphanius, temporarily Bishop Pesynthius' residence.
3. The hermitage of Cyriacus at TT 65-66.
4. The hermitage of the priest Moses at TT 29.
5. The *Topos* of St Mark the Evangelist at Qurnet Muraï.
6. "Baugruppe B" north of the German House.
7. The hermitage of Ezekiel and Djor at TT 1152.
8. The Place of Apa Terane (Dayr al-Nasara).
9. The *Laura* of St Phoibammon.
10. The community headed by "the archimandrite" at Karnak.
11. Bishop Pesynthius' monastic residence (Dayr al-Majma'/Dayr Mar Girgis).
12. Bishop Pesynthius' tomb (Dayr Anba Bisintaus).
13. The Monastery of Apa Samuel of Phel (Dayr al-Sanad /Dayr al-Gizaz).
14. The Monastery of Apa Macarius, son of Patoure.

PLATE 1: COLORS USED TO DISTINGUISH SOCIAL ACTORS, DIOCESES AND TIE STRENGTH

Datasets 1, 3–4: Social actors

	Patriarch
	Bishop
	Archpriest
	Priests, (arch)deacons, readers, clergymen.
	Episcopal secretary
	Monks, abbots, hermits, archimandrites.
	Military officials
	Civil officials
	<i>Lashanes</i>
	Women/girls
	Other people (unspecified)

Dataset 2: Dioceses

	Alexandria		Qus
	Antinoopolis		Ape
	Asyut		Esna
	Hermonthis		Edfu
	Koptos		Location unknown

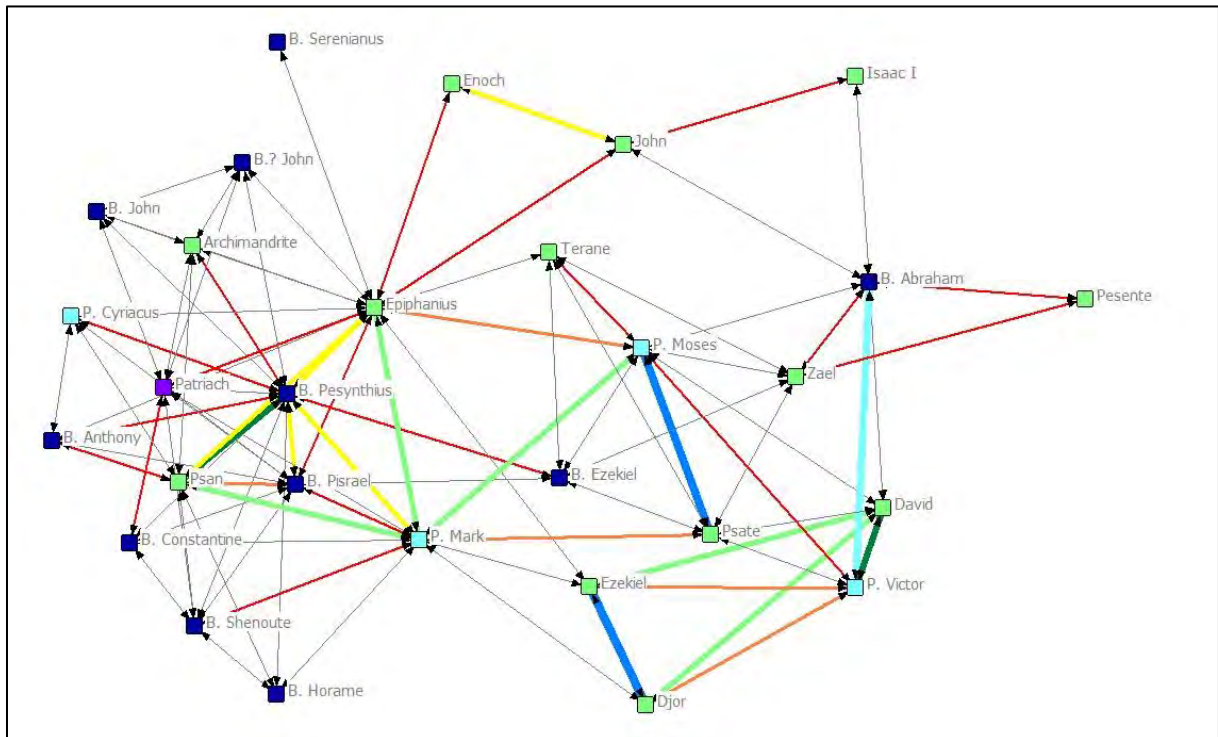
Dataset 1: Tie strength

	More than 10 ties		5 ties
	10 ties		4 ties
	9 ties		3 ties
	8 ties		2 ties
	7 ties		1 tie
	6 ties		

Note: - The images are also available in full size in the folders Dataset 1-4 on the CD.
- The option to render strong ties as thick lines did not work in the smaller networks.

PLATE 2: GRAPHS OF DATASET 1

1. The Theodosian network



2. The extended network

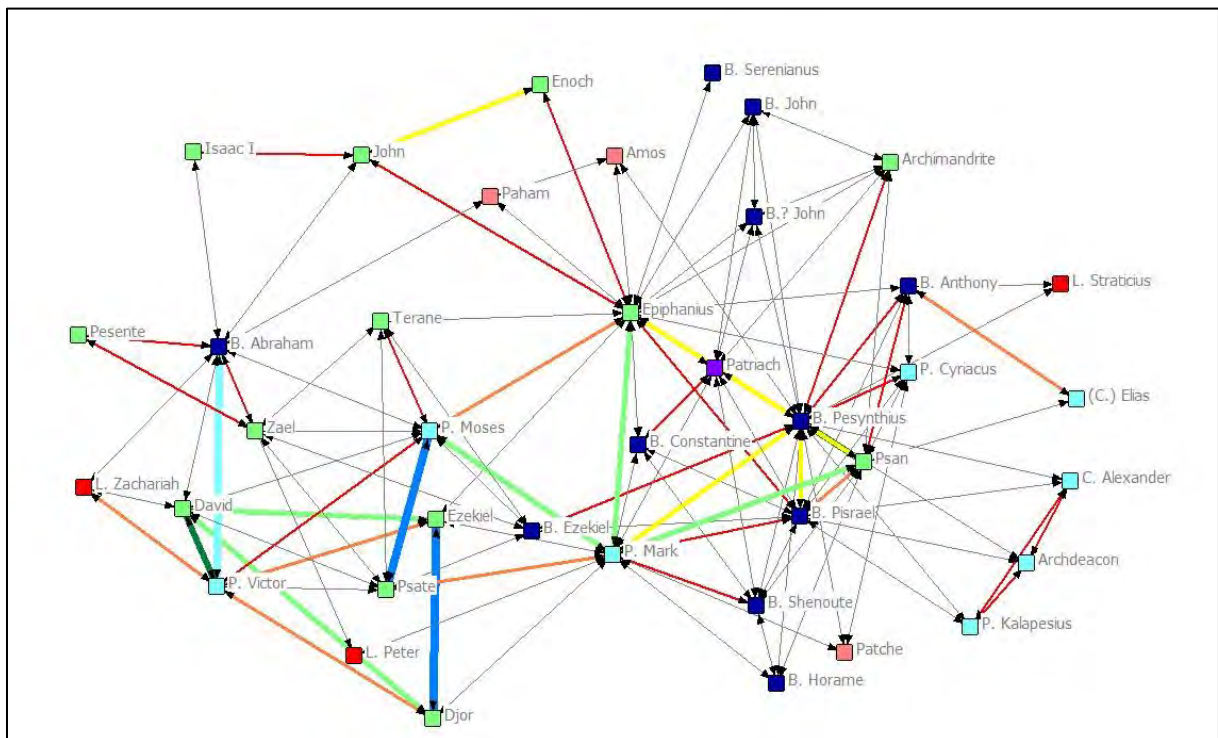
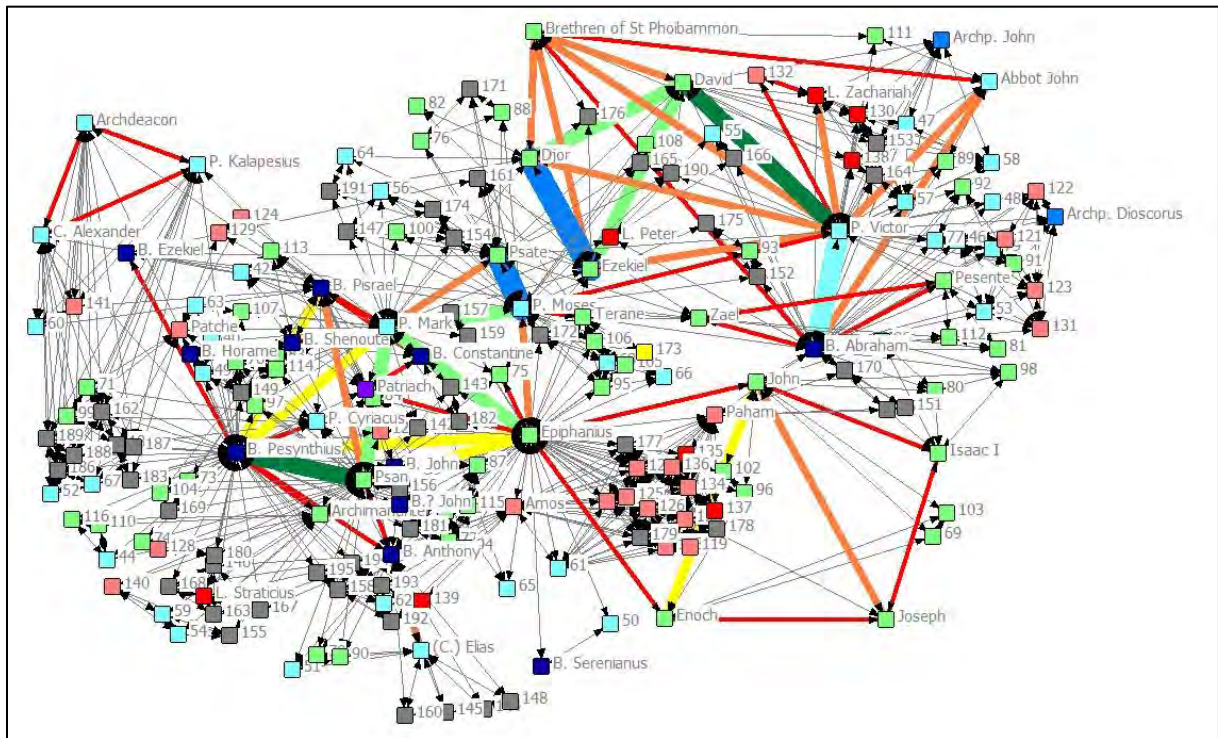


