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

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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 ΕΝΔΕΚΑΤΗ(С) ΙΝΔ(ΙΚΤΙΩΝΟС) +.

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 **ΤΕΤΙΝΗΜΑΚΑΡΙΩΤΗΣ**, “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 ⲛⲉⲕⲣⲓⲟⲓ ⲛⲓⲛ ⲡⲁⲡⲁⲥ is unclear; cf. Winlock and Crum 1926, 134, n. 6; Crum 1939, 778b. ⲕⲙⲓⲟ 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: ΠΕΝΠΕΤΟΥΛΑΒ 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.Pisentius* 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: ΑΠΑ ΖΟΡΑΜΗ; *P.CrumST* 192 (= *P.Lond.Copt.* I 467): ΑΒΒΑ ΟΡΑΜΙΟΣ.

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 $\bar{\pi}\eta\epsilon\kappa\bar{\rho}$); 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 Pson (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 ἸΠΦΝΖΩΡ**. According to Crum (1939, 718b), **ἸΠΖΟΤ** and **ἸΠΦΝΤΟ 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.