PLATE 3: GRAPHS OF DATASET 1

3. The Theban network



4. The Theban network – Tie strength (ties stronger than 1)

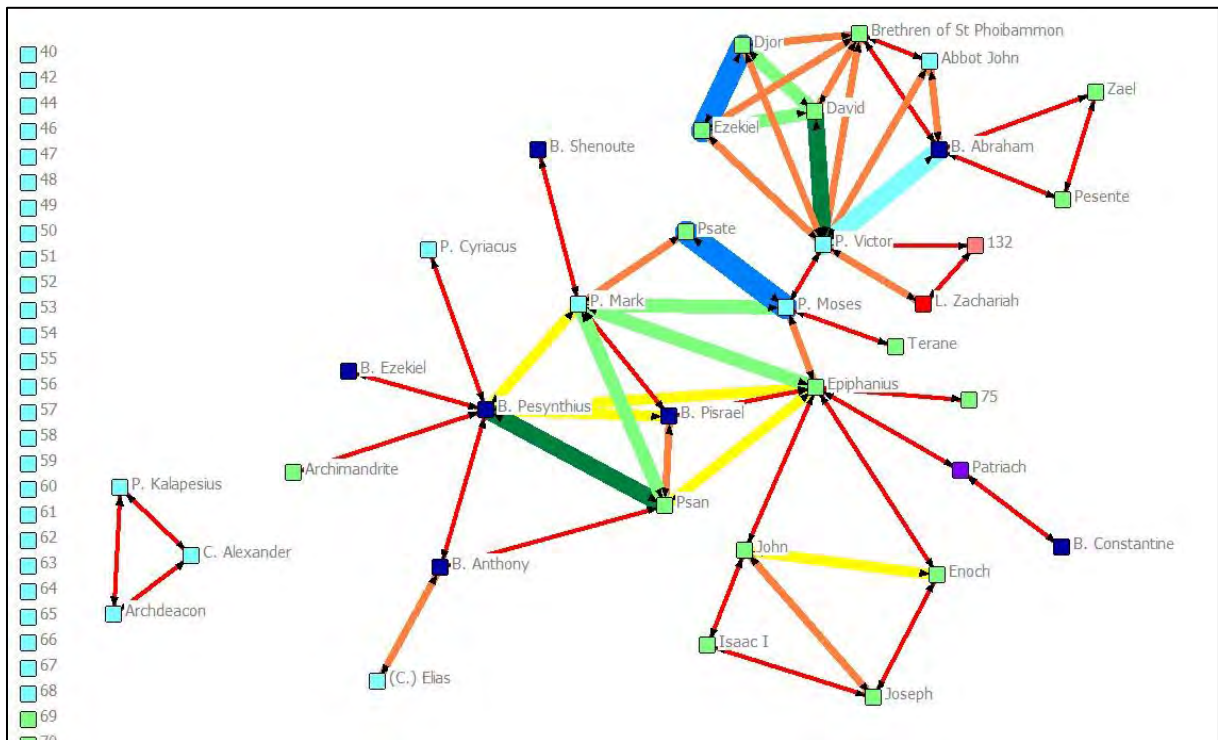
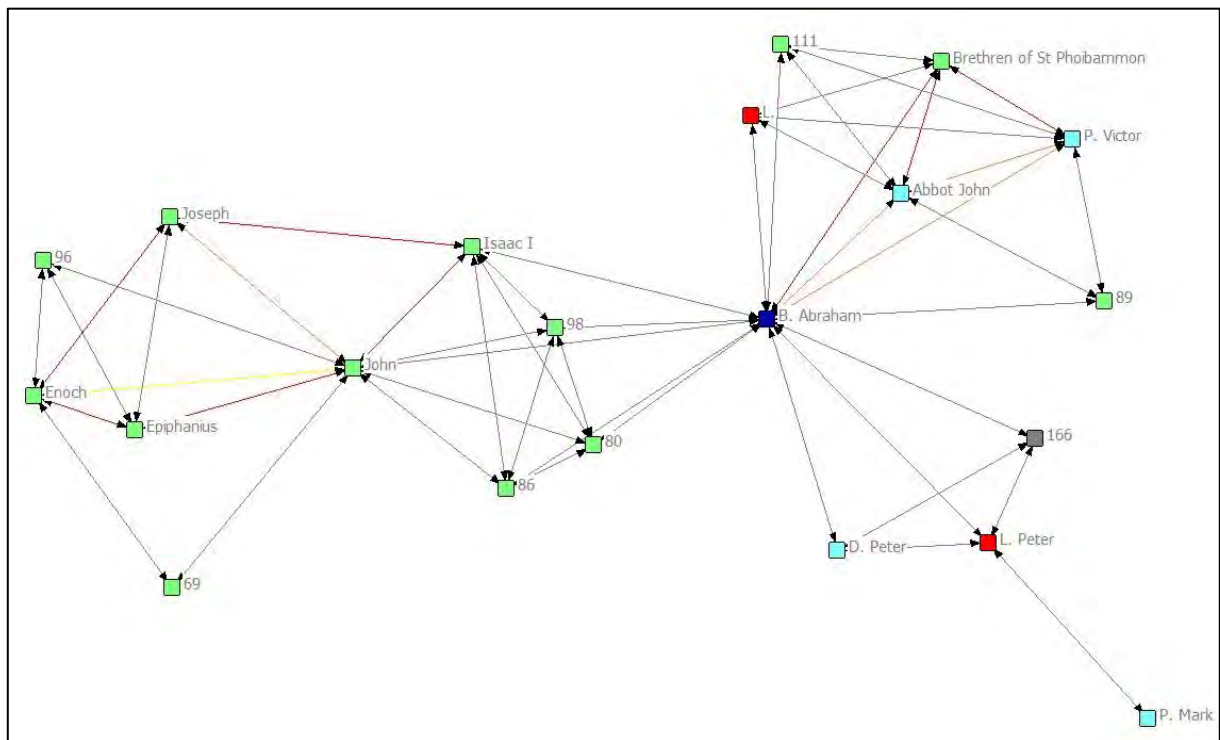


PLATE 4: GRAPHS OF DATASET 1

5. The network in 600-609



6. The network in 610-619

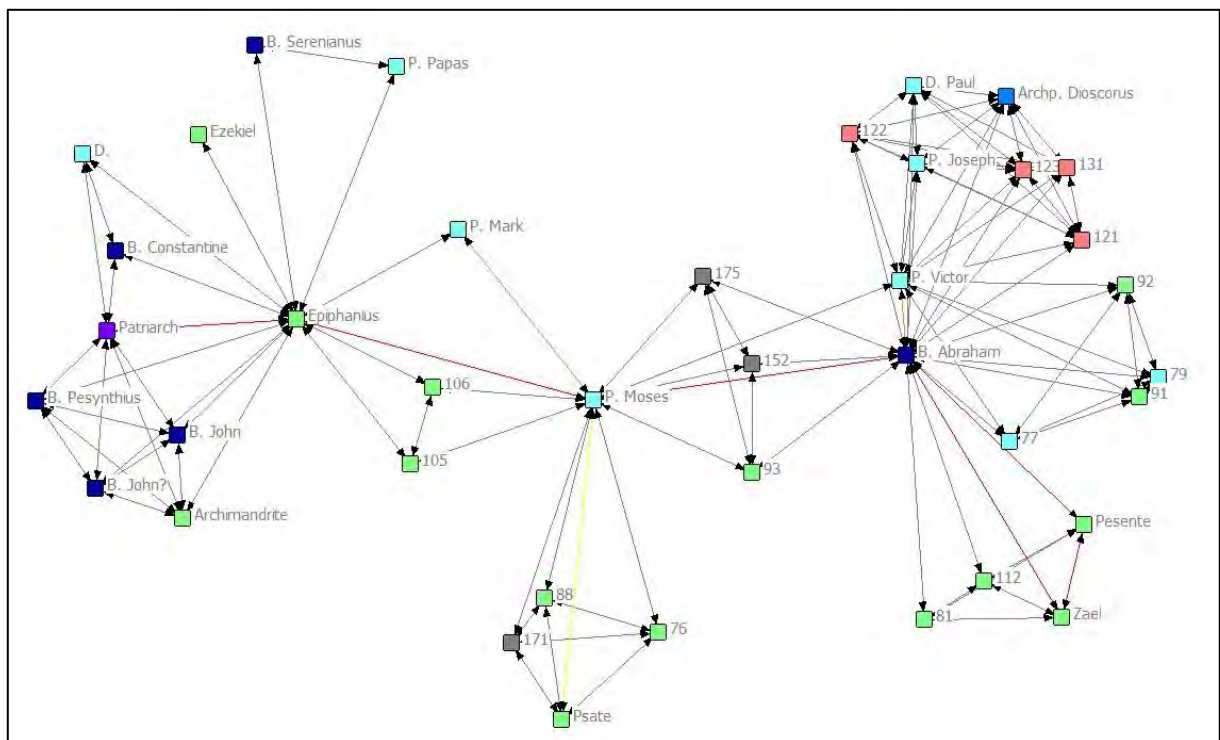
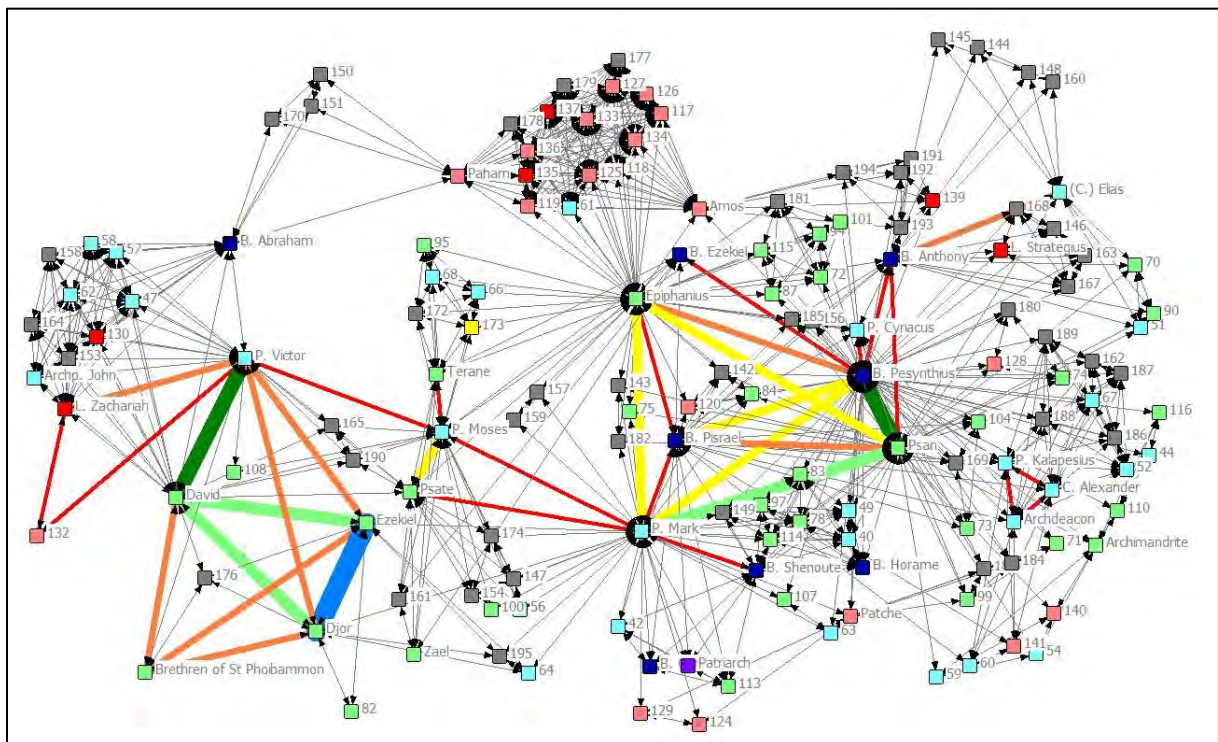


PLATE 5: GRAPHS OF DATASET 1

7. The network in 620-630



8. *The network in 620-630 – Tie strength (ties stronger than 1)*

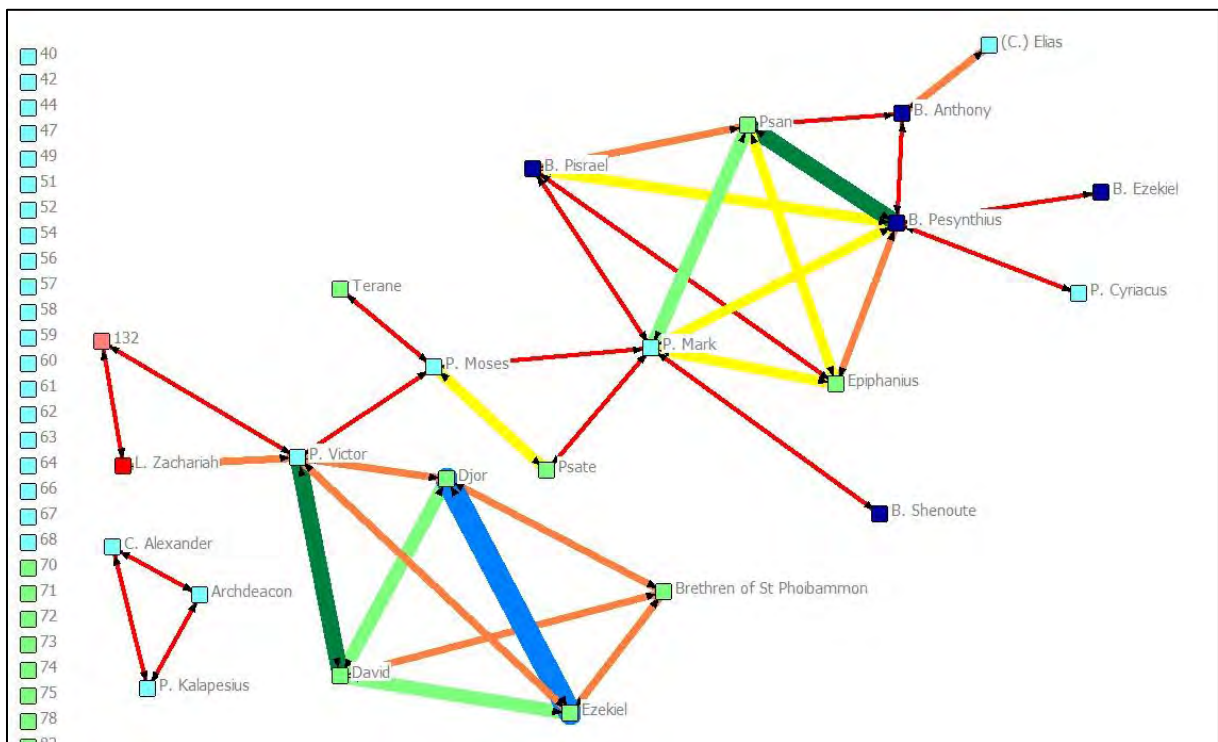
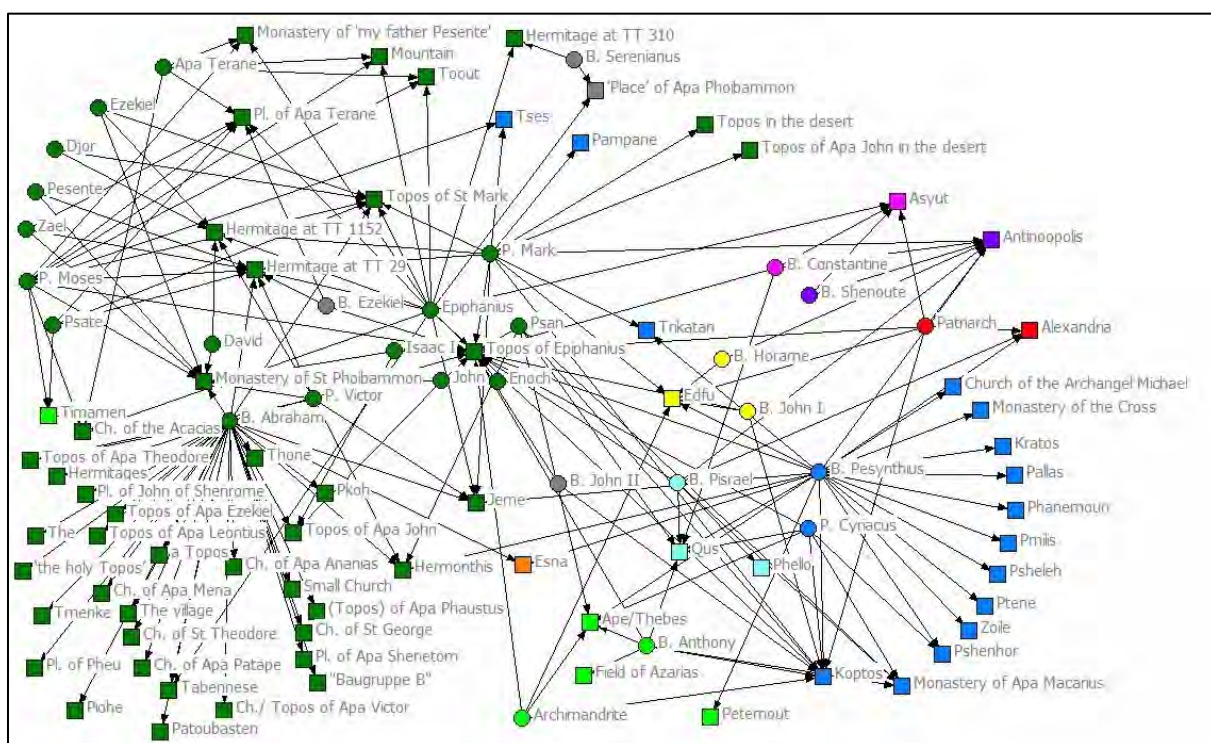


PLATE 6: GRAPHS OF DATASET 2

9. The complete two-mode network



10. Localities associated with the bishops Abraham and Pesynthius

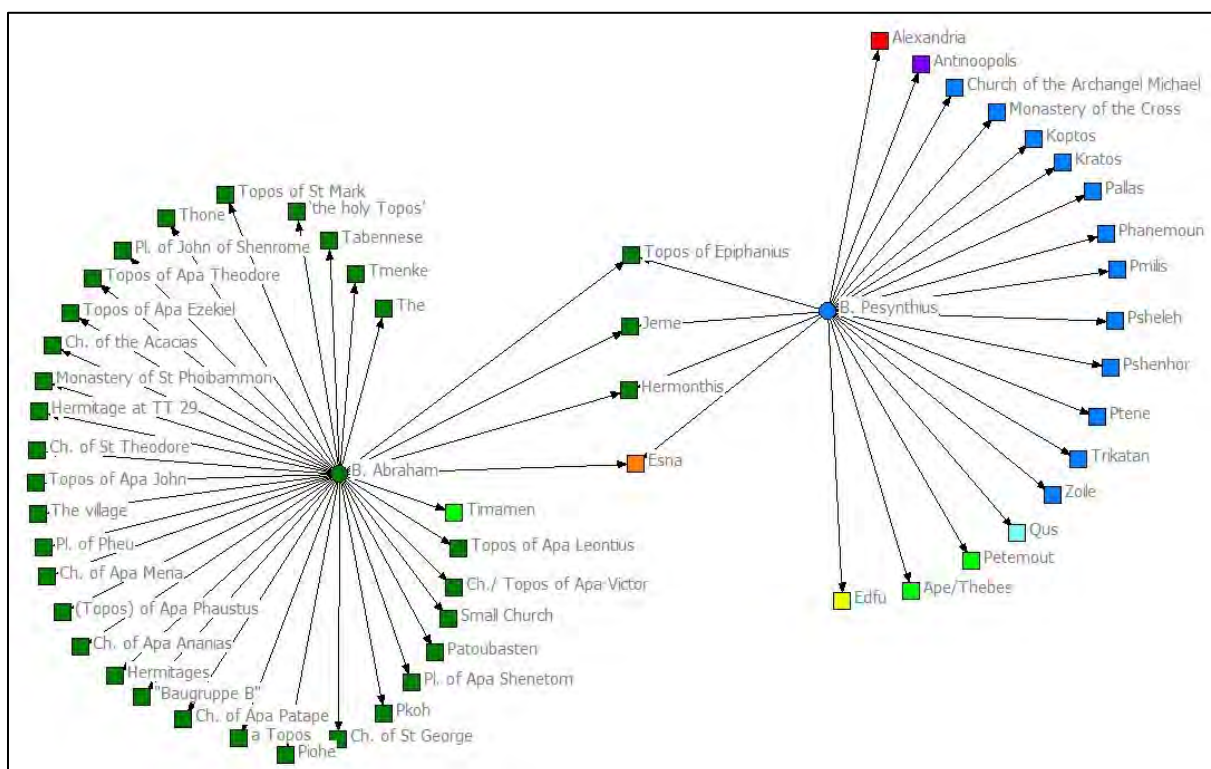
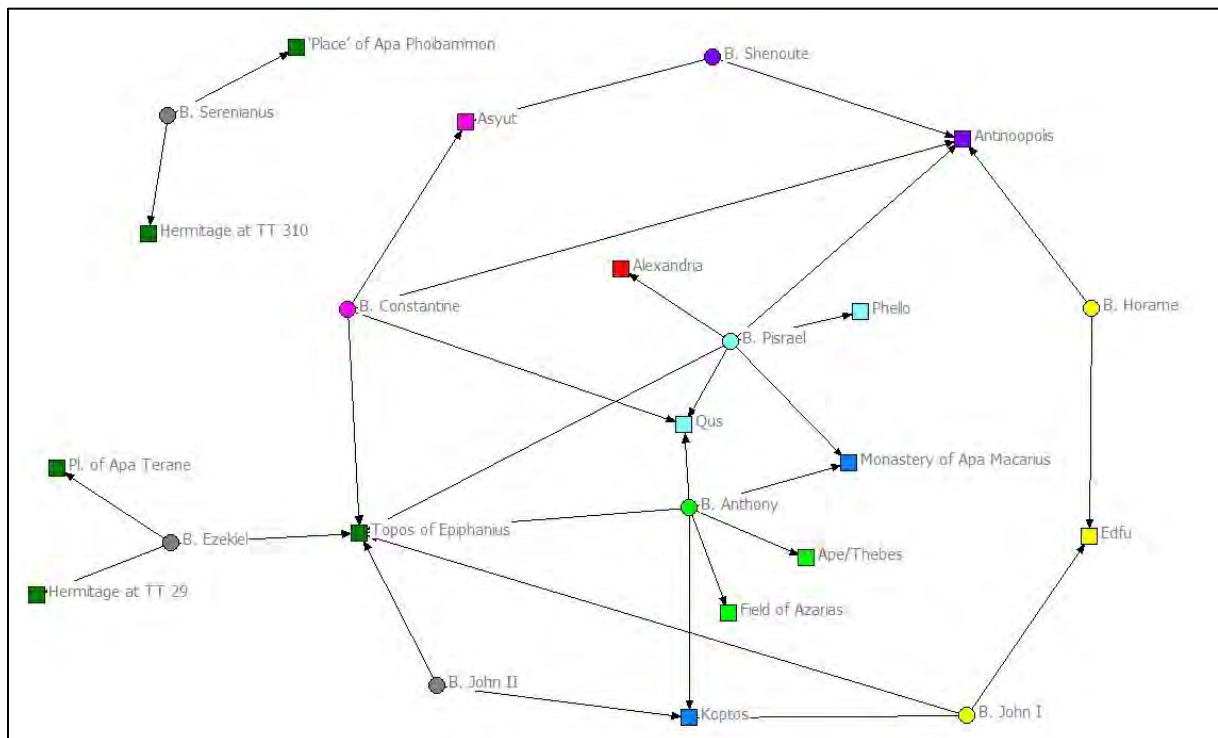


PLATE 7: GRAPHS OF DATASET 2

11. Localities associated with the other bishops



12 Localities associated with Epiphanius, Pisan, Mark and Moses

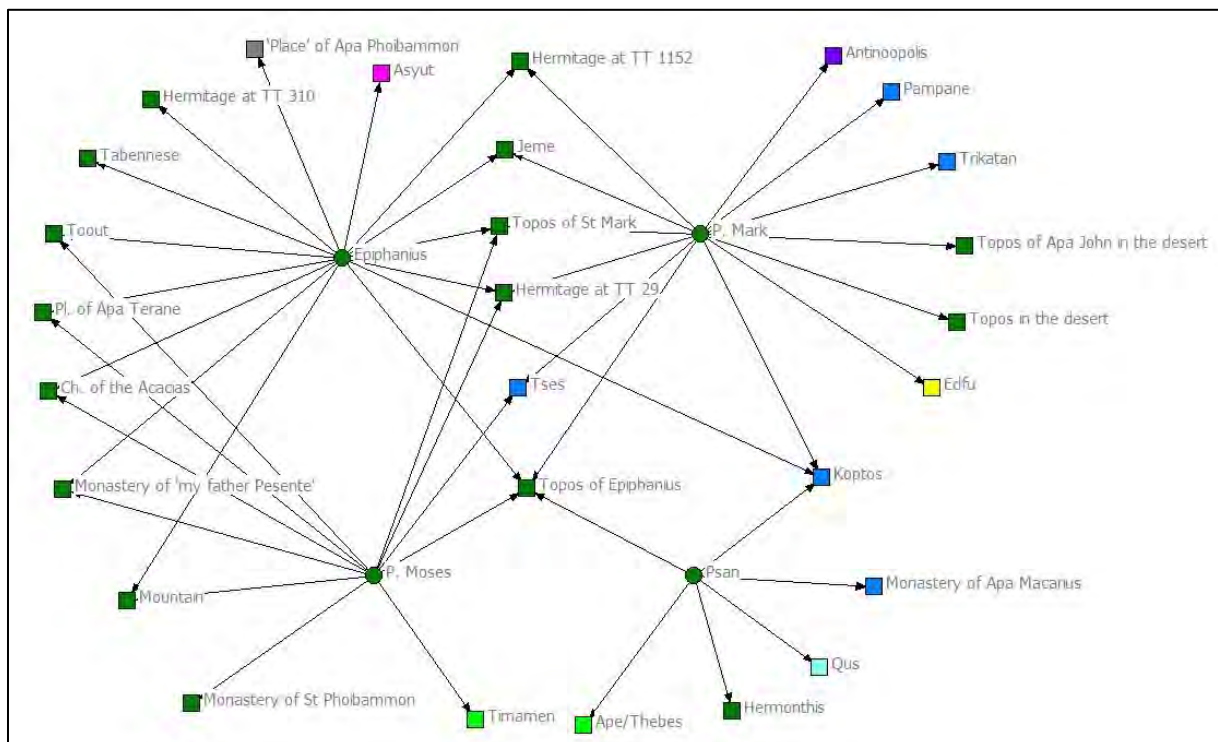
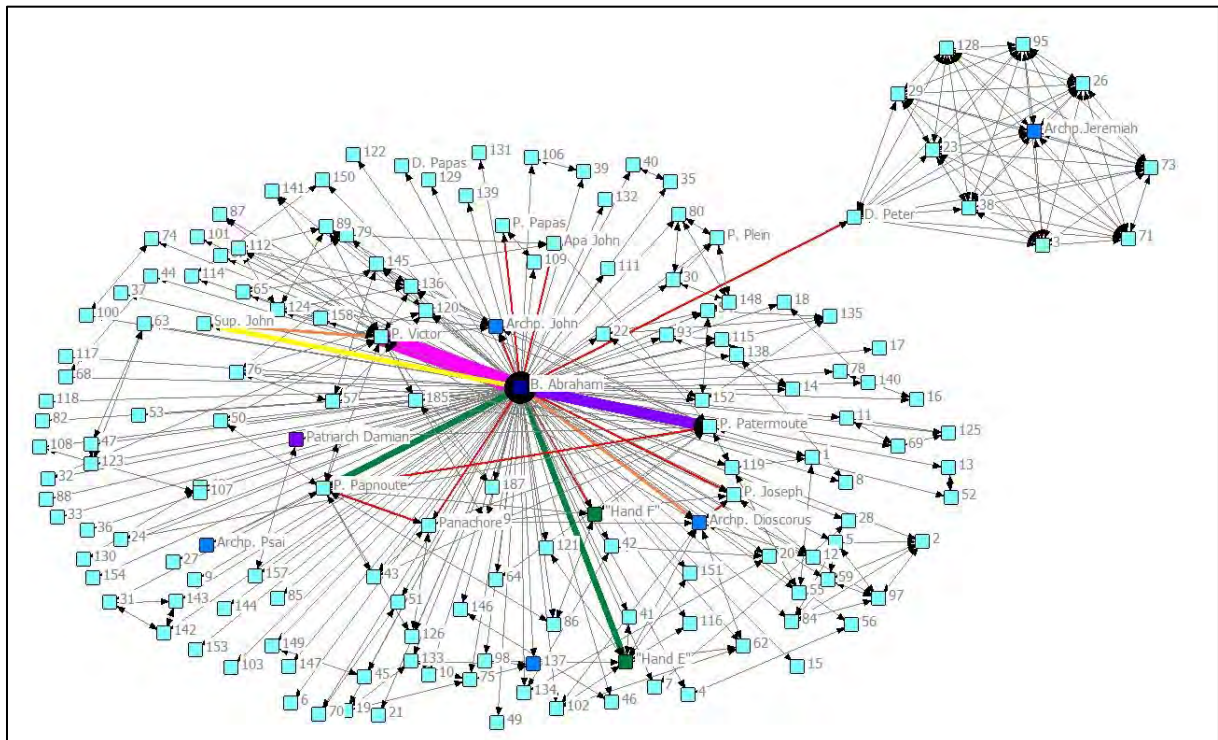


PLATE 8: GRAPHS OF DATASET 3

13. The ecclesiastical network



14. The complete network

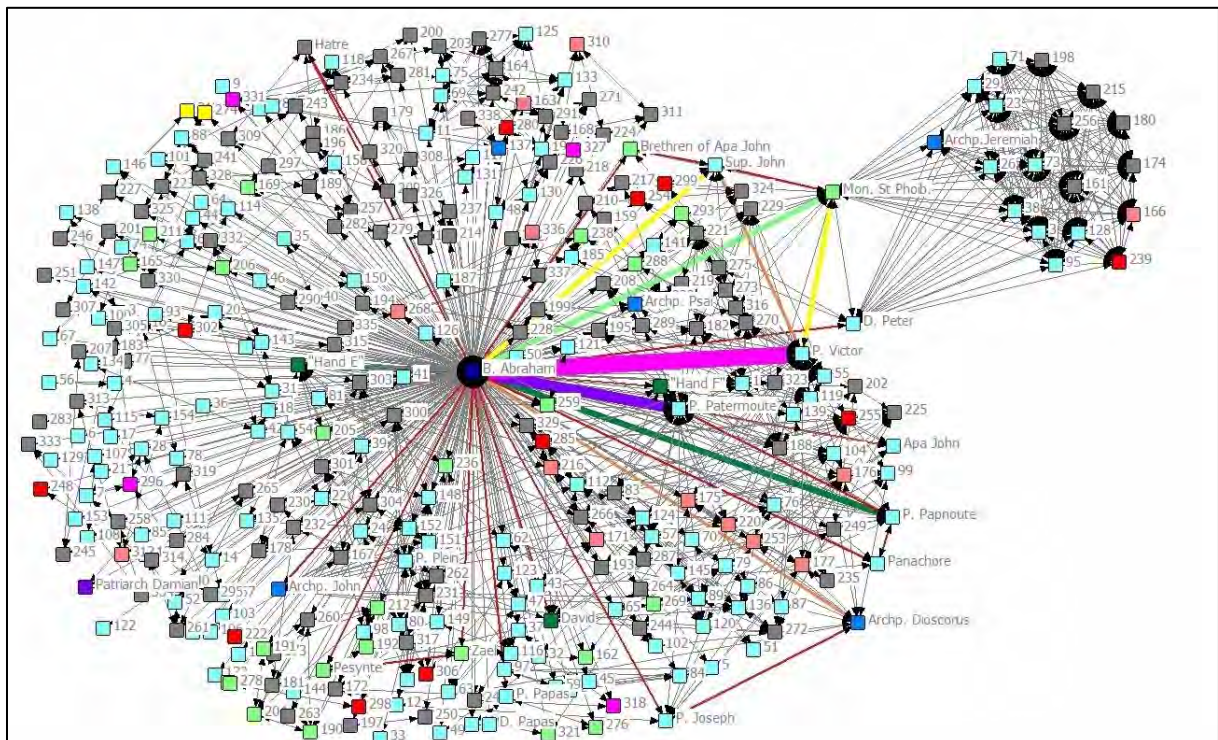
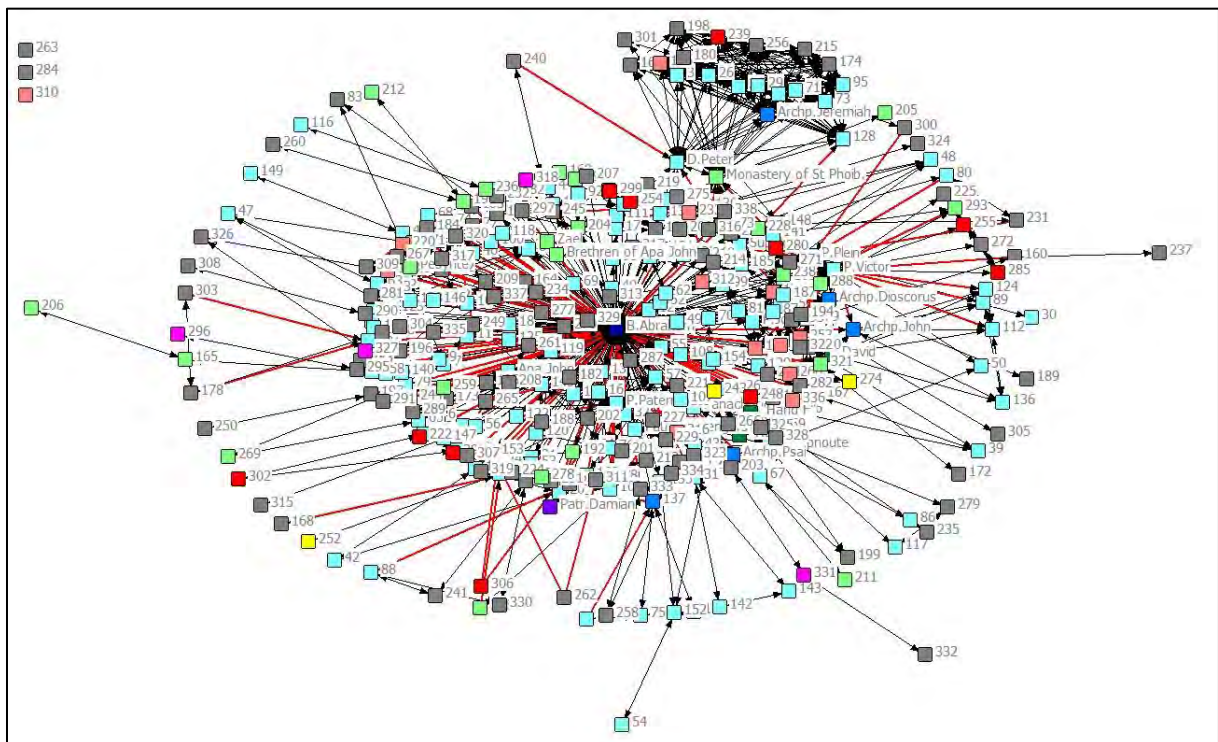


PLATE 9: GRAPHS OF DATASET 3

15. The directed network



16. The complete network – Tie strength (ties stronger than 1)

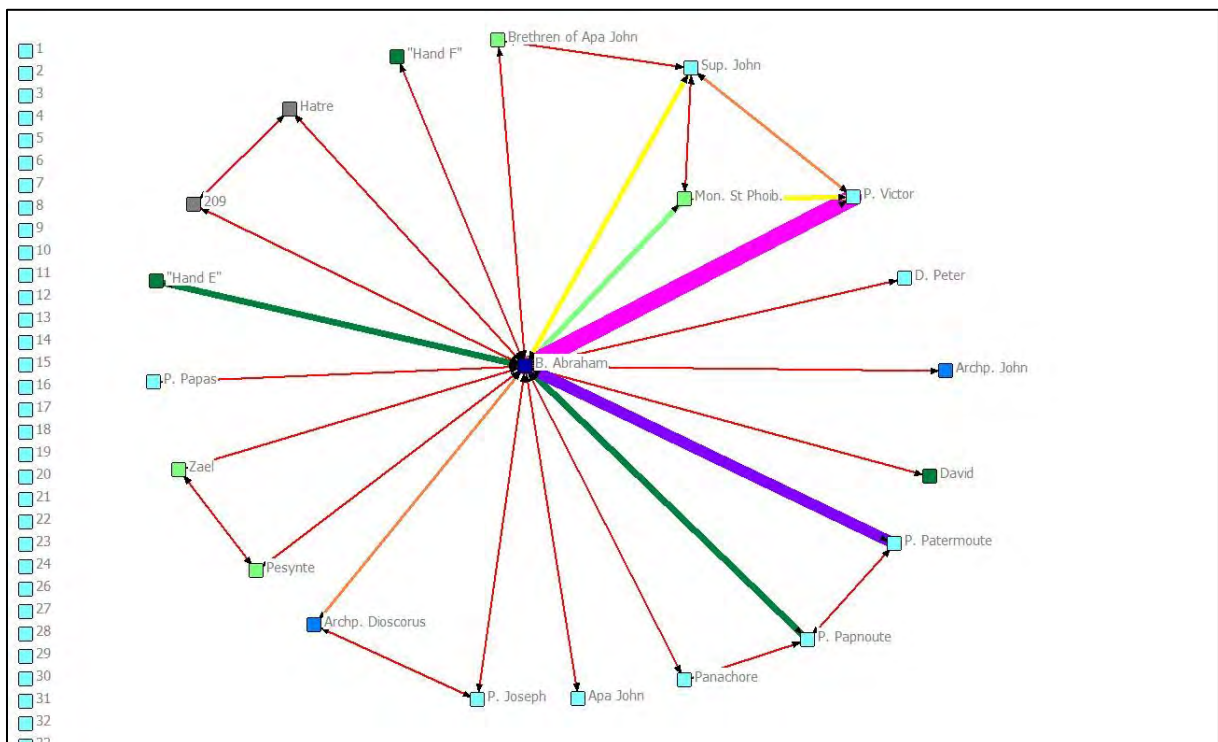
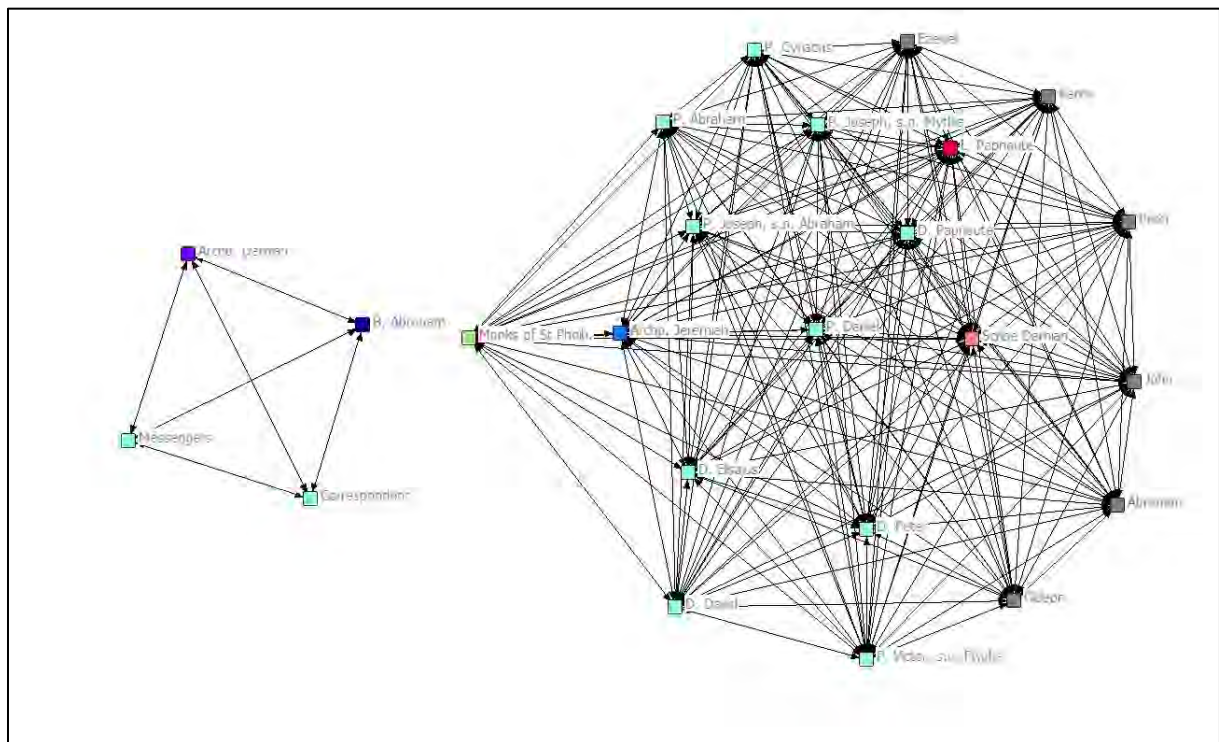


PLATE 10: GRAPHS OF DATASET 3

17. The network before 600



18. *The network in 600-609*

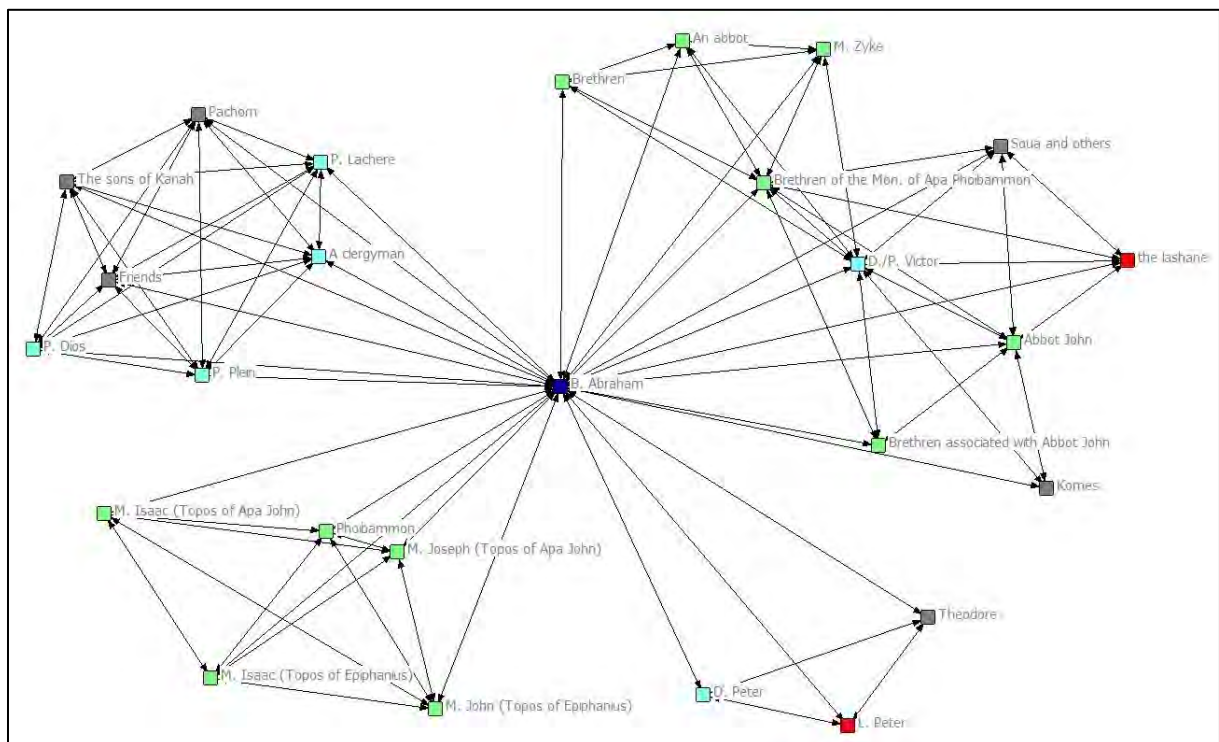
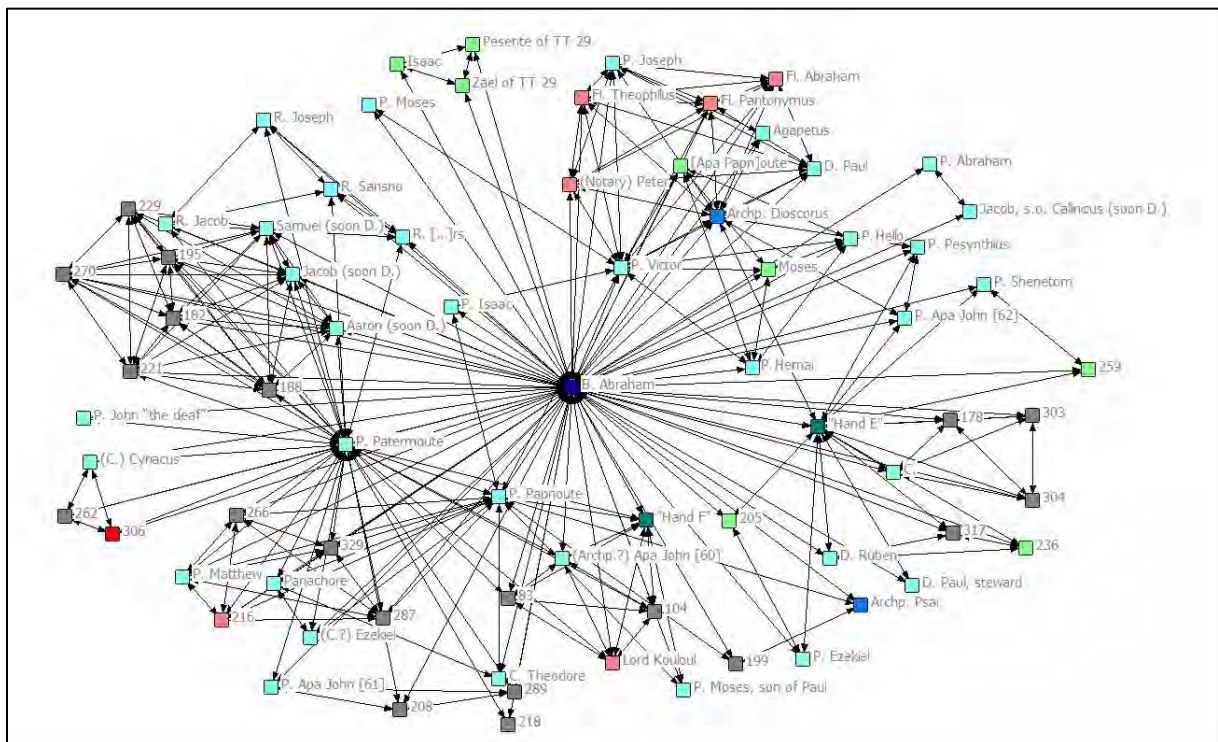


PLATE 11: GRAPHS OF DATASET 3

19. The network in 610-619



20. *The network in 620-621*

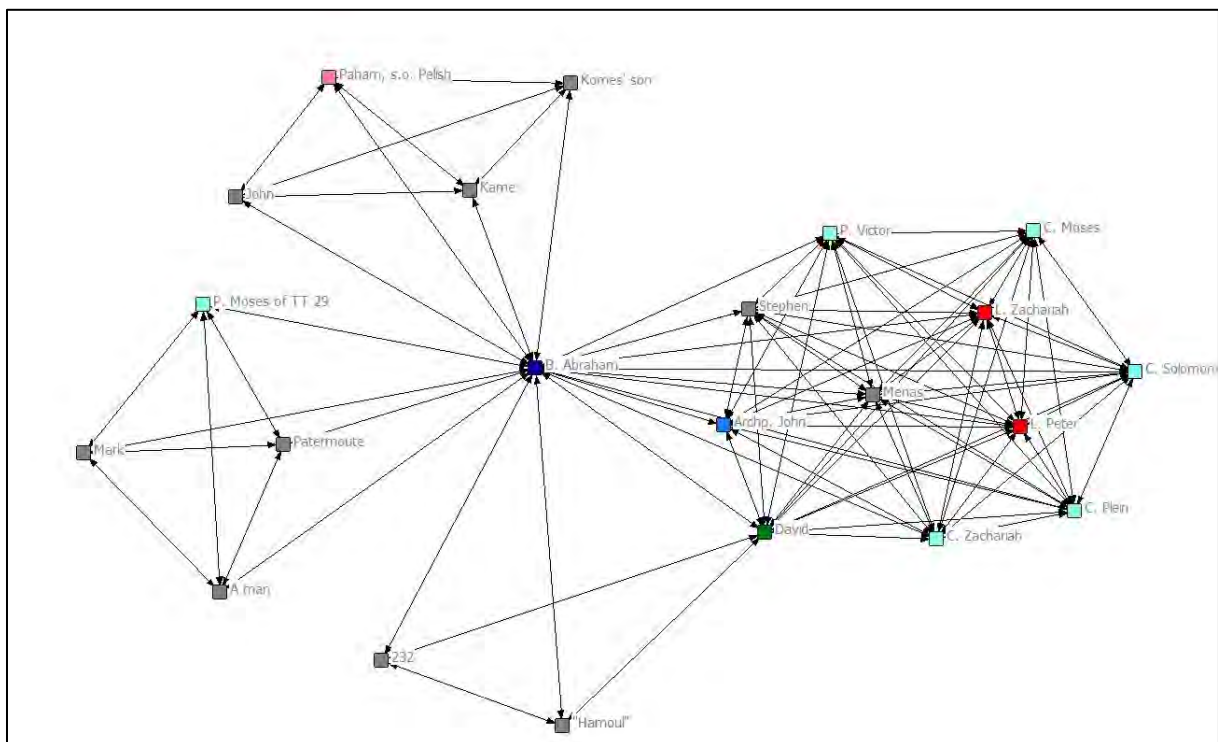
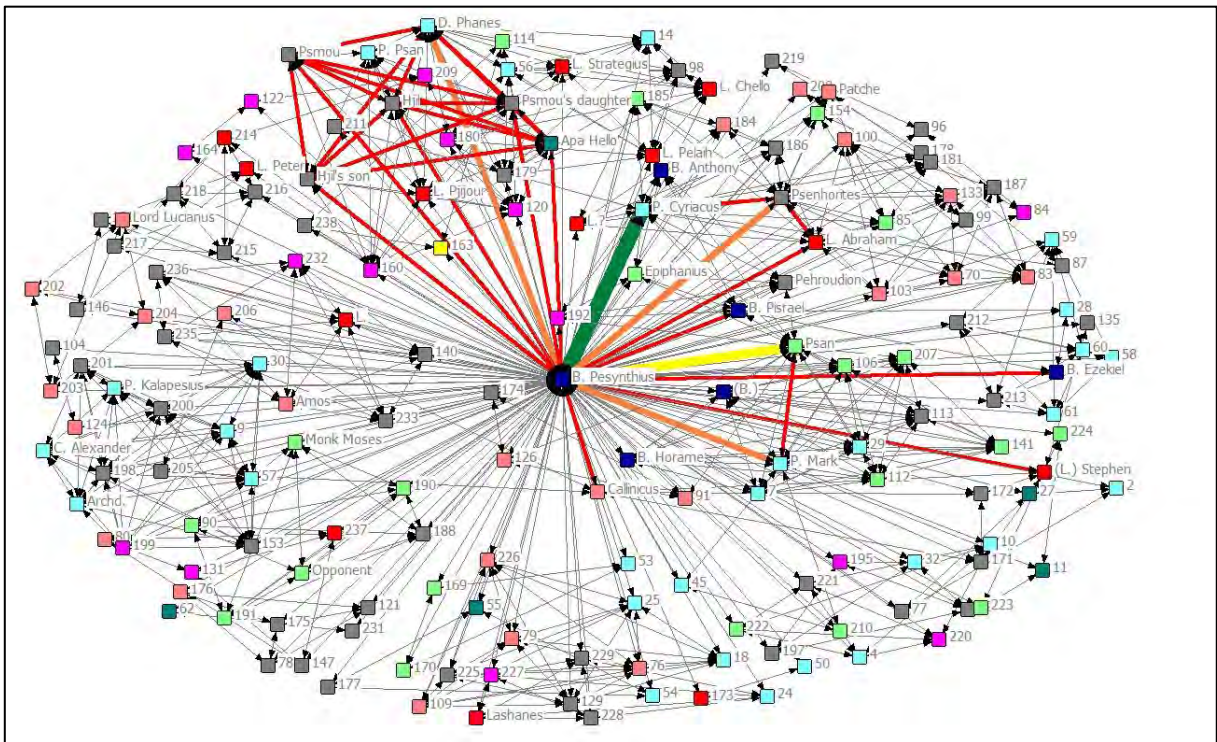


PLATE 12: GRAPHS OF DATASET 4

21. The basic network



22. The extended network

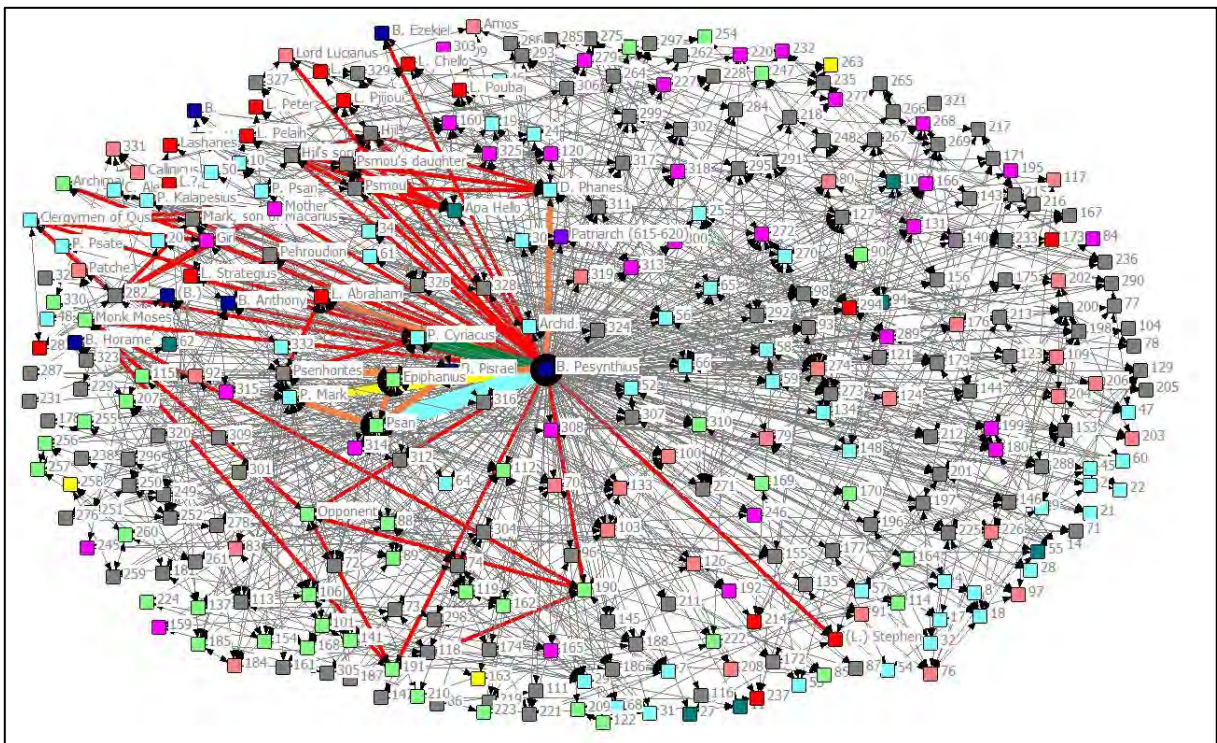
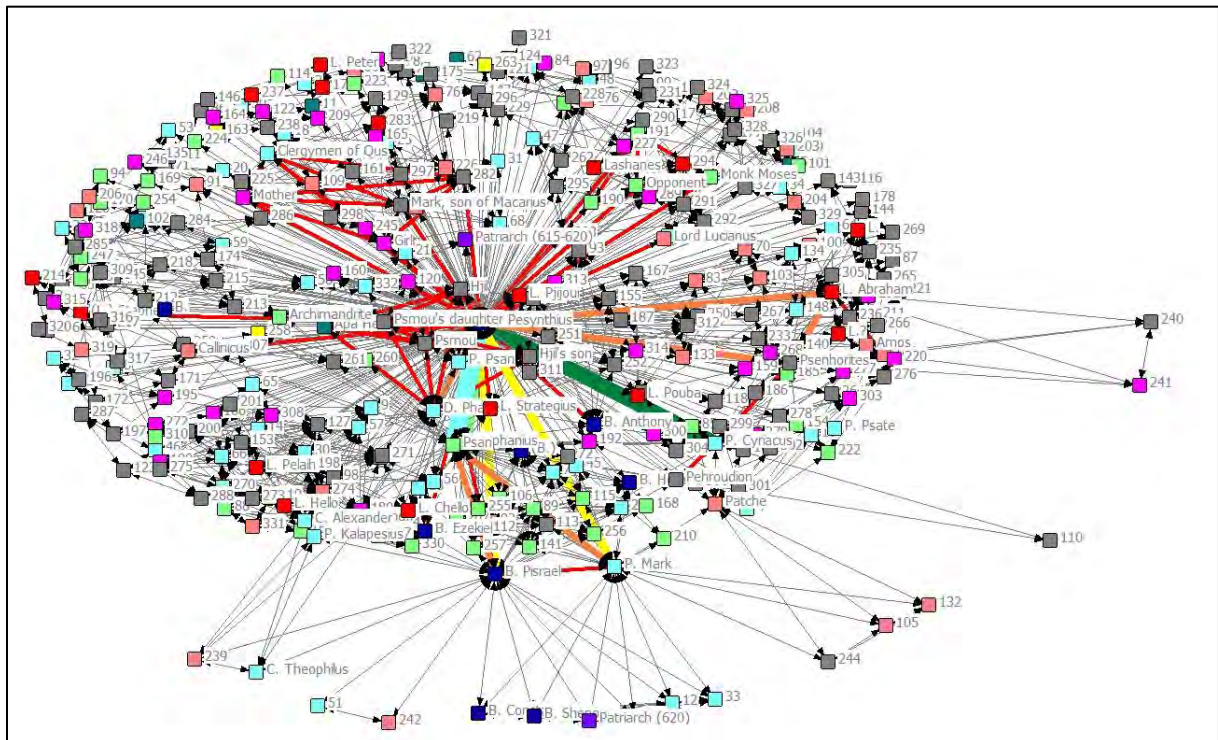


PLATE 13: GRAPHS OF DATASET 4

23. The complete network



24. The complete network - Tie strength

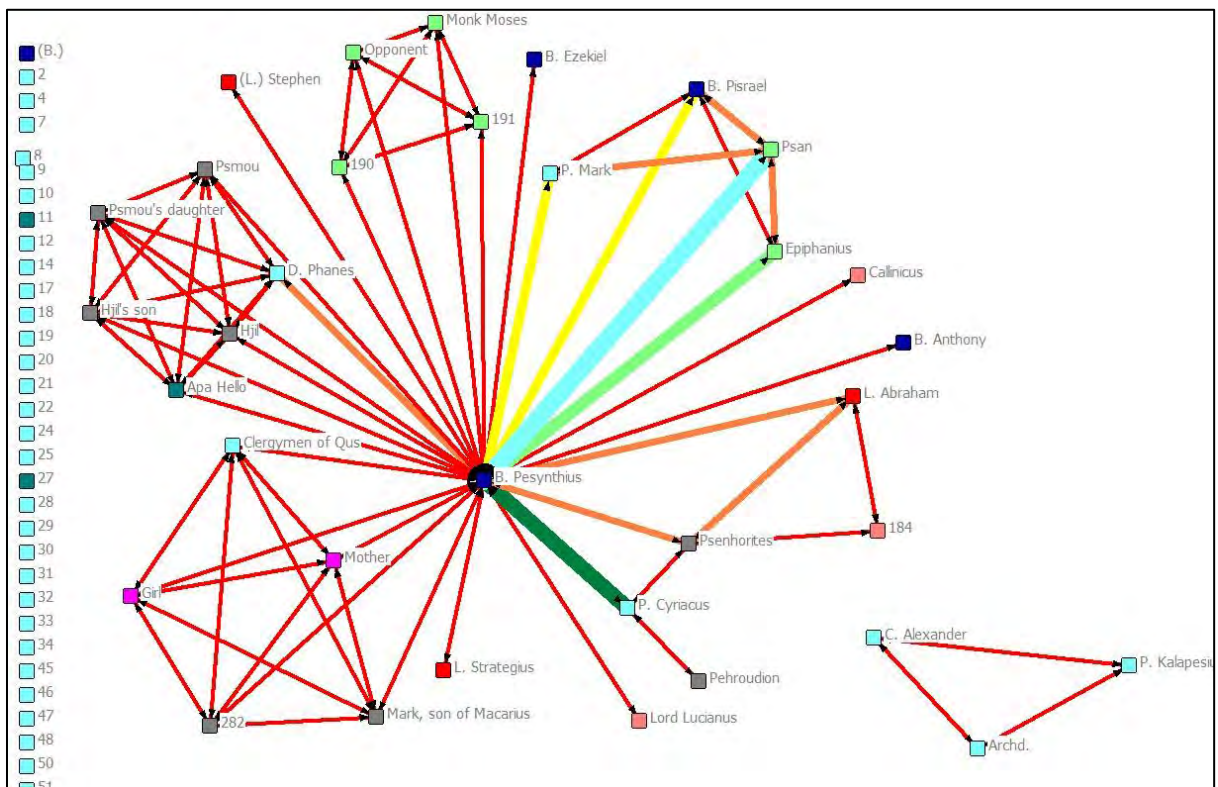
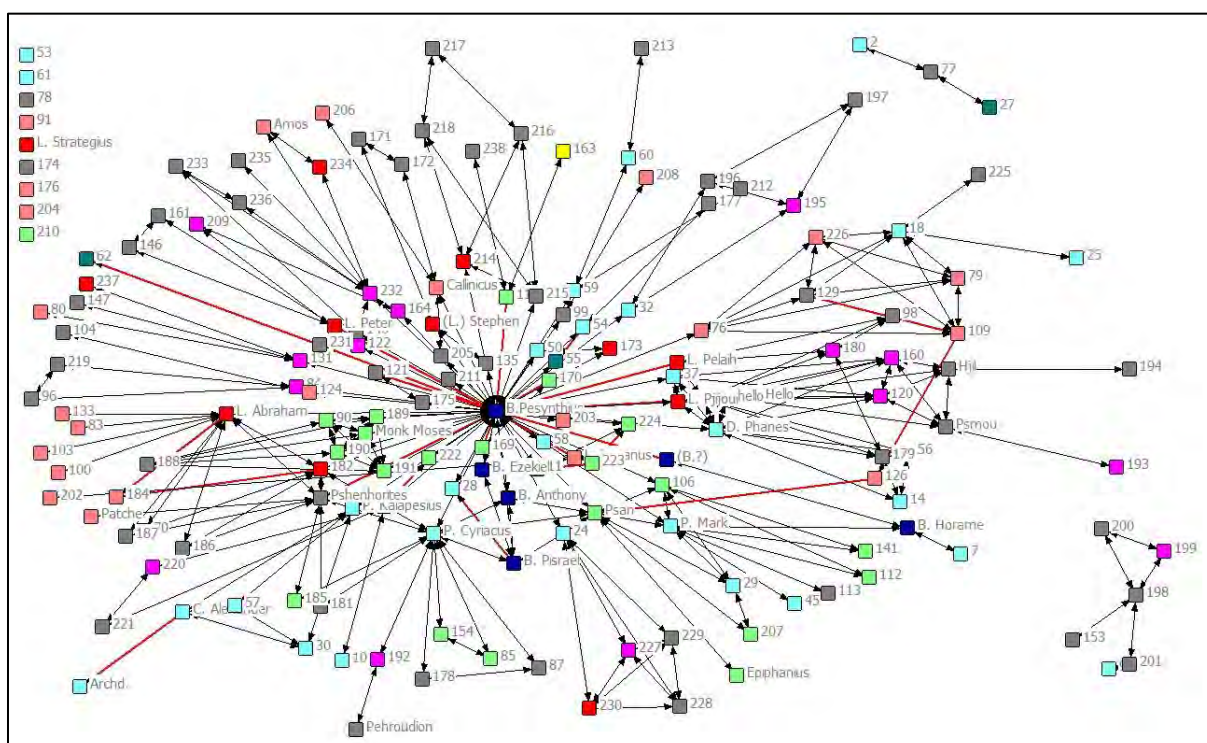


PLATE 14: GRAPHS OF DATASET 4

25. The directed basic network



26. The directed complete network

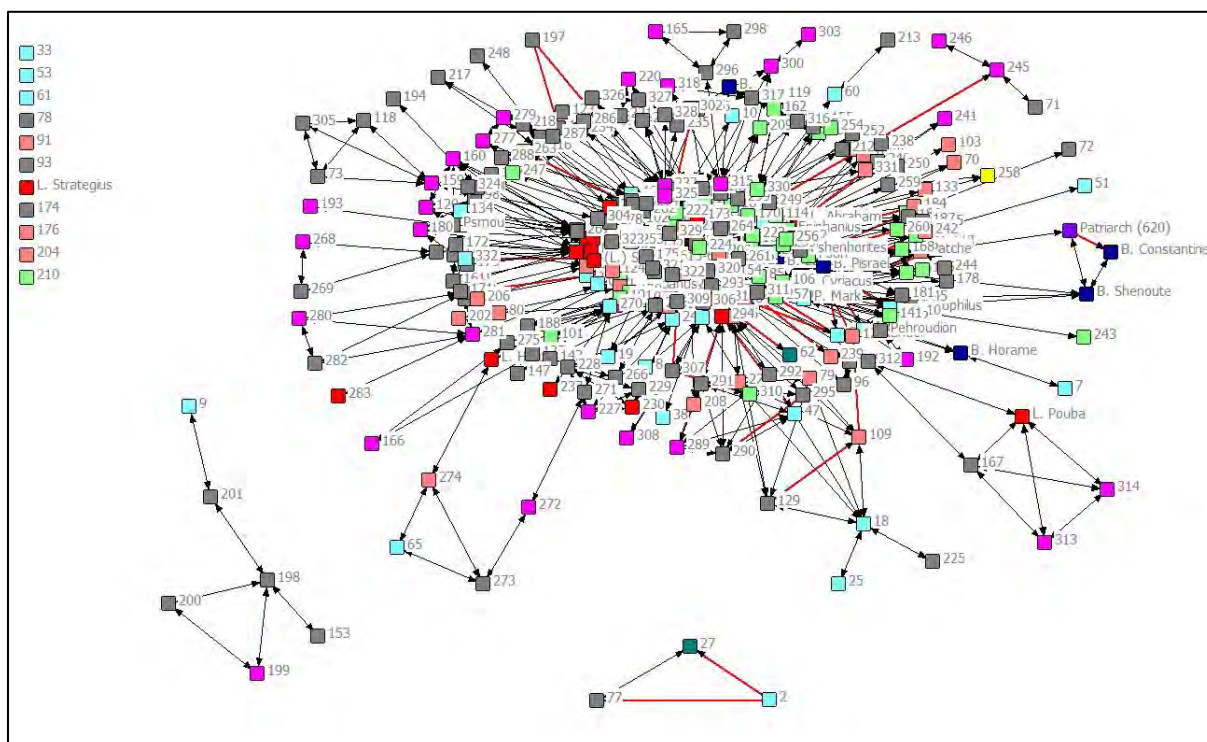
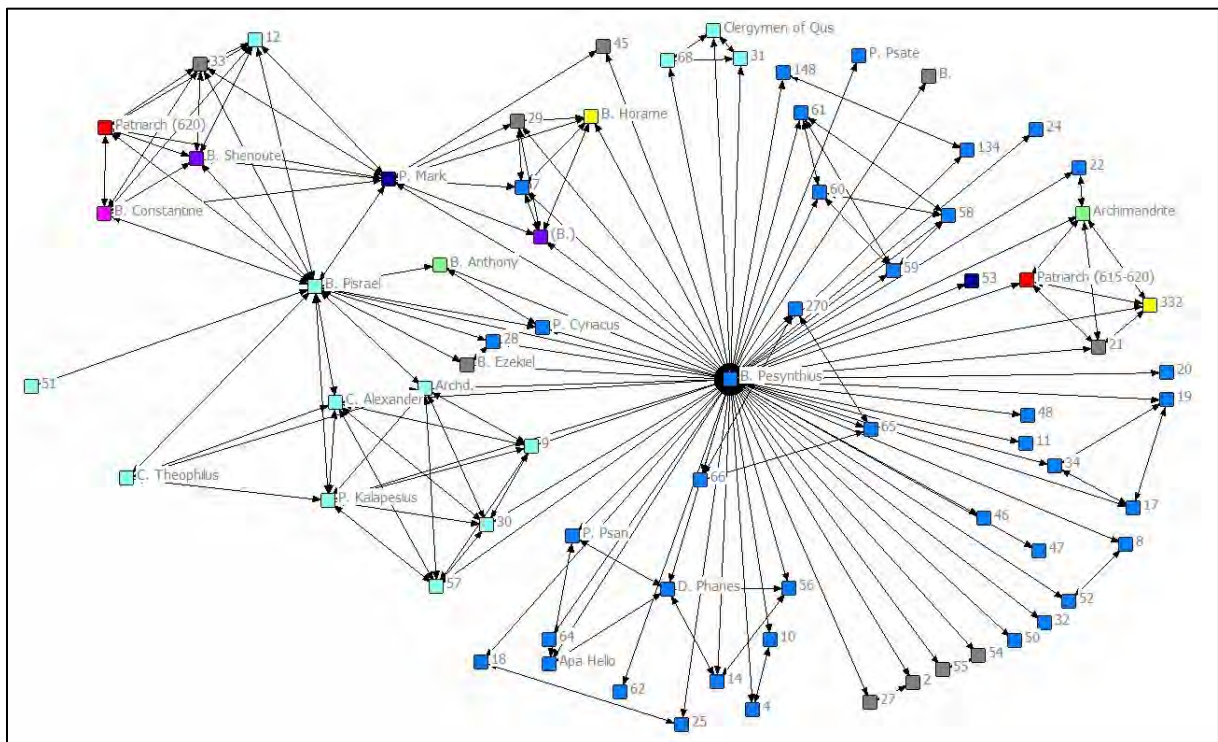


PLATE 15: GRAPHS OF DATASET 4

27. *Clergymen by diocese*



28. *Pesynthius'* ego network by social group

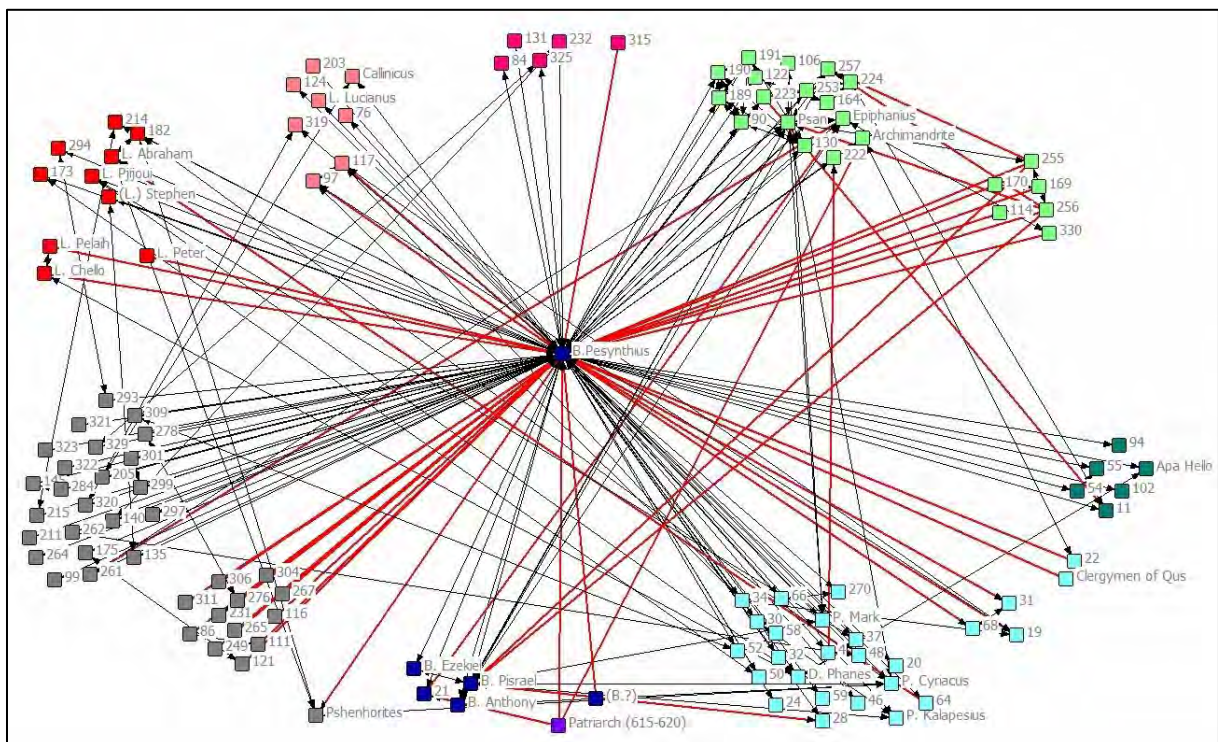


Table 1: Abbreviations used for indicating social positions (§1.1.3)

<i>Abbreviation</i>	<i>Title/ social status</i>	<i>Abbreviation</i>	<i>Title/ social status</i>
Archb.	Archbishop, patriarch	S.	Steward
B.	Bishop	M.	Monk
Archp.	Archpriest	Sup.	Monastic superior
Archd.	Archdeacon	L.	<i>Lashane</i>
P.	Priest	Vic.	<i>Vicarius</i>
D.	Deacon	Act.	<i>Actuarius</i>
R.	Reader	O.	Official (rank unspecified)
C.	Cleric (rank unspecified)	Scr.	Scribe, notary, master
~~P./D./C.~~	Excluded from the clergy	Pron.	<i>Pronoetes</i>
		Unmarked	Layman/ unspecified

Table 2: Arrows that indicate particular kinds of ties (§1.1.3)

A  B	1) <i>Effective one-directional tie</i> a) A sends a letter, instructions, request or goods to B, but the document does not record a reaction from B to A. b) A acts as a scribe on behalf of C, who wants to contact B. c) A acts as a warrant for B and it is possible that he met the bishop, but not certain. In the document he plays a secondary role.
A  B	2) <i>Effective reciprocated tie</i> a) A and B have met each other in person, or write to each other. b) A and B exchange messages through an agent C, who is consequently in direct contact with both of them. c) A and B live in the same village or monastic community. d) A and B act for a common cause, as joint authors, guarantors, witnesses, etc. e) A is subordinate to B (either the bishop or an archpriest) or vice versa. f) the logic of the text implies that A and B are in contact (or in conflict).
A  B	3) <i>Hypothetical one-directional or reciprocated tie</i>
A  B	a) A and B will certainly be in contact in the near future. b) It is likely or advisable that A and B are, or will be, in contact. c) The fragmentary document suggests a tie, the nature of which is unclear.

Table 3: Theodosian bishops during the early seventh century (§3.3.3)

Antinoupol.						Shenoute	?
Asyut		Constantine					
Koptos	?	Pesynthius					
Qus					Serenianus?	Pisrael	?
Ape					Ezekiel?	Antony	?
Hermonthis	Abraham					Moses	?
Esna					Serenianus?		
Edfu					John	Horame	?
	595	600	605	610	615	620	625 630

Table 4: Other members of the Theodosian network (§3.3.3)

Topos of Epiphanius		Isaac I							
		John							
			Enoch						
				Epiphanius					
					Psan				
Hermitage at TT 29			Pesente						
			Zael						
					Moses				
					Psate		?		
St Mark		Mark							
St Phoi-bammon			Victor, the secretary			Victor, the abbot			
						David	?		
Hermitage at TT 1152						Ezekiel	?		
						Djor	?		
Terane				Terane					
Karnak					“Archimandrite”				
Macarius						Cyriacus			
	595	600	605	610	615	620	625	630	

Table 5: Civil and monastic communities arranged by period (§4.3)

The following overview is based on the quantitative analysis of Dataset 1b, section D. The social actors who belong to the same community are grouped.

1. *Network of 600-601*

<i>Community</i>	<i>Individuals</i>
Monastery of St Phoibammon	B. Abraham, P. Victor, monks of St Phoibammon
Unspecified monastery	abbot John, the monks associated with him
Future <i>Topos</i> of Epiphanius	Isaac I, John, Enoch, Epiphanius
<i>Topos</i> of Apa John	Isaac, Joseph, Phoibammon (<i>O.Crum</i> 310)
Unspecified monastery	Joseph (<i>O.Mon.Epiph.</i> 105, etc.); = him of the <i>Topos</i> of Apa John?
Jeme	L. Peter, an anonymous <i>lashane</i>

2. *Network of 610-619*

<i>Community</i>	<i>Individuals</i>
Monastery of St Phoibammon	B. Abraham, P. Victor
Hermitage at TT 29	Pesente, Zael, P. Moses, Psate
<i>Topos</i> of Epiphanius	Epiphanius
<i>Topos</i> of St Mark	P. Mark
Hermonthis	Flavii Abraham, Pantonymus, Theophilus, notary Peter

3. *Network of 620-630*

<i>Community</i>	<i>Individuals</i>
Monastery of St Phoibammon	B. Abraham, P. Victor, monks of St Phoibammon
<i>Topos</i> of Epiphanius	Epiphanius, Psan; temporary: B. Pesynthius, B. Pisrael
<i>Topos</i> of St Mark	P. Mark
Hermitage at TT 29	P. Moses, Psate
Hermitage at TT 1152	Ezekiel, Djor
Hermitage of Apa Terane	Apa Terane
Jeme	L. Peter, the anonymous <i>lashane</i>

Table 6: The ecclesiastical apparatus of the diocese of Hermonthis

The numbers between brackets are ID numbers in Dataset 3.

	<i>Before 600 (§ 5.4.1)</i>	<i>600–609 (§ 5.4.2)</i>	<i>610–619 (§ 5.4.3)</i>	<i>620–621 (§ 5.4.4)</i>	<i>Date unknown (§5.4.5)</i>
<i>Episcopal residence</i>		Priest Victor (127; sometimes “Hand A”)	Priest Victor (127; “Hand B”?) “Hand E”, “F” (155-56)	Priest Victor (127) David (170; “Hand D”)	
<i>Hermonthis</i>			Archp. Dioscorus (34) P. Joseph (72) D. Paul (99) P. Pesynthius (102) ✠ Agapetus (12)		D. Philotheus D. Pheu? (107-08; cf. <i>P.Pisentius</i> 49 + <i>P.CrumST</i> 46)
<i>Jeme or Western Thebes</i>	Archp. Jeremiah (58) P. Abraham (3) P. Cyriacus (23) P. Daniel (26) P. Joseph (71) P. Joseph (73) P. Victor (128) D. David (29) D. Elisaius (174) D. Papnoute (95)	D. Peter (105) C. (148) <u>From Dataset 1:</u> P. Mark (§3.2.3, 7.4.4)	Archp. Psai (113) Archp. John? (60) P. Ezekiel (41) P. Isaac (50) P. Apa John (61) P. Hello (185) P. Hemai (187) P. Matthew (81) P. Moses (86) P. Moses (87)	Archp. John (60) P. Moses (TT 29; 88) C. Moses (89) C. Plein (112) C. Solomon (124) C. Zachariah (136) <u>From Dataset 4:</u> P. Mark (§3.2.3, 7.4.4) Clergymen (§7.4.4)	P. Isaac (48) (P.) Psate (115) (P.) Zachariah (134) D.+S. Pesente (103) D.+S. Salom (118) D. Abraham (6) D. Ananias (14) D. Apa Dios (33) D. Ezekiel (42) D. George (44)

	D. Peter (105)		P. Papnoute (94) P. Patermoute (96) P. Shenetom (121) C. Cyriacus (24) C. Panachore (90) C. Ezekiel (43) C. Theodore (126)		D. Isaac (48) D. Papas (92) D. Pappa (93) D. Victor (130) C. Athanasius (20) <u>From Dataset 4:</u> P. Mark (§3.2.3, 7.4.4)
<i>Hermonthis or Jeme</i>			D.+S. Paul (98)	Archd. Joseph (§7.4.4)	Archp. of <i>O.Crum</i> 485 Archp? (137)
<i>Church of the Acacias</i>					D. Ezekias (40) ex-S. Eboneh (35)
<i>Pasaft</i>					<u>Dataset 4:</u> P. Andrew
<i>Patoubasten</i>					P. Abraham (8)
<i>Piohe</i>					P. John (63), D. Isaac (47), R. Simeon (123)
<i>Pkoh</i>					P. Jacob (53)
<i>The</i>					R. Abraham (10)
<i>Thone</i>			P. John “the deaf” (64)		
<i>Tmenke</i>					P. Abraham (17)
“Village” (= <i>Jeme</i> ?)			R. Jacob (57) R. Joseph (76)		

			R. Sansno (120) R. [...]rs (145)		
<i>Location unknown</i>		Sup. John (66) P. Dios (30) P. Lachere (80) P. Plein (110)	Soon to be deacons: Aaron (1) Jacob (55) Paul (98) Samuel (119)		P. Abraham (4) Jacob, soon to be deacon (56) P. Athanasius (19) P. Joseph (75) P. Wanofre? (133)

Table 7: The ecclesiastical apparatus of the diocese of Koptos

The numbers between brackets are ID numbers in Dataset 4.

<i>(§7.4.1-2)</i>	<i>Basic network</i>	<i>Complete network</i>	<i>Not in Dataset 4</i>
<i>Episcopal entourage</i>	Apa Elisaius (11), P. Moses (28), C. (55, 64)		“Disciple” John (the <i>Encomium</i> only) The scribes of <i>P.Mon.Epiph.</i> 133, 136.2, <i>P.Pisentius</i> 18bis, 60, British Museum, EA 74954.
<i>Koptos</i>	D.? (50)	P. Pegosh? (34), Archd. (= Jacob?; 19), C. Hormisda (17)?	
<i>Pallas</i>	P. Gennadius (14), D. Phanes (35), P. Psan (37), (C.?) Apa Hello (15), C.? (56)		
<i>Kratos</i>		C. (implicit in ANU Classics Mus. 75)	
<i>Pshenhor</i>	Priest Cyriacus (6)		
<i>Phanemoun</i>		P. Psate (38)	
<i>Ptene</i>		C. Joannake (20)	
<i>Topos of the Archangel</i>	Jacob, recommended as the new S. (18)		
<i>Mon. of Samuel</i>			P. and Sup. Jacob (<i>Life of Andrew</i>)
<i>Mon. of the Cross</i>			P.+Sup. Andrew (<i>Life of Andrew, Encomium</i>)

<i>Unspecified</i>	P. Cyriacus (7; = 6?), P. Moses? (29), P. (45), C. Anthony (4), C. Elias (10), C. Kalapesius (24), C. Kalashire (25), C. Apa Michaias (27), C. Paul (32), C. (54, 59–59, 65–66), to be ordained soon (61)	P. Daniel (8), (P.+Sup.) John (22), P. (46–48), ~~S.~~ (52), C.? (134, 148, 270)	

Table 8: Clergymen in the dioceses of Qus and Ape

The numbers between brackets are ID numbers in Dataset 4.

Qus (§7.4.3)	<i>Basic network</i>	<i>Complete network</i>
<i>Episcopal residence</i>	B. Pisrael (36)	
<i>City of Qus</i>	P. Kalapesius (23), Archd. (49), D. Dios (9), C. Alexander (1), C. Papas (30), C. (57)	C. Theophilus (40) C. of Qus (67)
<i>Chapel of St John</i>	~~S.~~ (51).	
<i>Monastery</i>	Elisaius? (12)	
<i>Unspecified</i>	P. Paul (31), C. (67)	

Ape (§7.4.5)	<i>Basic network</i>	<i>Complete network</i>
<i>Episcopal residence</i>	B. Anthony (3)	
<i>(Karnak)</i>		Archimandrite? (63)

Fig. 9: Civil and military officials in the district of Hermonthis

The numbers between brackets are ID numbers in Dataset 3.

	<i>Before 600 (§ 5.5)</i>	<i>600–609 (§ 5.5)</i>	<i>610–619 (§ 5.5)</i>	<i>620–621 (§ 5.5)</i>	<i>620s (§5.5, 7.5.2)</i>	<i>Unknown (§ 5.5)</i>
<i>Hermonthis</i>			Fl. Abraham, Fl. Pantonymus, Fl. Theophilus (175-7), notary Peter (253)		<u>From Dataset 4:</u> Lawyer(s) Apa Elias O. Luke	
<i>Jeme or Western Thebes</i>	L. Papnoute (239) Abraham (161) Ezekiel (174) Gideon (180) John (198) Kame (215) Peter (256) Scr. Damian (166)	L. Peter (105)	Headmen (306) and Kame (216), who were associated with P. Patermoute, who worked in Jeme.	L. Peter (255) L. Zachariah (285) Paham, son of Pelish (233)	<u>From Dataset 1:</u> L. Shenoute, Amos, magistrates, the geometer Pisrael, an “ara”, soldiers in the mountain (listed in §5.5) <u>From Dataset 4:</u> L. (Shenoute?)	L. Victor (280)
<i>Ape (Thebes, “Ne”, Luxor)</i>					“the Persian at Ne” <u>From Dataset 4:</u> Lt of Ape L. Straticius of Ne	Comm. Paul (243) Lt Taggeila (274) Act. Peter (252)

<i>Piohe</i>						Scribe David (171)
<i>Timamen</i>						O. (312)
<i>Toout</i>					L. Victor (§5.5)	
<i>Unspecified</i>		L. (299)	Lord Kouloul (220)		<u>From Dataset 4:</u> Basilus Lord Lucianus <i>Comes</i> Master Elias	L. Loudj (222) L. Pesente (248) L. (298) L. (302) Lord Asper (163) Lord Sarapion(268) Lord (336) O. (310).

Table 10: Civil and military officials in the district of Koptos

The numbers between brackets are ID numbers in Dataset 4.

<i>(§7.5.1)</i>	<i>Basic network</i>	<i>Complete network</i>	<i>Not in Dataset 4</i>
<i>Koptos</i>	Callinicus (81), Stephen (157), L.? (plur.; 173), chief physician (208)	Lords Erythrius (97), Joseph (117).	
<i>Pallas</i>	L. Chello (82), L. Pelaih (139), L. Pjijoui (149)		
<i>Pshenhor</i>	<i>Lashane</i> Abraham (69), colleague (182)		
<i>Trikatan</i>	Abraham (70), L. (plur.; 214)		
<i>Kratos</i>		Headmen (319)	
<i>Pmilis</i>	L. Peter (143)		
<i>Zoile</i>		L. Pouba (150)	
<i>Topos of the Archangel</i>	Anastasius, Horion, Mena, Master Azarias (76, 79, 109, 226)		
<i>Qus</i>	Financial agents (239, 242)		Lawyer Theopemptos (§2.1.2, 7.5.1)
<i>Unspecified</i>	Act. Theophilus? L. (plural; 230), financial agents (184, 206), magistrates (274), Pron. Patche (136)	Pron. Gideon (105), Pron. Paham (132), Headman Hello (107), L. (283), L. (294)	